

REASSESSMENT OF THE STEREOTYPES IN SPEECH BEHAVIOR OF UZBEKS AND ENGLISH PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the reassessment of stereotypes in the speech behavior of Uzbeks and English people, focusing on the sociolinguistic factors that shape politeness, directness, and communicative norms. Drawing on the principles of intercultural pragmatics and ethnolinguistic, the research examines how traditional perceptions of national character—such as “Uzbek hospitality” or “English reserve”—manifest in actual speech practices. Through a comparative analysis of conversational patterns, greetings, requests, and compliments, this paper reveals how globalization, media, and intercultural contact have transformed stereotypical communicative expectations. The findings show that while both cultures maintain distinct politeness frameworks, modern discourse increasingly demonstrates hybrid forms of interaction that blur conventional cultural boundaries.

Keywords: speech behavior, stereotypes, pragmatics, intercultural communication, Uzbek, English, politeness strategies, sociolinguistics.

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada o‘zbeklar va inglizlarning nutqiy xulq-atvoridagi stereotiplar qayta baholangan. Tadqiqotda ijtimoiy-lingvistik omillar — xususan, xushmuomalalik, to‘g‘ridan-to‘g‘rilik va kommunikativ normalar — madaniy stereotiplar bilan qanday bog‘liqligi tahlil qilinadi. “O‘zbek mehmondo‘stligi” yoki “ingliz sovuqqonligi” kabi an‘anaviy qarashlar zamonaviy nutq amaliyotida qanday aks etayotgani intermadaniy pragmatika asosida ko‘rib chiqiladi. Solishtirma tahlil natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, har ikkala xalq nutqida xushmuomalalikning o‘ziga xos me‘yorlari saqlanib qolgan bo‘lsa-da, globallashuv jarayonida shakllanayotgan yangi nutq uslublari madaniyatlararo chegaralarni sezilarli darajada yumshatmoqda.

Kalit so‘zlar: nutqiy xulq, stereotip, pragmatika, intermadaniy muloqot, o‘zbek, ingliz, xushmuomalalik, sotsiolingvistika.

АННОТАЦИЯ

В данной статье проводится переоценка стереотипов в речевом поведении узбеков и англичан. Исследование направлено на выявление социолингвистических факторов, формирующих вежливость, прямолинейность и коммуникативные нормы. Традиционные представления о

национальном характере, такие как «узбекское гостеприимство» или «английская сдержанность», рассматриваются с точки зрения их проявления в современной речи. Сравнительный анализ показывает, что, несмотря на сохранение культурных различий, процессы глобализации и межкультурного взаимодействия привели к формированию новых гибридных форм общения, стирающих границы между культурными моделями.

Ключевые слова: речевое поведение, стереотип, прагматика, межкультурная коммуникация, узбек, англичанин, стратегии вежливости, социолингвистика.

INTRODUCTION

Stereotypes have long played a central role in shaping intercultural perceptions and communicative expectations between different linguistic communities. In sociolinguistics and intercultural pragmatics, the concept of *speech behavior* refers to the culturally determined ways individuals use language to express politeness, power, and social identity (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Scollon & Scollon, 2011)¹. Traditional notions often describe the English as “reserved” and “indirect” speakers, whereas Uzbeks are viewed as “warm,” “hospitable,” and “emotionally expressive” communicators. However, such generalizations—though partially grounded in observation—require constant reassessment in light of globalization, technological communication, and evolving intercultural encounters (Wierzbicka, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2008)².

Speech stereotypes are not merely linguistic but **ideological constructs** that reflect cultural values, historical experiences, and social hierarchies. According to Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988)³, stereotypes function as *cognitive shortcuts* that help people interpret unfamiliar communicative behavior. Yet, when unexamined, they risk distorting genuine understanding by reducing cultural complexity to simplified traits. In the case of Uzbek and English communication, stereotypes are often rooted in contrasting **cultural orientations**: collectivism versus individualism, high-context versus low-context communication, and emotional expressiveness versus restraint (Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2010)⁴.

In the Uzbek context, speech behavior is deeply intertwined with notions of *hurmat* (respect), *odob* (etiquette), and *mehr* (warmth). Expressions of deference, elaborate greeting rituals, and indirect requests are considered essential to

¹ Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.

² Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication, and Politeness Theory*. Continuum International Publishing.

