



## SPEECH ETIQUETTE IN THE ASPECT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION.

PhD., associate professor

**Khojjeva Zarina Bakhtiyarovna**

A master's student

**Tukhtaeva Madina Zokirjon qizi**

Tashkent International University of Financial Management and  
Technology

E-mail: [hazarinab@gmail.com](mailto:hazarinab@gmail.com)

[madinazakirovna888@gmail.com](mailto:madinazakirovna888@gmail.com)

Tel: +998 (99) 920 52 50

**Abstract.** In today's increasingly interconnected world, people from different backgrounds interact with each other every day, and being sensitive to differences in speech etiquette becomes an essential part of effective communication. Speech is a form of politeness, which makes the main contribution to the formation of mutual relations between people of different cultures. The grammatical structure and pronunciation of speech traditionally used in communication can cause several problems in intercultural communication. Understanding speech and adapting accordingly can greatly improve communication skills and foster positive relationships across cultures. This article provides an overview of the nuances of speech and the importance of cultural sensitivity in speech.

**Key words:** Speech etiquette, intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity in speech, verbal communication, non-verbal communication, cultural differences, communication competence, language, tone of voice.

**Аннотация.** В современном все более взаимосвязанном мире люди разного происхождения ежедневно общаются друг с другом, и понимание различий в речевом этикете становится неотъемлемой частью эффективного общения. Речь — это форма вежливости, которая вносит основной вклад в формирование взаимоотношений между представителями разных культур. Грамматическая структура и произношение речи, традиционно используемой в общении, могут вызвать ряд проблем в межкультурной коммуникации.

Понимание речи и соответствующая адаптация могут значительно улучшить коммуникативные навыки и наладить позитивные отношения между культурами. В этой статье представлен обзор нюансов речи и важности учета культурных особенностей в речи.

**Ключевые слова:** Речевой этикет, межкультурная коммуникация, культурная чувствительность речи, вербальная коммуникация, невербальное общение, культурные различия, коммуникативная компетенция, язык, тон голоса.

In today's world, which is getting connected day by day, the complex mix of cultural differences demands understanding as an important skill. Language acts like a bridge that connects people from diversified backgrounds. The language itself, however, carries a profound and hardly ever recognized layer of cultural norms, which goes by the name of speech etiquette. This silent rule deeply set in every culture determines how we talk to others, how we will express our feelings, and how we communicate in general. It acts like a silent conductor, guiding the pace and harmony of conversations.

Speech etiquette is more often called "speech manners" or "communicative norms," and is an unwritten code that speaks to how individuals interact with each other through talking in a given social context. In fact, it covers a wide array of practices that range from the precise words and phrases used in addressing other people up to the nonverbal signals we use in interaction.

This silent yet elaborate system of rules ensures that communication would be orderly, polite, and correct. It prescribes the way people greet and bid their farewells, the way they handle turn-taking in conversations, or the acceptability or prohibition of certain topics in particular settings. Speech etiquette sometimes even largely varies across cultures because such cultures vary in values, beliefs, and social organization that form ways of communicating.

Speech etiquette is not something that can be minimized. It is a serious tool for establishing and maintaining social contact, a means of understanding, and a way of getting through the complexities of contacts with other people. When people follow speech etiquette, unwritten rules mean respect to other people, a feeling of trust, and good communication. In this case, breach of such unwritten rules leads to misunderstandings, social awkwardness, and can give offense.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, people from very different backgrounds interact daily, and being sensitive to speech etiquette differences becomes a vital part of effective communication. Mindful of cultural differences, observant of others, and humble in respect, one can navigate through the difficult lessons of intercultural communication and attain meaningful contact across cultural divides.

Speech etiquette involves the norms and rules that guide polite speech behavior, ensuring that communication remains respectful and appropriate in any situation.

