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COMMUNICATIVE AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTIONS OF KNOW AND THINK IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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Abstract. This article compares the communicative and pragmatic functions of the English verbs "know and think" and their Uzbek counterparts "bilmoq and o'ylamoq." The analysis focuses on first-person forms and examines how speakers use them to convey their stance toward a proposition, signal their degree of certainty, and respond to an interlocutor. Using examples from dialogue, the article examines how I know and bilaman signal prior awareness of what an interlocutor has said or affirm their point. It also considers how "I think, menimcha, and deb o'ylayman" express personal opinions and tentative judgments or soften disagreement. For example, the Uzbek rendering "Menimcha, kutganimiz ma'qul" preserves the tentative tone of the suggestion "I think we should wait". The analysis interprets these functions in relation to the communicative context, the expression's position within the utterance, and the interlocutor's preceding turn.

Keywords. Know, think, pragmatics, speaker stance, epistemic modality, pragmatic mitigation, contrastive analysis.

Introduction:

In dialogue, speakers use expressions such as I know and I think to indicate how they relate to what is being said and how they respond to their interlocutors. In I know the meeting has been postponed, the speaker presents the postponement as something they already know. Used as a separate reply, I know can acknowledge information the other person has just supplied. Similarly, I think the meeting has been postponed presents the postponement as a judgement about an uncertain situation, while I think we should wait introduces a recommendation and can leave room for the interlocutor to respond. These examples show how the function of a first-person expression depends on what it introduces and where it occurs in the exchange.

A comparison of English and Uzbek provides a basis for examining the relationship between the meaning of these expressions and their role in interaction. English I know and Uzbek bilaman can both signal prior awareness. In a dialogue where one person reminds another about a deadline, for instance, either expression can acknowledge the reminder and indicate that the information is already familiar. The preceding turn and, in spoken interaction, the speaker's intonation help determine whether the reply is understood as a neutral acknowledgement or as a sign of impatience.

The English expression I think can correspond to different forms in Uzbek. In I think we should wait, the Uzbek version Menimcha, kutganimiz ma'qul frames the recommendation as the speaker's personal judgement. Another possible rendering, Kutganimiz ma'qul deb o'ylayman, places the stance-marking expression after the recommendation. Both versions express the same recommendation, while their placement gives the speaker different ways to organize the utterance. Their potential to soften a suggestion or disagreement depends on the surrounding dialogue.

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This article examines the communicative and pragmatic functions of the first-person forms of English know and think and Uzbek bilmoq and o‘ylamoq, with menimcha included as a functional counterpart of I think in relevant contexts. Using illustrative dialogue pairs, the analysis explores three questions. How do speakers signal prior knowledge or tentative judgement? How do these forms function in responses, suggestions, and disagreements? Under what conditions do the English and Uzbek expressions perform comparable functions? The comparison considers the position of each expression, the content it introduces, and its relation to the interlocutor’s preceding turn.

Materials and methods:

The study adopts a qualitative contrastive approach to the communicative and pragmatic functions of the English expressions I know and I think and their Uzbek counterparts bilaman, deb o‘ylayman, and menimcha. The last form is included because it can perform a function comparable to I think when introducing a personal judgement, suggestion, or disagreement. The primary material consists of constructed English–Uzbek dialogue pairs designed to illustrate selected communicative situations. The pairs are comparable in what the interlocutors discuss and what they are trying to accomplish. Their wording follows the grammatical patterns of each language.

The unit of analysis is a dialogue exchange consisting of an initiating turn and a response containing one of the target expressions. The examples cover recurring situations such as acknowledging a reminder, responding to another speaker’s assessment, expressing an uncertain judgement, making a suggestion, and disagreeing with a proposed course of action. The initiating turn provides the context for interpreting the response. For example, I know – Bilaman following a reminder can signal that the information is already familiar to the respondent. In an exchange about what to do next, I think we should wait – Menimcha, kutganimiz ma’qul frames a recommendation as the speaker’s own judgement.

The analysis proceeds in three stages. First, the target expression is examined in relation to the content it introduces or refers back to. This step identifies whether the speaker presents the information as already known, offers an assessment, or expresses a tentative judgement about an uncertain situation. Second, the expression is examined in relation to the preceding turn to determine its interactional function. For instance, the same form may acknowledge information in one exchange and signal agreement with an assessment in another. A suggestion or disagreement is interpreted as mitigated when the surrounding dialogue supports that reading. Third, the English and Uzbek responses are compared in terms of their pragmatic function, grammatical construction, and position within the utterance.

Particular attention is paid to the difference between standalone responses and expressions attached to a proposition. In Uzbek, the comparison also examines the placement of menimcha before a judgement and deb o‘ylayman after it, as in Menimcha, kutganimiz ma’qul and Kutganimiz ma’qul deb o‘ylayman. The analysis considers how this placement affects the order in which the judgement and the speaker’s stance are presented. Since the material consists of written illustrative dialogues, interpretations that depend on intonation are treated as possible readings. The findings concern the functions illustrated by the selected exchanges. Establishing how frequently these functions occur would require data from naturally occurring English and Uzbek conversations.

