

**SOCIOLINGUISTIC SIMILARITIES IN THE REALIZATION OF THE
MODESTY MAXIM IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES**

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Abstract

The sociolinguistic parallels between the English and Uzbek realizations of the modesty maxim are examined in this article. The study looks at how cultural and linguistic norms in both languages use comparable discourse techniques to convey modesty, limit self-praise, and preserve social harmony, all while drawing on the theoretical framework of politeness theory. The impact of age, gender, and social status on the application of the modesty maxim is also covered. The study sheds light on the cross-cultural purposes of modesty and offers understanding of its universal yet culturally particular linguistic expressions.

Keywords: Leech, pragmatics, politeness theory, sociolinguistics, English, Uzbek, cultural norms, gender and language, face-saving techniques, modesty maxim

Introduction

Politeness is a universal feature of human interaction, but its linguistic expressions vary across cultures. The modesty maxim is a fundamental principle according to Geoffrey Leech's politeness theory (1983), which states that speakers should minimize their own praise and maximize that of others. Modesty is regarded as a virtue in many cultures, and people's language choices during communication are influenced by this norm. The realization of the modesty maxim in two linguistically and culturally different languages—English and Uzbek—as well as the sociolinguistic factors influencing its application are examined in this article.

According to Leech's (1983) politeness principle, modesty is essential to cordial communication. In particular, self-deprecation and avoiding self-aggrandizement are stressed by the modesty maxim. This is supported by Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of face-saving acts, which emphasizes how speakers control their public self-image during social interactions. When there are disparities in status and

МЕДИЦИНА, ПЕДАГОГИКА И ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ: ТЕОРИЯ И ПРАКТИКА

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power, modesty serves as a tactic to lessen actions that could endanger one's reputation.

One of Geoffrey Leech's politeness principles, the modesty maxim, has a big influence on how people speak in different cultures. The use of modesty is ingrained in the social and cultural fabric of both Uzbek and English, reflecting both wider sociolinguistic norms and linguistic etiquette. According to sociolinguistic theory, speakers of both languages minimize their accomplishments, refrain from praising themselves, and elevate others in conversation. When receiving praise, English speakers respond modestly with expressions like "It was nothing" or "I just got lucky" (Leech 132). Similarly, to avoid compliments, Uzbek speakers frequently use phrases like "Unchalik emasman" (I'm not that good) or "Omadim keldi" (I was lucky). These phrases serve to preserve social harmony and prevent a hierarchical divide between interlocutors in addition to diminishing the speaker's sense of self-importance. Furthermore, modesty is a sign of moral and ethical conduct in both societies and is frequently connected to humility, respect for others, and a collectivist outlook (Holmes 45). Crucially, gender, age, and social standing also influence the sociolinguistic realization of modesty. According to traditional gender roles, female speakers typically use more indirect and self-effacing language when speaking to elders, while younger speakers are expected to be more modest in both Uzbek and English cultures (Tannen 178). The purpose of the modesty maxim in both languages, despite linguistic and cultural differences, demonstrates a universal human inclination to maintain interpersonal rapport, refrain from actions that could endanger one's reputation, and convey deference (Brown and Levinson 61). As a result, the comparison of modesty in Uzbek and English reveals how similar sociolinguistic techniques are employed to control politeness, demonstrating the universal but culturally specific character of modest communication. Modesty in language is a social balance mechanism in both Uzbek and English cultures. The devaluation of individual accomplishment is reflected in the common English reactions to compliments, such as "It was nothing," "I just got lucky," or "Anyone could have done it" (Leech 132). Phrases like "Unchalik emasman" (I'm not that good) and "Omadim keldi" (I was lucky) are also used by Uzbek speakers and serve the same pragmatic purpose. The illocutionary goal—reducing self-importance—is strikingly similar in both languages, despite their grammatical and phonetic differences. In both languages, social roles and modesty are closely related. For

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example, when speaking to elders, younger speakers are expected to be more humble in both cultures. The expression of modesty is also influenced by gender roles: female speakers of Uzbek and English are more likely to use indirect expressions and self-effacing language (Tannen 178; Holmes 45). These trends point to a desire to maintain interpersonal rapport as well as a common sociolinguistic understanding of hierarchical relationships.

Additionally, both languages express modesty through hedging and indirectness. In English, phrases like "Maybe I was just lucky" or "I'm not sure I deserve that" work similarly to their Uzbek counterparts, such as "Shunchaki tasodif bo'ldi" (It was just a coincidence). These frameworks help speakers stay courteous, refrain from bragging, and establish equality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are deep sociolinguistic parallels between Uzbek and English in the application of the modesty maxim. In order to conform to cultural norms of humility, both languages use indirectness, hedging, and self-deprecating language. The expression of modesty is further mediated by age, gender, and social standing, suggesting that politeness is a culturally controlled communication technique rather than just a linguistic trait. These parallels lend credence to the idea that, in spite of linguistic differences, the fundamentals of civility and modesty are influenced by universal human ideals of respect and social harmony.

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