Speech etiquette denotes the system of norms and rules of polite speech behavior that ensures the very existence of polite communication and appropriateness of linguistic action in any communicative event. It is a universal linguistic phenomenon<sup>1</sup> inherent in all speakers of any linguistic community in the world. Speech etiquette is located in the area of pragmatic and sociolinguistic routine that forms politeness and, therefore, gives an important contribution to the moulding of interactions between persons from different cultural backgrounds.

The significance of speech etiquette consists in that it can save the polite and friendly or official relations in accordance with the situation of speech. It impacts the establishment, retention, or improvement of individual or social relations and, therefore, plays an important role in communication. Speech etiquette gives politeness to speech regardless of its content, and a deviation from speech etiquette is regarded commonly as the evidence of bad manners or deliberate rudeness.

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<sup>1</sup> [Top Ten Tips for... Effective Cross-Cultural Communication \(chrysos.org.uk\)](https://chrysos.org.uk/Top-Ten-Tips-for-Effective-Cross-Cultural-Communication)

Speech etiquette consists of some important components<sup>2</sup> which render it an effective means of communication:

1. Phrases or linguistic formulas: Those are words of courtesy like 'sorry', 'thanks', and 'please'; greetings and farewells: 'hello', 'good evening', 'goodbye'; and forms of address: 'you' or 'ladies and gentlemen'.

2. Non-verbal factors: Gestures, facial expressions, movement, and posture all play a vital role in speech etiquette and support the verbal factor.

3. Cultural specificity: Headwords and expressions of each language reflect the national specificity of speech politeness and linguistic etiquette.

4. Tone of voice: This is how the words are said, including volume and a variation in pitch, says volumes about speech etiquette.

5. Appropriateness to context: The ability to adapt speech to different social situations, considering factors such as formality, social status, and cultural norms.

Speech etiquette serves several important functions<sup>3</sup> in communication:

1. Contact-setting function: It establishes and maintains the communication between interlocutors.

2. Appellative function: This is the function of calling or addressing the interlocutor appropriately.

3. Orientation function: It serves to orient the speaker toward the addressee's role in speech interactions.

4. Expressive function: with speech etiquette, the expression of emotions and feelings about human relationships is possible.

5. Directive function: It regulates relations between the speaker and the hearer by using the appropriate speech etiquette formula.

Mastery of speech etiquette requires that interlocutors observe and direct their attention to such features of 'speech culture' as correctness, logicity, purity, and

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<sup>2</sup> I.A. Kereksha. Speech etiquette as a component of the cultural minimum. Молодой ученый. — 2019. — № 7 (245). — С. 259-260.

<sup>3</sup> L. Myroslava. Speech and texting etiquette on the cell phone. KYIV 2010. P. 10-11.

accuracy of speech, being aware of linguistic 'weeds', expressiveness of speech, speech tone, and the rules of speech behaviour.

Consequently, speech etiquette is an integral part of communication competence, especially when interacting with other cultures. It consists of several aspects: linguistic and non-verbal, functions, and necessary consideration concerning cultural and social norms. Understanding and applying speech etiquette principles may help improve one's communicative competence and allow them to feel more at ease in the varied cultural landscape.

According to J. Thomas's article "Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failure" pragmatic misunderstandings in communication between people of different cultures, but speaking the same language.<sup>4</sup> In fact, sometimes, when people talk to each other, they have different ways of thinking and saying things. This can lead to misunderstandings. If someone makes a mistake because they don't understand the other person's culture, it can be even more upsetting than just messing up the words. This can make both people feel uncomfortable. Speech etiquette varies substantially between cultures, reflecting the different values that different societies have treasured. Understanding these variables is important for effective intercultural communication and cultural sensitivity in speech.

