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LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL NORMS OF UZBEK – ENGLISH HOSPITALITY: “DO’S VS DON’TS”²⁷

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality is considered one of the most important social values in both cultures, reflecting national identity, communication styles, and moral principles. Hospitality is more than the act of receiving guests, it is a complex system that maintains social trust, respect, and solidarity. Hospitality serves as a fundamental social institution that regulates interpersonal relationships and reflects deep-seated cultural values. The research is based on comparative cultural analysis and examples from everyday communication. This study compares the customs, etiquette, verbal expressions, and guest-host relationships characteristic of English and Uzbek hospitality, the hospitality norms of both cultures, identifying how “collectivistic” and “individualistic” social structures dictate different communicative strategies. Special attention is given to similarities and differences in welcoming guests, table manners, politeness strategies, and cultural expectations. Through an analysis of traditional literature, etiquette manuals, and field observations, this article highlights the “Do’s and Don’ts” that govern guest-host interactions. Findings suggest that while Uzbek hospitality prioritizes generosity, social closeness, and overt displays of respect, English hospitality emphasizes privacy, punctuality, and the maintenance of personal boundaries. The findings suggest that intercultural competence requires a deep understanding of these divergent pragmatic mechanisms to avoid “social coldness” or unintended offense.

KEYWORDS

Hospitality discourse, pragmatics, politeness strategies, communicative behavior, social, communicative norms. Uzbek culture, English culture, intercultural communication, hospitality rituals, discourse analysis.

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O‘ZBEK – INGLIZ MEHMONDO‘STLIGINING LINGVISTIK VA IJTIMOIY ME‘YORLARI: “DO’S VS DON’TS”

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ANNOTATSIYA	KALIT SO‘ZLAR
Mehmondo‘stlik har ikki madaniyatda ham milliy o‘zlik, mulqot uslublari va axloqiy tamoyillarni aks ettiruvchi eng muhim ijtimoiy qadriyatlardan biri hisoblanadi. Mehmondo‘stlik shunchaki mehmon kutish emas, balki ishonch, hurmat va birdamlikni ta’minlovchi murakkab tizimdir. U shaxslararo munosabatlarni tartibga soluvchi va chuqur ildiz otgan madaniy qadriyatlarni aks ettiruvchi fundamental ijtimoiy institut bo‘lib xizmat qiladi. Ushbu tadqiqotda o‘zbek va ingliz madaniyatlaridagi mehmondo‘stlik normalari qiyoslanadi hamda “kollektivistik” va “individualistik” ijtimoiy tuzilmalar turlicha kommunikativ strategiyalarni qanday belgilab berishi aniqlanadi. Mumtoz adabiyotlar, odob-axloq qo‘llanmalari va tajriba-kuzatuv tahlili orqali maqolada mehmon va mezb-on o‘rtasidagi o‘zaro munosabatlarni tartibga soluvchi odob qoidalari (“mumkin va mumkin bo‘lmagan me‘yorlar”lar) yoritib berilgan. Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko‘rsatadiki, o‘zbek mehmondo‘stligida saxiylik, ijtimoiy yaqinlik va hurmatni ochiq-oydin namoyon etish ustuvor ahamiyatga ega bo‘lsa, ingliz mehmondo‘stligida shaxsiy daxlsizlik, punktuallik va shaxsiy chegaralarni saqlashga urg‘u beriladi. Olingan natijalar madaniyatlararo kompetensiya “ijtimoiy sovuqlik” yoki tushunmovchiliklarning oldini olish uchun ushbu bir-biridan farq qiluvchi pragmatik mexanizmlarni chuqur tushunishni talab qilishidan dalolat beradi.	Mehmondo‘stlik diskursi, pragmatika, xushmuomalalik strategiyalari, kommunikativ xulq-atvor, ijtimoiy me‘yorlar, kommunikativ me‘yorlar, o‘zbek madaniyati, ingliz madaniyati, madaniyatlararo mulqot, mehmondo‘stlik rituallari (marosimlari), diskurs tahlili.

ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ НОРМЫ УЗБЕКСКОГО И АНГЛИЙСКОГО ГОСТЕПРИИМСТВА: “DO’S VS DON’TS”

