

**ТЕОРЕТИЧЕСКАЯ, ПРИКЛАДНАЯ И СРАВНИТЕЛЬНО-СОПОСТАВИТЕЛЬНАЯ
ЛИНГВИСТИКА/THEORETICAL, APPLIED AND COMPARATIVE LINGUISTICS**

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**SOME VIEWS ON NATIONAL-CULTURAL PECULIARITIES OF SYSTEMS AND FORMULAS OF TAJIK AND
ENGLISH SPEECH ETIQUETTE**

Research article

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Abstract

The given article dwells on the national-cultural specificity of speech etiquette systems and formulas in Tajik and English. Drawing upon sociolinguistic and pragmatic theories, the author of the article analyzes the differences in forms of address, greetings, leave-takings, apologies, requests, and expressions of gratitude. The research is based on a comparative analysis of contemporary usage and illustrative examples from “Reminiscences” by Sadridin Aini. The analysis reveals significant differences stemming from cultural values, social hierarchies, and historical influences. Tajik speech etiquette emphasizes respect for elders, formality in many interactions, and indirectness, while English speech etiquette, particularly in contemporary American and British contexts often prioritizes directness, informality, and egalitarianism. These differences can lead to miscommunication and pragmatic failure in intercultural interactions. Thus, the study contributes to cross-cultural understanding and possesses implications for language teaching and intercultural communication training.

Keywords: speech etiquette, Tajik, English, sociolinguistics, cross-cultural communication, national-cultural specificity, forms of address.

**НЕКОТОРЫЕ ВЗГЛЯДЫ НА НАЦИОНАЛЬНО-КУЛЬТУРНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ СИСТЕМ И ФОРМУЛ
ТАДЖИКСКОГО И АНГЛИЙСКОГО РЕЧЕВОГО ЭТИКЕТА**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается национально-культурная специфика систем и формул речевого этикета в таджикском и английском языках. Опираясь на социолингвистические и прагматические теории, автор статьи анализирует различия в формах обращения, приветствия, прощания, извинения, просьбы и выражения благодарности. Исследование основано на сравнительном анализе современного употребления и иллюстративных примерах из «Воспоминаний» Садриддина Аини. Анализ выявляет существенные различия, вытекающие из культурных ценностей, социальных иерархий и исторических влияний. Таджикский речевой этикет подчеркивает уважение к старшим, формальность во многих взаимодействиях и косвенность, в то время как английский речевой этикет, особенно в современных американских и британских контекстах, часто отдает приоритет прямоте, неформальности и эгалитаризму. Эти различия могут привести к недопониманию и прагматическому сбою в межкультурном взаимодействии. Таким образом, исследование способствует межкультурному пониманию и имеет значение для преподавания языка и обучения межкультурному общению.

Ключевые слова: речевой этикет, таджикский язык, английский язык, социолингвистика, межкультурное общение, национально-культурная специфика, формы обращения.

Introduction

Speech etiquette is defined as the set of conventionalized formulas and strategies resorting to social interaction to establish and maintain relationships [10], [4], [5], [6] and is deeply traced back in the cultural-national society of any nation. The theme explored reflects underlying values, social structures, and historical developments. The comparative analysis of the speech etiquette systems of the comparative languages, such as Tajik and English reveals significant differences that can lead to misunderstandings and communication breakdowns in intercultural happenstances.

It is worth mentioning that “speech etiquette manifests itself in both spoken interactions and written texts throughout the entire course of communication, but it assumes particular importance during the establishment and maintenance of contact with an interlocutor. It is especially relevant in the most common everyday situations and in the initial stages of communication. Indeed, before initiating a conversation, it is crucial to address the conversational partner, offer greetings, and, at the appropriate juncture, express gratitude or apologies. This fundamental knowledge of a foreign language is what individuals intending to interact with foreign colleagues strive to acquire first and foremost” [9].

The purpose of the corpus of our study is:

- to identify and analyze the key differences between Tajik and English speech etiquette systems;
- to dwell on the cultural and historical factors promoting these differences;

- to illustrate these differences with concrete examples from “Reminiscences” by S. Aini, and to provide English translations comparatively;
- to discuss the implications of these differences for intercultural communication.

Materials and methods

The corpus of our study conducts a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative analysis of linguistic data with insights from sociolinguistic and pragmatic theories.

The research includes the following methodologies:

1) Literature Review: while dwelling on the former in question we have conducted a comprehensive consideration of scholarly articles, books, and relevant resources on speech etiquette, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, both Tajik and English language and culture. The search focused on publications from 2010 to 2024 to ensure the relevance of the level of usage. Key databases and search appliances used, included JSTOR, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science.

