

## SELLING CULTURE: A SOCIOLINGUISTICS ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK TOURISM TEXTS.

**Novik Karina**

Teacher at Uzbekistan State World Languages University,  
Faculty of English Philology,  
karri199825@gmail.com

**Abdisoatova Dilnoza**

Student, Faculty of English Philology,  
Uzbekistan State World Languages University,  
[abdisoatovadilnozaa@gmail.com](mailto:abdisoatovadilnozaa@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** This study explores the representation of national identity in English and Uzbek tourism texts from a sociolinguistics perspective. It examines the linguistic strategies used to promote culture, focusing on lexical choices, evaluative language, and cultural references. The analysis shows that tourism discourse not only provides information about destinations but also constructs and “sells” cultural identity to different audiences, reflecting both global and local perspectives.

**Key words:** tourism discourse, national identity, sociolinguistics, cultural representation, English language, Uzbek language, tourism texts.

### Introduction

In recent decades, the global tourism industry has transformed how nations present themselves to the world. Promotional materials—websites, brochures, and social media campaigns—have become key sites where cultural heritage is packaged and national identity is articulated. As noted by Dann, tourism discourse is a distinct genre shaped by the dual goals of persuasion and representation, where language is strategically deployed to construct appealing destination images [1]. These trends are particularly visible in post-Soviet contexts such as Uzbekistan, where the state has actively invested in tourism as a tool for economic growth and international recognition.

One of the most prominent features of contemporary tourism discourse is the linguistic construction of national identity. Tourism texts select and foreground specific historical narratives, cultural symbols, and evaluative language to position a nation for different audiences. According to Urry, the “tourist gaze” is mediated by such promotional materials, which shape expectations and frame experiences [3]. For Uzbekistan, this involves navigating a layered heritage—Zoroastrian, Islamic, Soviet, and post-independence—and presenting it in ways that appeal both to international visitors and to domestic audiences. As Thurlow and Jaworski emphasize, tourism discourse is never neutral; it actively produces versions of identity that reflect ideological choices about what to include, what to omit, and how to address the reader [2].

The relevance of this study lies in the growing influence of tourism on national branding and the need to understand how linguistic choices mediate identity in multilingual contexts. Uzbekistan offers a unique case: English serves as the lingua franca for international tourism, while Uzbek remains the language of internal authenticity and state-sponsored heritage. Comparing the two reveals how the same cultural artifacts are framed differently depending on the intended audience. Such an

analysis is particularly timely given Uzbekistan's recent tourism reforms and its ambition to position itself as a leading destination on the Silk Road. The aim of this study is to analyze the sociolinguistic strategies employed in English-language and Uzbek-language tourism texts to construct and “sell” national identity.

#### Materials and Methods

The study is based on a contrastive corpus of tourism texts collected from official sources, including the Uzbekistan Tourism Development Committee website ([uzbekistan.travel](http://uzbekistan.travel)), ministry portals, and printed brochures published between 2018 and 2025. The corpus comprises 40 texts: 20 in English and 20 in Uzbek, selected for genre consistency (promotional descriptions of cultural sites, travel guides, and heritage highlights). The research applies Critical Discourse Analysis to interpret how linguistic features construct national identity, supplemented by quantitative corpus analysis (using AntConc) to measure frequencies of adjectives, pronouns, and evaluative expressions [1; 2].

The classification of linguistic units—such as evaluative adjectives, metaphors, modality, deixis, and cultural references—is based on definitions from tourism discourse theory and contrastive pragmatics frameworks [1; 2]. Uzbek excerpts are provided with glosses (literal English translations) to ensure transparency in analysis. The study also draws on cross-cultural findings from recent contrastive research on English and Uzbek tourism materials [4].

#### Results

The analysis demonstrates that English and Uzbek tourism texts employ systematically different linguistic strategies to construct national identity, reflecting distinct audience orientations. Lexically, English texts contain a high density of evaluative adjectives and metaphors—such as magnificent, breathtaking, a rich tapestry of wonders—which serve to exoticize and dramatize cultural heritage. In contrast, Uzbek texts rely on compound descriptors (*tarixiy-me'moriy yodgorlik* “historical-architectural monument”), culturally grounded terms (*muqaddas* “sacred”), and fewer overt superlatives. Borrowings such as UNESCO and Silk Road appear in both corpora, but English texts use them as global signifiers, while Uzbek texts embed them within locally specific narratives [2; 3].

Furthermore, the texts differ in grammatical and rhetorical choices that shape the relationship between the writer and the reader. English texts frequently use second-person pronouns (you) and hortative modality (must see, should discover), creating an inclusive, persuasive tone that mimics spoken invitation. Uzbek texts predominantly employ impersonal constructions and third-person descriptions (*O'zbekiston ... tortmoqda* “Uzbekistan attracts...”), favoring formality and factual presentation. As noted by Ziyotova, such contrasts align with broader cross-cultural differences in promotional discourse, where English prioritizes direct engagement and Uzbek privileges institutional authority [4].

