

## THE MANIFESTATION OF SPEECH AGGRESSION IN INTERNET COMMUNICATION: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

*Zebuniso Botirova Solijon kizi*

*PhD student of Andijon state university  
Andijan state institute of foreign languages  
Faculty of the English language and literature  
Department of English language practice*

### Introduction

In today's digitized society, the nature of communication has undergone significant transformation, with online platforms such as social media, discussion forums, and messaging applications becoming central to daily human interaction. While these digital environments facilitate global connectivity, they also give rise to new communicative challenges, notably the proliferation of **speech aggression**. This form of verbal behavior—marked by hostility, insult, and psychological manipulation—has become particularly visible in **internet-mediated discourse**, where factors such as anonymity and lack of direct accountability encourage more aggressive speech acts (Hardaker, 2013).

Linguists and discourse analysts emphasize that aggression in language should not be seen purely as a reflection of individual emotion, but rather as a **socially and contextually motivated linguistic practice** (Culpeper, 2011; Kienpointner, 2013). In online settings, speech aggression is expressed through a wide range of pragmatic and stylistic means, including **irony, sarcasm, mock politeness, swear words, indirect threats, and digital paralinguistic tools** like emojis or typographical emphasis (Dyner, 2015). These features collectively contribute to the construction of aggressive intent, often blurring the lines between humorous provocation and verbal attack.

Moreover, speech aggression in online communication is not homogeneous; it serves various discourse functions—from emotional release and self-assertion to ideological alignment or in-group solidarity (Terkourafi, 2008). Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Telegram host multifaceted discourse environments where aggression is frequently entangled with social commentary, political expression, or cultural identity struggles. As such, **online discourse becomes a dynamic space for both linguistic creativity and verbal conflict** (Seargeant & Tagg, 2014).

Despite the growing body of research on digital communication, **cross-linguistic and culturally sensitive analyses** of speech aggression in internet contexts remain underdeveloped. In particular, there is a need to explore how **Uzbek and English language users** employ aggression pragmatically in online discourse, considering sociocultural norms and platform-specific affordances.

This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a **comparative linguistic analysis** of speech aggression in English and Uzbek online interactions. It draws on theories from pragmatics and critical discourse analysis to uncover how aggression is encoded, interpreted, and functionally deployed in digital communicative practices. In doing so, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship between **language, aggression, and digital culture**.

### Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative discourse-analytic approach** rooted in pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (CDA), focusing on the linguistic realization of speech aggression in internet-mediated communication. The data was collected from **two major social media platforms** — Twitter (for English) and Telegram public comment threads (for Uzbek). These platforms were chosen due to their high user activity, open accessibility, and the presence of frequent emotionally charged exchanges. A corpus of **200 online comments** (100 in English, 100 in Uzbek) was compiled over a two-month period. Comments were selected based on relevance to emotionally or ideologically provocative topics, such as politics, gender, and nationalism. Comments exhibiting **explicit or implicit aggressive language** were manually identified using established criteria from previous studies (Culpeper, 2011; Hardaker, 2013).

Speech aggression was analyzed through three primary linguistic dimensions:

- **Lexical choices** (e.g., insults, derogatory labels, taboo words)
- **Pragmatic strategies** (e.g., irony, sarcasm, mock politeness)
- **Discourse-level patterns** (e.g., repetition, intensifiers, polarizing syntax)

The analysis was also guided by **Kienpointner's (1997)** framework of aggressive speech acts and **Terkourafi's (2008)** politeness/impoliteness theory, allowing a cross-cultural comparison between English and Uzbek discourse norms.

## Results

The analysis reveals both cross-cultural similarities and differences in the way speech aggression is linguistically manifested.

### *Lexical Indicators of Aggression*

In both corpora, the **use of evaluative epithets and derogatory terms** was common. English comments often included direct insults (e.g., *idiot, moron, snowflake*) and profanity. Uzbek comments utilized cultural-specific slurs and metaphorical expressions (e.g., *qo'ycha aqling bilan, boshqorong'i odam*), reflecting **contextual and social embeddedness** (Khodjaeva, 2020).

### *Pragmatic Strategies*

The use of **sarcasm and irony** was a prominent feature in both languages, though manifested differently. English users frequently employed “mock politeness” (e.g., *Sure, that's a brilliant idea...*), while Uzbek speakers tended to use proverb-like sarcasm (*Yana bir aqli topildiyu...*) — an indirect yet biting strategy (Dynel, 2015).

### *Discourse-Level Structures*

Both datasets showed a tendency toward **intensification** (e.g., all caps, excessive punctuation) and **repetition** to emphasize hostility. English comments often used rhetorical questions and negation (*You really think that makes sense?*), while Uzbek discourse leaned on **confrontational imperatives** (*Ko'zingni och!, Bor-da, o'qi!*).

Interestingly, **emojis and gifs** were also used to reinforce or subvert aggression, a phenomenon aligned with digital paralinguistics (Sergeant & Tagg, 2014).

## Discussion

These findings confirm previous assertions that **speech aggression in online discourse is multimodal, pragmatic, and highly context-sensitive** (Hardaker, 2013; Dynel, 2015). Despite linguistic differences, both English and Uzbek users rely on similar discourse strategies to express aggression, though the degree of directness varies.

### *Cultural Influences*

Uzbek speakers showed a preference for **indirect aggression**, often masked through metaphor or irony. This aligns with high-context cultural communication patterns where face-saving is prioritized (Hall, 1976). In contrast, English-speaking users tended to be more **explicit and confrontational**, in line with low-context communication styles.

### *Platform-Specific Behavior*

Platform affordances also played a role: Twitter's brevity fosters pithy, often sharp expressions of aggression, while Telegram comments allowed for slightly **longer, narrative-style hostile responses**. This suggests that technological design influences not only the content but also the form of aggressive speech.

### *Implications*

Understanding how speech aggression functions across languages and platforms is crucial not only for linguistic theory but also for **developing moderation policies and digital literacy strategies**. Recognizing culturally grounded strategies of verbal hostility may assist in creating **AI tools for hate speech detection and cross-cultural communication training** (Norris, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

This study sheds light on the **linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms** through which speech aggression is constructed and interpreted in internet-mediated communication. By comparing English and Uzbek social media discourse, it demonstrates that while **aggression is a universal communicative act**, its **expression is deeply shaped by language, culture, and digital context**. Future research could expand this inquiry by including more diverse languages, exploring the role of humor in aggressive speech acts, or employing **computational discourse analysis methods** to analyze larger datasets.

### **References**

- Culpeper, J. (2011). *Impoliteness: Using language to cause offence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dynel, M. (2015). Trolling is not stupid: Internet trolling as the art of deception. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 3(1), 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.3.1.01dyn>
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books.
- Hardaker, C. (2013). “Uh... not to be nitpicky...”: Trolling in computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict*, 1(1), 58–86. <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlac.1.1.04har>
- Khodjaeva, N. (2020). Pragmatic features of invective utterances in Uzbek political discourse. *Philology and Language Teaching*, 3(12), 73–82.
- Kienpointner, M. (1997). Varieties of rudeness: Types and functions of impolite utterances. *Functions of Language*, 4(2), 251–287. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fof.4.2.05kie>
- Norris, S. (2020). *Digital literacy and discourse*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429266113>
- Seargeant, P., & Tagg, C. (2014). *The language of social media: Identity and community on the internet*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Terkourafi, M. (2008). Toward a unified theory of politeness, impoliteness, and rudeness. In D. Bousfield & M. A. Locher (Eds.), *Im/politeness in language: Studies on its interplay with power*

*in theory and practice* (pp. 45–74). Mouton de Gruyter.