2) Theoretical Framework: The study draws upon the following theoretical frameworks:

– *Spencer-Oatey's Rapport Management (2008)* [7]: Helen Spencer-Oatey's Rapport Management theory emphasizes the significance of managing interpersonal relations and maintaining rapport within communication. It focuses on three key aspects: face sensitivities, social rights and obligations, and interactional goals.

– *Usmonova, M. N. (2024)* [9]: on certain peculiarities of the notion of speech etiquette in linguistics. She presents the opinions of famous linguists and defines the term “speech etiquette”. Speech etiquette is associated with the concept of etiquette (from the French “Ettiquée” – label, tag) - a set of rules of behavior concerning the external manifestation of attitudes towards people (treatment of others, forms of address and greetings, behavior in public places, manners and clothing).

These theoretical frameworks provide a valuable foundation for the analysis of politeness phenomena in Tajik and English speech. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that politeness is not solely a matter of applying universal principles; it is also profoundly influenced by culturally specific norms and values.

3) Data Collection:

Contemporary Usage: Data on contemporary Tajik and English speech etiquette were gathered from linguistic corpora and observations of natural interactions.

Literary Analysis: We selected “Reminiscences” by Sadridin Aini as a primary source of data on Tajik speech etiquette. This work provides a detailed and nuanced portrayal of Tajik social life and interactions. We identified 10 concrete examples of speech etiquette formulas, providing their English translations and analyzing their cultural and linguistic significance.

4) Data Analysis:

Comparative Analysis: We systematically compared Tajik and English speech etiquette formulas across different categories, including greetings, leave-takings, forms of address, requests, apologies, and expressions of gratitude.

Cultural Interpretation: We interpreted the observed differences in light of the underlying cultural values and social structures of Tajik and English-speaking societies.

Pragmatic Analysis: We analyzed the pragmatic functions of different speech acts and politeness strategies, considering the potential for miscommunication in intercultural interactions.

5) Limitations:

The analysis of “Reminiscences” reflects a specific historical period (early 20th century). While many cultural patterns persist, contemporary Tajik speech etiquette may have evolved. The generalizations about “English speech etiquette” are necessarily broad, as significant variations exist across different English-speaking communities. We primarily focus on standard American and British English. The assessment of extensive, contemporary corpora of spoken Tajik is limited while making a fully balanced comparison challenging [2], [3].

Main results

3.1. Forms of Address

Tajik, like many languages with a strong tradition of formality engages a complex system of forms of address reflecting social hierarchy, age, and relationship between speakers. Common forms include:

- *Shumo*: The formal form of *you* used for addressing elders, superiors, strangers, and anyone deserving respect.
- *Tu*: The informal form of *you* used for addressing close friends, family members (often younger), and children.
- *Titles and Kinship Terms*: Using titles (e.g., *ustod* – *master, teacher*; *domullo* – *mullah, religious scholar*; *khola* – *aunt*; *amak* – *uncle*) or kinship terms, even when not directly related, is a common way to show respect.
- *First Name + Patronymic*: In more formal settings, addressing someone by their first name and patronymic (e.g., *Rahim Saidovich*) is common.
- *Avoidance of Direct Address*: In some situations, particularly when addressing someone of significantly higher status, direct address may be avoided altogether using indirect phrasing or third-person references.

English, in contrast, has largely lost its formal *you* (the archaic form *thou* is no longer used in standard dialects). The universal *you* is used in most contexts. However, distinctions are made through:

- *Titles + Last Name*: *Mr., Ms., Dr., Professor* + last name are used in formal settings or when addressing someone of higher status.
- *First Name*: Using first names is increasingly common, even in professional settings, reflecting a trend towards informality.
- *Kinship Terms*: Kinship terms are generally used only for actual relatives.
- *Sir/Madam*: Used in very formal setting or in service encounters.

3.2. Greetings and Leave-Takings

Tajik greetings are often elaborate and involve multiple exchanges inquiring about the well-being of the addressee and their family. Common greetings include:

- *Assalomu alaykum*: the standard greeting, meaning *Peace be upon you* (derived from Arabic).
- *Va alaykumi salom*: the response to *Assalomu alaykum* meaning *And peace be upon you*.
- *Chi khel?*: *How are you?* (informal)
- *Shumo chi khel?*: *How are you?* (formal)
- *Sihatu salomat hasted?*: *Are you healthy and well?* (formal)
- *Khub hasted?*: *Are you well?*
- *Khush omaded*: *Welcome*.

