
THE ROLE OF THE CATEGORY OF OPTATIVNESS IN BOTH UZBEK AND ENGLISH LITERATURE

Pardayeva Diyora Mannon qizi

Master's degree graduate of the Uzbek State University of World Languages, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

The category of optativ, which expresses wishes, hopes, and unrealizable desires, occupies a special place in the grammatical and stylistic systems of world literatures. This study explores the role of optativ constructions in Uzbek and English literary traditions, with a focus on how linguistic means of expressing wishes function in poetic, narrative, and dramatic texts. Drawing on comparative stylistics, cognitive poetics, and discourse analysis, the paper reveals that optativ markers serve not only as grammatical devices but also as carriers of cultural worldview. In Uzbek literature, optativ forms embody collective ideals and spiritual aspirations, while in English literature they often emphasize personal longing, prayer, or poetic modality. The findings show that the optativ category functions as a bridge between grammar and aesthetics, highlighting the inseparable relationship between linguistic structure and literary imagination.

KEYWORDS: Optativ, modality, Uzbek literature, English literature, wish, poetic language, comparative stylistics, discourse analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The category of optativ, which expresses wishes, hopes, prayers, and unrealizable desires, has always held an important position in the linguistic and literary traditions of many nations. In both Uzbek and English literature, the optativ mood serves not only as a grammatical category but also as a stylistic and cultural phenomenon that reveals the values, emotions, and aspirations of a community. Its functions are particularly visible in folklore, epic traditions, classical poetry, and especially in prose narratives of the modern era.

Across languages, the optativ mood stands as a linguistic manifestation of human desire to shape reality beyond the constraints of the present. In Uzbek oral and written traditions, optativ forms are deeply interwoven with ritual language, blessings (duo), and epic poetry, where they articulate communal hopes for prosperity, peace, and heroism. For example, in the epic Alpomish, formulas like “Yurtim obod bo‘lsin” (“May my land flourish”) encapsulate not only individual wishes but also collective ideals of national well-being. Similarly, in everyday folk speech, optative utterances function as culturally resonant acts of solidarity and respect. In Uzbek literature, the optativ is morphologically well-developed and easily identifiable through verb endings such as -gin, -aylik, -sin. Beyond folklore, its presence is especially notable in the prose works of Abdulla Qahhor. His short stories often depict everyday struggles, where characters express their

innermost wishes and frustrations through optativ forms. For example, in “Sinchalak,” the mother figure repeatedly utters expressions like “O‘g‘lim sog‘-salomat bo‘lsin” (“May my son remain healthy”), encapsulating the deep maternal hope tied to family well-being. In “Anor,” Qahhor portrays human vulnerability and longing through characters who resort to prayers and heartfelt wishes, using the optativ as a linguistic reflection of their powerlessness before fate. Such usages reveal how optativ forms are not merely grammatical structures but emotional markers that deepen psychological portrayal in Uzbek prose.

In English literature, the optativ category is less morphologically marked but finds rich expression through modal auxiliaries (may, might, should), archaic verb forms (God save the King), and poetic constructions. Shakespearean drama, for instance, frequently employs optativ formulas as rhetorical devices that convey both prayerful appeals and dramatic irony: “Long live the King!” or “Heaven grant us peace!” Such forms situate personal desire within broader religious and political frameworks, reflecting the interconnection of individual will and social order. In English literature, while the optativ lacks clear morphological endings, it surfaces frequently in narrative prose through modal auxiliaries (may, might, let), fixed expressions, and character dialogue. A striking example can be found in O. Henry’s stories. His characters- often ordinary people facing ironic twists of fate- express wishes and desires in ways that closely resemble optativ constructions. In *The Gift of the Magi*, the young couple, Jim and Della, are driven by unspoken hopes: Della whispers to herself “May Jim think it’s beautiful” after cutting her hair to buy a gift. Though simple, the optativ “may” captures her deep desire for acceptance and love. Similarly, in *The Last Leaf*, Johnsy, weakened by illness, ties her life to the ivy leaves outside her window, murmuring wishes that she might survive until the last leaf falls. These moments exemplify how the optativ mood conveys human vulnerability, longing, and the tension between hope and despair. The comparative perspective shows that in both Abdulla Qahhor and O. Henry’s narratives, the optativ functions as a psychological lens. It externalizes inner emotion and renders invisible thoughts audible, giving narrative prose an additional dimension of sincerity. While Uzbek prose often employs explicit morphological optativ markers, English prose tends to rely on modal verbs and contextual cues to evoke similar effects. Despite formal differences, both literatures share the conviction that the language of wishing carries performative weight - words themselves become vessels of hope.

