



Tukhtakhodjayeva NARGIZA

Tashkent International University of
Financial Management and Technologies
Professor (acting), PhD
E-mail: nargiza5123@mail.ru

A CROSS-LINGUISTIC STUDY OF COGNITIVE PATTERNS AND PRAGMATIC APPROACHES IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Abstract. This article examines the interaction between cognitive schemas and pragmatic strategies in Uzbek and English digital discourse within the framework of cognitive linguistics and pragmatics. The study focuses on how communicative intentions are formed, conveyed, and interpreted in online environments such as social media platforms, forums, and digital comment spaces. Through a comparative analysis, the article identifies similarities and differences in discourse organization, speech act realization, politeness strategies, and identity construction in both linguistic communities.

The findings demonstrate that cultural values and cognitive models significantly influence pragmatic choices in digital communication. In particular, Uzbek discourse tends to reflect collective identity, indirectness, and respect-oriented politeness strategies, whereas English discourse shows a stronger inclination toward individualism, directness, and self-expression. The study highlights how digital interaction serves as a reflection of deeper cognitive and sociopragmatic norms. Overall, the article contributes to the field of intercultural pragmatics by revealing how language, culture, and cognition interact in virtual communicative contexts..

Keywords: Pragmatic strategies, Digital discourse, Cross-cultural communication, Uzbek language, English language, Online interaction, Politeness strategies, Identity construction.

ЎЗБЕК ВА ИНГЛИЗ ОНЛАЙН МУЛОҚОТИДА КОГНИТИВ МОДЕЛЛАР ҲАМДА ПРАГМАТИК ЁНДАШУВЛАРНИ ҚИЁСИЙ ТАҲЛИЛИ

Аннотация. Ушбу мақолада ўзбек ва инглиз тилларидаги рақамли нутқ муҳитида когнитив схемалар ҳамда прагматик стратегиялар ўртасидаги ўзаро боғлиқлик когнитив лингвистика ва прагматика назариялари асосида таҳлил қилинади. Тадқиқот ижтимоий тармоқлар, форумлар ва онлайн изоҳлар каби виртуал платформаларда мулоқот мақсадларининг қандай шаклланиши, ифодаланиши ва талқин қилинишини қиёсий жиҳатдан ўрганишга қаратилган.

Таҳлил натижалари ҳар икки тил доирасида нутқнинг ташиқил этилиши, нутқ актларининг амалга оширилиши, ҳушмуомалалик (политенесс) стратегиялари ҳамда шахсий ва ижтимоий идентитетнинг ифодаланишида муҳим маданий ва лингвистик фарқлар мавжудлигини кўрсатади. Хусусан, ўзбек тилидаги рақамли мулоқотда жамоавийлик, билвосита ифода, ҳурмат ва ижтимоий масофа тамойиллари устувор бўлса, инглиз тилидаги дискурсда тўғридан-тўғри ифодалаш, индивидуал позицияни очиқ намоён қилиш ва шахсий эркинликка урғу кучли эканлиги аниқланади.

Мазкур тадқиқот рақамли мулоқотнинг чуқур когнитив ва социопрагматик меъёрлар билан узвий боғлиқлигини очиқ беради ҳамда виртуал муҳитдаги маданиятлараро мулоқотни англашда муҳим назарий ва амалий аҳамият касб этади.

Калит сўзлар: Прагматик стратегиялар, Рақамли дискурс, Маданиятлараро мулоқот, Ўзбек тили, Инглиз тили, Онлайн мулоқот, Одоб-муомала стратегиялари, Идентичлик ифодаси.

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of digital communication has transformed the ways in which individuals from different cultures interact, convey meaning, and construct their identities. In both Uzbek and English online environments, digital media serve as dynamic spaces where traditional cultural values converge with new communicative practices. Cognitive schemas—mental structures that organize the interpretation of linguistic and social information—significantly influence participants’ understanding and responses. Simultaneously, pragmatic strategies facilitate the accomplishment of communicative objectives and the maintenance of social harmony.

This study seeks to conduct a comparative examination of cognitive schemas and pragmatic strategies in Uzbek and English digital discourse, emphasizing aspects such as politeness, indirect communication, metaphorical conceptualization, and the formation of online identity.

Theoretical Background. Cognitive schemas can be understood as mental structures that organize human knowledge and guide the interpretation of experiences, linguistic signals, and communicative intentions. The notion was first introduced in Bartlett’s seminal work *Remembering* [1:45], where he described schemas as frameworks enabling individuals to process and recall information meaningfully. This concept was further elaborated by Rumelhart [2:36], who viewed schemas as organized systems of prior knowledge that shape perception and comprehension. Within cognitive linguistics, Lakoff [3:112] and Langacker [4:57] expanded this perspective by arguing that schemas are dynamic, culturally embedded models that evolve through interaction with language and social experience.

