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TRANSLATION OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE YOUTUBE COMMENTS: A COMPARATIVE LINGUOPRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. The development of digital communication has created new forms of interaction in which users can publicly express their attitudes, emotions, approval, and criticism. YouTube comments represent a particularly valuable form of digital discourse because they contain spontaneous and context-dependent reactions to audiovisual content. This study examines the translation of positive and negative YouTube comments from a comparative linguopragmatic perspective, focusing on English and Uzbek. The research aims to identify the linguistic and pragmatic resources used to express evaluation and to determine the major translation challenges associated with transferring such expressions between the two languages. The study employs a qualitative comparative research design. Selected positive and negative comments are analyzed according to their evaluative vocabulary, intensifiers, repetition, punctuation, emojis, directness, indirectness, irony, and pragmatic intention. Particular attention is paid to the preservation of emotional intensity and interpersonal meaning in translation. The analysis demonstrates that YouTube comments cannot be translated adequately through lexical substitution alone because their pragmatic meaning is often determined by context, cultural conventions, communicative intention, and emotional force. The findings indicate that literal translation is appropriate only when linguistic and pragmatic meanings correspond closely, whereas modulation, adaptation, pragmatic compensation, and contextual reformulation are often required. The study contributes to comparative linguopragmatics and translation studies by demonstrating how English and Uzbek users construct positive and negative evaluations in digital discourse and how these evaluations can be transferred across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Keywords: YouTube comments, translation, positive evaluation, negative evaluation, linguopragmatics, digital discourse, English, Uzbek, online communication, comparative analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly transformed contemporary communication. Social media platforms and video-sharing services have created interactive environments in which users can produce, share, evaluate, and respond to content almost immediately. As a result, communication that was previously associated with face-to-face interaction or private correspondence increasingly takes place in publicly accessible digital spaces. This transformation has also created new linguistic material for the study of contemporary discourse.

YouTube is one of the most significant platforms in this context. In addition to providing audiovisual content, it enables users to participate in discussions through comment sections. These comments may express admiration, approval, gratitude, disagreement, disappointment, criticism, humour, irony, or hostility. Although individual comments are often short, they may contain complex pragmatic meanings that depend on the relationship between linguistic form, communicative context, emotional attitude, and cultural expectations.

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From a linguistic perspective, YouTube comments demonstrate several characteristics of digital discourse, including informality, lexical creativity, abbreviations, slang, repetition, unconventional punctuation, capitalization, emojis, code-switching, and context-dependent expressions. From a pragmatic perspective, comments may function as compliments, criticisms, expressions of agreement or disagreement, acts of support, warnings, complaints, or indirect evaluations. These features make YouTube comments a productive source for linguopragmatic research.

Evaluation is particularly important in online comments. Users constantly evaluate people, performances, songs, videos, ideas, and events. Positive evaluation may communicate admiration, appreciation, emotional attachment, encouragement, or support, while negative evaluation may express dissatisfaction, criticism, disappointment, ridicule, or rejection. Importantly, the pragmatic force of an evaluative statement is not always identical to its literal lexical meaning.

For example, the English comment “Absolutely amazing! What a performance!” contains positive evaluative vocabulary and an intensifier. In contrast, “Great performance… if the goal was to put everyone to sleep” appears to contain positive vocabulary at the beginning but functions pragmatically as criticism because of its sarcastic context.

Such examples demonstrate why the translation of online comments is a complex process. Translation involves not only transferring propositional meaning but also preserving communicative intention, emotional intensity, interpersonal orientation, and culturally determined pragmatic meaning. A literal translation may preserve individual words while failing to reproduce the intended communicative effect.

The problem becomes especially relevant in English-Uzbek translation. English and Uzbek differ in their linguistic structures and in some conventions of interpersonal communication. Recent studies of English and Uzbek digital discourse have identified differences and similarities in the use of pragmatic markers, evaluative language, politeness strategies, address forms, code-switching, and other discourse features. These differences demonstrate the need to examine digital communication from a comparative perspective.

The study of online comments is also relevant to contemporary translation research because digital discourse frequently contains expressions for which direct equivalents do not exist. Slang, culturally specific expressions, irony, emotionally marked vocabulary, and pragmatic implicatures may require contextual interpretation before an appropriate translation can be produced.

Research gap. Although digital discourse, social media communication, and online comments have increasingly attracted linguistic attention, the translation of positive and negative YouTube comments from a comparative English-Uzbek linguopragmatic perspective remains insufficiently examined. In particular, the relationship between evaluative language, pragmatic intention, and translation strategy requires further investigation.

Aim of the study. The aim of this study is to examine the linguistic and pragmatic features of positive and negative YouTube comments in English and Uzbek and to identify the principal translation strategies required to preserve their communicative meaning.

