

SOME FEATURES OF EXPRESSIVE SPEECH ACTS OF CONGRATULATION AND WISHING IN ENGLISH, GERMAN, AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES**Axmadjonov Nurbek Zokirjon ugli,**

Associate Professor,

Department of German and French Languages, Fergana State University

Abstract: The article reveals the content of such notions as “speech act of congratulation” and “speech act of wish” and describes some similarities and essential distinctive features of these speech acts realization in the English, German and Russian languages. The authors mention the conditions of speech act of congratulation success and classify the existing occasions for it, also indicate the differences between congratulation and wish. At the same time the authors pay special attention to the fact that at the present moment, notwithstanding the tendency of speech expressiveness thorough studying, the complex description of speech acts themselves still remains uncompleted.

Key words and phrases: speech act of wish; speech act of congratulation; speech expressiveness; intercultural communication; communicants; compliment; addressee; informal communication; formal communication; discourse.

At present, there is a noticeable tendency toward a thorough and detailed study of speech expressiveness. This is due to the lack of a comprehensive description of expressive speech acts, as well as their particular social significance in the process of interpersonal communication.

Following N. A. Trofimova, we consider expressive speech acts as “acts that realize the intention of expressing a psychological state and exerting an emotional impact on the addressee” [5, p. 6]. As the researcher notes, this intention is sometimes combined with other intentions and may be derivative of them or arise from them. However, this does not hinder communication. The addressee interprets the main intentions, since pragmatic understanding is based on a fairly extensive set of linguistic and extra linguistic information, which includes knowledge of the properties of the grammatical structure of the utterance, its paralinguistic characteristics, the features of the communicative situation, the addressee, the world, etc. [Ibid., pp. 6–7].

In our view, the most interesting, yet unfortunately the least studied, are the speech acts of congratulation and wishing. Different researchers define them in various ways. For example, E. V. Vdovina notes that the speech act of congratulation is, as a rule, a polite speech act performed by the speaker with the aim of expressing sympathy and joy regarding a present event that corresponds to the interests of the addressee [2].

As for the speech act of wishing, the author defines it as “a polite speech act performed by the speaker with the aim of expressing attention and sympathy toward the addressee and hope for well-being in the addressee’s future life, thereby conforming to the norms of etiquette accepted in a given society” [Ibid., p. 15]. According to the researcher, the higher the status and role of the addressee, the more formal the communicative situation and the more polite the congratulatory and wishing expressions.

Following N. A. Trofimova, we define congratulation as “a speech act associated with generally accepted norms of behavior in a typified communicative situation, indicating a benevolent attitude toward the interlocutor, allowing the maintenance of contact in an appropriate tone, possessing a stable expression pattern, and realizing a stereotypical intention—by congratulating, to express one’s own emotional state and to evoke a positive emotional response in the addressee” [5, p. 107].

Wishing is also defined by us, following N. A. Trofimova, as “a speech act whose illocutionary goal consists in the speaker’s reaction to the addressee’s action or to a certain state of affairs concerning the addressee and requiring the realization of a wish in accordance with the norms accepted in a given society” [Ibid., p. 72]. The author emphasizes that wishing expresses

the speaker's benevolent attitude toward the addressee, and the expression of this attitude contributes to establishing or maintaining contact with other members of the given society.

Thus, it can be stated that utterances of positive wishing are intended to regulate interpersonal relations between communicants.

In distinguishing between congratulation and wishing, we note, following F. Coulmas, that these speech acts differ primarily in their temporal reference [6, p. 149]. One usually congratulates on an event that has already occurred, marking the fact of a celebration. Wishes, on the other hand, relate to the future—such as wishing for many years of life—or to both the present and the future, for example, happiness, love, and success.

Moreover, an important differentiating criterion is the difference in the emotions expressed. The fact is that in congratulation, the expressed sympathy can be defined as “shared joy experienced together with the addressee, whereas in wishing the speaker expresses a certain benevolence” [7, p. 142].

