CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK SPEECH ETIQUETTE

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Abstract: This thesis discusses cultural differences in English and Uzbek speech etiquette. It examines how politeness, greeting forms, requests, apologies, gratitude, and respect are expressed differently in the two languages. The paper argues that understanding speech etiquette is essential for successful intercultural communication and effective foreign language learning.

Key words: speech etiquette, culture, politeness, intercultural communication, English, Uzbek

Introduction

Language is not only a means of exchanging information. It is also a reflection of social behavior and national culture. One of the clearest examples of this connection can be seen in speech etiquette. Speech etiquette includes the words and expressions people use in everyday communication when they greet each other, apologize, express gratitude, ask for help, or show respect. These forms may seem simple, but in fact they reveal deep cultural values and social norms. For this reason, the study of speech etiquette is especially important in the field of language and culture.

English and Uzbek speech etiquette have both similarities and differences. In both cultures, politeness is highly valued, but it is expressed in different ways. In Uzbek communication, respect for age, status, and social position plays a very important role. Speech often includes polite forms, respectful pronouns, and expressions that show modesty and courtesy. In English, politeness is also important, but it is often expressed through indirectness, softening devices, and fixed phrases such as "could you," "would you mind," or "I'm afraid" [1]. These differences show that politeness is not universal in form, even if its purpose is similar.

Greetings provide a good example of cultural variation. In Uzbek, greetings are often warm, extended, and closely connected with asking about health, family, and general well-being. Expressions such as Assalomu alaykum, Yaxshimisiz?, or Ishlar yaxshimi? are common in daily interaction and can reflect sincerity, closeness, and respect. In English, greetings are usually shorter and more formulaic, such as "Hello," "Hi," or "How are you?" However, the phrase "How are you?" does not always require a detailed answer. In many cases, it functions as a routine social expression rather than a real request for personal information. This can sometimes confuse learners who interpret it literally.

The same can be observed in making requests. Uzbek speakers often try to be very respectful, especially when speaking to older people or strangers. They may use longer forms or soft expressions to avoid sounding rude. English speakers also use polite requests, but their politeness often depends on modal verbs, intonation, and context. For example, the difference between "Open the window" and "Could you open the window, please?" is not only grammatical but also cultural. A student who translates

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directly from one language to another may produce a sentence that is grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate. In my opinion, this is one of the main reasons why language learners sometimes feel that communication is difficult even when they know vocabulary and grammar.

Apologies and expressions of gratitude also reflect cultural differences. In Uzbek culture, apologizing may involve emotional sincerity and humility, especially in formal or family contexts. English apologies, on the other hand, are often frequent and formulaic. English speakers may say "sorry" in many everyday situations, even for small inconveniences. Similarly, "thank you" is used very often in English, sometimes more regularly than in Uzbek daily interaction. This does not mean that one culture is more polite than another. Rather, it shows that each language community has its own communicative habits and expectations.

Forms of address are another important aspect of speech etiquette. In Uzbek, kinship terms and honorific forms are widely used even outside the family. Words like aka, opa, xola, or amaki can express closeness and respect in social interaction. In English, such usage is less common. People usually address each other by name, title, or neutral terms such as "Mr.", "Mrs.", or "Professor" in formal situations. For Uzbek learners of English, it may seem unusual that direct name use can be normal and polite. At the same time, English speakers learning Uzbek may not immediately understand why forms of address are so closely connected with age and social relationship.

These differences are especially important in intercultural communication. When people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds communicate, misunderstandings may arise not because of grammar mistakes, but because of differences in pragmatic norms. A learner may unintentionally sound too direct, too distant, too informal, or too emotional. That is why speech etiquette should be taught as part of language learning, not as an additional topic outside the main curriculum [2]. Students need to know not only what to say, but also when, how, and to whom it should be said.

In foreign language teaching, the comparison of English and Uzbek speech etiquette can be very productive. It helps students notice both similarities and differences between cultures. Such comparison also develops intercultural awareness. For example, teachers can ask students to analyze greetings in dialogues, compare apology formulas, role-play formal and informal situations, or discuss how politeness changes depending on age and context. These activities make the lesson more practical and meaningful. They also help students avoid mechanical translation and develop more natural communication skills.

In my view, speech etiquette is one of the most practical themes in the Language and Culture course because it connects theory with real life. Students can immediately see how cultural values appear in daily speech. They also become more aware of their own linguistic habits and learn to respect communicative traditions of other people. This awareness is important not only for academic success, but also for professional and social communication in the modern world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, English and Uzbek speech etiquette reflect different cultural traditions, social expectations, and ways of expressing politeness. Greetings, requests, apologies, gratitude, and forms of address may have similar communicative purposes, but they are realized differently in each culture. Therefore, understanding these

differences is essential for effective foreign language learning and successful intercultural communication. The study of speech etiquette helps learners use language more appropriately, avoid misunderstandings, and build respectful communication across cultures.

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