In addition, the linguistic features contribute to the construction of social identity and emotional resonance. English texts construct a global “tourist” identity by positioning the reader as an explorer of exotic lands, using metaphors like heart of the Silk Road to evoke wonder. Uzbek texts, by contrast, construct a collective national identity through references to Amir Temur, Alisher Navoiy, and Islamic heritage, often employing the inclusive *biz* (“we”) to align the reader with the nation. Emotionally charged terms such as *faxr* (“pride”) and *maftunkor* (“enchanting”) in Uzbek texts

affirm cultural belonging, while English equivalents like unforgettable and once-in-a-lifetime emphasize the uniqueness of the tourist experience [1; 3].

#### Discussion

The findings indicate that the divergent linguistic strategies observed in English and Uzbek tourism texts are closely linked to audience orientation and sociocultural context. English texts, aimed at international tourists, employ dense evaluative adjectives, metaphors, and direct address to exoticize and commodify Uzbek heritage. Uzbek texts, by contrast, prioritize factual description, formal impersonal structures, and culturally specific vocabulary, reflecting their role in affirming national identity for a domestic audience. As Dann notes, tourism language is always tailored to the presumed expectations of its readership [1].

The impact of these linguistic choices on the construction of national identity is both significant and multifaceted. On the one hand, English texts contribute to the commodification of culture, packaging heritage as a consumable product for the global market. On the other hand, Uzbek texts reinforce authenticity and collective pride, using heritage as a resource for internal nation-building. As emphasized by Urry, the tourist gaze is shaped by the linguistic and semiotic resources that destinations deploy [3]. The coexistence of these two discursive modes reveals the complex ideological work that tourism discourse performs.

At the same time, challenges may arise, including potential inconsistencies between the identity projected internationally and the self-understanding promoted domestically. This is particularly relevant on global platforms such as official tourism websites, where English and Uzbek versions appear side by side. However, as argued by Thurlow and Jaworski, such tensions are inherent to tourism discourse, which is by nature a site of negotiation between authenticity and marketability [2]. These changes should be viewed as part of the natural adaptation of language to new communicative demands rather than as a distortion of cultural representation.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has examined the construction of national identity in English and Uzbek tourism texts, with particular attention to the linguistic strategies employed in each corpus. The analysis has demonstrated that these texts represent distinct discursive modes, shaped by different audience expectations, sociocultural norms, and the dual pressures of global marketability and domestic authenticity.

The findings indicate that English tourism texts rely on dense evaluative adjectives, metaphors, and direct address to exoticize Uzbek heritage and position the destination for the international tourist gaze. Uzbek texts, by contrast, prioritize formal impersonal structures, culturally grounded vocabulary, and references to national symbols, affirming collective identity for a domestic audience. As emphasized by Dann, tourism language is always tailored to the presumed expectations of its readership, and the divergences observed here reflect the strategic choices inherent in cross-cultural promotional discourse [1].

Furthermore, the study has shown that the commodification of culture through language is not a uniform process but one that varies significantly by audience. While concerns may arise about the potential misalignment between externally projected and internally understood identities, such tensions are inherent to tourism discourse, which by nature negotiates between authenticity and marketability. It can therefore be

concluded that the linguistic choices in English and Uzbek tourism texts do not represent a weakening of cultural identity; instead, they demonstrate the flexibility of language as it adapts to the competing demands of global promotion and local self-representation. Their continued evolution highlights the dynamic role of language in shaping how nations are imagined and sold in the modern world.

#### REFERENCES

1. Dann, G. M. S. *The Language of Tourism: A Sociolinguistic Perspective*. Wallingford: CAB International, 1996. 298 p.
2. Thurlow, C., Jaworski, A. *Tourism Discourse: Language and Global Mobility*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 282 p.
3. Urry, J. *The Tourist Gaze*. 2nd ed. London: Sage, 2002. 184 p.
4. Ziyotova, M. *Contrastive analysis of evaluative language in English and Uzbek tourism brochures*. Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan, 2025, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 45–58.
5. Sobirova, F. I. (2025). Speech manipulation in electoral programs. *Philological Research: Language, Literature, Education*, 1(1.1).
6. Sobirova, F. I. (2025, February). Idrok va tilning o'zaro ta'siri: Tilni qayta ishlash va o'zlashtirishda psixolingvistik nuqtai nazar. *The Lingua Spectrum*, 2.
7. Sobirova, F. I. (2026). Ongga ta'sir qilish san'ati: Suhbatdan oldingi va keyingi manipulyatsiyalar. *Obrazovanie nauka i innovatsionnye idei v mire*, 91.
8. Sobirova, F. I. (2025, October). Saylovoldi nutqlarida manipulyativ strategiyalarning pragmatik tahlili. *Modern Education and Development*, 35(1).
9. Sobirova, F. I. (2025, March). Neyrolingvistikada nutqiy ta'sir. *Лучшие интеллектуальные исследования*, 41(2).