

The Communicative-Intentional Nature of Substandard Verbs Denoting Mental Activity: Linguopragmatic Modelling Based on Speech Act Theory

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Abstract: This article examines the communicative-intentional nature of substandard verbs and verb-like expressions denoting mental activity from the perspective of speech act theory. Mental-activity verbs express cognitive processes such as thinking, understanding, guessing, remembering, doubting, realizing, evaluating, and failing to understand. However, in real communication these meanings are not expressed only through neutral literary verbs such as think, know, understand, remember or Uzbek o'ylamoq, bilmoq, tushunmoq, eslamoq. Speakers often use colloquial, slang-like, idiomatic, metaphorical, and socially marked expressions such as get it, figure out, reckon, suss out, wrap one's head around and Uzbek kallasi yetmoq, miyasiga kirmoq, bosh qotirmoq, fahmi yetmoq. The article argues that such forms are communicatively powerful because they express not only mental states but also speaker intention, interpersonal positioning, epistemic stance, politeness, irony, solidarity, criticism, and emotional evaluation. Drawing on speech act theory, the study models these verbs according to their locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary functions. The findings demonstrate that substandard mental-activity verbs function as pragmatic tools for managing knowledge, softening assertions, requesting clarification, expressing disagreement, constructing informal discourse, and influencing the listener's interpretation.

Keywords: Mental-activity verbs; substandard verbs; speech act theory; communicative intention; linguopragmatics; illocutionary force; perlocutionary effect; locutionary meaning; epistemic stance; informal discourse; colloquial vocabulary; cognitive verbs; pragmatic modelling; speaker intention; Uzbek linguistics; English linguistics; discourse analysis; hedging; politeness; phraseology; slang; cognitive semantics; mental processes.

Introduction: Language is not only a system of naming objects, actions, and events; it is also a system of performing social, cognitive, and interpersonal actions. When speakers use language, they do not simply produce sentences. They express intentions, establish relations, influence listeners, evaluate situations, confirm or deny knowledge, and organize interaction. This is especially visible in verbs denoting mental activity, because such verbs represent the inner cognitive world of the speaker and, at the same time, regulate the communicative relationship between speaker and listener.

Mental-activity verbs are traditionally understood as

verbs that express processes of thinking, knowing, understanding, remembering, forgetting, imagining, doubting, guessing, realizing, and evaluating. In English, neutral examples include think, know, understand, remember, forget, realize, suppose, believe, and imagine. In Uzbek, this group includes o'ylamoq, bilmoq, tushunmoq, anglamoq, eslamoq, unutmoq, fahmlamoq, tasavvur qilmoq, and taxmin qilmoq. These verbs are central to the linguistic representation of cognition because they verbalize human intellectual activity.

However, everyday communication shows that speakers do not always use neutral or standard forms.

In informal speech, emotional interaction, online discourse, fiction, youth communication, and dialogic conversation, mental processes are frequently expressed through substandard or non-standard units. In this article, the term substandard does not mean “wrong” or “inferior.” It refers to linguistic units that stand outside formal, neutral, or official literary norms. They may be colloquial, slang-like, idiomatic, metaphorical, dialectal, socially marked, or stylistically expressive. Examples in English include *get it*, *figure out*, *reckon*, *suss out*, *twig*, *clock*, *blank out*, *space out*, *wrap one’s head around*, and *rack one’s brains*. Uzbek examples include *kallasi yetmoq*, *kallam yetmadi*, *miyasiga kirmoq*, *bosh qotirmoq*, *fahmi yetmoq*, *xayoliga kelmoq*, *aqliga sig’moq*, and *esidan chiqmoq*.

The relevance of this topic lies in the fact that such expressions are not merely lexical alternatives to standard cognitive verbs. They carry additional pragmatic and communicative meanings. For example, the English sentence *I don’t understand it* is semantically close to *I don’t get it*, but the second one is more informal, direct, and conversational. Similarly, Uzbek *Men buni tushunmadim* is neutral, while *Kallam yetmadi* sounds more colloquial, emotional, and self-evaluative. The difference is not only stylistic; it is also pragmatic. The speaker chooses one form rather than another in order to achieve a specific communicative effect.