³ Gudykunst, W. B., & Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). *Culture and Interpersonal Communication*. Sage Publications.

⁴ Hofstede, G. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill Education.

maintaining social harmony. For instance, common Uzbek greetings such as *Assalomu alaykum*, *ahvollaringiz yaxshimi?* are not mere formalities but manifestations of solidarity and mutual recognition. In contrast, English communicative norms emphasize efficiency, autonomy, and minimalism — exemplified in expressions like *Hi* or *How are you?*, which often function as routine phatic exchanges rather than genuine inquiries (Coulmas, 2013)⁵.

Nonetheless, recent studies indicate a gradual transformation in both linguistic cultures. With the rise of global digital communication, social media, and intercultural education, speakers in both societies increasingly adopt hybrid communicative styles that blend local politeness conventions with globalized speech norms (Kecks, 2014; House, 2015)⁶. For instance, younger Uzbeks in online contexts tend to use English pragmatic markers such as *please*, *sorry*, and *thanks* even in Uzbek sentences, while English speakers are incorporating culturally adaptive politeness strategies when interacting in multicultural settings.

The reassessment of speech stereotypes between Uzbeks and English people is thus essential for understanding how cultural identities are negotiated in contemporary discourse. As Karsh (1998)⁷ argues, language is not only a means of communication but also a *symbolic representation of cultural belonging*. This perspective necessitates analyzing how traditional stereotypes—such as “Uzbek generosity” or “English formality”—are maintained, reshaped, or challenged in modern communication.

Therefore, this study aims to:

1. Examine the origins and functions of speech stereotypes in Uzbek and English communicative cultures.
2. Identify the extent to which these stereotypes correspond to or diverge from real linguistic practices.
3. Explore how globalization and intercultural communication have influenced the transformation of traditional speech norms.

By doing so, the research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how stereotypes operate within linguistic interaction—not as fixed categories but as evolving constructs influenced by cultural change, media, and interpersonal experience.

Theoretical Perspectives on Stereotypes and Speech Behavior

The study of speech behavior and stereotypes lies at the intersection of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and cultural studies. In linguistic terms, stereotypes

⁵ Coulmas, F. (2013). *Sociolinguistics: The Study of Speakers' Choices*. Cambridge University Press.

⁶ House, J. (2015). *Politeness in Intercultural Pragmatics*. De Gruyter Mouton.

⁷ Kramsch, C. (1998). *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

represent collective perceptions that shape communicative expectations between members of different speech communities (Gudykunst, 2003; Spencer-Oatey, 2008)⁸. They function as simplified cognitive models—schemas that help individuals interpret social behavior but may also reinforce cultural biases and communicative misunderstandings (Lippmann, 1922; Dijk, 1998)⁹.

According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) ¹⁰politeness theory, speakers use linguistic strategies to balance two fundamental needs: *positive face* (the desire to be liked and approved) and *negative face* (the desire for autonomy and freedom of action). These strategies, however, are culture-dependent; what is considered polite in one culture may appear distant or even rude in another. For instance, English politeness often relies on indirectness (*Could you please...?*), while Uzbek politeness typically emphasizes emotional warmth, deferential forms, and extended greetings (*hurmat bilan, iltimos qilaman*).

From the standpoint of intercultural pragmatics, stereotypes in speech are not static but dynamic constructs that evolve through contact and negotiation (Kecskes, 2014) ¹¹. They reflect deeper cultural dimensions—such as individualism vs. collectivism (Hofstede, 2010) and high-context vs. low-context communication (Hall, 1976)¹²—that influence conversational style, directness, and emotional expression.

Cultural Dimensions and Communicative Norms

Edward Hall's (1976) theory of contextual communication provides a foundational framework for understanding how cultural values shape language use. In *high-context cultures* (e.g., Uzbek), much of the message is conveyed implicitly through nonverbal cues, shared social knowledge, and contextual signals. In contrast, *low-context cultures* (e.g., English), prioritize explicit verbal communication, clarity, and directness.

Similarly, Hofstede's (2010)¹³ cultural dimensions theory distinguishes between collectivist and individualist societies. Uzbek communication reflects collectivist values, where speech is oriented toward maintaining social harmony, respect for elders, and communal relationships. Politeness formulas such as *hurmat bilan* (with respect), or *ahvollaringiz yaxshimi?* (how are your affairs?) reinforce relational bonds. English speech, however, often exhibits individualistic values emphasizing independence and efficiency, where brevity and linguistic minimalism serve pragmatic rather than relational goals (Coulmas, 2013; Holmes, 2013).

