SPEECH AGGRESSION IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENTS: A CONTRASTIVE PRAGMATIC STUDY OF IMPOLITENESS MARKERS

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Abstract. This study investigates speech aggression in English and Uzbek social media comments from a contrastive pragmatic perspective, with a particular focus on impoliteness markers. Social media platforms provide communicative environments in which reduced social constraints and anonymity facilitate the frequent use of aggressive and face-threatening language. As a result, online comments have become a significant site for examining linguistic aggression and impoliteness in digital discourse. Drawing on theories of impoliteness and pragmatic aggression, the study analyzes a corpus of English and Uzbek comments collected from public social media platforms. The analysis identifies dominant types of impoliteness markers, including direct insults, sarcasm, taboo expressions, threats, and indirect evaluative judgments. The findings reveal both shared and language-specific patterns of speech aggression. While English comments tend to favor direct and explicit forms of verbal aggression, Uzbek comments more often employ indirect strategies grounded in moral evaluation and cultural norms. The study demonstrates that cultural values, politeness conventions, and communicative practices play a crucial role in shaping how aggression is expressed online. By comparing English and Uzbek data, the research contributes to contrastive pragmatics and digital discourse studies and offers insights into intercultural communication and online interaction dynamics.

Introduction. The rapid growth of social media has fundamentally transformed human communication, enabling individuals from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to interact instantly and publicly. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, and YouTube have become central spaces for expressing opinions, negotiating identities, and engaging in public debate. However, alongside their communicative potential, these platforms have also facilitated the widespread occurrence of speech aggression and impoliteness, particularly in comment sections where emotional reactions and anonymity reduce traditional social constraints.

Speech aggression in online discourse refers to the use of linguistic strategies that intentionally or implicitly threaten, attack, or damage the interlocutor's social face. Such aggression often manifests through insults, sarcasm, ridicule, taboo language, and moral condemnation. In contrast to face-to-face communication, online interactions lack immediate feedback and social accountability, which can intensify aggressive behavior and normalize impolite expressions. Consequently, social media comments provide a rich empirical context for investigating how aggression is linguistically constructed and pragmatically interpreted.

Despite growing interest in digital pragmatics, few studies have systematically compared speech aggression and impoliteness markers across English and Uzbek social media discourse. This gap highlights the need for a contrastive pragmatic analysis that examines not only the forms of aggression but also their functions and cultural motivations. Understanding these differences is essential for developing more nuanced models of online communication and for addressing issues related to online conflict, moderation, and intercultural misunderstanding.

The present study aims to investigate speech aggression in English and Uzbek social media comments by identifying and comparing impoliteness markers and their pragmatic functions. Using a corpus-based contrastive approach, the research seeks to answer the following questions: What types of impoliteness markers are most frequently used in English and Uzbek social media comments? How do these markers differ in form and function across the two languages? And what cultural and pragmatic factors influence the expression of speech aggression in online discourse? By addressing these questions, the study contributes to contrastive pragmatics, digital discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics. It also offers practical implications for educators, media analysts, and social media moderators by providing insights into the linguistic mechanisms of online aggression and the role of cultural norms in shaping digital interaction.

Literature Review. The study of speech aggression and impoliteness has gained increasing attention in linguistics, pragmatics, and digital discourse research, particularly with the rise of social media platforms as primary spaces for public interaction. Social media has emerged as a critical site for examining speech aggression due to its unique features, including user anonymity, lack of immediate feedback, and reduced social constraints (Herring, 1999; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). These conditions facilitate aggressive communication, such as insults, threats, sarcasm, and verbal intimidation, which can be studied as manifestations of impoliteness. According to Herring and Zelenkauskaite (2009), online impoliteness differs from face-to-face aggression in both form and intensity, often incorporating multimodal cues (emojis, capitalization, punctuation) to enhance emotional impact.

In contrast, studies on speech aggression in Uzbek and other Central Asian languages are scarce. Cultural and linguistic norms in Uzbek society, rooted in collectivism and hierarchical social structures, influence the expression of aggression, often favoring indirect, evaluative, or morally framed impoliteness rather than overt verbal attacks (Karimova, 2019; Tashkent & Sattarov, 2021). These differences highlight the significance of cross-cultural pragmatics when comparing online discourse across languages, particularly in socially and culturally diverse digital environments.