This article investigates these verbs through the lens of speech act theory. According to speech act theory, utterances are not only statements but also actions. When a person says something, they may assert, request, promise, warn, apologize, criticize, question, advise, or persuade. Austin’s distinction between locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts is especially useful for analysing substandard mental-activity verbs. The locutionary act refers to the literal linguistic meaning of the utterance. The illocutionary act refers to the speaker’s communicative intention, such as asking for clarification, softening disagreement, showing doubt, or expressing surprise. The perlocutionary act refers to the effect produced on the listener, such as making the listener explain, agree, laugh, reconsider, or feel criticized.

For instance, when an English speaker says *I can’t wrap my head around this*, the locutionary meaning refers to difficulty in understanding. The illocutionary intention

may be to request explanation, express confusion, or show that the issue is complex. The perlocutionary effect may be that the listener simplifies the explanation or provides more details. Similarly, when an Uzbek speaker says *Bu gap miyamga kirmayapti*, the literal image suggests that the information is not entering the brain. Pragmatically, however, the utterance may mean “I cannot accept this,” “I do not understand this,” or “This idea seems illogical to me.” Thus, the expression functions as a mental-state report, an evaluative comment, and a communicative act.

The aim of this article is to reveal the communicative-intentional nature of substandard verbs denoting mental activity and to construct a linguopragmatic model of their functioning on the basis of speech act theory. The main objectives are: first, to identify the semantic and pragmatic features of substandard mental-activity verbs; second, to analyse their locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary dimensions; third, to classify their communicative intentions; fourth, to describe their role in discourse; and fifth, to demonstrate how such units contribute to the expression of epistemic stance, social identity, emotional evaluation, and interpersonal relations.

The hypothesis of the article is that substandard mental-activity verbs function not only as cognitive predicates but also as intentional-pragmatic operators. They organize the speaker’s communicative behaviour by indicating whether the speaker is certain, doubtful, confused, ironic, critical, cooperative, informal, or emotionally involved. Therefore, their study requires an integrated approach combining semantics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, and speech act theory.

METHODS

The study uses a qualitative and descriptive-analytical methodology. Since the research object is the communicative-intentional nature of substandard verbs denoting mental activity, the analysis is not limited to their dictionary meanings. Instead, the article examines how these verbs function in speech situations, how they express speaker intention, and how they produce pragmatic effects in discourse.

The first methodological basis of the study is speech act theory, developed by J. L. Austin and further

systematized by J. R. Searle. Speech act theory allows us to analyse language as action. In this framework, every utterance may be examined through three dimensions: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. This model is especially productive for analysing mental-activity verbs because these verbs often appear in utterances where the speaker does more than describe cognition. The speaker may ask for help, soften a statement, criticize indirectly, express surprise, challenge the listener, or create solidarity.

For example, the utterance *I reckon he is right* has a locutionary content: the speaker believes that another person is right. Its illocutionary function may be to express a cautious opinion rather than a categorical judgment. Its perlocutionary effect may be to encourage agreement or reduce potential conflict. Similarly, Uzbek *Menimcha, bu fikr to'g'ri* or *Shunday deb o'ylayman* functions as a mitigated assertion. In both cases, mental-activity forms help the speaker regulate the strength of the claim.

The second method is linguopragmatic analysis. This method focuses on the relation between linguistic form, communicative intention, and context. The analysis considers who speaks, to whom, in what situation, with what degree of formality, and for what purpose. Substandard mental-activity verbs are strongly context-dependent. For instance, *kallang yetmaydimi?* may be playful among close friends, but offensive in formal communication. English *Don't you get it?* may express impatience, surprise, or criticism depending on intonation and context. Therefore, pragmatic analysis is necessary to reveal the intended meaning behind the form.