Both speech acts are, in most cases, performed consecutively; however, in colloquial speech, congratulation most often precedes wishing. For example:

“Congratulation on your wedding anniversary! I wish you a happy married life!” (Поздравляю с годовщиной свадьбы! Желаю счастливой семейной жизни!). “Aber zum Geburtstag möchte ich Ihnen gratulieren! Herzlichen Glückwunsch und ein langes Leben!” (Я хочу еще поздравить Вас с Днем рождения! Сердечное поздравление и долгой жизни!).

«Поздравляю с Новым годом! Желаю счастья и удачи в новом году!».

A congratulation may also be quite brief: Abbe Lasmann greeted her. “Congratulations! I understand the wedding date is all set.” Dana smiled. “Yes.” [10, p. 62]. (Эбби Лэсмэн поприветствовал ее: «Поздравляю! Я так понимаю, дата свадьбы уже назначена». Дана улыбнулась: «Да»). “Zum Geburtstag!” (С Днем рождения!). «– Знаешь, Диня, мой брат женился, – пробормотала она, когда они случайно остались вдвоем в учительской. – Да? Поздравляю, – ответил он спокойным и, как ей показалось, безразличным тоном» [1, p. 130].

In the above examples, there is a statement of a completed or ongoing event without any wishes for the future.

In addition, unlike wishes, congratulations sometimes contain an element of praise or compliment:

Dr. Montfort, Dr. Vaughn, Dr. Hoelterhoff and Dr. Keller were gathered in Otto Lewison's office. He was studying their reports. When he finished, he looked up at Dr. Keller and smiled. “Congratulations,” he said. “These reports are all positive. You've done a wonderful job.” “She is a wonderful woman. Very special, Otto. I'm glad she's going to have her life back again” [9, p. 359].

(Доктор Монфорт, доктор Вон, доктор Хелтерхофф и доктор Келлер собрались в кабинете Отто Луисона. Он изучал их отчеты. Закончив, он посмотрел на доктора Келлера и улыбнулся. «Поздравляю, – сказал он. – Все заключения положительные. Вы проделали отличную работу». «Она замечательная женщина. Особенная, Отто. Я рад, что вернул ей здоровье»). “Herzlichen Glückwunsch zum Examen, Gudrun! Mit Auszeichnung besteht nicht jede ihr Examen!” (Сердечное поздравление со сдачей экзамена, Гудрун! Не каждый сдает свой экзамен на отлично!). «Поздравляю с повышением! Это могло произойти лишь благодаря твоим незаурядным способностям и труду».

In some cases, a congratulation may precede a toast. In such instances, a wish may be absent, while direct or implicit praise is expressed. For example:

The door to the conference room was closed. He let Lara open the door and as she did, forty voices started to sing out, “Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you...” ... People were crowding around her, and everyone seemed to be talking at once. “Happy birthday, Lara...” “You look wonderful...” ... Charles Cohn said, “No matter what happens, I'm proud of you, Lara. You said you wanted to make a difference, and you did.” ... “Let's drink a toast,” Jerry

Townsend said, “to the best boss I ever had, or ever will have!” Charles Cohn raised his glass. “To a wonderful little girl who became a wonderful woman!” The toasts went on, and finally, it was Philip’s turn. There was too much to say, and he put it in five words: “To the woman I love” [11, pp. 396–397].

(Дверь конференц-зала была закрыта. Он пропустил Лару, и, как только она открыла дверь, сорок голосов пропели: «С Днем рожденья тебя, с Днем рожденья тебя...»... Вокруг нее собрались люди, казалось, все говорили одновременно. «С Днем рождения, Лара...». «Ты великолепно выглядишь...»... Чарльз Коэн сказал: «Не важно, что там было, я все равно горжусь Вами, Лара. Вы говорили, что сделаете все по-другому, и Вы это сделали»... «Предлагаю тост, – крикнул Джерри, – за лучшего босса, который у меня когда-либо был и будет!». Чарльз Коэн поднял свой бокал и сказал: «За очаровательную маленькую девчушку, которая превратилась в очаровательную женщину!». Тосты сменяли один другой, и, наконец, дошла очередь до Филипа. Он так много хотел ей сказать, но все свои чувства он вложил в пять слов: «За женщину, которую я люблю!»).