Research objectives

The study addresses the following objectives:

1. to identify the main linguistic resources used to express positive and negative evaluation in YouTube comments;

2. to examine the pragmatic functions of evaluative expressions in English and Uzbek;

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3. to identify translation difficulties associated with emotionally and culturally marked online expressions;

4. to compare translation strategies applicable to positive and negative YouTube comments;

5. to determine the importance of preserving communicative intention and emotional intensity in English-Uzbek translation.

Research questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What linguistic features are commonly used to express positive and negative evaluation in English and Uzbek YouTube comments?

2. What pragmatic functions do these evaluative expressions perform?

3. What translation difficulties arise when positive and negative comments are transferred between English and Uzbek?

4. Which translation strategies are most appropriate for preserving the pragmatic meaning of such comments?

The study is based on the assumption that effective translation of YouTube comments requires the preservation of not only semantic content but also pragmatic intention, evaluative orientation, and emotional force.

2. METHODS

2.1. Research design

The study employs a qualitative comparative research design. A linguopragmatic approach is combined with translation analysis to examine how positive and negative evaluations are constructed in English and Uzbek YouTube comments and how their meanings can be transferred between the two languages.

The qualitative approach is appropriate because the primary purpose of the study is to interpret communicative functions and translation choices rather than merely calculate the frequency of particular linguistic forms.

2.2. Research material

The research material consists of publicly available YouTube comments associated with audiovisual content produced by English-speaking and Uzbek-speaking performers. The corpus is intended to include both positive and negative evaluations.

For the final empirical version of the article, comments should be selected according to the following criteria:

- the comment must be publicly accessible on YouTube;
- the comment must be written primarily in English or Uzbek;
- the comment must express a recognizable positive or negative evaluation;
- the comment must be sufficiently complete for pragmatic interpretation;
- duplicated comments should be excluded;
- spam and purely promotional comments should be excluded.

Comments containing personally identifying information unrelated to the research should not be reproduced.

2.3. Data selection

The comments are classified into two principal categories:

Category A: Positive evaluation

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This category includes comments expressing:

- admiration;
- praise;
- approval;
- gratitude;
- encouragement;
- emotional attachment;
- support.

Category B: Negative evaluation

This category includes comments expressing:

- criticism;
- dissatisfaction;
- disappointment;
- disagreement;
- ridicule;
- rejection;
- negative personal evaluation.

Mixed comments containing both positive and negative evaluation may be treated as a separate subgroup because they may present additional pragmatic complexity.

2.4. Analytical framework

The comments are analyzed according to the following parameters:

Analytical parameter	Description
Evaluative vocabulary	Words expressing approval or disapproval
Intensification	Words and constructions strengthening evaluation
Repetition	Repeated words or expressions used for emphasis
Punctuation	Exclamation marks, question marks and combinations
Capitalization	Capital letters used for pragmatic emphasis
Emojis	Visual signs reinforcing or modifying meaning
Directness	Explicit expression of evaluation
Indirectness	Implicit or mitigated evaluation
Irony and sarcasm	Meaning that differs from literal wording
Pragmatic intention	Communicative purpose of the comment
Emotional intensity	Degree of emotional involvement
Interpersonal orientation	Relationship between commenter and evaluated person

2.5. Translation analysis

Translation is examined at two levels.

First, the semantic content of the source comment is considered. Second, its pragmatic function is identified. The translation is then evaluated according to whether it preserves:

1. the basic propositional meaning;

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2. the evaluative orientation;
3. the communicative intention;
4. the emotional intensity;
5. the interpersonal effect.

The analysis considers several translation strategies, including literal translation, modulation, adaptation, pragmatic compensation, contextual reformulation, and preservation of culturally or digitally marked elements.

2.6. Ethical considerations

The study uses publicly accessible online material. To reduce privacy-related concerns, usernames and other unnecessary identifying information should not be reproduced in the final publication. The examples used for analysis should focus on linguistic characteristics rather than individual users.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Positive evaluation

The analysis indicates that positive YouTube comments commonly rely on evaluative adjectives, intensifiers, emotional expressions, repetition, punctuation, and emojis.

A typical English example is:

“Absolutely amazing! Her voice is incredible! ♡”

The comment contains several positive linguistic resources. Amazing and incredible provide explicit evaluation, while absolutely increases the degree of positive assessment. The exclamation marks contribute emotional intensity, and the heart emoji reinforces the expression of affection or admiration.

A corresponding Uzbek expression may be:

“Ovozi juda ajoyib ekan! Judayam yoqdi! ♡”

The Uzbek comment similarly employs positive evaluation and intensification. The expression juda ajoyib communicates strong approval, while judayam yoqdi explicitly expresses the speaker's positive emotional response.

The comparison demonstrates that positive evaluation is realized through broadly similar resources in both languages, although the exact linguistic construction may differ.

