

# "Sincerity" And "Samimiylik": A Comparative Linguocultural Study In English And Uzbek Discourses

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**Abstract:** Although sincerity is universally valued, its linguistic expression and cultural framing vary significantly across speech communities. This article examines the parallel concepts of sincerity in English and samimiylik in Uzbek, focusing on their semantic structures, pragmatic realisation and culturally embedded norms. Drawing on a corpus of 270 naturally occurring dialogues from British and Uzbek television talk-shows, advice programmes and informal YouTube vlogs, the study combines corpus-driven semantic analysis with ethnographically informed discourse interpretation. The findings show that while both cultures align sincerity with truthfulness and emotional transparency, English discourse tends to foreground individual authenticity and mitigate overt affect through politeness strategies, whereas Uzbek discourse embeds sincerity in relational warmth, solidarity and culturally salient metaphors of the heart. These differences affect how praise, criticism and disagreement are performed. The article argues that a nuanced awareness of such divergences can enhance intercultural communication and guide pedagogical practice in English-Uzbek translation and language teaching.

**Keywords:** Sincerity; samimiylik; linguocultural pragmatics; English discourse; Uzbek discourse; intercultural communication.

**Introduction:** For more than half a century pragmatics has treated sincerity primarily as a felicity condition on performative utterances, yet everyday speech rarely conforms neatly to philosophical postulates. Speakers navigate overlapping moral, relational and affective considerations, and these considerations are patterned by culture. In English communicative tradition sincerity emerged historically alongside Protestant ideals of interiority; the truthful self is presumed to reside behind language and can, at least notionally, be displayed without artifice. In Uzbek communicative culture, shaped by Turko-Persian literary canons and collectivist social organisation, samimiylik is equally prized but is construed less as private psychological authenticity than as an interpersonal atmosphere of warmth, modesty and benevolence.

In an era of expanding economic ties between Anglophone countries and Uzbekistan, misunderstandings about sincerity surface in business negotiation, classroom interaction and digital media commentary. When an English speaker says "To be

perfectly honest....," the phrase is intended to mark candour yet simultaneously signals potential face threat to the addressee, inviting mitigation. An Uzbek speaker, by contrast, may begin with "Ochig'ini aytsam..." which translates literally as "If I speak openly....," but the subsequent utterance often seeks to reinforce solidarity rather than to re-establish individual authenticity. Such subtle divergences underscore the need for a systematic comparison of how sincerity is encoded, enacted and evaluated in the two linguistic communities.

Previous cross-cultural work on sincerity has tended to juxtapose Western and East Asian cultures, emphasising honour-based versus harmony-based interactional logics. Research on Turkic and Central Asian contexts remains scarce. Uzbek scholars have documented samimiylik in proverbs and folk narratives, but large-scale discourse analyses remain underdeveloped. Meanwhile, Anglophone pragmatics has mapped sincerity as a metapragmatic norm in British English yet rarely contrasts it with typologically distant languages. The present study addresses this

lacuna by asking three questions: How do English and Uzbek speakers lexicalise sincerity in naturally occurring interaction? Which semantic frames and metaphors stabilise the concept in each language? And how do interlocutors deploy sincerity markers pragmatically when they praise, criticise or dissent? By integrating corpus linguistics with participant observation and interview data, the research traces the lived pragmatics of sincerity beyond dictionary definitions.

A bilingual spoken-language corpus was compiled between October 2023 and January 2025. The English sub-corpus comprises 140 episodes of BBC's "Question Time," Channel 4's "Sunday Brunch" and 33 British lifestyle vlogs, totalling 185,000 words. The Uzbek sub-corpus includes 96 episodes of "Oydin Suhbat," 24 youth advice podcasts and 27 family-oriented YouTube channels, yielding 178,000 words. All recordings were transcribed orthographically and time-aligned. Metadata captured speaker age, gender, social role and interactional setting.

Lexical items associated with sincerity were identified through key-word analysis using the log-likelihood metric against reference corpora (the BNC Spoken and the Tilshunoslik Uzbek Spoken Corpus). In English the nodes sincere, honesty, genuinely, and the metapragmatic phrases to be honest, frankly, with all due respect emerged as statistically salient. In Uzbek, frequent nodes were samimiy, samimiyat, chin dil(da), rostini ayt, and the formulaic ochig'ini aytsam. Concordance lines were inspected manually for pragmatic function.

To uncover underlying semantic frames, twenty graduate students bilingual in English and Uzbek carried out a free association task, writing the first five words elicited by the stimuli sincerity and samimiylik. Responses were grouped thematically and quantified. Additionally, metaphor identification procedures following the MIPVU protocol isolated conceptual metaphors that structure sincerity talk, such as SINCERITY IS HEAT in Uzbek and SINCERITY IS CLARITY in English.

Pragmatic role was examined in three recurrent speech activities—compliments, complaints and disagreements—coded according to the taxonomy of Brown and Levinson. Cross-tabulation assessed the co-occurrence of sincerity markers with face-threatening or face-supportive moves. Reliability checks produced a Cohen's  $\kappa$  of 0.86.

To contextualise corpus findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve British and fourteen Uzbek participants (teachers, journalists, and IT professionals) who had lived for at least two years in

the counterpart culture. The interviews probed subjective interpretations of sincerity displays and memorable cross-cultural incidents. Field notes from Uzbek family gatherings and British community events further grounded the analysis.

