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

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PRAGMALINGUISTIC FEATURES OF SOME SPEECH ETIQUETTE UNITS IN TAJIK AND ENGLISH

Research article

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Abstract

The given article dwells on the comparative analysis of the pragmalinguistic features of speech etiquette units in Tajik and English. The study is empirically grounded in a corpus-based analysis of "Ghulomon" by S. Aini that provides authentic, socially-stratified dialogue. The research methodology integrates contextual analysis, speech act theory, and contrastive pragmatics to examine key etiquette units, including greetings, forms of address, apologies, and expressions of gratitude. The analysis reveals a fundamental divergence in the pragmalinguistic organization of speech etiquette in the two languages. The Tajik system is characterized by status-oriented explicitness, where social hierarchy is overtly and mandatorily encoded through a rich system of grammaticized pronouns (ту/шумо), obligatory honorifics, and formulaic expressions. In contrast, the English system is defined by face-oriented implicitness.

Keywords: speech etiquette, pragmalinguistics, comparative pragmatics, Tajik and English languages, politeness theory.

ПРАГМАЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ НЕКОТОРЫХ ЕДИНИЦ РЕЧЕВОГО ЭТИКЕТА В ТАДЖИКСКОМ И АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматривается сравнительный анализ прагмалингвистических особенностей единиц речевого этикета в таджикском и английском языках. Исследование основано на эмпирическом анализе корпуса «Гуломона» С. Айни, содержащего аутентичные диалоги, отражающие социальную стратификацию. Методология исследования интегрирует контекстуальный анализ, теорию речевых актов и контрастивную прагматику для изучения ключевых единиц этикета, включая приветствия, формы обращения, извинения и выражения благодарности. Анализ выявляет фундаментальное расхождение в прагмалингвистической организации речевого этикета в двух языках. Таджикская система характеризуется статусно-ориентированной эксплицитностью, где социальная иерархия явно и обязательно кодируется посредством богатой системы грамматизированных местоимений (ту/шумо), обязательных форм вежливости и формульных выражений. В противоположность этому, английская система определяется имплицитной ориентацией на сохранение лица.

Ключевые слова: этикет речи, прагмалингвистика, сравнительная прагматика, таджикский и английский языки, теория вежливости.

Introduction

Speech etiquette, the system of culturally-sanctioned norms for verbal interaction, constitutes a cornerstone of human communication. It functions as more than a mere repository of polite expressions; it is a dynamic system that regulates social distance, expresses respect, and reflects the underlying value systems of a culture. Pragmalinguistics, the study of how language is used in context, provides the ideal theoretical framework for investigating these units, as it focuses on the relationship between linguistic forms and their intended communicative functions. This paper delves into "some considerations beset with the pragmalinguistic features of speech etiquette units", aiming to deconstruct and compare the systems at play in the Tajik and English languages [8], [9].

The contrast between Tajik and English in this domain is particularly stark and illuminating. Tajik, a West-Iranian language deeply embedded in the cultural traditions of Central Asia and the Persianate world, operates within a framework where social hierarchy, age, and status are of paramount importance. These factors are not merely background context but are actively and explicitly encoded into the linguistic structure of everyday speech [4]. English, particularly in its Anglo-American variant, functions as the primary vehicle for a culture that, at least overtly, espouses ideals of egalitarianism, individualism, and transactional clarity. Politeness in this context is often realized not through overt markers of deference, but through strategies that minimize imposition and respect individual autonomy [10].

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The primary purpose of the article is to conduct a comprehensive comparative analysis of the pragmalinguistic features of speech etiquette units in Tajik and English. The study aims to identify, describe, and contrast the linguistic strategies employed in both languages for key etiquette functions, including greetings, forms of address, apologies, expressions of gratitude, and directives. A central objective is to test the hypothesis that Tajik speech etiquette operates according to a "Principle of Hierarchy" (explicitly encoding social status through grammaticized markers), while English speech etiquette follows a "Principle of Non-Imposition" (implicitly mitigating threats to interlocutor autonomy through strategic linguistic choices).