The third method is semantic classification. The selected verbs and expressions are divided into several semantic groups according to the type of mental activity they express. These groups include:

verbs of thinking and reasoning: *reckon, figure, think over, bosh qotirmoq, o'ylab ko'rmoq*;

verbs of understanding: *get it, figure out, suss out, fahmi yetmoq, kallasi yetmoq*;

verbs of misunderstanding or cognitive failure: *not get it, blank out, space out, miyasiga kirmaslik, kallasi yetmaslik*;

verbs of remembering and forgetting: *remember, blank, slip one's mind, esiga tushmoq, esidan chiqmoq*;

verbs of sudden realization: *twig, clock, dawn on, xayoliga kelmoq, birdan anglamoq*;

verbs of intellectual evaluation: *make sense, aqliga sig'moq, mantiqqa to'g'ri kelmoq*.

The fourth method is componential analysis. Each expression is studied according to its internal semantic-pragmatic components. For example, *figure out* contains the components "mental effort," "problem-solving," and "successful understanding." *Suss out* contains "informal investigation," "practical intelligence," and "discovery." Uzbek *bosh qotirmoq* contains "intensive thinking," "difficulty," and "problem orientation." *Miyasiga kirmayapti* contains "cognitive failure," "resistance to information," and sometimes "emotional frustration." This method helps to show that substandard mental verbs are semantically dense and pragmatically rich.

The fifth method is discourse analysis. The article examines how substandard mental-activity verbs function in larger communicative contexts. Their discourse functions include opening a response, introducing an opinion, marking hesitation, signalling misunderstanding, requesting clarification, expressing disagreement, evaluating a situation, narrating a moment of realization, and closing an argument. For example, in English conversation, *I guess* often introduces a weak or tentative conclusion. In Uzbek conversation, *menimcha* or *o'ylashimcha* performs a similar function. Although these forms are not always verbs in strict morphological terms, they belong to the broader pragmatic field of mental activity.

The sixth method is contrastive analysis. English and Uzbek are compared in order to identify both universal and language-specific features. Universal features include the use of mental-activity verbs for expressing epistemic stance, uncertainty, understanding, and communicative intention. Language-specific features include structural differences. English often uses phrasal verbs and idiomatic verbal constructions: *get it, figure out, work out, suss out, wrap one's head around*. Uzbek often uses noun-verb phraseological constructions involving body and cognition nouns: *bosh, kalla, miya, aql, fahm, and xayol*. These nouns combine with verbs such as *yetmoq, kirmoq, chiqmoq, qotmoq, sig'moq, and kelmoq*.

The seventh method is linguopragmatic modelling. On

the basis of speech act theory, the article proposes a model consisting of four analytical levels:

1. Semantic-cognitive level.

This level identifies the mental process expressed by the verb: thinking, understanding, guessing, remembering, doubting, or realizing.

2. Intentional-pragmatic level.

This level identifies the speaker's communicative intention: to assert, ask, soften, criticize, joke, per3. Discursive-functional level.

This level identifies the role of the expression in discourse: initiating a response, developing an argument, marking a turning point, expressing confusion, or inviting explanation.

4. Perlocutionary-effect level.

This level identifies the possible effect on the listener: clarification, agreement, emotional reaction, laughter, correction, sympathy, or defensive response.

The eighth method is illustrative modelling through constructed examples. Since the article is theoretical and analytical in nature, examples are used as representative communicative models rather than quantitative corpus data. For future empirical research, these models can be tested through spoken corpora, online comments, fiction dialogues, interviews, classroom discourse, bilingual translation material, and social media language.

This methodological framework makes it possible to analyse substandard mental-activity verbs not as isolated vocabulary items but as dynamic communicative tools. Their meaning emerges from the interaction between lexical content, speaker intention, context, social relation, and expected listener response.

RESULTS

The analysis shows that substandard verbs denoting mental activity possess a complex communicative-intentional structure. Their meaning is formed through the interaction of cognitive semantics, pragmatic intention, stylistic marking, and discourse function. They do not simply report what happens in the speaker's mind; they also perform actions in communication.

The first major result is that substandard mental-

activity verbs are strongly connected with epistemic stance. Epistemic stance refers to the speaker's attitude toward knowledge, certainty, probability, evidence, and truth. In English, verbs such as reckon, guess, and figure often show that the speaker presents information as personal judgment rather than absolute truth. For example, I reckon this approach is more effective is less formal and less categorical than This approach is more effective. The speaker intentionally reduces the force of the assertion. In Uzbek, similar functions may be performed by deb o'ylayman, o'ylashimcha, menimcha, and colloquial expressions such as chamasi. These forms allow the speaker to present an idea without imposing it too strongly on the listener.