In German, short toasts are commonly used:

“Auf dein Wohl!” (За твое здоровье!).

However, more extended wishes containing elements of praise can also be found:

“Zum Geburtstag! Trinken wir für einen guten Mann!” (С Днем рождения! Так выпьем же за хорошего человека!).

“От души поздравляю! Так выпьем же за этого замечательного человека!” It should be noted that a compliment must not be confused with the speech act of congratulation. In congratulation, the determining factor is the “resultative nature of the event” [5, p. 108]. In other words, what is important is the fact that a person has achieved a certain success.

As for the felicity conditions of the speech act of congratulation, they are generally considered to include:

1. preparatory conditions (there is a certain event or state of affairs concerning the addressee and corresponding to their interests);

2. sincerity condition (the speaker evaluates the resulting state of affairs—based on conventional values—as positive for the addressee and, in accordance with social traditions, as positive for themselves as well) [8, p. 91].

With regard to situations that serve as occasions for congratulation, it can be stated that they are determined by tradition and can be easily enumerated. For example, Marten-Cleef classifies such occasions as follows:

1. “rites of passage,” such as birthdays (especially coming-of-age and milestone anniversaries), religious holidays (e.g., confirmation), and family celebrations (e.g., engagement);

2. specific achievements of the addressee, such as successfully passing an examination, a спортивная победа, etc.;

3. fortunate events occurring without the direct involvement or special effort of the addressee [7, p. 147].

As noted by E. V. Vdovina, under certain conditions, congratulations and wishes are perceived as a natural course of events. However, if in some situations expected congratulations or wishes do not occur, the communicative norms accepted in a given society are violated, and the person who has not been congratulated may feel uncomfortable or, in some cases, even offended [2].

D. F. Komorova points out that Russians, for example, in contrast to Germans, tend to prefer informal communication over formal interaction. For this reason, Russian discourse typically employs non-standard, extended, and personally oriented expressions, whereas in German, where “a significant proportion of communication is characterized by surface-level politeness, preference is given to standard neutral clichés” [4]. According to S. Marten-Cleef [7], in German culture it is generally not customary to explicitly congratulate one another on Christmas, whereas birthday congratulations are not only common but also expected; their absence is perceived as

unusual and impolite. In Russian-speaking and English-speaking cultures, however, Christmas greetings are considered quite important. Moreover, "...while the absence of congratulations related to rites of passage is often perceived by Germans as a forgivable violation of norms, the absence of congratulations on the addressee's achievements or unexpected good fortune is interpreted as a sign of antipathy" [5, p. 111]. This is also characteristic of English and Russian cultures.

As L. Wisson observes, Americans, in comparison with Russians, are "less inclined toward congratulatory expressions" [3, p. 103]. For instance, in the case of a birthday, it is often sufficient to say: "Happy Birthday / I'd like to wish you a very happy birthday."

Unlike Russians, adult Americans tend to pay much less attention to their birthdays. As a rule, only milestone dates are celebrated, while non-milestone birthdays are typically marked only among close friends. Americans do not necessarily view birthdays as an occasion for gathering with relatives and friends; sometimes the "celebrant" marks the event by going to a restaurant with a spouse or a few close friends.

L. Wisson also notes that Americans primarily offer congratulations on occasions such as birthdays, New Year, and Christmas, using expressions like "Happy Birthday!", "Happy New Year!", or "Merry Christmas!". It is not typical for them to personally congratulate others on holidays such as Thanksgiving or Independence Day. Moreover, Americans rarely use the phrase "congratulate you on..." when referring to such occasions [3].

In German, short toast formulas are common:

"Auf dein Wohl!"

Thus, despite the presence of certain common features in the expression of congratulatory and wishing speech acts in English, German, and Russian, there are undoubtedly distinct national characteristics in the realization of these speech acts in each language and, consequently, in each culture.

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