



PAPER

## EMOTIONAL DISCOURSE IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT: A STUDY OF JOY AND SADNESS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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### Abstract

This article examines the linguistic and cultural representation of joy and sadness in English and Uzbek discourse from a cross-cultural and pragmatic perspective. Although emotions are universal in human experience, their linguistic expression is strongly influenced by cultural and social norms. By analyzing idioms, metaphors, phraseological units, and pragmatic strategies, the study reveals significant differences in how English and Uzbek speakers conceptualize and communicate feelings. The findings demonstrate that Uzbek discourse tends to emphasize collectivism, ritualized forms, and direct imagery, whereas English discourse highlights individuality, metaphorical abstraction, and indirect expression.

**Key words:** emotional discourse, pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, idioms, metaphor, joy, sadness, English, Uzbek.

### Introduction

Emotions are a vital part of human interaction, shaping communication, social relationships, and cultural identity. According to Wierzbicka (1999), emotions cannot be separated from cultural context because languages encode unique “cultural scripts” that guide how feelings are expressed. Similarly, Kövecses (2000) emphasizes that metaphors of emotions are both universal and culture-specific, reflecting shared bodily experience but also local traditions.

English and Uzbek languages provide an interesting field for comparison: one represents a predominantly individualistic Western culture, while the other embodies collectivist Eastern traditions. Studying joy and sadness in these languages highlights not only linguistic differences but also contrasting worldviews.

**Aim:** To investigate how joy and sadness are expressed in English and Uzbek discourse and to identify the cultural and pragmatic factors shaping these expressions.

#### Objectives:

1. To identify idioms, metaphors, and phraseological units representing joy and sadness in English and Uzbek.
2. To compare similarities and differences in emotional

discourse across both languages.

3. To analyze the cultural and pragmatic dimensions underlying these differences.

### Methods

This study employs a **comparative, qualitative discourse analysis**.

• **Data Sources:** English and Uzbek idioms, metaphors, ritualized expressions (congratulations and condolences), and pragmatic strategies drawn from literary texts, oral communication, and online corpora.

#### • Procedure:

1. Collecting linguistic units related to joy and sadness.
2. Classifying them into semantic categories (metaphors, idioms, ritualized phrases).
3. Interpreting their pragmatic functions in context.
4. Conducting cross-cultural comparison between English and Uzbek discourse.

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## Results

The analysis produced the following findings:

### 1. Expressions of Joy

**English:** Joy is metaphorically framed as elevation and lightness (*on cloud nine, walking on air, over the moon*). Strong adjectives (*fantastic, wonderful, amazing*) highlight individual satisfaction. The focus remains on personal emotional states.

**Uzbek:** Joy is tied to nature, spirituality, and collectivism (*ko'nglimiz tog'dek ko'tarildi, dunyosi yorishdi, quvonchingiz doimiy bo'lsin*). Plural pronouns and ritualized blessings emphasize community and shared happiness.

### 2. Expressions of Sadness

**English:** Sadness is expressed indirectly (*I feel down, I'm a bit upset, I'm feeling blue*). Common metaphors include heaviness (*a heavy heart*), fragmentation (*heartbroken*), and color imagery (*feeling blue*). The discourse focuses on psychological interiority.

**Uzbek:** Sadness is expressed more directly and vividly (*yuragi ezildi, dili vayron bo'ldi, ko'zlari yoshga to'ldi*). Ritualized condolence formulas (*boshingiz omon bo'lsin, og'ir bo'ldi*) reflect empathy and collective solidarity.

### 3. Cultural-Pragmatic Contrasts

**Individualism vs. Collectivism:** English foregrounds personal states; Uzbek emphasizes group belonging.

**Indirectness vs. Directness:** English mitigates sadness with softened expressions; Uzbek verbalizes grief openly.

**Metaphorical Preferences:** English uses abstract metaphors (height, colors, fragmentation); Uzbek favors body-centered and nature-based imagery.

**Spontaneous vs. Ritualized Forms:** English expressions are spontaneous and personal; Uzbek includes many fixed, ritualized formulas for both joy and sadness.

## Discussion

The findings show that while joy and sadness are universal emotions, their verbalization is culturally shaped. English discourse reflects individualism, abstraction, and indirectness, while Uzbek emphasizes collectivism, directness, and ritualized communication.

This has important implications for **cross-cultural communication**. Misunderstandings may occur if emotional metaphors are translated literally—for instance, “feeling blue” does not refer to color, and “yuragi ezildi” is not a physical condition. Translators, educators, and intercultural mediators must be aware of these differences to avoid misinterpretation.

Moreover, the presence of ritualized blessings and condolences in Uzbek illustrates how emotions are embedded in cultural practices, while English emotional discourse tends to prioritize spontaneity and individuality.

## Conclusion

The comparative study demonstrates that emotional discourse encodes both universal human feelings and culturally specific worldviews. English discourse highlights individuality and metaphorical abstraction, whereas Uzbek emphasizes collectivism, spirituality, and ritualized forms of emotional expression.

Recognizing these contrasts is essential for effective translation, intercultural dialogue, and emotional linguistics. Ultimately, joy and sadness are not only personal affective states but also **linguocultural codes** that mirror the values and identity of a community.

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