In English-speaking cultures, it is a norm to be polite in order to interact well with people. Polite language not only maintains respect, but it also creates good relations. Gratitude and apology are the hallmarks of politeness in the English language. *'Thank you', 'I appreciate it', or 'I'm sorry' for any trivial inconvenience.*

English speech etiquette has a rich and authoritative tradition. Any departure from the norm is immediately viewed as an act of bad manners or intentional rudeness. Communication in the English-speaking societies is regularly made on

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas J. Cross-cultural Pragmatic Failure. - California: Applied Linguistics, 1983. – №. 4(2). – P. 112.

three levels of politeness: formal, neutral, and familiar.<sup>5</sup> Every level has its speech variety, the formal being the standard for institutions, organisations, and in business.

Russian verbal etiquette is quite different from the English version. For one thing, Russians are much more direct in their speech, although at times this can be misunderstood as rudeness by others. In fact, their blunt expressiveness is often coupled with an extreme valuing of sincerity in relationships.

In Russian culture, smiling is not as prevalent as in some Western societies. Russians generally smile only when they genuinely mean it<sup>6</sup>, rather than as a social courtesy. This cultural difference can sometimes lead to misunderstandings in intercultural communication.

Russian speech etiquette also places great importance on hospitality. When visiting a Russian home, it is customary to bring a small gift, such as a dessert, to show respect to the host. Russians typically remove their shoes when entering a home and wear slippers, a practice that reflects their cultural norms.

The more formal way of speaking is usually the guiding principle in German speech etiquette. Germans communicate rather directly, emphasizing clarity and accuracy.<sup>7</sup> This directness may at times come across as bluntness to members of other cultures who prefer an indirect method of communicating.

Punctuality is a high regard in German culture and influences speech etiquette. Showing up late to appointments or meetings is considered a sign of disrespect, and one is supposed to let people know if he/she will be late.

Another aspect of German speech etiquette is the respect given to titles and formal forms of address. One would commonly find '*Herr*' (*Mr*) or '*Frau*' (*Mrs*) followed by the surname, as in the English way; this is standard in professional circles. The formal and colloquial pronouns '*Sie*' and '*du*', respectively, also play an

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<sup>5</sup> M. Solieva. National components in the structure of speech etiquette in english and uzbek languages. International Scientific Conference, December 18-19, 2021

<sup>6</sup> [What are some examples of Russian etiquette? - Quora](#)

<sup>7</sup> D.Smith. German: A Complete Guide for German Language Learning Including German Phrases, German Grammar and German Short Stories for Beginners. Kindle Edition. September 15, 2018

important role in the etiquette of German speaking: the formal is used by default in most situations, unless one is invited to use the informal variety.

Understanding these cultural variations in speech etiquette is essential for effective intercultural communication. It helps in navigating diverse cultural landscapes and avoiding potential misunderstandings that could arise from differing communication norms. By being aware of these differences, individuals can demonstrate cultural sensitivity in speech and enhance their communication competence in various cultural contexts.

Living in today's world, speech etiquette in intercultural communication has now become an important skill for people of different backgrounds. With every foreign student looking for new impressions and every host community opening their arms to people from different cultures, effective cross-cultural communication is at stake. We can build meaningful connexions and foster a peaceful global community through embracing empathy, active listening, openness of mind, and adaptation of communication techniques.

Speaking etiquette plays a paramount role in effective communication, especially in intercultural contexts. The level of vocabulary and phraseology applied leads to the most significant difference in perceptions and interpretations between cultures. English-speaking cultures rely heavily on phrases and words that denote politeness, respect, and consideration to the listener.

For instance, there are phrases like 'Thank you', 'I appreciate it', and 'I'm sorry' that are used even when minor inconvenient situations arise, so the relationships remain intact. These carry “politeness default values”<sup>8</sup> bound by culture, which contributes to the tone of the interaction in general.

In contrast, Russian speech etiquette is more reliant on directness and frankness without much concern for preventing face-loss. For instance, using diminutives in

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<sup>8</sup> [Top Ten Tips for... Effective Cross-Cultural Communication \(chrysos.org.uk\)](https://chrysos.org.uk/)



Russian can soften the illocutionary force of requests and make them more polite without resorting to indirect language.

