



Zulayho DADAHONOVA^a 

^asenior teacher, doctor of
philosophy in pedagogical sciences (PhD),
Ferghana State University

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL GROUP AND IDENTITY ON SPEECH ETIQUETTE

Abstract. Speech etiquette is a dynamic system of communicative norms that reflects social structures, cultural values, and personal identity. It functions not only as a set of polite formulas but as a mirror of society, encoding collective traditions and individual strategies of interaction. The choice of etiquette forms is shaped by social identity, which regulates how speakers perceive themselves and others in communicative contexts. Key factors such as age, gender, profession, national culture, and virtual identity influence the expression of respect, status, equality, and social distance. Professional groups often rely on formal address to maintain hierarchy, while youth communities prefer informal greetings and slang to emphasize solidarity. Thus, speech etiquette emerges as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that evolves with social and cultural transformations, serving as a vital tool for expressing belonging, respect, and identity.

Keywords: *speech etiquette, social identity, group norms, age factor, gender differences, professional communication, national culture, virtual identity, politeness strategies, sociolinguistics.*

INTRODUCTION

Speech etiquette is a fundamental component of human communication, reflecting social norms, cultural values, and individual identity. It is not merely a set of polite formulas but a dynamic system shaped by social group membership and self-identification. The way individuals express respect, status, equality, and social distance depends on their position in society, group affiliation, and cultural background (Brown, 1987:56; Holmes, 1995:112).

Speech etiquette functions as a mirror of society, encoding both collective traditions and individual strategies of interaction. It is shaped by social identity, which determines how speakers perceive themselves and others in communicative contexts (Tajfel, 1979:34). For example, members of professional groups often rely on formal address to maintain hierarchy, while youth communities prefer informal greetings and slang, emphasizing solidarity and equality (Crystal, 2003:215).

MAIN PART

Recent research in sociolinguistics and social psychology demonstrates that age, gender, profession, national culture, and virtual identity decisively influence the choice of etiquette formulas, reinforcing group norms and personal identity (Giles, 1991:78). Age is particularly significant: younger speakers tend to use expressive, informal styles, while older interlocutors expect deferential and respectful language (Trudgill, 2000:59). Gender differences also play a role, with women often employing hedging and indirectness, while men favor directness and assertiveness (Lakoff, 1975:78; Tannen, 1990:92).

Professional identity shapes etiquette through specialized terminology and hierarchical address. Lawyers, doctors, and academics rely on formalized speech patterns, while creative industries often adopt collaborative and informal styles (Fairclough, 2001:133). National culture, meanwhile, encodes values into everyday communication: Uzbek speakers use “Assalomu alaykum” to convey respect and religious-cultural identity, English speakers rely on neutral greetings like “Hello,” and Russian speakers emphasize formality with “Здравствуйте” (Wierzbicka, 1991:201; Abrams, 2025:67).

Virtual identity adds a modern dimension, as online communication increasingly relies on emojis, abbreviations, and English slang, reshaping etiquette in digital contexts (Wardhaugh, 2010:144). This demonstrates that speech etiquette is not static but evolves alongside social and technological transformations, continuing to serve as a vital tool for expressing belonging, respect, and identity (Holmes, 1995:119).

Social group and identity strongly shape speech etiquette, influencing how respect, status, equality, and social distance are expressed in communication (Giles, 1991:78). A person’s position in society, group affiliation, and level of self-awareness play a crucial

role in the choice of speech etiquette formulas (Tajfel, 1979:34). For instance, informal greetings and internet slang are widespread among youth, while formal groups tend to prefer honorifics such as “respected” (Crystal, 2003:215).

Research confirms that group membership shapes communicative behavior and identity expression. Communication accommodation theory explains how individuals adjust their speech to align with group norms, thereby reinforcing identity and social bonds (Giles, 1991:82). Social identity theory demonstrates that ingroup and outgroup distinctions affect language use, with etiquette serving as a marker of inclusion or exclusion (Tajfel, 1979:41).

Age is one of the most decisive sociolinguistic factors: younger speakers tend to use informal, expressive styles, while communication with older interlocutors requires more deferential and respectful language (Trudgill, 2000:59). In Uzbek culture, “siz” is used instead of “sen” when addressing elders, while in English “Mr./Ms.” is preferred until first names are permitted (Wardhaugh, 2010:144).