⁸ Gudykunst, W. B. (2003). *Bridging Differences: Effective Intergroup Communication* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

⁹ Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public Opinion*. Harcourt, Brace & Company.

¹⁰ Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Kecskes, I. (2014). *Intercultural Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

¹² Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Anchor Books.

¹³ Hofstede, G. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill Education.

A key aspect of this contrast is emotional expression. Uzbeks tend to express empathy and warmth verbally and nonverbally—through extended greetings, compliments, and inquiries about family well-being—whereas English speakers often adopt a reserved tone and avoid overt emotional display to preserve personal space (Wierzbicka, 2003). This cultural divergence has historically reinforced the stereotype of “emotional Uzbeks” versus “reserved English.”

However, as Kecskes (2014) notes, globalization and multilingual interaction are transforming communicative identities, producing *hybrid speech styles* that blend traditional politeness strategies with new intercultural norms. For instance, the influence of English on Uzbek discourse has introduced elements of conciseness and functional clarity, while Uzbek patterns of relational politeness are increasingly recognized in English intercultural communication studies (House, 2015).

Reassessment of Stereotypes in Modern Sociolinguistics

Modern sociolinguistics challenges essentialist notions of national speech styles. According to Tannen (2005), communicative differences are better explained through *situational context, gender, and social roles* than through fixed cultural stereotypes. Similarly, Scollon and Scollon (2011) argue that stereotypes should be reassessed within discourse systems, where participants negotiate meaning dynamically depending on power relations, topic, and intent.

In the Uzbek context, Alimova (2019) and Rakhimov (2021)¹⁴ emphasize that post-Soviet sociolinguistic realities have diversified speech behavior, especially among younger generations exposed to global media. English influences in digital communication—such as using “thank you,” “sorry,” or emoji-based politeness—have softened traditional hierarchical norms. Conversely, British sociolinguistics has documented a rise in *positive politeness markers* (e.g., humor, informal address) in multicultural Britain, reflecting a shift toward inclusivity and emotional accessibility (Culpeper, 2011; Mills, 2003)¹⁵.

Therefore, reassessing stereotypes in the speech behavior of Uzbeks and English people means recognizing that language is fluid, adaptive, and context-dependent. Stereotypes may serve as cultural reference points, but they no longer define communication in rigid national terms. Instead, speakers constantly reconstruct their identities through linguistic accommodation, code-switching, and cross-cultural awareness (Giles & Ogay, 2007)¹⁶.

¹⁴ Alimova, G. (2019). *Cultural Communication Patterns in Modern Uzbek Society*. Tashkent State University Press.

¹⁵ Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁶ Giles, H., & Ogay, T. (2007). Communication accommodation theory. In B. Whaley & W. Samter (Eds.), *Explaining Communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars* (pp. 293–310). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

The literature reviewed highlights a paradigm shifts from perceiving speech stereotypes as *static representations* of national character to viewing them as *dynamic cultural negotiations*. Modern research emphasizes adaptability, hybridity, and the influence of globalization on communicative norms.

This theoretical foundation provides a framework for the following sections, which will analyze authentic examples of speech interaction among Uzbeks and English speakers, demonstrating how stereotypes are being redefined in everyday discourse.

Methodology and Research Design

This study employs a qualitative, comparative, and interpretive research design grounded in intercultural pragmatics and discourse analysis. The aim is to reassess traditional stereotypes associated with the speech behavior of Uzbeks and English people, exploring how these stereotypes manifest or transform in real communicative contexts.

The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of cultural meaning and social interaction rather than numerical generalization (Dörnyei, 2007; Creswell, 2014)¹⁷. By analyzing authentic examples of greetings, requests, apologies, and compliments, the research identifies pragmatic strategies that reflect evolving cultural values.

Research Objectives

The methodology was designed to address three primary objectives:

1. To identify stereotypical speech patterns in Uzbek and English communicative cultures.
2. To analyze how these patterns are reshaped in modern cross-cultural and digital contexts.
3. To interpret how globalization and intercultural contact contribute to redefining politeness and emotional expression.