The grammatical structures and styles of politeness that are conventionally used in speech etiquette differ across cultures and languages. In English, indirect requests are conventionally regarded as the politest form of requesting something. These are usually in the form of interrogative constructions with modal verbs: 'Can you.?' or 'Would you mind.?'.

While it is true that, for instance, in Polish and Russian, imperative forms occur more often and are considered unmarked for polite requests. This directness may, however, be modulated, often by using intonation, address forms, or modal particles, rather than indirect constructions.

Another important aspect of speech etiquette that might add much to the perception of politeness is the tone of voice and pronunciation. In most English-speaking cultures, politeness-in particular, when making requests or apologizing-is identified with a softer tone and rising intonation.

Cultural differences in intonation and pronunciation can cause several problems in intercultural communication. For example, a polite tone in one culture could be viewed as overly formal, or even insincere, in another. Thus, cultural awareness of speech and differences in speech become critical for effective cross-cultural communication.

The linguistic aspects of speech etiquette comprise the most important categories which form the essence of intercultural communication: lexical, grammatical, stylistic, tonal, and articulatory. Understanding these nuances and adapting one's speech accordingly can greatly enhance communication competence and foster positive relationships across diverse cultural backgrounds.

Speech etiquette norms are the basis for successful communication and good interpersonal relationships. All behaviors and practices combined help ensure



politeness and respect in an interaction, be it in a differing cultural group or otherwise.

Equally, one of the most common etiquette mistakes is inappropriate language or tone. This could be using informal language in a formal setting, not adjusting your communication style to suit different cultural contexts, or even using a tone that can be portrayed as disrespectful or confrontational. Another common mistake has implications in non-verbal communication, such as lack of eye contact, which is usually perceived to imply insincerity, disinterest, or insecurity.

One common mistake speaker make in public speaking situations is giving a canned speech; that is, a generic speech off the shelf that does not demonstrate an attempt to understand the particular needs of this audience, which creates disappointment and frustration among listeners. Furthermore, there are those who present hastily, without stopping at the right moments to let their message sink in, or remaining glued to visual aids during the time the presentation takes.

Indeed, speech etiquette is the very pivot on which personal and professional relationships generally depend.

Proper etiquette creates an atmosphere of respect and consideration, essential in building and maintaining good relations. On the other hand, bad etiquette makes tension, misunderstanding, and conflict arise, which, eventually, leads to not-so-good relationships or hinders effective communication.

Workplace speech can also impact team dynamics, collaboration, and overall organizational culture.

Leaders with subtle speech etiquette command confidence and loyalty among their members, while leaders who do not heed these norms often find it more difficult to earn respect and cooperation from their colleagues.

It becomes all the more important in intercultural communication to understand and adhere to speech etiquette norms. Other cultures may expect different personal space, greetings, and social behaviors than others. Such awareness enables one to be

sensitive and not cause offense in such situations. For immigrants or people working in multicultural environments, for instance, the level of their integration into society and professional success is deeply dependent on the degree of their familiarity with speech etiquette norms.

Basically, speech etiquette norms constitute the foundation of communication, as well as healthy interpersonal relationships. Subsequently, having these norms in mind and attempting to follow them allow improvement in speech etiquette competencies, avoiding common mistakes, for favorably influencing different cultural and professional circumstances.

Speech etiquette shape how people from different cultures talk to each other. They influence the way folks from various backgrounds interact helping them understand and respect one another. When we see how speech rules differ across cultures, change how we talk, and learn to be aware, we can close gaps and form stronger bonds between cultures. To get better at talking with people from other cultures, we need to study their language, history, and social habits. This info helps break the ice and gives us things to chat about besides work. While looking things up is good experiencing a culture teaches us more. By watching and listening to different cultural views, we can get past obstacles and find what we have in common, which leads to better and more meaningful talks between cultures.

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