Key-word analysis revealed that English discourse encodes sincerity primarily through transparency metaphors. High-frequency collocates include clear, plain, upfront, straight-forward, pointing to visibility and unimpeded transmission. The association task corroborated this, with 63 % of English respondents listing truth and 41 % listing transparency. By contrast, Uzbek responses clustered around dil (heart) and mehr (affection). Collocational patterns showed samimiy modified by adjectives denoting temperature and softness, such as iliq (warm) and yumshoq (gentle), which foreground tactile and affective dimensions.

Metaphor analysis found SINCERITY IS HEAT pervasive in Uzbek. Expressions like iliq samimiyat ("warm sincerity") and ko'ngildan chiqdi ("came from the heart") suggest an embodied, relational model. English texts, on the other hand, preferred SINCERITY IS LIGHT/CLEARNESS, evident in phrases such as crystal-clear honesty or she laid her cards on the table. These metaphors construct sincerity as a property of information, not of social temperature.

When offering praise, English speakers often preface compliments with mitigators that highlight personal authenticity: I'm genuinely impressed by... or Honestly, your presentation was excellent. Such tokens occur in 48 % of observed compliments. They serve dual functions: signalling positive evaluation and distancing the speaker from possible charges of flattery. Uzbek compliments, however, rely on intensifiers connoting heartfelt emotion: Chin dildan tabriklayman ("I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart") appears in 52 % of Uzbek praise events. Rather than hedging, these markers intensify affective involvement, reinforcing communal bonds.

In English complaints sincerity markers emerge as face-threat mitigation: Frankly, this service isn't acceptable. Here frankly licenses direct criticism by framing it as reluctantly bestowed honesty. The Uzbek equivalent complaint more commonly appeals to relational concern: Samimiy gapirsam, bu xizmatdan uncha qoniqmadigiz ("If I speak sincerely, you were not very satisfied with this service"). The phrasing downplays the speaker's own dissatisfaction and foregrounds empathy with the addressee's unmet needs.

Disagreement patterns epitomise the cultural divergence. English participants often juxtapose sincerity with politeness: With all due respect, I don't think that's accurate. The deference formula cushions

the impending negative stance. Uzbek speakers deploy the humility device *ochig'ini aytsam* and often couple it with kinship or in-group address terms: *O'zimni aytsam*, aka, *fikringizga qo'shilolmayman* ("To be open, brother, I can't quite agree with your view"). The kinship term offsets potential discord, aligning sincerity with deference rather than bluntness.

Interviewees who had experienced both cultures highlighted differing default assumptions. Britons in Uzbekistan initially interpreted enthusiastic praise accompanied by tactile gestures as exaggeration, while Uzbeks in the UK perceived the British penchant for understatement as emotional distance. Several British informants recalled being advised by Uzbek colleagues to "speak from the heart" in meetings, an injunction they misread as a call for emotional disclosure rather than solidarity signalling. Uzbeks, conversely, felt unsettled when told they were "brutally honest," a compliment in British managerial speech but carrying negative connotations in Uzbek, where *qattiq rostgo'y* implies rudeness.

The data substantiate the thesis that sincerity is culturally indexed and that its pragmatic deployment hinges on dominant interactional ideologies. In English, sincerity is inseparable from the moral virtue of authenticity, rooted historically in Protestant confessional traditions and the Romantic valorisation of the unique self. Consequently, sincerity markers legitimise face-threatening speech acts by casting them as morally necessary revelations of the inner self. Politeness theory accommodates this through the strategy of negative politeness—minimising imposition by emphasising speaker reluctance.

Uzbek communicative norms, informed by Islamic ethical discourses and collectivist social structures, construe sincerity primarily as fidelity to the relationship rather than to an autonomous self. The heart-based metaphors mobilise a sensorium of warmth that binds interlocutors. When sincerity is invoked, it is less a licence for bluntness than an assurance of benevolent intent. Pragmatically, sincerity markers function as positive politeness devices that strengthen solidarity, even when the content is critical. These findings echo Wierzbicka's claim that emotional keywords are anchored in culturally specific semantic primes, yet they extend her argument by demonstrating how the same speech act—disagreement—can pivot on divergent sincerity ideologies.

Pedagogically, these insights matter for translators and language teachers. English learners in Uzbekistan who render *samimiy fikrimcha* as my sincere opinion may inadvertently sound pompous, because English

reserves sincere mainly for formal or ceremonial registers. Conversely, British expatriates using honestly in Uzbek may overemphasise individual perspective, overshadowing communal alignment. Syllabi that pair corpus-based examples with cultural commentary can pre-empt such mismatches.

The study also contributes methodologically by showing that corpus pragmatics, when combined with ethnography, captures both statistical tendencies and emic interpretations. Future research might adopt eye-tracking or neurocognitive measures to investigate whether the metaphorical grounding of sincerity in heat versus clarity translates into different embodied processing. Longitudinal designs could trace whether exposure to English social media reshapes Uzbek sincerity norms among urban youth.

The comparative lens applied here reveals sincerity as a fertile site where language, culture and morality intersect. English discourse encodes sincerity through transparency metaphors that licence candid individuality, whereas Uzbek discourse embeds sincerity in warmth metaphors that sustain relational harmony. These semantic and pragmatic patterns influence how compliments, complaints and disagreements are crafted, yielding distinctive interactional textures. By mapping these textures, the study not only advances theoretical debates in linguocultural pragmatics but also furnishes practical guidance for intercultural communication between Anglophone and Uzbek communities.

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