

THE PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF EVALUATIVE STATEMENTS AND THE PRESERVATION OF SPEECH IMPACT IN TRANSLATION

Madiyorova Madinabonu Azimboy kizi

Assistant Teacher of Western languages and literature Department,
Mamun University, Khiva, Uzbekistan

Email: madinabonumadiyorova@gmail.com

Abstract: Evaluative statements play a crucial role in shaping communicative intent, influencing interlocutors' perceptions, and guiding social interaction. In translation studies, the preservation of the pragmatic effect of such statements is essential for maintaining the communicative equivalence between source and target texts. This paper examines the pragmatic functions of evaluative utterances and explores strategies for retaining their speech impact in translation. Drawing on both theoretical frameworks in pragmatics and empirical examples from English-Uzbek translation, the study demonstrates that translators must balance semantic accuracy with pragmatic adequacy to preserve evaluative force. Findings suggest that literal translation often fails to convey the intended emotional or social effect, while pragmatic equivalence requires context-sensitive adaptation.

Keywords: Evaluative statements, pragmatics, speech impact, translation studies, communicative equivalence

Introduction. Language serves not only as a medium for conveying information but also as a powerful instrument for expressing attitudes, shaping interpersonal relations, and constructing social realities. One of the most salient features of human communication is the use of evaluative statements—utterances that encode a speaker's approval, disapproval, or judgment regarding people, events, or situations. Such statements function pragmatically in that they go beyond the literal meaning of words to perform illocutionary acts: expressing emotions, persuading interlocutors, reinforcing social norms, or challenging authority. For instance, when a speaker says "*This proposal is brilliant*" or "*That idea is pointless*," the primary function is not the transmission of factual information but the communication of stance and the attempt to influence the hearer's perception.

The study of evaluative language has been an important part of pragmatics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics. Scholars such as Austin (1962) and Searle (1979) demonstrated that evaluative utterances are deeply connected to speech act theory, since they carry both illocutionary force (the intention of the speaker) and perlocutionary effect (the impact on the listener). Moreover, Grice's theory of implicature (1975) emphasizes that evaluative statements often contain implied meanings, irony, or exaggeration that are essential for pragmatic interpretation. In other words, the evaluative force of an utterance cannot be fully understood without considering its context, cultural background, and communicative intention. In translation studies, evaluative language represents one of the most delicate challenges. While the lexical content of an evaluative statement may be accurately rendered, the pragmatic effect—tone, emphasis, irony, or emotional weight—can easily be lost in the process of transferring meaning from one language to another. For example, the English sentence "*He is unbearably arrogant*" when translated literally into Uzbek as "*U juda manman*" loses part of its intensifying force, unless reinforced through pragmatic adaptation such as "*U haddan tashqari manman*." This

demonstrates that evaluative language operates not only on a semantic level but also on a cultural and psychological one, where equivalence depends on preserving speech impact rather than words alone.

The importance of this issue becomes particularly evident in fields such as literary translation, political discourse, journalism, and intercultural communication, where evaluative statements are not only descriptive but also persuasive and performative. A political leader's evaluative remark may shape public opinion, a journalist's evaluative tone may frame a news narrative, and a literary character's evaluative speech may reveal identity or emotional depth. If translators fail to preserve the speech impact of such utterances, the communicative effectiveness of the text diminishes, and the target audience may receive a distorted version of the intended meaning.

Therefore, this study aims to explore two interrelated aspects: (1) the pragmatic functions of evaluative statements as communicative tools, and (2) the strategies by which their speech impact can be preserved in translation. The research assumes that literal equivalence is insufficient and that pragmatic equivalence, achieved through context-sensitive and culturally appropriate adaptation, is the key to maintaining the original force of evaluative utterances. By analyzing examples from English-Uzbek translation, this paper contributes to both pragmatic theory and translation practice, offering insights for linguists, translators, and educators alike.