In discourse analysis, cognitive schemas operate as interpretive lenses that help interlocutors identify speech acts, recognize metaphors, and assign meaning beyond the literal content of words. For instance, an Uzbek user interpreting the phrase *ko’ngil olish* (“winning someone’s heart”) activates a cultural schema grounded in collectivist values of empathy and respect, whereas an English user reading “give me some space” activates a spatial schema tied to individual autonomy.

Digital communication amplifies the salience of such schemas since online discourse often relies on minimal textual cues (abbreviations, emojis, memes) to convey complex intentions. Thus, understanding how cognitive schemas differ across languages and cultures becomes crucial for explaining digital miscommunication or pragmatic failures.

Pragmatic Strategies and Politeness Theory. Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, explores how meaning is constructed through contextual factors and speaker intentions rather than through linguistic form alone [5:14]. One of the most influential contributions to this field is Brown and Levinson’s [6:61] Politeness Theory, which differentiates between positive politeness—strategies aimed at expressing solidarity and approval—and negative politeness, which seeks to minimize imposition and respect the interlocutor’s autonomy. However, as noted by Matsumoto [1988] and Gu [7:410, 8:243], this model reflects predominantly Western communicative norms, and its universality has been questioned due to significant cross-cultural variations in the conceptualization of politeness.

In the Uzbek cultural and linguistic context, politeness is intricately linked to social hierarchy, age, and collective values. The use of honorific expressions, hedging, and indirect requests serves to uphold *hurmat* (respect) and *yuz* (social face), which constitute core elements of Uzbek pragmatic competence [9:89, 10:54]. Such expressions function as a mechanism for maintaining interpersonal harmony and reinforcing social cohesion. In contrast, English discourse often prioritizes egalitarianism and individual autonomy, where directness is not necessarily viewed as impoliteness but rather as a marker of communicative efficiency.

With the advent of digital communication, pragmatic strategies have undergone notable recontextualization. As Locher and Graham [11:5] observe, online platforms blur the boundaries between spoken and written discourse, leading to new forms of politeness negotiation. For instance,

the brevity and informality of English-language Twitter interactions often result in the omission of conventional politeness markers. Conversely, in Uzbek digital spaces such as Telegram groups, even short exchanges tend to include formulaic expressions of *respect* (*iltimos*, *rahmat*), reflecting the continued salience of cultural politeness norms. As noted by Shaykh Muhammad Sodiq Muhammad Yusuf [2016, October 3], “*respect (hurmat) and sincerity (samimiyat) form the moral foundation of Uzbek interpersonal communication, which also manifests in digital interactions. The strongest call is the believer’s proper and beautiful conduct*”. [12] At the same time, globalized digital practices, such as the use of emojis or softening markers, illustrate how local cultural schemas adapt to global communicative trends [13:9, 14:41].

Digital Discourse and Identity Construction. Scholars such as Herring and Androutsopoulos argue that digital discourse constitutes a hybrid space where written and spoken features merge, producing new pragmatic norms. In these contexts, identity is negotiated through discourse markers, stance-taking, and stylistic choices. Cognitive schemas provide the mental scaffolding for this identity construction, while pragmatic strategies ensure that identities are projected and interpreted appropriately. In Uzbek digital spaces, identity markers often highlight belonging to family, region, or nation. Hashtags like *vatandosh* or *ona_tilimiz* reflect schemas of collective identity. In English digital discourse, identity construction frequently revolves around professional, ideological, or lifestyle-related positioning, often expressed through self-branding and personalization *myjourney*, *independent*.

Cross-Cultural Communication Frameworks. Intercultural pragmatics, as outlined by Kecskes [2014], offers a comprehensive framework for understanding how speakers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds negotiate meaning within shared communicative spaces, particularly in digital contexts. When interlocutors rely on differing cognitive and cultural schemas—for instance, the Uzbek preference for extended, respectful greetings versus the English tendency toward concise exchanges—pragmatic misalignments may occur, leading to misunderstanding or communicative tension. Nevertheless, digital discourse simultaneously enables pragmatic convergence, as globally recognizable semiotic tools such as memes, GIFs, and emojis facilitate the creation of hybrid communicative norms that transcend cultural and linguistic boundaries [15:73].

Methodology. The study adopts a comparative approach, analyzing samples of Uzbek and English digital discourse from Twitter, Telegram, and online forums. The focus is on: 1. *Politeness and indirectness*. 2. *Metaphorical and cultural schemas*. 3. *Identity construction strategies*. 4. *Use of humor and irony*.