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АННОТАЦИЯ	КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА
Гостеприимство в обеих культурах рассматривается как одна из важнейших социальных ценностей, отражающей национальную идентичность, особенности коммуникации и нравственные принципы. Гостеприимство – это не просто акт приема гостей, а сложная система, поддерживающая социальное доверие, уважение и единство. Оно служит фундаментальным социальным институтом, который регулирует межличностные отношения и отражает укоренившиеся культурные ценности. В данном исследовании сравниваются нормы гостеприимства в узбекской и английской культурах, а также выявляется, как «коллективистская» и «индивидуалистическая» социальные структуры предопределяют различные коммуникативные стратегии. На основе анализа классической литературы, руководств по этикету и опыта практических наблюдений в статье выделяются правила и запреты («что можно», «что запрещено»), регулирующие взаимодействие между гостем и хозяином. Результаты исследования показывают, что если узбекское гостеприимство ставит во главу угла щедрость, тесное взаимодействие и открытое проявление уважения, то английское гостеприимство делает акцент на приватности, пунктуальности и соблюдении личных границ. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что межкультурная компетенция требует глубокого понимания этих различающихся прагматических механизмов во избежание «социальной холодности» или недопонимания.	Дискурс гостеприимства, прагматика, стратегии вежливости, коммуникативное поведение, социальные нормы, коммуникативные нормы, узбекская культура, английская культура, межкультурная коммуникация, ритуалы гостеприимства, дискурс-анализ.

MATERIALS AND REVIEW

Hospitality is defined not merely as serving food but as a system that reinforces ethical standards and social solidarity. In Uzbek scholarship, Husanov and G‘ulomov describe hospitality as a “school of ethics and aesthetics” developed over centuries, requiring high sensitivity and tact from the host. This includes everything from the arrangement of the table to the nature of the conversation.

Historical perspectives are provided by Kaykovus’s “Qobusnoma”, which outlines “golden rules” for hosting, such as meeting guests at the entrance and avoiding excessive boasting about one’s food. Complementing this, Mahmud Sattor’s “O‘zbek udumlari” (Mahmud Sattor, 2007,182) identifies specific taboos, such as greeting guests at the threshold, which is seen as a boundary that should not be occupied.

In contrast, English hospitality is analyzed through the lens of William Hanson’s “Just Good Manners.” Hanson argues that etiquette is a tool for showing consideration and respect for others’ comfort. English norms are rooted in mutual consent and the preservation of “face”, often utilizing indirect communication and “passive aggression” to maintain social harmony

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a qualitative comparative research design to investigate the socio-cultural and pragmatic norms of hospitality in Uzbek and English societies. The methodology is structured into four distinct phases:

- Theoretical and Ethno-Cultural Textual Analysis

The primary foundation of the research involves a diachronic and synchronic analysis of authoritative texts on etiquette. Uzbek Context: The study analyzes classical pedagogical works such as Kaykovus’s “Qobusnoma” (Kaykovus, 2019, 69) to identify foundational verbal and non-verbal norms. It also incorporates modern sociopragmatic perspectives from B. Husanov and V. G‘ulomov’s “Muomala madaniyati” and ethnographic data from Mahmud Sattor’s “O‘zbek udumlari”.

In English Context the research utilizes William Hanson's "Just Good Manners" as a contemporary benchmark for English social etiquette, focusing on strategies for social harmony and the "face-saving" acts prevalent in Western individualistic cultures.

- Field Observations (Empirical Data)

To complement the textual analysis, the study utilizes "live observations" conducted within Uzbek households. This empirical approach allows for the identification of recurring Speech Acts such as the repetitive nature of invitations ("Oling, nega yemayapsiz?") and the ritualistic use of blessings (duo) to conclude social interactions. Non-Verbal Semiotics, observation of physical boundaries (the threshold/ostona), seating hierarchies (to'r), and hand gestures (the "right-hand rule")

- Comparative Modeling

The final stage of the methodology involves a comparative synthesis where norms are categorized into "Do's" and "Don'ts" across both cultures. The data is cross-referenced against two primary cultural paradigms identified in the sources Collectivistic Paradigm (Uzbek) where hospitality is an ethical duty prioritizing social closeness and generosity. Individualistic Paradigm (English) where hospitality is a social agreement prioritizing personal space, privacy, and strict adherence to time. By using this multi-layered approach combining historical literature, modern etiquette guides, live social observation, and pragmatic analysis the study provides a comprehensive overview of the divergent cultural logic that governs guest-host interactions in both nations.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In Uzbek culture, the guest is considered a sacred figure who brings blessings to the home. Peshvoz (The Welcome) is mandatory to meet the guest at the gate or door with a warm welcome ("Xush kelibsiz"). The relationship is defined by social status, age, and gender. The host demonstrates generosity and care, while the guest responds with humility and gratitude. Refusing a guest is considered a disgrace to the entire family and neighborhood (mahalla).

In arrival and Seating guests are met at the gate. Men typically shake hands, while it is polite for men to greet women with a slight bow and their right hand over their heart. The seating arrangement is crucial, the most honored guests are seated at the “to‘r” (the place furthest from the entrance). Meals always begin and end with tea. A unique “inverse respect” rule applies to tea pouring, the more respected the guest, the less tea is poured into their cup (piyola). This encourages the guest to ask for more, signaling respect for the household. (Kaykovus, 2019, 69).

Uzbek hospitality is characterized by repetitive invitations such as “Oling, nega yemayapsiz?” (Help yourself, why aren’t you eating?). (Mo‘minov S., 2000, 72). Conversations often involve detailed inquiries about health, family, and work. The event concludes with a “duo” (blessing) led by the eldest member, wishing for peace and prosperity.

