

AGE AND GENDER SPECIFIC FEATURES OF SPEECH IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the influence of age and gender factors on speech characteristics in English and Uzbek from a linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic perspective. In modern communication, age-related speech differences, lexical, grammatical and prosodic features characteristic of male and female speech, as well as gender stereotypes in the two languages, their connection with the social function of language and thinking are extensively analyzed. As a research, corpus materials, sociolinguistic observations and conversational texts were compared. According to the results of the article, while gender differences in English are more manifested at the pragmatic and intonational level, in Uzbek their main manifestation is expressed through forms of address, categories of respect and sociocultural units. It is determined that age-related speech differences in both languages differ significantly in metaphorical expression, vocabulary and communicative strategies.

Keywords: gender linguistics, age linguistics, English, Uzbek, sociolinguistics, speech characteristics, pragmatics, discourse analysis.

ВОЗРАСТНЫЕ И ГЕНДЕРНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ РЕЧИ В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И УЗБЕКСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье рассматривается влияние возрастных и гендерных факторов на речевые характеристики английского и узбекского языков с лингвистической, социолингвистической и прагматической точек зрения. В современной

коммуникации подробно анализируются возрастные речевые различия, лексические, грамматические и просодические особенности, характерные для мужской и женской речи, а также гендерные стереотипы в двух языках, их связь с социальной функцией языка и мышления. В качестве исследования сравнивались корпусные материалы, социолингвистические наблюдения и разговорные тексты. Согласно результатам статьи, если в английском языке гендерные различия в большей степени проявляются на прагматическом и интонационном уровне, то в узбекском языке их основное проявление находит через формы обращения, категории уважения и социокультурные единицы. Установлено, что возрастные речевые различия в обоих языках существенно различаются в метафорическом выражении, лексике и коммуникативных стратегиях.

Ключевые слова: гендерная лингвистика, возрастная лингвистика, английский язык, узбекский язык, социолингвистика, речевые характеристики, прагматика, дискурс-анализ.

INGLIZ VA O'ZBEK TILLARIDA YOSH, GENDER JIHATDAN NUTQNING O'ZIGA XOSLIGI

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola ingliz va o'zbek tillarida yosh va gender omillarining nutq xususiyatlariga ta'sirini lingvistik, sosiolingvistik va pragmatik nuqtai nazardan o'rganadi. Zamonaviy kommunikatsiyada yoshga doir nutq farqlari, erkak va ayol nutqiga xos bo'lgan leksik, grammatik va prosodik belgilar, shuningdek, ikki tilda gender stereotiplari, tilning ijtimoiy vazifasi va tafakkur bilan bog'liqligi keng tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot sifatida korpus materiallari, sosiolingvistik kuzatuvlar va suhbat matnlari solishtirildi. Maqola natijalariga ko'ra, ingliz tilida gender farqlari ko'proq pragmatik va intonatsion sathda namoyon bo'lsa, o'zbek tilida ularning asosiy ko'rinishi murojaat shakllari, hurmat kategoriyalari va sotsiokulturologik birliklar orqali ifodalanadi. Yosh bilan bog'liq nutq farqlari esa ikki tilda ham metaforik ifoda, so'z boyligi va kommunikativ strategiyalarda sezilarli darajada farqlanishi aniqlanadi.

Kalit soʻzlar: gender lingvistika, yosh lingvistikasi, ingliz tili, oʻzbek tili, sotsiolingvistika, nutq xususiyatlari, pragmatika, diskurs tahlili.

INTRODUCTION

Age and gender have long been recognized as major sociolinguistic variables that determine how individuals select and use linguistic forms in everyday communication. In both English and Uzbek, the linguistic behavior of speakers changes considerably across different stages of life, reflecting cognitive development, socialization processes, and cultural expectations. Similarly, gender plays a crucial role in shaping linguistic choices, from lexical preference and tone to conversational strategies and pragmatic norms. The comparison of English and Uzbek speech patterns offers a unique perspective because both languages belong to different language families, possess distinct grammatical structures, and reflect different socio-cultural traditions. English, as a global lingua franca, demonstrates tendencies toward individualistic communication and explicit expression, whereas Uzbek, rooted in Central Asian collectivist culture, manifests a preference for indirectness, respect-based formulations, and hierarchical politeness strategies¹.

Cross-linguistic analysis of age and gender variation in speech is particularly important today, as intercultural communication becomes increasingly common in education, business, migration processes, and digital communication. Understanding how speech norms vary among children, adults, elderly people, men, and women in both languages helps prevent miscommunication, supports effective language teaching, and deepens socio-pragmatic competence. This study aims to provide a comprehensive academic overview of the linguistic markers that characterize age and gender-specific speech in English and Uzbek, drawing on modern sociolinguistic theories and empirical findings.²

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

¹ Labov W. — Sociolinguistic Patterns — Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022, pp. 88–126.

² Coates J. — Women, Men and Language — London: Routledge, 2015, pp. 65–150.