Gender plays a central role in speech etiquette. Women are often socialized to use more polite and emotionally expressive language, while men adopt more direct and assertive styles (Lakoff, 1975:78; Tannen, 1990:92). Women frequently use hedging and tag questions, while men rely on direct statements. Tannen distinguishes between women’s “rapport style” and men’s “report style,” shaping etiquette formulas accordingly.

Profession determines the level of formality and terminology. Lawyers use “Your Honor,” doctors employ “patient confidentiality,” and academics rely on citation etiquette (Fairclough, 2001:133). In Uzbek professional culture, honorifics like “hurmatli” are common, in English “Dear Dr. Smith” is standard, and in Russian “уважаемый” is widely used (Wierzbicka, 1991:201).

National culture is one of the strongest determinants of speech etiquette, encoding values and traditions into communication. In Uzbek culture, “Assalomu alaykum” conveys religious and cultural respect, in English “Hello/Hi” reflects neutrality and individualism, while in Russian “Здравствуйте” signals politeness and distance (Abrams, 2025:67). Collectivist cultures emphasize deference and indirectness, while individualist cultures favor clarity and directness.

<u>Factor</u>	<u>Uzbek</u>	<u>Russian</u>	<u>English</u>
<u>Age</u>	Elders addressed with “siz”; youth use “sen”.	Elders: “Здравствуйте”; peers: “Приветик”.	Elders: “Mr./Ms.”; peers: “Hi/Hey.”
<u>Gender</u>	Women: “Rahmat, opa”; men: “Salom, aka.”	Women: diminutives (“Катенька”); men: patronymics (“Иван Иванович”).	Women: “Miss/Mrs.”; men: “Sir.”
<u>Profession</u>	Formal letters: “Hurmatli”.	Workplace letters: “Уважаемый”.	Business letters: “Dear Dr. Smith,” “Best regards.”
<u>National culture</u>	Greeting: “Assalomu alaykum”; blessings: “Omad tilayman.”	Greeting: “Здравствуйте”; thanks: “Большое спасибо.”	Greeting: “Hello/Hi”; thanks: “Thank you very much.”
<u>Virtual identity</u>	Mix of Uzbek-English slang (“ok, rahmat”).	Abbreviations: “спс” (short for спасибо).	Abbreviations: “LOL,” “BRB,” “Thx.” Emojis 😊😊.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, speech etiquette emerges as a powerful sociolinguistic phenomenon reflecting the interplay between social group membership and identity. Age, gender, profession, national culture, and virtual identity shape communicative behavior, determining whether language expresses solidarity, hierarchy, respect, or individuality. From deferential forms used with elders to youth slang, from professional jargon to culturally embedded greetings, etiquette formulas embody the values and structures of society (Holmes, 1995:119). Speech etiquette is not static but evolves with social and cultural transformations, remaining a vital tool for expressing belonging, respect, and identity.

REFERENCES:

1. Abrams D., Lalot F. Intergroup communication and identity. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025. – 21 p.
2. Brown P., Levinson S. Politeness: Some universals in language usage. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987. – 345 p.
3. Crystal D. The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language. – Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. – 499 p.
4. Fairclough N. Language and power. – London: Longman, 2001. – 226 p.
5. Giles H., Coupland N. Language: Contexts and consequences. – Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991. – 244 p.
6. Holmes J. Women, men and politeness. – London: Longman, 1995. – 254 p.
7. Lakoff R. Language and woman's place. – New York: Harper & Row, 1975. – 83 p.
8. Tajfel H., Turner J. An integrative theory of intergroup conflict // Austin W.G., Worchel S. (eds.). The social psychology of intergroup relations. – Monterey: Brooks/Cole, 1979. – 369 p. (article pp. 33–47).
9. Tannen D. You just don't understand: Women and men in conversation. – New York: Ballantine Books, 1990. – 330 p.
10. Trudgill P. Sociolinguistics: An introduction to language and society. – London: Penguin, 2000. – 222 p.
11. Wardhaugh R. An introduction to sociolinguistics. – Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. – 464 p.
12. Wierzbicka A. Cross-cultural pragmatics: The semantics of human interaction. – Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991. – 502 p.