2. Metaphorical and Cultural Schemas: In Uzbek digital communication, the frequent use of proverbs and culturally embedded metaphors reflects and reinforces the community’s collectivist orientation. Expressions such as *ko’ngil olish* (“to win someone’s heart”) and *yuz saqlash* (“to save face”) evoke deeply ingrained cognitive and cultural schemas centered on social harmony, empathy, and the preservation of mutual respect. These linguistic choices signal the importance of maintaining interpersonal balance and belonging within a communal framework.

In contrast, English digital discourse tends to mirror an individualist worldview, foregrounding concepts of personal agency and self-determination. Metaphorical expressions like *step back* or *move on*—as well as technological metaphors such as *reset* and *upgrade*—symbolize notions of self-renewal, independence, and progress, aligning with the cultural value of personal autonomy. Thus, while both linguistic systems rely on metaphorical thinking, their pragmatic orientations diverge according to underlying cultural models of self and society.

3. Identity Construction: In Uzbek digital communication, users frequently foreground a sense of collective belonging and national unity. Phrases such as *biz xalqmiz* (“we are a nation”) and *vatandoshlar* (“compatriots”) function as discursive markers of solidarity, reflecting the cultural

emphasis on communal identity and shared social values. These expressions linguistically construct a collective self that prioritizes group cohesion over individual distinction.

In contrast, English-language digital discourse often centers on individual stance-taking and self-presentation. Formulations like *in my opinion* or *as a professional* serve as identity markers that foreground personal expertise, autonomy, and distinctiveness. Through such expressions, speakers position themselves as independent agents, reinforcing an individual-oriented communicative style rather than a collective one.

4. Humor and Irony: Uzbek digital humor frequently draws on wordplay, diminutive forms, and situational irony rooted in the nuances of everyday life and local experience. This form of humor is inherently context-dependent, relying on shared cultural knowledge and communal understanding among users. Its pragmatic effect often lies in reinforcing social intimacy and collective identity through familiar cultural references.

In contrast, English online humor tends to employ sarcasm, memes, and intertextual allusions to popular culture, allowing for humor that is more universal and easily transferable across diverse audiences. The global reach of digital platforms facilitates the rapid diffusion and reinterpretation of such humorous content, creating a dynamic space for intercultural engagement.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that while both Uzbek and English digital discourses employ pragmatic strategies to express politeness, humor, and identity, they are grounded in distinct cognitive and cultural schemas. Uzbek discourse reflects a collectivist orientation, shaped by hierarchical norms of respect and deference, whereas English discourse privileges individual autonomy, egalitarianism, and directness. Digital environments, therefore, function as negotiated intercultural arenas, where local communicative traditions intersect with globalized discourse practices, sometimes producing convergence, yet frequently preserving cultural specificity and pragmatic distinctiveness.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English digital discourses reveals that pragmatic behavior in online communication is deeply embedded within cultural and cognitive frameworks. While both linguistic communities employ universal strategies for politeness, humor, and identity negotiation, their underlying orientations diverge.

Uzbek digital discourse reflects a collectivist worldview, where communicative acts are guided by principles of *hurmat* (respect), *yuz saqlash* (face-saving), and social harmony. The frequent use of proverbs, honorifics, and culturally resonant metaphors illustrates a preference for maintaining relational balance and communal belonging. Even in digital contexts, these norms persist through formulaic politeness markers and context-sensitive humor that rely on shared social understanding.

In contrast, English digital communication tends to foreground individual expression, autonomy, and directness. Pragmatic strategies such as stance-taking, personal branding, and concise exchanges align with an individualist cognitive schema that values self-representation and efficiency. English digital humor, marked by sarcasm, memes, and global intertextuality, demonstrates adaptability to transnational audiences and reflects a more decontextualized form of social interaction.

Ultimately, digital platforms act as intercultural contact zones where these distinct pragmatic patterns are continually negotiated. Globalized communicative tools—such as emojis, GIFs, and memes—serve as hybrid semiotic resources that enable both convergence and cultural differentiation. Thus, while the internet facilitates a shared global discourse, local pragmatic traditions continue to shape interactional styles, sustaining linguistic diversity and cultural identity in the digital age.

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*Bosh muharrir: Odinaxon Muhammad Yusuf
Muharrirlar: M.Jaloldinova, F.Tursunboyeva
Nashr uchun mas’ul: S.Husanova
Sahifalovchi: Z.Arslonov
Dizayner Z.G‘ulomov*

Tahririyat manzili: Toshkent shahar, Olmazor tumani,
Uzumbog' 9-tor ko'cha 4-uy.

E-mail: peshqadamilmiymarkazi@gmail.com

Web-sahifa: peshqadamkarvoni.uz

Telefonlar: +998 91) 774 62 62

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