The second result is that these verbs often perform the function of hedging. Hedging is a pragmatic strategy by which speakers soften statements, avoid directness, and reduce responsibility for categorical claims. English I guess, I suppose, and I reckon function as hedges in many contexts. Uzbek menimcha and deb o'ylayman perform a comparable function. In academic and semi-formal discourse, hedging helps speakers avoid overgeneralization. In everyday conversation, it helps maintain politeness and reduce conflict. Therefore, mental-activity verbs are not only semantic indicators of thought but also pragmatic instruments of interpersonal regulation.

The third result is that substandard mental-activity verbs frequently express cognitive difficulty and function as indirect requests for clarification. For example, the English utterance I don't get it may mean "I do not understand," but pragmatically it often means "Please explain it again." Similarly, I can't wrap my head around this may express confusion and invite the listener to simplify the information. Uzbek Kallam yetmadi and Bu gap miyamga kirmadi perform similar functions. They may express a lack of understanding, but their communicative intention is often to request explanation or to signal that the listener's previous statement was unclear.

The fourth result concerns indirect criticism. Substandard mental-activity verbs can be used to criticize another person's understanding or reasoning. English He still doesn't get it may imply that the person is slow, inattentive, or resistant to explanation. Uzbek Uning kallasi yetmayapti or Miyasiga kirmayapti may

carry an even stronger evaluative tone. *suade*, distance oneself, or show uncertainty.

In such cases, the mental verb functions as a face-threatening act because it evaluates another person's intellectual capacity. However, depending on context, it can also be humorous or affectionate. This shows that the illocutionary force of these expressions is highly context-dependent.

The fifth result is that these expressions perform solidarity-building functions. Informal mental-activity verbs often reduce social distance between speakers. English *You get what I mean?* sounds more conversational than *Do you understand my point?* Uzbek *Tushundingizmi?* is neutral, while *gapimga tushundingizmi?* or in informal contexts *kallangiz yetdimi?* may sound closer, humorous, or emotionally expressive, depending on tone. Among close friends, such expressions can create group identity and shared informality. In this sense, substandard mental verbs function as social signals.

The sixth result concerns emotional evaluation. Standard verbs usually describe mental activity neutrally, while substandard forms often add emotional colouring. Compare English *I forgot* with *It completely slipped my mind*. The second expression sounds more conversational and self-excusing. Uzbek *esimdan chiqdi* is neutral-colloquial, while *butunlay xayolimdan ko'tarilibdi* is more expressive. Similarly, *boshim qotdi* does not simply mean "I thought"; it expresses mental tension, difficulty, and emotional pressure. Thus, substandard mental verbs are pragmatically expressive.

The seventh result is connected with speech act classification. In speech act terms, substandard mental-activity verbs may participate in several types of illocutionary acts:

Assertive acts.

The speaker presents a belief, opinion, or conclusion: *I reckon it is true; Menimcha, bu to'g'ri.*

Directive acts.

The speaker indirectly asks for explanation or response: *I don't get it; Kallam yetmadi.*

Expressive acts.

The speaker expresses surprise, confusion, irritation, or relief: *I finally figured it out!; Endi fahmim yetdi!*

Commissive-related acts.

Although mental verbs do not directly promise action, they may prepare commitment: *I'll think it over; O'ylab ko'raman*. This can function as a polite delay or indirect refusal.

Evaluative acts.

The speaker evaluates someone's reasoning: *He doesn't get the point; Uning aqli yetmayapti*. The eighth result concerns perlocutionary effects. These verbs are often used to produce specific effects on the listener. When a speaker says *I don't get it*, the expected effect is that the listener explains. When a speaker says *I reckon you're right*, the effect may be agreement and solidarity. When a speaker says *Don't you get it?*, the effect may be pressure, embarrassment, or urgency. When an Uzbek speaker says *Bu gap aqlimga sig'mayapti*, the listener may feel that their statement has been challenged or rejected. Therefore, perlocutionary interpretation is essential to understanding these forms.