Literature review

The theoretical framework of this study draws upon foundational works in pragmatics, politeness theory, and contrastive linguistics. P. Brown and S.C. Levinson's (2011) seminal politeness theory provides the universal framework for understanding face-saving strategies, distinguishing between positive and negative politeness [8]. A. Wierzbicka (2010) offers essential insights into the cultural semantics of English, highlighting its orientation towards autonomy and transactional clarity [10]. The Russian scholarly tradition is represented by V.I. Karasik (2015), who explores linguistic manifestations of personality [2], N.I. Formanovskaya (2014), who examines speech interaction from a communicative-pragmatic perspective [5], and T.V. Larina (2013), whose contrastive work on English and Russian communication styles provides a valuable methodological model [3]. For the Tajik linguistic context, the study relies on R.A. Majidova's (2018) sociolinguistic analysis of modern Tajik speech etiquette [4] and J.R. Perry's (2011) reference grammar, which documents the morphological and syntactic features of Tajik deixis [9]. Recent contributions by B.P. Ashrapov (2025) on comparative morphological analysis across Tajik, English, and Chinese further inform the contrastive methodology [6], [7]. The empirical foundation is provided by S. Aini's "Ghulomon" (2019), a literary work renowned for its authentic representation of socially-stratified dialogue in early 20th-century Tajik society [1].

Materials and Methods

The research is empirically grounded in a qualitative corpus-based analysis of Sadriddin Aini's novel "Ghulomon" (2019), selected for its rich representation of authentic, socially-stratified dialogue across various social classes (masters, servants, peasants, judges, religious figures) in early 20th-century Tajik society. The corpus comprises approximately 488 pages of text, from which a targeted sample of over 150 etiquette-related utterances was extracted for detailed analysis.

The methodological framework integrates three complementary approaches:

1. Contextual (Discourse) Analysis: Each etiquette unit is examined within its broader situational context, including the social roles of participants, setting, and communicative goals, to determine how linguistic choices are shaped by and shape the interactional environment.

2. Speech Act Theory: Drawing upon Searle's classification, utterances are categorized by their illocutionary force (e.g., directives, expressives, commissives) to analyze how the same pragmatic function is realized through different linguistic forms in the two languages.

3. Contrastive Pragmatics: A systematic comparison of Tajik and English equivalents is conducted at multiple levels—morphological (T/V pronoun distinction), lexical (honorifics, self-denigrating terms), syntactic (imperative vs. interrogative for directives), and formulaic (fixed expressions for apologies, gratitude)—to identify both universal pragmatic strategies and language-specific realizations.

Main Results and Discussion

The comparative analysis of speech etiquette units in "Ghulomon" reveals consistent and systematic differences in their pragmalinguistic realization. The findings are presented below, categorized by key etiquette functions.

3.1. Pragmalinguistic Features of Address Systems

The system of address is arguably the most powerful domain for signaling social relationships. The contrast between Tajik and English here is fundamental.

3.1.1. The T/V Pronoun Distinction

The choice between the informal *my* (T-form) and the formal *шумо* (V-form) is the most prominent grammaticized feature of Tajik social deixis, a feature absent in modern English.

Example 1: A Master Addresses a Slave

Бой бо таҳдид ба ӯ нигариста, гуфт: "*Ту* фикр мекунӣ, ки ман аз найрангҳои ту бехабарам?" [1, P. 125] — The boy, looking at him threateningly, said: "Do *you* think I am unaware of your tricks?" (translated by the author).

The use of *my* is the primary pragmalinguistic act here. It functions to place the addressee in a subordinate position. The choice is non-negotiable and reflects a fixed social reality. The illocutionary force of the question is aggressive, but the pronoun choice has already established the power dynamic before the semantic content is even processed. The pronoun *you* is pragmatically neutral regarding status. The entire burden of conveying the threatening and dominant tone falls on other linguistic and paralinguistic features. The Tajik model grammaticizes the power dynamic through the pronoun. The English model lexicalizes and contextualizes it. The pragmatic function is shifted from a single, obligatory grammatical morpheme in Tajik to a combination of contextual cues in English.

3.1.2. Honorifics and Status-Marking Nouns

Tajik employs a rich system of honorifics and status-marking nouns that are often obligatory in polite or formal speech.

Example 2: A Peasant Addresses a Judge

Деҳқон дар назди қозӣ сари таъзим фуруд оварда, гуфт: "*Тақсир*, ин *бандаи хоксор* омадааст, то аз *шумо* адолат талаб кунад" [1, P. 235] — The peasant, bowing low before the judge, said: "*Your Honor*, *this humble servant* has come to seek justice from *you*" (translated by the author).