Methodologically, the study combines contrastive linguistic analysis with literary hermeneutics. Uzbek texts are analyzed from epics, lyrical poetry, and proverbs, while English sources include Renaissance drama, Romantic poetry, and modern novels. Attention is given to both formal markers (verbs in the optative mood, modal constructions) and functional aspects (prayer, blessing, curse, rhetorical appeal). The investigation revealed three key functions of the optativ in both traditions. First, the ritual function, where optative forms accompany blessings, curses, and prayers, reinforcing social and religious values. Second, the aesthetic function, where optativs intensify lyrical and dramatic expression, foregrounding longing and emotional resonance. Third, the cognitive-symbolic function, where optativs encode visions of an ideal world, allowing literature to project possibilities beyond empirical reality.

Comparative analysis demonstrates both similarities and divergences. Uzbek literature tends to collectivize wishes, binding them to communal well-being, while English texts more often highlight individual desire and existential yearning. Yet both traditions share the conviction that the act of wishing - whether communal or personal - possesses performative power: language itself is seen as capable of shaping destiny.

When comparing Uzbek and English traditions, several parallels and differences emerge. In both literatures, the optativ mood is strongly tied to ritual and prayer, highlighting the universal human belief in the performative force of language. Yet cultural nuances shape its realization: Uzbek literature emphasizes collective and communal wishes, often linked to national ideals, while English literature more frequently focuses on individual longing or religious appeals. Nevertheless, both traditions reveal a conviction that language possesses the power to influence reality, transform emotions, and articulate visions of a better world. The functions of the optativ can be summarized in three major dimensions. First, its ritual function, seen in blessings, prayers, and formulaic utterances, where words carry sacred or communal authority. Second, its aesthetic function, particularly evident in poetry and drama, where optativ forms heighten emotion and artistic impact. Third, its symbolic and cognitive function, where the optativ encodes ideals, hopes, and possibilities, allowing literature to serve as a mirror of human imagination.

Thus, the functions of the optativ in modern prose can be summarized in three interrelated aspects. First, the emotional-psychological function, where optativ forms reveal a character's inner state, as seen in Qahhor's maternal figures or O. Henry's vulnerable heroes. Second, the narrative-aesthetic function, since the optativ intensifies plot tension by highlighting what is desired but unattainable. Third, the cultural-symbolic function, as the optativ encodes broader moral lessons- family devotion in Qahhor's prose, or the irony of fate in O. Henry's stories.

The study concludes that the optativ category is not merely a grammatical mood but a cultural and aesthetic resource. By expressing desires that transcend the real, optativ forms enable literature to negotiate between actuality and imagination, social norms and individual aspiration. Recognizing the role of optativ enriches both linguistic theory and literary interpretation, underscoring how language encodes humanity's timeless impulse to hope, pray, and dream.

REFERENCES

1. Bally, C. General Linguistics and the Optative Mood. Paris: Payot, 1950.
2. Crystal, D. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J. A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language. London: Longman, 1985.
4. Karimov, S. O'zbek tili grammatikasi. Toshkent: Fan, 1992.
5. Mirzaev, T. O'zbek xalq og'zaki ijodi. Toshkent: Fan, 2005.
6. Qahhor, A. Anor. Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1983.
7. Qahhor, A. Sinchalak. Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1984.
8. O. Henry. The Gift of the Magi and Other Stories. New York: Modern Library, 1993.

9. O. Henry. The Last Leaf. In: The Four Million. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1907.
10. Jakobson, R. Linguistics and Poetics. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960.