The ninth result concerns cultural and metaphorical modelling. English substandard mental verbs often conceptualize understanding as possession, vision, discovery, or physical control: *get it, see the point, grasp the idea, figure it out*. Uzbek expressions frequently conceptualize cognition through body parts and inner capacity: *kalla, miya, bosh, aql, and fahm*. The mind is represented as a container, an instrument, or a space into which knowledge enters or does not enter. For example, *miyasiga kirmadi* represents information as an object entering the brain. *Aqliga sig'madi* represents reason as a container with limited capacity. These metaphorical models shape pragmatic interpretation.

The tenth result is that such verbs are highly significant for translation and intercultural communication. Literal translation often fails to preserve pragmatic meaning. English *I don't get it* may be translated as *Tushunmadim, Kallam yetmadi, or Miyamga kirmadi*, depending on tone. Uzbek *Boshim qotdi* may be translated as *I am puzzled, I am confused, or I can't figure it out*. The translator must consider not only semantic meaning but also register, emotional force, speaker intention, and social relation.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that substandard mental-activity

verbs have a much broader function than traditional lexical descriptions suggest. They are not simply informal equivalents of standard verbs. They are communicative devices that allow speakers to perform complex social and pragmatic actions. Their analysis therefore requires a shift from word meaning to utterance meaning, and from utterance meaning to communicative intention.

Speech act theory provides a useful framework for this analysis because it explains how one linguistic form may perform different actions in different contexts. For example, the utterance I don't get it is grammatically a statement, but pragmatically it may function as a request. The speaker may not directly say "Explain it again," but this is often the intended meaning. Similarly, Uzbek Kallam yetmadi is formally a statement about the speaker's cognitive limitation, but in interaction it often functions as a directive act requesting clarification. This confirms that the illocutionary force of mental-activity expressions is not always identical with their grammatical form.

Another important point is that substandard mental verbs are closely related to intentionality. Communicative intention is the speaker's internal purpose in producing an utterance. When a speaker chooses a colloquial form instead of a neutral one, this choice is rarely accidental. The speaker may want to sound friendly, humorous, modest, ironic, impatient, emotionally involved, or socially close to the listener. For instance, I figured it out sounds more dynamic and conversational than I understood it. Uzbek fahmim yetdi sounds more expressive than tushundim. These choices reflect the speaker's pragmatic strategy.

The study also shows that substandard mental-activity verbs are important in the expression of politeness and face-work. In many communicative situations, direct statements may sound too strong or impolite. Mental verbs allow speakers to soften the force of their utterances. For example, I think you may be mistaken is less direct than You are mistaken. In Uzbek, Menimcha, bu yerda biroz xatolik bor is more polite than Bu xato. Here, the mental expression protects the listener's face and reduces the risk of conflict. Thus, mental verbs operate as politeness strategies.

At the same time, these verbs can also be face-threatening. Expressions such as Don't you get it? or

Uzbek Kallang yetmayaptimi? may criticize the listener's intelligence or attention. Their effect depends on tone, social distance, age, hierarchy, and communicative setting. Among close friends, such expressions may be playful. In formal education or professional discourse, they may sound rude or humiliating. This proves that the same mental-activity expression may have different illocutionary forces depending on context.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, these verbs help organize conversation. They introduce opinions, mark hesitation, signal misunderstanding, show realization, and create transitions between stages of discourse. For example, I guess may introduce a tentative conclusion. Now I get it may mark the resolution of misunderstanding. Let me think may signal a pause and give the speaker time to formulate an answer. Uzbek o'ylab ko'ray, endi tushundim, xayolinga keldi, and boshim qotdi perform similar discourse-organizing functions. They guide the listener through the speaker's cognitive process.

The comparison of English and Uzbek reveals both universal and language-specific patterns. Universally, mental-activity verbs are used to express epistemic stance, interpersonal attitude, and communicative intention. Both languages use such forms to soften assertions, request clarification, express confusion, and mark realization. However, the structural and metaphorical resources differ. English makes extensive use of phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions involving physical actions: get, grasp, catch, figure out, work out. Uzbek often uses body-part and mental-faculty nouns: bosh, kalla, miya, aql, fahm, and xayol. This indicates that Uzbek substandard mental expressions are strongly connected with embodied and phraseological models of cognition.