Leave-takings in Tajik are also often extended, with expressions of good wishes and hopes for future meetings. Examples include:

- *Khayr*: *Goodbye* (literally *good*).
 - *To didor*: *Until we meet again*.
 - *Khudo hofiz*: *May God protect you* (common in religious contexts).
 - *Boshed*: a general expression of goodwill, literally meaning *Be well*.
- English greetings and leave-takings are typically briefer and more direct:
- *Hello/Hi*: common greetings.
 - *How are you?*: often used as a phatic expression, not requiring a detailed answer.
 - *Good morning/afternoon/evening*: time-specific greetings.
 - *Goodbye/Bye*: common leave-takings.
 - *See you later/See you*: informal leave-takings.
 - *Welcome*: similar to Tajik *Khush Omaded*.

3.3. Requests, Apologies, and Expressions of Gratitude

Tajik often engages indirectness and politeness markers when making requests, apologizing, or expressing gratitude. This is to mitigate potential face-threatening acts.

- *Requests*: might involve circumlocutions, hedges (e.g., *Agar ilojash boshad... – If it's possible...*), and expressions of deference.
- *Apologies*: May involve elaborate expressions of regret, taking responsibility, and offering compensation (even for minor offenses). *Bubakhshed – Excuse me/Forgive me* is common, but often accompanied by further explanation.
- *Gratitude*: *Tashakkur – Thank you* is common, but often accompanied by expressions of indebtedness or blessings (e.g., *Khudo barakat dihad – May God bless you*).

English, while having polite forms for these speech acts, often favors more directness:

- *Requests*: *Can you...?*, *Could you...?*, *Would you mind...?* are common, but more direct requests (*Give me...*) are also acceptable in many contexts.
- *Apologies*: *I'm sorry*, *Excuse me*, *I apologize* are common, but the level of elaboration often depends on the severity of the offense.
- *Gratitude*: *Thank you*, *Thanks*, *I appreciate it* are common, and often considered sufficient.

3.4. Examples from “Reminiscences” by S.Aini

Here are 10 examples from “Reminiscences” by S.Aini with English translations, page numbers (from the 1954 edition):

Examples 1: Ba hazrati Eshon ta`zim karda guftam: – *Assalomu alaykum!* [1, P. 25].

Translation: Bowing to His Excellency the Ishan, I said: – *Assalomu alaykum!*

This exemplifies the formal greeting *Assalomu alaykum* used to address a person of high religious status. The act of bowing (ta`zim karda) further emphasizes respect. In English, a comparable interaction might involve *Good morning, Reverend/Imam*, with a possible nod, but the intricate bowing and Arabic-derived greeting are culturally specific to the Tajik (and broader Islamic) context.

Example 2: Mullo Abdurahim ba man guft: – Tu ham *dommullo* shudai? [1, P. 47].

Translation: Mullo Abdurahim said to me: – Have you also become a *domullo*?

The use of *dommullo* (a title for a religious scholar) shows respect, even though the speaker is questioning the addressee's status. In English, the equivalent might be *So, you've become a scholar now?* The tone could be similar, but the specific title reflecting a religious hierarchy is absent.

Example 3: Padaram ba man guft: – Khub kardi, ki omadi, *bacham* [1, P. 68].

Translation: My father said to me: – You did well to come, *my child*.

This demonstrates the use of the kinship term *bacham* (my child) by a father to his son. This is common in Tajik, conveying affection and closeness. In English, *You did well to come, son* is a direct equivalent, maintaining a similar level of affection.

Example 4: Man ba vai guftam: – Ramat, *tagho* [1, P. 82].

Translation: I said to him: – Thank you, *uncle*.

The use of *tagho* (maternal uncle) shows respect, even if the person is not a literal uncle. This use of kinship terms to address non-relatives is common in Tajik culture. In English, *Thank you, sir* might be used in a similar context, conveying respect but lacking the familial connotation.

Example 5: On kas ba man guftand: – *Shumo chi kor mekuned?* [1, P. 101].

Translation: That person said to me: – What do you do?

The use of *shumo* (formal *you*) indicates that the speaker is addressing someone they respect or do not know well. In English, the equivalent would simply be *What do you do?* lacking the explicit formal/informal distinction.

Example 6: Man ba vai guftam: – *Khayr, boshed* [1, P. 115].

Translation: I said to him: – Farewell, be well.

This demonstrates a typical Tajik leave-taking, combining *khayr* (goodbye) with *boshed* (a wish for well-being). In English, *Goodbye* or *Take care* would be common, but *boshed* lacks a direct equivalent, reflecting a cultural emphasis on wishing well-being.

Example 7: On kas ba man guftand: – *Salomat boshed* [1, P. 115].

Translation: That person said to me: – Be healthy.

Another form of leave-taking, wishing someone well. In English *Take care* would be the most direct equivalent.

Example 8: Ba injo *biyoed*, – guft vai ba man bo narmi [1, P. 132].