Table 1. Positive evaluative resources

Feature	English example	Uzbek equivalent/function
Positive adjective	amazing	ajoyib
Strong intensifier	absolutely amazing	juda ajoyib
Emotional evaluation	I love this	Bu menga juda yoqdi
Repetition	So beautiful, beautiful!	Juda chiroyli, juda chiroyli!
Exclamation	Incredible!	Ajoyib!

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Emoji	♡🔥	♡🔥

The translation challenge is therefore not primarily lexical. In many cases, equivalent positive vocabulary exists in both languages. The greater difficulty concerns the preservation of intensity, naturalness, and emotional effect.

3.2. Negative evaluation

Negative comments demonstrate a broader range of pragmatic possibilities. They may express direct criticism, mild dissatisfaction, disappointment, sarcasm, or strong rejection.

For example:

"This version is really disappointing."

A possible Uzbek translation is:

"Bu variant juda hafsalani pir qildi."

The translation preserves the negative evaluation but changes the grammatical structure. The English adjective disappointing is transferred through an Uzbek verbal expression associated with disappointment.

Another example is:

"Not exactly her best performance."

A literal translation may sound unnatural in Uzbek. A more contextually appropriate version is:

"Bu uning eng yaxshi ijrolaridan biri emas."

The English expression is relatively mitigated. It does not directly state that the performance is bad; instead, it places it below the speaker's expectations. Therefore, the translation should preserve this relatively moderate degree of criticism.

This demonstrates the importance of distinguishing **negative semantic content** from **negative pragmatic force**.

3.3. Intensification and emotional force

Intensification is particularly frequent in highly emotional YouTube comments.

English users may employ:

- very;
- really;
- absolutely;
- so;
- totally;
- repeated punctuation;
- capitalization.

Uzbek users may employ:

- juda;
- nihoyatda;
- juda ham;
- eng;
- repetition;
- expressive particles and constructions.

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Consider:

“THIS IS SO GOOD!!!”

The capitalization and punctuation significantly increase emotional intensity. A simple translation such as “Bu juda yaxshi” conveys the basic meaning but reduces the expressive force.

A more pragmatically equivalent Uzbek version could be:

“BU JUDA ZO‘R!!!”

The exact translation will depend on context, but the example demonstrates that pragmatic equivalence may require the preservation of expressive formatting.

3.4. Repetition as an expressive device

Repetition is frequently used to strengthen emotional evaluation.

For example:

“Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!”

The repetition does not introduce new propositional information. Instead, it performs an intensifying function.

A possible Uzbek rendering is:

“Juda chiroyli, juda chiroyli!”

or, depending on context:

“Chiroyli, juda chiroyli!”

The translator therefore needs to consider the function of repetition rather than simply reproduce the exact lexical sequence.

3.5. Irony and sarcasm

Irony and sarcasm represent some of the most challenging cases for translation.

Consider:

“Wow, amazing performance… I almost fell asleep.”

The word amazing is conventionally positive, but the following sentence reveals that the overall communicative intention is negative. The expression therefore cannot be translated as an ordinary compliment.

A contextually appropriate Uzbek version could be:

“Voy, qanday ‘ajoyib’ ijro… sal qolsa uxlab qolardim.”

Quotation marks around ajoyib help reproduce the ironic interpretation.

The example demonstrates that pragmatic interpretation must precede translation. The translator must first determine whether an apparently positive expression is genuinely positive or functions ironically.

3.6. Pragmatic mitigation

Negative comments do not always use direct criticism.

Compare:

Direct criticism:

“This song is terrible.”

Mitigated criticism:

“It is not really my type of song.”

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The first comment expresses strong negative evaluation. The second presents personal preference and reduces the directness of criticism.

An Uzbek translation should maintain this distinction:

“Bu qo‘shiq juda yomon.”

versus:

“Bu qo‘shiq unchalik mening didimga mos emas.”

The second translation preserves the interpersonal mitigation present in the original.

3.7. Translation strategies

The analysis suggests that different pragmatic situations require different translation strategies.

Table 2. Translation strategies in YouTube comments

Strategy	Function	Example
Literal translation	Preserves close semantic and pragmatic equivalence	“Amazing voice” → “Ajoyib ovoz”
Modulation	Changes perspective while preserving meaning	“I can't get enough of this” → “Qayta-qayta eshitgim keladi”
Adaptation	Replaces a culturally specific expression	Context-dependent
Pragmatic compensation	Restores lost emotional/pragmatic effect through another device	Intensifier or expressive construction
Contextual reformulation	Produces a natural target-language equivalent	“Not exactly her best” → “Eng yaxshi ijrolaridan biri emas”
Preservation	Retains emojis, hashtags or recognizable digital forms	♡, 🔥, etc.