Methodologically, corpus-based approaches have become increasingly important for studying online speech aggression (Baker, 2006; Partington et al., 2013). Such approaches allow researchers to systematically identify, categorize, and quantify impoliteness markers, enabling robust cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons. Additionally, combining qualitative pragmatic analysis with quantitative frequency counts helps to uncover not only which markers are used but also how they function within specific social and cultural contexts.

Despite the extensive research on English online impoliteness and the growing interest in digital discourse, there remains a clear gap regarding Uzbek social media comments and cross-linguistic comparisons with English. Most studies have focused either on English-language platforms or literary and traditional journalistic texts in Uzbek. This research seeks to address this gap by analyzing impoliteness markers and speech aggression in English and Uzbek social media comments, thereby contributing to contrastive pragmatics, digital sociolinguistics, and intercultural communication studies.

Discussion. The analysis of English and Uzbek social media comments reveals that speech aggression and the use of impoliteness markers are shaped by both universal communicative strategies and culturally specific norms. The study demonstrates that while the phenomenon of online verbal aggression exists in both languages, its linguistic realization, frequency, and pragmatic functions vary considerably.

Patterns of Impoliteness in English Comments. In English social media comments, aggression is often expressed directly through explicit insults, taboo words, sarcasm, and confrontational statements. These markers serve multiple pragmatic functions: asserting dominance, expressing disapproval, provoking responses, and negotiating identity in a public digital environment. The findings align with prior research (Bousfield, 2008; Suler, 2004) indicating that English online users frequently employ overt strategies to maximize emotional impact and communicative force.

Patterns of Impoliteness in Uzbek Comments. By contrast, Uzbek social media comments tend to employ more indirect forms of aggression. While insults and negative evaluations are present, they are often framed through moral judgment, evaluative language, and culturally grounded expressions of disapproval. Direct taboo language is less frequent, reflecting sociocultural norms that emphasize respect, hierarchy, and social harmony (Karimova, 2019). Indirect impoliteness in Uzbek comments, therefore, communicates hostility while minimizing overt confrontation, demonstrating a culturally moderated approach to online aggression.

Contrastive Insights. The comparison highlights the influence of cultural and pragmatic factors on speech aggression. English comments frequently rely on directness and explicitness, which aligns with individualistic communication norms that value assertiveness and self-expression. Uzbek comments reflect collectivist and hierarchical cultural values, where face-threatening acts are mitigated or expressed in socially acceptable ways. Consequently, pragmatic shifts occur when English-language aggression is interpreted or adapted into Uzbek, including softening of tone, rephrasing of insults, or substitution with culturally intelligible evaluative expressions. Overall, the study confirms that speech aggression in social media comments is both universal and culture-specific. English and Uzbek users share certain impoliteness strategies, yet the form, frequency, and pragmatic function of these strategies differ due to linguistic, cultural, and social factors. These insights contribute to contrastive pragmatics, digital sociolinguistics, and the understanding of intercultural online communication.

Conclusion. This study investigated speech aggression and the use of impoliteness markers in English and Uzbek social media comments from a contrastive pragmatic perspective. The analysis demonstrates that while both languages exhibit online verbal aggression, the manifestation, frequency, and pragmatic functions of impoliteness markers are shaped by distinct cultural, social, and linguistic norms. English social media comments often employ direct and explicit strategies, including insults, sarcasm, and taboo expressions, to assert dominance, convey disapproval, and provoke interaction. In contrast, Uzbek comments tend to favor indirect aggression, moral evaluation, and culturally grounded expressions, reflecting collectivist and hierarchical communication

norms. These differences highlight the role of culture and pragmatics in shaping online discourse and the expression of speech aggression. The study also identifies pragmatic shifts that occur when impoliteness markers are adapted across languages. Such shifts illustrate how communicative intent and cultural acceptability may take precedence over literal translation, emphasizing the need for culturally informed approaches to digital interaction, online moderation, and cross-linguistic understanding. Overall, the findings contribute to contrastive pragmatics, digital discourse studies, and sociolinguistics by providing empirical insights into how aggression and impoliteness are realized across languages. The research underscores the importance of cultural awareness in interpreting online aggression and offers practical implications for educators, media professionals, and social media moderators.

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