Translation: *Come* here, – he said to me softly.

Even with a direct command *biyoed* – *come* the addition of *bo narmi* – *softly* indicates politeness and consideration. In English, *Come here, please* would convey a similar level of politeness, using *please* instead of describing the tone of voice.

Example 9: *Ustod* ba man guftand: – *Az shumo bisyor minnatdorom* [1, P. 158].

Translation: The *master* said to me: – I am very grateful to you.

The use of *ustod* (*master/teacher*) and *shumo* (*formal you*) shows respect, and *bisyor minnatdorom* (*I am very grateful*) is a more elaborate expression of gratitude than a simple *thank you*. In English, *Thank you very much* or *I really appreciate it* would be used, but the level of formality conveyed by *ustod* is absent.

Example 10: Man ba vai guftam: – *Iltimos*, in korro kuned [1, P. 176].

Translation: I said to him: – *Please*, do this.

Iltimos is a direct equivalent of *please* used to soften a request. This shows that while Tajik often uses indirectness, direct requests with politeness markers are also possible. The English equivalent is a straightforward *Please, do this*.

Discussion

The comparative analysis reveals several key differences between Tajik and English speech etiquette systems:

– **Formality vs. Informality:** Tajik speech etiquette, as reflected in both contemporary usage and “Reminiscences” by Aini emphasizes formality in many interactions, particularly those involving elders, superiors, or strangers. This is manifested in the use of *shumo*, elaborate greetings and leave-takings, and indirectness in requests and apologies. English, particularly in contemporary American and British contexts, tends towards greater informality, with the widespread use of first names and more direct speech acts.

– **Respect for Elders:** Tajik culture places a strong emphasis on respect for elders, which is reflected in the use of specific forms of address, deferential language, and avoidance of direct contradiction. While respect for elders exists in English-speaking cultures, it is often expressed less explicitly in linguistic forms.

– **Indirectness vs. Directness:** Tajik often favors indirectness in communication, particularly when making requests, expressing disagreement, or delivering criticism. This is to avoid causing offense or disrupting social harmony. English, while having polite forms, often prioritizes directness and clarity.

– **Cultural Values:** These differences reflect underlying cultural values. Tajik culture, influenced by Islamic traditions and a history of hierarchical social structures, emphasizes collectivism, respect for authority, and maintaining face. English-speaking cultures, particularly in the West, often prioritize individualism, egalitarianism, and direct communication.

– **Potential for Miscommunication:** These differences can lead to miscommunication and pragmatic failure in intercultural interactions. For example, a Tajik speaker might perceive a direct request from an English speaker as rude or disrespectful, while an English speaker might find a Tajik speaker's indirectness confusing or evasive. A Tajik speaker's elaborate greetings might be seen as overly formal or time-consuming by an English speaker, while an English speaker's brief greetings might be perceived as dismissive by a Tajik speaker.

– **Historical Influences:** Aini's examples demonstrate that formality and respect markers, particularly in forms of address, were integral to Tajik interactions even in the early 20th century. These are likely rooted in historical social structures and the influence of Persian and Islamic traditions.

Conclusion

Thus, this study demonstrates the significant national-cultural specificity of Tajik and English speech etiquette systems. The differences extend beyond simple linguistic variations, reflecting deep-seated cultural values, social hierarchies, and historical influences. The analysis of examples from “Reminiscences” by Sadridin Aini provides valuable insights into the historical context of Tajik speech etiquette and highlights the enduring importance of respect, formality, and indirectness in many Tajik interactions.

The findings have several implications:

– **Intercultural Communication:** Awareness of these differences is crucial for effective intercultural communication between Tajik and English speakers. Misunderstandings can be avoided by understanding the underlying cultural norms and adjusting communication styles accordingly.

– **Language Teaching:** Language learners should be taught not only the grammatical rules of Tajik and English but also the pragmatic norms and cultural context of speech etiquette. This includes understanding forms of address, politeness strategies, and appropriate levels of formality.

– **Further Research:** Further research is needed to explore the evolution of Tajik speech etiquette in contemporary society, particularly in light of globalization and increasing contact with other cultures. Additionally, comparative studies involving other varieties of English (e.g., Australian, Canadian) would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diversity of English speech etiquette. More extensive corpus-based research on contemporary spoken Tajik would be highly valuable.

The corpus of our study contributes to a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between language, culture, and social interaction. By highlighting the national-cultural specificity of speech etiquette it underscores the importance of intercultural awareness and sensitivity in an increasingly interconnected world.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

Все статьи проходят рецензирование. Но рецензент или автор статьи предпочли не публиковать рецензию к этой статье в открытом доступе. Рецензия может быть предоставлена компетентным органам по запросу.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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