The findings indicate that no single translation strategy is sufficient for all types of comments. The appropriate strategy depends on the relationship between lexical meaning and pragmatic function.

4. DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that YouTube comments should be treated as context-dependent communicative acts rather than isolated linguistic units. Their meaning emerges through the interaction of lexical choices, pragmatic intention, emotional force, and contextual interpretation.

This finding corresponds to the broader understanding of pragmatics developed by scholars such as Austin, Searle, and Leech, who emphasize the relationship between linguistic expressions and the actions performed through them. In online discourse, this relationship becomes particularly visible because users frequently communicate attitudes through very short expressions.

The findings also support previous observations concerning the linguistic characteristics of English and Uzbek digital communication. Research on English-Uzbek social media discourse has identified evaluative expressions, pragmatic markers, politeness strategies, informal vocabulary, code-switching, and multimodal resources as important features of online interaction.

One of the most important findings of the present study is that **pragmatic equivalence cannot always be achieved through lexical equivalence**. An English expression and its dictionary

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equivalent in Uzbek may refer to the same general concept while producing different interpersonal or emotional effects.

This problem is particularly apparent in negative evaluation. A comment such as “Not exactly her best performance” expresses criticism but simultaneously mitigates its force. If the translator renders it using a strongly negative Uzbek expression, the target text may become more offensive than the source. Conversely, excessive mitigation may weaken the original speaker's intended criticism.

Therefore, translation of digital discourse requires attention to **degree of evaluation**.

The same principle applies to positive comments. An expression such as “Absolutely incredible!!!” is not equivalent in pragmatic force to a neutral expression such as “Good.” If the translator reduces all positive comments to neutral praise, the emotional character of the original discourse is lost.

Irony and sarcasm present an even more complex challenge. Because the intended meaning may contradict the literal meaning, translation must be based on contextual interpretation. This confirms the importance of pragmatic analysis before translation.

Another important issue is the multimodal character of YouTube comments. Emojis, capitalization, punctuation, repetition, and other visual resources contribute to meaning. They can reinforce, modify, or even reverse the interpretation of verbal content. Consequently, digital translation should not treat such elements as irrelevant formatting.

From a comparative English-Uzbek perspective, the analysis suggests that both languages possess common strategies for expressing approval and disapproval, but the preferred realization of interpersonal meaning may differ. English comments may frequently employ concise direct formulations, whereas Uzbek expressions may in some contexts use additional contextual or interpersonal elements to soften criticism or establish solidarity. These tendencies should not be interpreted as absolute differences between all English and Uzbek users; rather, they should be investigated as context-sensitive tendencies.

The findings have implications for translation studies and foreign-language education. Translators working with social media content need to develop not only lexical and grammatical competence but also pragmatic competence. They should be able to identify irony, mitigation, emotional intensity, implied criticism, and culturally specific expressions.

The findings are also relevant to EFL and translation pedagogy. YouTube comments can provide authentic material for teaching pragmatics, translation strategies, evaluative language, politeness, and intercultural communication. Students can compare source and target expressions and discuss whether a translation preserves the original communicative intention.

5. CONCLUSION

The study examined positive and negative YouTube comments from a comparative English-Uzbek linguopragmatic perspective, with particular attention to translation problems and strategies.

The analysis demonstrates that YouTube comments constitute a rich source of contemporary digital discourse. Positive and negative evaluations are expressed through evaluative vocabulary, intensifiers, repetition, punctuation, capitalization, emojis, direct and indirect constructions, irony, and other pragmatic resources.

The main finding is that translation of such comments cannot be adequately performed through lexical substitution alone. The translator must consider the communicative intention, evaluative

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orientation, emotional intensity, degree of directness, interpersonal relationship, and cultural context of the original expression.

Positive comments frequently require the preservation of emotional intensity and expressive force, whereas negative comments require particular attention to the degree of criticism and pragmatic mitigation. Irony and sarcasm are especially challenging because their intended meanings may differ substantially from their literal linguistic forms.

The comparative analysis also indicates that English and Uzbek share several general mechanisms of digital evaluation while differing in some ways in their preferred realization of interpersonal and pragmatic meaning. These differences demonstrate the importance of a linguopragmatic approach to English-Uzbek digital translation.

The study contributes to translation and digital discourse research by emphasizing the role of pragmatic meaning in the translation of user-generated online content. It also demonstrates the potential of YouTube comments as authentic material for investigating contemporary English-Uzbek linguistic interaction.

The present study is limited by the qualitative nature of the analysis and the need for a larger systematically constructed corpus. Future research should examine a larger dataset of authentic comments associated with English and Uzbek singers and classify them according to evaluation type, speech act, politeness strategy, emotional intensity, irony, metaphor, slang, code-switching, and translation technique. Quantitative corpus analysis could additionally determine the relative frequency of these features and provide stronger empirical evidence for comparative conclusions.

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