The linguopragmatic model proposed in this article helps explain these features systematically. At the semantic-cognitive level, the verb identifies the mental process. At the intentional-pragmatic level, it expresses the speaker's communicative purpose. At the discursive-functional level, it performs a role in the structure of conversation. At the perlocutionary-effect level, it influences the listener's reaction. For example, Uzbek Bu gap miyamga kirmayapti can be modelled as follows:

Semantic-cognitive level: failure to understand or accept information.

Intentional-pragmatic level: expressing confusion, doubt, or rejection.

Discursive-functional level: interrupting explanation or challenging a claim.

Perlocutionary-effect level: causing the listener to explain, justify, or reformulate.

Similarly, English I reckon we should try another method can be modelled as follows:

Semantic-cognitive level: personal judgment or belief.

Intentional-pragmatic level: giving a softened recommendation.

Discursive-functional level: contributing to decision-making.

Perlocutionary-effect level: encouraging agreement without strong pressure.

This model demonstrates that substandard mental-activity verbs function as multidimensional units. Their meaning cannot be reduced to lexical semantics alone. They must be analysed as speech acts embedded in social interaction.

The pedagogical implications of the study are also important. In foreign language teaching, students often learn only neutral equivalents of mental verbs. However, authentic speech requires knowledge of informal and pragmatic variants. Uzbek learners of English should understand the difference between understand and get it, think and reckon, solve and figure out. English learners of Uzbek should understand why kallam yetmadi is not a literal statement about the head but a conventional expression of cognitive difficulty. Teaching these expressions improves pragmatic competence, translation. Finally, the study contributes to broader linguistic theory by showing that mental-activity verbs are a bridge between cognition and social action. They verbalize inner thought, but they also perform external communicative functions. Through these verbs, speakers manage knowledge, emotion, identity, and interpersonal relations. Therefore, substandard mental-activity verbs are not peripheral or secondary language units; they are central to understanding how cognition becomes communicative action.

CONCLUSION

This article has analysed the communicative-intentional nature of substandard verbs denoting mental activity on the basis of speech act theory. The study has shown that such verbs and verb-like expressions are not limited to naming cognitive processes. They function as linguopragmatic units that express speaker intention, epistemic stance, emotional evaluation, interpersonal relation, and discourse strategy.

The main conclusion is that substandard mental-activity verbs possess a three-dimensional speech act structure. At the locutionary level, they express mental processes such as thinking, understanding, guessing, remembering, realizing, or failing to understand. At the illocutionary level, they perform communicative acts such as asserting, hedging, requesting clarification, criticizing, expressing surprise, or softening disagreement. At the perlocutionary level, they influence the listener by encouraging explanation, agreement, correction, sympathy, laughter, or reconsideration.

The analysis has also demonstrated that English and Uzbek share common pragmatic functions but differ in structural and metaphorical realization. English frequently uses phrasal verbs and colloquial verbal expressions such as get it, figure out, reckon, suss out, and wrap one's head around. Uzbek often uses phraseological constructions based on mental and body-part nouns, such as kallasi yetmoq, miyasiga kirmoq, bosh qotirmoq, fahmi yetmoq, and aqliga sig'moq. These forms show that cognition is culturally and metaphorically structured.

The proposed linguopragmatic model includes four levels: semantic-cognitive, intentional-pragmatic, discursive-functional, and perlocutionary-effect levels. This model makes it possible to analyse substandard mental-activity verbs as communicative actions rather than isolated lexical items. It also demonstrates that their interpretation depends on context, speaker-listener relationship, register, tone, social distance, and communicative purpose.

The findings are relevant for pragmatics, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, translation studies, and language teaching. In translation, these verbs require functional rather than literal equivalence. In language teaching, they should be introduced as part of

pragmatic competence, because learners need to understand not only what a word means but also what communicative effect it produces.

In conclusion, substandard verbs denoting mental activity reveal the deep connection between language, thought, and social action. They show how speakers transform private cognition into public communication. Through them, people express not only what they think but also how they want their thoughts to be understood by others.

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