Data Sources and Sample

Data were collected from three main sources to ensure validity and representativeness:

1. Authentic spoken data:
 - Recordings and transcriptions of natural conversations among native Uzbek and British English speakers (aged 20–55).
 - Informal interviews conducted with 15 Uzbek university students and 10 British students studying in Uzbekistan.
2. Digital communication samples:

¹⁷ Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

○ Posts, comments, and greetings extracted from Uzbek Telegram channels, Instagram captions, and English social media discourse (Twitter, Reddit).

○ Samples were anonymized and selected according to ethical research guidelines.

3. Literary and media examples:

○ Uzbek television programs (*Oydin hayot*, *Munozara*), and BBC talk shows (*HardTalk*, *The Graham Norton Show*) were analyzed to observe public discourse and politeness expressions.

Analytical Framework

The analysis is based on a triangulated model combining three analytical approaches:

1. Pragmatic analysis — using Brown & Levinson's (1987)¹⁸ theory of *politeness strategies* (positive vs. negative face).

2. Discourse analysis — applying Scollon & Scollon's (2011)¹⁹ *intercultural discourse system model* to identify contextual variation in speech.

3. Cultural value analysis — following Hofstede (2010) and Hall (1976) to interpret communication style differences (collectivism vs. individualism, high-context vs. low-context).

Each communicative act (e.g., greeting, request, compliment) was categorized according to:

- Form (direct, indirect, hybrid)
- Function (solidarity, power, deference)
- Cultural index (traditional vs. globalized expression)

For instance, the Uzbek greeting *Assalomu alaykum, ishlaringiz joyidami?* was classified as an extended solidarity act, while the English *Hi, how's it going?* was coded as a phatic minimization act.

Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis followed several systematic steps:

1. Collection and transcription: All speech events were transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for spoken data and plain orthography for written examples.

2. Coding: Thematic coding was conducted using NVivo 14 software, following Miles and Huberman's (1994) procedure of data reduction and categorization.

¹⁸ Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ Scollon, R., & Scollon, S. W. (2011). *Intercultural Communication: A Discourse Approach*. Wiley-Blackwell.

3. Comparative analysis: Each pair of communicative events (Uzbek–English) was compared across speech acts to identify structural, semantic, and pragmatic differences.

4. Interpretation: The patterns were interpreted within a cross-cultural cognitive framework to determine whether stereotypical features persist, weaken, or transform.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the ethical standards of sociolinguistic research (BAAL, 2019). All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained. Names and identifying details were omitted to preserve anonymity. All media and corpus materials were used in accordance with *fair academic use* and *citation guidelines*.

Limitations of the Study

The study focuses primarily on urban and educated speakers; hence, the findings may not fully represent all socio-economic or regional speech varieties. Furthermore, online data (social media communication) reflects *written speech acts* that may differ from natural spoken interaction. Future research could incorporate quantitative corpus linguistics or ethnographic observation for greater validity.

This methodological design ensures a reliable and culturally sensitive analysis of speech behavior. By combining qualitative discourse analysis, pragmatic interpretation, and cultural frameworks, the study provides an in-depth, interdisciplinary reassessment of stereotypes in Uzbek and English communicative practices.

Stereotypical Perceptions in Speech Behavior

Stereotypes related to speech behavior have long played a key role in how cultures perceive one another. Traditional characterizations such as “*The English are polite but distant*” and “*Uzbeks are hospitable and emotional*” reflect ethnocentric generalizations rather than empirical realities (Wierzbicka, 1991)²⁰. In intercultural communication, these labels often oversimplify complex pragmatic systems and overlook contextual variations.

For instance, Uzbek communicative culture tends to emphasize solidarity and respect, manifested through elaborate greetings and inquiries about family or well-being — e.g., “*Assalomu alaykum, ishlaringiz joyidami, oilangiz sog‘-salomatmi?*”

²⁰ Wierzbicka, A. (1991). *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*. Mouton de Gruyter.

Such expressions serve both phatic (relational) and emotional functions, reflecting collectivist cultural values (Hofstede, 2010)²¹.

By contrast, English speakers typically use brief, phatic exchanges like “*Hi, how are you?*” or “*You alright?*” which are less about actual well-being and more about maintaining a neutral social tone. According to Leech (2014)²², this reflects a negative politeness orientation, in which indirectness preserves personal space and autonomy — a key component of individualistic societies.

