

LINGUOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF GREETINGS IN ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. Greetings are culturally shaped communicative practices rather than simple linguistic formulas. This article presents an extended analysis of the linguocultural characteristics of greetings in English and Russian communication, emphasizing how cultural values, social norms, and interactional expectations influence linguistic choice and behavior. Using a qualitative comparative approach, the study examines verbal and non-verbal greeting practices, degrees of formality, emotional involvement, and sociocultural factors such as status, age, and familiarity. The findings demonstrate that English greetings are largely ritualized, politeness-oriented, and emotionally restrained, whereas Russian greetings are more context-dependent, socially sensitive, and emotionally meaningful. The study highlights that greetings function as culturally embedded communicative practices rather than simple linguistic routines. It concludes that understanding these differences is essential for effective intercultural communication and for developing communicative competence in foreign language learning.

Keywords: linguoculture, greetings, speech etiquette, intercultural communication, English communication, Russian communication

ЛИНГВОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ ПРИВЕТСТВИЯ
В АНГЛИЙСКОЙ И РУССКОЙ КОММУНИКАЦИИ

Аннотация. Данная статья посвящена изучению лингвокультурных аспектов приветствий в английской и русской коммуникации. Цель исследования — проанализировать, как культурные ценности, социальные нормы и коммуникативные ожидания влияют на формы приветствий в двух языках. В работе используется качественный сравнительный метод, позволяющий рассмотреть вербальные и невербальные формы приветствий, степень формальности, эмоциональную выразительность, а также влияние социокультурных факторов, таких как возраст, социальный статус и степень знакомства. Результаты показывают, что английские приветствия носят преимущественно формализованный, вежливый и эмоционально сдержанный характер, тогда как русские приветствия более контекстуально обусловлены, социально чувствительны и эмоционально насыщены. Делается вывод о том, что приветствия являются культурно обусловленными коммуникативными практиками. Понимание этих различий важно для успешной межкультурной коммуникации и формирования коммуникативной компетенции при изучении иностранных языков.

Ключевые слова: лингвокультура, приветствия, речевой этикет, межкультурная коммуникация, английская коммуникация, русская коммуникация.



INGLIZ VA RUS MULOQOTIDA SALOMLASHUVNING LINGVOMADANIY JIHATLARI

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqola ingliz va rus tillaridagi salomlashuvlarning lingvokultural jihatlarini o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi — madaniy qadriyatlar, ijtimoiy me'yorlar va kommunikativ kutishlarning salomlashuv shakllariga qanday ta'sir qilishini tahlil qilishdir. Ishda sifatli taqqoslash usuli qo'llanilib, salomlashuvlarning verbal va noverbal shakllari, rasmiylik darajasi, emotsional ifodalanish hamda yosh, ijtimoiy maqom va tanishlik darajasi kabi sotsiomadaniy omillar o'rganiladi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, ingliz tilidagi salomlashuvlar ko'proq standartlashgan, muloyimlikka yo'naltirilgan va emotsional jihatdan bosiq bo'lsa, rus tilidagi salomlashuvlar kontekstga bog'liq, ijtimoiy jihatdan sezgir va emotsional jihatdan boy hisoblanadi. Tadqiqot xulosasiga ko'ra, salomlashuvlar oddiy til birliklari emas, balki madaniyatga xos kommunikativ amaliyotlardir. Ushbu farqlarni anglash samarali madaniyatlararo muloqot va chet tilini o'rganishda kommunikativ kompetensiyani rivojlantirish uchun muhim ahamiyatga ega.

Kalit so'zlar: lingvokultura, salomlashuvlar, nutq etiketi, madaniyatlararo muloqot, ingliz kommunikatsiyasi, rus kommunikatsiyasi

1. Introduction

Human communication begins with contact, and greetings serve as one of the most fundamental mechanisms for establishing this contact. Although greetings may appear routine and automatic, they perform complex social and cultural functions. Through greetings, speakers signal respect, recognition, social distance, or closeness, and they implicitly define the nature of the relationship between interlocutors. For this reason, greetings occupy a central position in speech etiquette and intercultural pragmatics.

In linguocultural studies, language is viewed as an expression of cultural reality. As Kramsch (1998) states, "language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality" (p. 3). Greetings vividly illustrate this idea, as they reflect culturally specific norms of politeness, emotional expression, and social hierarchy. When speakers from different cultural backgrounds interact, differences in greeting behavior often become one of the first sources of misunderstanding.

English and Russian communicative cultures demonstrate contrasting orientations toward interpersonal interaction. English-speaking societies generally value predictability, politeness, and emotional moderation, while Russian communicative norms place greater emphasis on sincerity, contextual awareness, and social sensitivity. These differences are not accidental but rooted in broader cultural and historical traditions. The aim of this article is to examine how these cultural orientations are manifested in greeting practices in English and Russian communication and to highlight the importance of linguocultural awareness in intercultural interaction.