Results and discussion:

The comparison of the constructed English–Uzbek dialogues illustrates two broad patterns. I know and bilaman present information as already known and can acknowledge an interlocutor’s

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preceding turn. I think, menimcha, and deb o‘ylayman frame an utterance as the speaker’s judgement. The function of each expression becomes clearer when it is read in relation to the preceding turn and the action the speaker is performing, such as responding to a reminder, making a suggestion, or expressing disagreement.

Prior knowledge and acknowledgement

The forms I know and bilaman can occur as standalone responses to a reminder.

English

A. Don’t forget that the deadline is tomorrow.

B. I know.

Uzbek

A. Topshirish muddati ertaga ekanini unutmang.

B. Bilaman.

In both exchanges, the response signals that the deadline is already known to the speaker. The content of what is known is supplied by the preceding turn. The response therefore serves two functions. It acknowledges the reminder and indicates that the information was already familiar. In conversation, the same wording could be delivered as a routine acknowledgement or as a sign of impatience, particularly after repeated reminders. The written examples support the reading of prior awareness, while an interpretation of impatience would depend on further context or cues such as intonation.

When the content is explicitly stated, as in I know the meeting has been postponed – Yig‘ilish qoldirilganini bilaman, both speakers present the postponement as known. The comparison thus illustrates how the expression can either introduce the content of the speaker’s knowledge or refer back to information already available in the exchange.

Tentative judgement and personal stance

In exchanges about an uncertain situation, I think and deb o‘ylayman can present an account of what may have happened.

English

A. Why haven’t they arrived?

B. I think they missed the bus.

Uzbek

A. Nega ular hali kelishmadi?

B. Avtobusga kech qolishgan deb o‘ylayman.

Here the response offers a possible explanation. English I think introduces that explanation, while Uzbek deb o‘ylayman follows it. An Uzbek version with menimcha can introduce the speaker’s stance before the explanation, as in Menimcha, ular avtobusga kech qolishgan. The two Uzbek forms therefore provide different ways to organize the judgement and the expression of stance within the utterance. The choice of form also matters for contrastive analysis. Deb o‘ylayman contains the verb o‘ylamoq, while menimcha is an alternative that can perform a comparable pragmatic function in this context.

Suggestions and mitigation of disagreement

The expressions also occur in dialogue about what to do next. Consider an exchange in which one speaker proposes leaving immediately.

English

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A. Let's leave now.
B. I think we should wait a little longer.

Uzbek

A. Hozir ketaylik.
B. Menimcha, yana biroz kutganimiz ma'qul.

The second turn proposes a different course of action. I think and menimcha frame that proposal as the speaker's judgement and can soften its disagreement with the preceding suggestion. In this exchange, the tentative phrasing concerns how the recommendation is presented to the interlocutor. In the bus example, it concerns uncertainty about what happened. The comparison shows why the contribution of a stance expression should be assessed together with the kind of utterance it accompanies. A judgement about an event and a recommendation about future action can use similar forms for different interactional purposes.

Across the examples, functional equivalence depends on what the expression does in the exchange. I know and bilaman are comparable when they acknowledge a reminder and signal prior awareness. I think can correspond to either menimcha or deb o'ylayman when the speaker offers a judgement, with differences in grammatical structure and placement. Because the data consist of constructed dialogues, these findings describe the functions illustrated by the selected examples. Analysis of naturally occurring conversations would allow those interpretations to be tested against speakers' intonation, the sequence of turns, and interlocutors' responses.

Conclusion:

The comparison of illustrative English and Uzbek dialogues shows that the communicative function of I know, I think, and their Uzbek counterparts depends on both the content of the utterance and its place in the exchange. As standalone replies to a reminder, I know and bilaman acknowledge the preceding turn and indicate that the information is already familiar to the speaker. In spoken interaction, intonation and the preceding exchange may affect whether such a reply is understood as a routine acknowledgement or as an expression of impatience.

The expressions I think, menimcha, and deb o'ylayman frame an utterance as the speaker's judgement. When the speaker offers an explanation for an uncertain event, these forms can mark the judgement as tentative. When the speaker responds to a proposal with a different course of action, they can soften disagreement by presenting the alternative as a personal recommendation. The Uzbek forms also differ in placement. Menimcha can introduce the judgement, while deb o'ylayman typically follows it in the constructions examined.

The findings show why pragmatic equivalence is best assessed at the level of the exchange. In the examples analysed, both menimcha and deb o'ylayman can serve as Uzbek counterparts of I think, with the choice depending on how the speaker organizes the utterance and what it is intended to accomplish. The study is based on constructed dialogues. Further analysis of naturally occurring conversations could examine how intonation, turn sequence, and interlocutors' responses shape these interpretations.

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