The study is grounded in classical and contemporary works on sociolinguistics, including the theories of Labov, Trudgill, Holmes, and modern gender linguistics researchers such as Coates and Tannen. Uzbek linguistic traditions, particularly the works of Qo‘ng‘urov, Yuldoshev, Bozorov, and Karimov, provide foundational perspectives on Uzbek pragmatics, politeness norms, and age-related communication patterns. Prior studies consistently highlight that social identity, cultural background, and group norms influence linguistic choices, while age and gender function as stable sociolinguistic determinants of variation³.

Methodologically, the research employs a qualitative comparative design, synthesizing data from sociolinguistic interviews, discourse analysis, and secondary sources. Samples of natural spoken English and Uzbek were examined to identify lexical, phonological, and pragmatic patterns. The study also utilizes cross-cultural comparison to analyze structural and functional similarities and differences. In addition, a small corpus of dialogues from media sources, everyday conversations, and educational settings in both languages was reviewed to identify recurring communicative strategies among different age and gender groups. The two languages were analyzed according to shared sociolinguistic variables: politeness strategies, address terms, emotional expressiveness, turn-taking norms, taboo avoidance, and pragmatic softening or intensification.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

1. Age-Related Speech Features

Age influences vocabulary size, discourse coherence, pragmatic competence, and communicative style. Children in English tend to use shorter utterances, rely heavily on concrete nouns and simple verbs, and frequently shift topics. Uzbek children display similar linguistic tendencies but are more influenced by cultural norms of respectful communication, especially when addressing adults, often using softened requests.

³ Trudgill P. — Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society — London: Penguin Books, 2020, pp. 54–97.

Adults in English generally adopt direct communication strategies and express opinions more explicitly, while Uzbek adults often prioritize indirectness, using modal verbs and honorifics to signal politeness. Elderly speakers in Uzbek use more proverbs, fixed expressions, and culturally loaded idioms, reflecting traditional values, whereas English-speaking elderly speakers show a more narrative and explanatory discourse style.

2. Gender-Related Speech Features

Gender differences appear in vocabulary, politeness markers, intonation, and conversational strategies. Women in English tend to use more hedges (“maybe”, “kind of”), emotional vocabulary, politeness markers, and supportive backchanneling (“right”, “I see”). In Uzbek, female speech similarly shows more emotional expressiveness, euphemisms, and softened forms of criticism, consistent with cultural expectations of modesty and harmony.

Men in English often employ shorter sentences, assertive tone, fewer hedging devices, and more topic-control strategies. Uzbek men exhibit even stronger dominance strategies in conversation, often using direct imperatives, culturally embedded proverbs, and authoritative tones, reflecting patriarchal social structures.

Table 1. Age-specific speech features in english and uzbek

Age Group	English Speech Characteristics	Uzbek Speech Characteristics
Children	Short utterances, simple grammar, rapid topic shifts	Simple sentences, respectful forms when addressing adults, culturally shaped politeness
Adults	Direct communication, explicit statements, balanced pragmatics	Indirect speech, honorifics, culturally guided politeness hierarchy
Elderly	Narrative style, explanatory tone	High use of idioms, proverbs, moralistic tone

Table 2. Gender-Specific Speech Features in English and Uzbek

Gender	English Features	Uzbek Features
Female	More hedges, polite forms, emotional vocabulary, supportive backchannels	Indirect requests, euphemisms, emotional expressiveness, modest tone
Male	Assertiveness, fewer hedges, more interruptions	Directive tone, proverbs, authoritative speech reflecting hierarchy

3. Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Findings

The study reveals that while English and Uzbek share several universal patterns—such as women’s use of communicative politeness and men’s preference for assertive forms—cultural influences produce important differences. English speech patterns emphasize personal autonomy and clarity, whereas Uzbek speech norms value respect for age, hierarchy, and community. Thus, Uzbek speakers, regardless of gender, often adopt more hierarchical address forms, especially when speaking to older individuals. English-speaking adolescents tend to use slang more frequently than Uzbek adolescents, whose slang is culturally restricted and often influenced by Russian or modern internet culture. These findings emphasize the importance of context, social role, and cultural values in shaping communicative behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that age and gender significantly influence linguistic choices in both English and Uzbek, shaping vocabulary usage, pragmatic strategies, discourse structure, and communicative preferences. While universal sociolinguistic tendencies can be observed across both languages—such as women’s greater use of polite, emotional, and cooperative speech forms—the cross-cultural analysis shows that cultural norms strongly affect the extent and manner of such variation. Uzbek speech is deeply rooted in hierarchical respect, collectivist values, and traditional politeness formulas, resulting in more indirectness and culturally embedded expressions across all age groups. English, in contrast, reflects individualistic norms that encourage directness, explicit argumentation, and a more egalitarian approach to communication between genders and generations.

The insights gained from this comparative study contribute to sociolinguistic theory and have practical implications for language teaching, intercultural communication, translation studies, and the development of pragmatic competence among learners. Understanding these differences is essential for designing effective educational materials and supporting communication between English and Uzbek speakers in academic, professional, and social contexts. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for further empirical research into digital communication, slang evolution, and shifting gender norms in modern societies, as these factors continue to reshape linguistic practices.

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