2. Methods

The present study employs a qualitative comparative methodology. Rather than focusing on quantitative frequency analysis, the research emphasizes interpretation, meaning, and cultural context. Greeting expressions were selected from authentic spoken interaction, educational materials, and commonly observed communicative situations in both English- and Russian-speaking environments.



THE ANALYSIS FOCUSES ON THE FOLLOWING PARAMETERS:

verbal forms of greetings and their pragmatic functions
degrees of formality and informality
emotional involvement and sincerity
non-verbal elements accompanying greetings
sociocultural variables such as age, social status, familiarity, and institutional context

The theoretical background of the study is informed by politeness theory and intercultural pragmatics. Brown and Levinson (1987) emphasize that “politeness is a basic form of social cooperation” (p. 5), a concept that provides a useful framework for understanding how greetings function in maintaining social harmony. However, theoretical models serve as supportive tools, while the primary emphasis remains on original interpretation and cultural analysis.

3. Results*Verbal Forms of Greetings*

One of the most prominent features of English greetings is their high degree of formulaicity. Expressions such as *Hello*, *Hi*, *Good morning*, and *Good afternoon* are used across a wide range of social contexts with minimal variation. Even in formal situations, greeting choices remain relatively stable and predictable. A particularly characteristic feature of English greeting behavior is the use of phatic expressions, such as *How are you?* or *How’s it going?*. These expressions rarely function as genuine inquiries. As Yule (2020) notes, “many utterances are produced not to convey information but to maintain social relationships” (p. 120).

Russian greetings, by contrast, demonstrate greater lexical and pragmatic diversity. The choice between *Здравствуйте* and *Привет* is socially meaningful and requires careful consideration of contextual factors. Age differences, institutional roles, and degrees of familiarity play a crucial role in determining the appropriate greeting form. An incorrect choice may be interpreted as disrespectful, overly familiar, or distant, which highlights the higher pragmatic responsibility placed on the speaker in Russian communication (Larina, 2015).

Formality and Social Hierarchy

Formality is another area where linguocultural differences are clearly visible. In English, the distinction between formal and informal greetings is relatively limited and often neutralized in everyday interaction. Even in professional settings, informal greetings may be used to create a friendly atmosphere.

In Russian communication, however, formality serves as an important marker of social hierarchy and respect. The use of formal greeting forms is expected in institutional and hierarchical contexts, and deviation from these norms may be perceived as inappropriate. This reflects a cultural tendency to encode social structure more explicitly in language.

Emotional Orientation

English greetings are generally characterized by emotional restraint. Politeness is achieved through brevity, emotional neutrality, and avoidance of personal intrusion. This communicative style aligns with what Brown and Levinson (1987) describe as negative politeness, aimed at protecting the interlocutor’s personal space. Russian greetings often allow for greater emotional sincerity, particularly among familiar interlocutors. Questions about health or personal circumstances may lead to honest and sometimes detailed responses. Wierzbicka (2003) observes that “different cultures have different expectations about emotional expressiveness” (p. 34), and this difference is clearly reflected in Russian greeting behavior.

Non-Verbal Components

Non-verbal behavior plays a significant role in greeting rituals. In English-speaking cultures, smiling during greetings is common and functions as a symbol of friendliness rather than emotional closeness. Physical distance is usually respected, and physical contact is limited.

In Russian culture, non-verbal behavior is more context-sensitive.



Smiling is not obligatory, especially in formal situations, and a serious facial expression may signal respect rather than unfriendliness. Handshakes may be firmer, and physical proximity may be closer, depending on the relationship between speakers.

4. Discussion.

The results of the study confirm that greetings function as culturally embedded communicative acts rather than neutral linguistic routines. English greetings emphasize stability, predictability, and politeness, creating an interactional space that minimizes social risk and emotional exposure. Russian greetings, in contrast, emphasize sincerity, contextual awareness, and relational depth. These differences frequently lead to pragmatic misunderstandings in intercultural communication. English speakers may perceive Russian greeting behavior as overly serious or emotionally intense, while Russian speakers may interpret English greetings as superficial or insincere. Such misunderstandings are not the result of linguistic incompetence but arise from differing cultural expectations regarding appropriate social behavior (Wierzbicka, 2003).

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings highlight the importance of integrating linguocultural instruction into foreign language education. Teaching greetings as isolated vocabulary items is insufficient. Learners must understand the cultural meanings, social conditions, and emotional norms associated with greeting practices. As Kramsch (1998) emphasizes, “culture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill” (p. 27), but an essential component of communicative competence.

5. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that greetings in English and Russian communication reflect deeply rooted cultural values and social norms. While both languages employ greetings to initiate interaction and maintain social relations, they differ significantly in terms of formality, emotional expression, and pragmatic expectations. Understanding these linguocultural differences is essential for successful intercultural communication and effective foreign language education. Greetings should therefore be viewed not as routine expressions, but as meaningful cultural practices embedded in human interaction.

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