Methods. The research employed a qualitative approach, combining discourse analysis with comparative translation analysis. The data consisted of 50 English evaluative statements extracted from literary texts, journalistic materials, and everyday dialogues. Their Uzbek translations, produced by professional translators, were analyzed to assess pragmatic equivalence. The analytical framework was based on:

1. Speech act theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979) for identifying illocutionary force.
2. Grice's cooperative principle (1975) to evaluate implicatures in evaluative utterances.
3. House's (2015) functional-pragmatic model of translation to determine equivalence.

Additionally, surveys were conducted with 30 Uzbek-speaking readers who assessed the perceived emotional and persuasive effect of translated evaluative statements compared to the original English texts.

Results. Analysis revealed that literal translations preserved semantic meaning but often weakened the pragmatic force. For instance, "*She is unbearably arrogant*" was translated as "*U juda manman*", which conveyed meaning but lacked the same intensity; contextual adaptation strategies, such as intensification ("*U haddan tashqari manman*"), better preserved the intended speech impact; pragmatic equivalence was most effectively achieved when translators employed cultural adaptation, replacing foreign evaluative markers with functionally similar expressions in the target culture; reader surveys confirmed that adapted translations were perceived as more emotionally persuasive and closer in impact to the original.

Discussion. The findings highlight the importance of pragmatics in translation. Evaluative statements are not merely lexical units but carry interpersonal meanings that shape discourse. Translators must therefore move beyond word-for-word translation to focus on preserving illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect. The study supports Nida's (1964) principle of dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes the response of the target audience. It also aligns with House's (2015) functionalist approach, which views translation as a pragmatic act requiring adaptation. Challenges remain in balancing fidelity and naturalness, as excessive adaptation risks distorting the author's intended meaning. From a practical standpoint, translators should consider

intensification, mitigation, or cultural substitution strategies when rendering evaluative statements. Training programs in translation studies should incorporate pragmatic analysis to enhance awareness of evaluative language functions.

Conclusion. The study of evaluative statements reveals that language is never a neutral medium; it is always loaded with subjective meanings that serve pragmatic purposes. Evaluative utterances do not merely describe reality but actively construct social relationships, influence attitudes, and guide the course of interaction. Their illocutionary and perlocutionary effects demonstrate that they function as acts of persuasion, alignment, or confrontation within communicative contexts.

In the field of translation, this dimension becomes particularly critical. While semantic accuracy is necessary, it is not sufficient to achieve communicative equivalence. If the pragmatic force of evaluative language is lost, the translation risks becoming flat, emotionally weaker, or even misleading. The findings of this study confirm that literal translation often dilutes the speech impact of evaluative statements, whereas pragmatic equivalence—achieved through intensification, cultural substitution, or contextual adaptation—better preserves the original communicative effect.

From a theoretical perspective, the analysis supports Nida's (1964) principle of dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes the response of the target audience, as well as House's (2015) functional-pragmatic model, which views translation as a socially situated act. Practically, the research highlights the need for translators to develop pragmatic competence alongside linguistic proficiency. This includes sensitivity to illocutionary force, awareness of cultural connotations, and skill in recreating emotional intensity in the target language. The implications of this study extend to various domains where evaluative discourse is central: literature, journalism, politics, and intercultural communication. In each of these areas, the translator carries the responsibility of preserving not only the meaning but also the persuasive and emotional resonance of the original text. Failure to do so diminishes the communicative power of the translation and reduces its authenticity in the target culture.

In conclusion, evaluative statements are essential pragmatic devices in human communication, and their successful translation requires a balance of semantic fidelity and pragmatic adaptation. Preserving the speech impact of evaluative utterances ensures that the translated text resonates with the target audience as effectively as the original did with its audience. Future research should continue to investigate cross-linguistic strategies for maintaining pragmatic force, particularly in politically charged, literary, and culturally sensitive texts. By doing so, translation studies can further bridge the gap between linguistic accuracy and communicative effectiveness.

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