Unlike the flexible timeframes of Uzbek culture, English hospitality is strictly time-bound. Guests are expected to arrive exactly at the invited time, arriving early is seen as a “pragmatic pressure” on the host.

English hosts use “ice-breaker” topics, most notably the weather, to avoid overly personal or uncomfortable subjects. Phrases like “What a beautiful day, isn’t it?” serve as safe entry points for dialogue. To maintain “face,” English culture uses passive aggression for example, saying “It’s getting quite late, isn’t it?” rather than asking a guest to leave. (Brown P., Levinson S. C., 1987, 227).

Modern English etiquette requires hosts to ask about allergies or dietary restrictions in advance. At the table, food is traditionally passed to the left (clockwise) to maintain order. Gratitude is expressed formally through a “thank you note” sent a day or two after the visit.

Active listening is important that social grace is measured by one’s ability to focus on the interlocutor, using phrases like “That sounds interesting!” to encourage the other person to speak.

The fundamental difference lies in the cultural objective is that Uzbeks aim to strengthen social closeness through extreme generosity and “opening one’s heart”.

The abundance of food is a symbol of a “wide heart” not just wealth. English people aim to enjoy a pleasant social gathering without causing discomfort or infringing on personal space. Order, discipline, and the correct use of cutlery are often more important than the quantity of food.

A significant point of divergence is the nature of personal questions. In Uzbek culture, asking about one’s age, marital status, or salary is a standard way of showing interest. In English culture, these are viewed as rude intrusions into “personal territory”. Conversely, the Uzbek habit of “over-inviting” (repeatedly offering food) might be seen as pushy by an English guest, while the English “thank you note” might seem overly formal or distant to an Uzbek host.

Table 1.**Key Comparative Findings**

Criteria	Uzbek hospitality	English hospitality
Punctuality	10-15 minutes late is normal	Arriving exactly on time is required
Greetings	Handshakes (men) or bow (men to women)	Firm but gentle handshake
Topics	Health, family, personal status	Weather, art, general topics
Tea Culture	Pouring less tea shows more respect	Filling the cup almost to the top
Ending the Visit	Escorting guests to the gate/street	Short farewell at the door
Gifts	Practical (bread, fruit, sweets).	Symbolic (wine, chocolate, flowers).
Privacy	Personal questions show care/closeness.	Personal questions are offensive.
Gratitude	Duas (blessings) and return invitations.	“Thank you” notes or letters.

Prohibitions and Taboos (DON'Ts) in Uzbek culture

- × The Threshold Rule: One must never stand on or greet someone over the threshold (ostona), as it is believed to disrupt the home's peace or "cut off" its sustenance (rizq).
- × Asking Instead of Serving. A host should never ask, "Will you eat?". It is considered shameful, food and tea must be served immediately without inquiry.
- × Early Departure Etiquette. When a guest leaves, the host must not close the door immediately. The door should remain open until the guest has distanced themselves, symbolizing a desire for their return.
- × Public Reprimands: It is strictly forbidden to scold children or family members in front of guests, as this causes the guest to lose "face" and feel uncomfortable. (Husanov B. G'ulomov V., 2009, 79)

Prohibitions and Taboos (DON'Ts) in English culture

- × In financial and personal Inquiries asking about age, marital status, or salary ("How much do you earn?") is considered a severe breach of etiquette and a "crude" invasion of privacy.
- × Direct Confrontation, an English host will rarely tell a guest to leave directly. Instead, they use "passive aggression" or polite hints like "It's getting quite late, isn't it?". (Fox K., 2004, 29).
- × The "Thirteen" Superstition: Avoid seating exactly thirteen people at a table; if this occurs, a host might place a "fourteenth guest" (like a teddy bear) in a spare seat to avoid bad luck.(Hanson W., 2024, 125)

The study reveals that the "Do's and Don'ts" of each culture are rooted in opposing social philosophies. For Uzbek people hospitality is an active generosity. The goal is to strengthen closeness. A host who doesn't offer everything they have is seen as lacking "breadth of soul". On the other hand, hospitality for the English is an ordered art. The goal is a "pleasant and cultural rest" without causing discomfort to either party. Here, respecting a guest's privacy and time is the highest form of respect.

CONCLUSION

Understanding these norms is essential for avoiding cross-cultural misunderstandings. The risk of intercultural pragmatic failure is highest when these two systems collide without consciously understanding of their underlying values. An Uzbek guest may interpret the English host's respect for privacy which aim to provide comfort, as "social coldness" or a lack of genuine welcome, while an English guest may perceive the Uzbek host's proactive insistence (e.g., being urged to eat more), as a violation of their personal boundaries and freedom of choice. Ultimately, both cultures view the guest as "sacred", but they express this sanctity through vastly different linguistic and behavioral codes.

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