Pragmatic Strategies and Politeness Models

Brown and Levinson’s (1987)²³ theory of politeness strategies is central to understanding these differences. Uzbek speakers often employ positive politeness, expressing warmth, empathy, and involvement (e.g., “*Marhamat, mehmon bo‘ling!*”), while English speakers rely more on negative politeness, emphasizing non-imposition (“*Would you mind if I...?*”).

However, data analysis shows that globalization and intercultural exposure are reducing these contrasts. Younger generations of Uzbeks, especially in online communication, increasingly adopt concise, English-style forms like “*Ok, thanks*” or “*See you*”, while British speakers participating in multicultural contexts have begun to use more expressive and affiliative phrases such as “*Welcome, my friend!*” (Kecskes, 2014)²⁴.

This demonstrates a gradual hybridization of pragmatic norms, where both sides blend global and local communicative strategies.

Gender and Contextual Variation

The study found notable gender-based variation in politeness strategies. Uzbek women tend to employ more solidarity-oriented and emotionally expressive forms (e.g., “*jonim*”, “*azizam*”), which strengthen interpersonal ties. English women also tend to use mitigating devices such as “*kind of*”, “*sort of*”, and hedges, signaling politeness and cooperation (Tannen, 1990)²⁵. Conversely, male speakers in both cultures more often use direct or efficiency-focused language.

Context was equally significant:

- Formal settings (academic, professional) in both cultures favored more restrained language,

²¹ Hofstede, G. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. McGraw-Hill.

²² Leech, G. (2014). *The Pragmatics of Politeness*. Oxford University Press.

²³ Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.

²⁴ Kecskes, I. (2014). *Intercultural Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.

²⁵ Tannen, D. (1990). *You Just Don’t Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. Ballantine Books.

- Informal settings (home, online chat) showed greater emotional openness and reduced adherence to traditional stereotypes.

Impact of Globalization and Media

Media and technology have profoundly influenced communicative behavior. Uzbek youth exposed to English-language films and online content adopt Anglo-pragmatic tendencies — such as using “*Sorry*” or “*Excuse me*” more frequently and casually.

At the same time, British speakers increasingly adopt intercultural sensitivity, recognizing the emotional expressiveness valued in non-Western cultures (Giles & Coupland, 1991)²⁶.

As a result, the traditional dichotomy — “*formal English vs. emotional Uzbek*” — is progressively dissolving.

Both groups demonstrate pragmatic flexibility, reflecting a shared global communicative culture where hybrid politeness styles are emerging.

Reassessing the Stereotypes

The analysis indicates that national stereotypes in speech behavior are not static constructs; they evolve through social change, education, and intercultural exchange. Modern Uzbeks are increasingly adopting pragmatic efficiency, while English speakers are learning to value emotional warmth. Thus, the “stereotypes” now function less as rigid labels and more as cultural reference points for identity negotiation.

The findings confirm Wierzbicka’s (2003)²⁷ argument that “cultural scripts of politeness” are dynamic and context-dependent, influenced by globalization, bilingualism, and media contact. Hence, reassessment of speech stereotypes is essential not only for linguistic accuracy but also for fostering intercultural empathy.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that traditional stereotypes about Uzbek and English speech behavior — emotionality versus restraint, collectivism versus individualism — only partially reflect communicative reality. Through comparative pragmatic and discourse analysis, the research revealed that:

1. Politeness systems in both cultures remain distinct yet increasingly overlapping.
2. Globalization and media influence have produced hybridized pragmatic norms.
3. Speech stereotypes are undergoing reevaluation, with growing intercultural convergence.

²⁶ Giles, H., & Coupland, N. (1991). *Language: Contexts and Consequences*. Open University Press.

²⁷ Wierzbicka, A. (2003). *Understanding Cultures through Their Key Words*. Oxford University Press.

4. Younger generations serve as primary agents of linguistic adaptation, bridging emotional and formal communication styles.

Ultimately, the reassessment of these stereotypes highlights the flexibility and adaptability of human communication. Rather than fixed cultural barriers, differences in speech behavior now function as opportunities for mutual learning and intercultural dialogue. Such findings reinforce the need for intercultural education and pragmatic awareness in modern linguistic studies.

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