So, the relevant utterance is a dense package of pragmalinguistic deference markers.

1. Тақсир: An obligatory honorific for a person of high official or religious standing. Its omission would be a grave offense.

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2. бандаи хоксор: Literally *humble slave/servant*. The speaker avoids the first-person pronoun *ман (I)* and instead refers to himself in the third person using a term of extreme self-denigration. This is a powerful pragmalinguistic strategy to elevate the status of the addressee by lowering one's own.

3. шумо: The obligatory V-form pronoun, reinforcing the respectful stance.

In English, it must be used differently, though functionally similar, strategies to convey this level of deference.

1. Your Honor: A specific, institutionalized honorific used for addressing judges. It is a direct functional, though not literal, equivalent of *мақсир* in this context.

2. this humble servant: This phrase is a possible, though highly formal and slightly archaic, translation. It captures the self-denigrating function of the Tajik original. A more common modern alternative might be to use "I" but frame the sentence very politely (e.g., "Your Honor, I have come before you to humbly seek justice"). The choice to use "this humble servant" is a stylistic one to preserve the historical flavor.

3.2. Pragmalinguistic Features of Apologies

Apologies are face-saving acts aimed at restoring social equilibrium after a transgression.

Example 3: A Formal Apology

Гуноҳкор ба зиндонбон гуфт: "*Маро узр*, ки боиси заҳмати шумо шудам. Ин тақсири ман аст" [1, P. 260] — The prisoner said to the guard: "*I apologize* for causing you trouble. It is my fault" (translated by the author).

Proceeding from the assumption of the above-adduced example one can assert that the core components of a full apology (expression of regret, acknowledgement of harm, acceptance of responsibility) appear to be pragmatically similar in both languages. The main difference lies in the specific lexical and formulaic choices. The Tajik model often feels slightly more formal and oriented towards the consequences for the hearer, while the common English model ("I'm sorry") is more oriented towards the speaker's internal emotional state.

3.3. Pragmalinguistic Features of Gratitude Expressions

Expressing gratitude is a positive politeness strategy that affirms the relationship between interlocutors.

Example 4: Expressing Heartfelt Thanks

Кампир дастонашро ба сӯи осмон бардошта, дуо кард: "*Хонаобод шав, бачам*. Барои лутфат *ҳазор раҳмат*" [1, P. 302] —The old woman raised her hands to the sky and prayed: "*May your house prosper, my son*. *A thousand thanks* for your grace" (translated by the author).

The pragmalinguistic models for expressing deep gratitude reveal a significant cultural divergence. The Tajik model is communal and spiritual, framing the act as a blessing that reinforces social and divine harmony. The English model is more transactional and individual, focused on acknowledging the specific act of kindness and expressing the speaker's personal feelings of gratitude.

3.4. Pragmalinguistic Features of Directives

Example 5: A Deferential Request

Ҷавон бо эҳтиром гуфт: "*Агар илоҷаш бошад*, ба ман роҳи деҳаро *нишон диҳед*, *тақсир*" [1, P. 189] — The young man said respectfully: "*If it's possible*, *could you show* me the way to the village, *sir*?" (translated by the author).

Thus, both languages use the strategy of making the request conditional on the hearer's ability. However, the English model adds another crucial layer of mitigation by transforming the entire syntactic structure from a command (imperative) to a question (interrogative). This shift is a core feature of English politeness pragmatics.

Conclusion

Thus, the conducted comparative study beset with the pragmalinguistic features of speech etiquette units in Tajik and English, based on the empirical evidence from Sadriddin Aini's "Ghulomon", has successfully illuminated the deep structural and functional differences between the two systems. It has shown that speech etiquette is not a superficial overlay on language but a core organizing principle of communication that reflects and reinforces cultural worldviews.

The significance of this study lies in its detailed, evidence-based contribution to contrastive pragmatics, offering a clear model for comparing languages from vastly different cultural spheres. It provides critical insights for the fields of translation studies and foreign language pedagogy, arguing that competence in another language is inseparable from competence in its cultural and pragmatic norms. While based on a literary text from a specific historical period, the fundamental principles uncovered in this research — of hierarchy versus autonomy, explicitness versus implicitness — remain essential for navigating the complexities of our increasingly interconnected world. Future research can and should explore the evolution of these principles in contemporary digital and spoken contexts, but the foundational contrasts identified here will remain a vital starting point.

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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