RESPECT AS A SCALAR PRAGMATIC CATEGORY: BOUNDARIES AND DEGREES IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH DISCOURSE

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Abstract: *This paper explores respect as a scalar pragmatic category manifested through varying degrees and context-dependent boundaries in Uzbek and English discourse. While respect has traditionally been treated as a component of politeness or a sociolinguistic variable, this study argues that it functions as a gradable phenomenon that operates along a continuum rather than within fixed categorical limits. The research adopts a comparative-pragmatic approach to analyze linguistic means expressing respect across lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels.*

Keywords: *respect, scalar category, pragmatics, politeness, Uzbek language, English language, discourse, gradation.*

HURMAT GRADATSION PRAGMATIK KATEGORIYA SIFATIDA: O‘ZBEK VA INGLIZ TILLARI DISKURSIDA CHEGARALAR VA DARAJALAR

Annotatsiya: *Mazkur maqolada hurmat tushunchasi o‘zbek va ingliz tillari diskursida turli darajalarda namoyon bo‘ladigan hamda kontekstga bog‘liq chegaralarga ega bo‘lgan gradatsion pragmatik kategoriya sifatida tahlil qilinadi. An’anaviy yondashuvlarda hurmat ko‘pincha xushmuomalalik (politeness) tarkibiy qismi yoki sotsiolingvistik o‘zgaruvchi sifatida talqin qilingan bo‘lsa-da, ushbu tadqiqotda u qat’iy kategoriyalarga emas, balki*

uzluksiz continuum asosida amal qiluvchi darajalanadigan hodisa sifatida asoslanadi. Tadqiqotda leksik, grammatik va diskurs darajalarida hurmatni ifodalovchi lingvistik vositalar qiyosiy-pragmatik yondashuv asosida tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: *hurmat, gradatsion kategoriya, pragmatika, xushmuomalalik, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, diskurs, darajalanish.*

Respect is a fundamental component of human communication, reflecting interpersonal relations, social hierarchy, and cultural norms. In linguistic studies, respect is often subsumed under the broader notion of politeness, yet its internal structure and degree-based nature remain underexplored. Traditional approaches tend to treat respect as a binary or categorical phenomenon—either present or absent—without adequately accounting for its gradability and contextual variability.

This study aims to reconceptualize respect as a scalar pragmatic category, characterized by varying degrees (intensity) and flexible boundaries determined by discourse context. The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English provides an opportunity to examine how different linguistic systems encode respect through diverse mechanisms.

Respect and Politeness Theory: respect is closely linked to politeness theory, particularly the concept of "face" introduced by Erving Goffman and further developed by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. According to this framework, speakers employ linguistic strategies to maintain positive and negative face, often reflecting varying degrees of respect.

Similarly, Geoffrey Leech emphasizes the role of politeness principles in regulating communicative behavior, suggesting that respect is not absolute but contextually negotiated.

Scalar Nature of Pragmatic Categories: In pragmatics, scalar categories are those that allow gradation rather than discrete classification. Respect fits

this model as it can range from minimal politeness to highly formal or honorific expression. This gradability is influenced by:

- social distance
- power relations
- cultural expectations
- communicative goals

Thus, respect should be viewed as a continuum rather than a fixed category.

Methodology: This study employs a comparative-pragmatic and typological approach. The data consists of examples from Uzbek and English discourse, including everyday conversations, literary texts, and formal communication.

The analysis is conducted across three levels:

- lexical (forms of address, honorifics)
- grammatical (morphological and syntactic markers)
- discourse-pragmatic (indirectness, mitigation strategies)

Degrees of Respect in Uzbek: Uzbek language exhibits a rich system of respect expression, often encoded morphologically and lexically. Key features include:

- plural forms (*-lar*) used as honorific markers
- possessive suffixes (*-ingiz*) indicating politeness
- culturally specific address forms (*ustoz, domla, otaxon*)

These forms allow speakers to express varying degrees of respect depending on the interlocutor's status and the communicative context.

For example:

- *O'tir* (sit – informal)
- *O'tiring* (sit – respectful)

This contrast illustrates a clear gradation in respect.

Degrees of Respect in English: In contrast, English lacks a developed morphological system of honorifics and instead relies on:

- modal verbs (*could, would, might*)
- indirect speech acts
- politeness markers (*please, kindly*)
- formal address forms (*Sir, Madam, Dr.*)

For instance:

- *Open the window.* (direct, low respect)
- *Could you open the window, please?* (high respect)

Thus, respect in English is primarily realized through syntactic complexity and pragmatic strategies.

Boundaries of Respect: Unlike measurable categories, respect does not have fixed boundaries. Instead, its limits are defined by:

- cultural norms
- situational appropriateness
- speaker intention

In Uzbek culture, excessive familiarity may be perceived as disrespect, whereas in English discourse, over-formality may create social distance or awkwardness.

Therefore, the boundary of respect is dynamic and context-sensitive, rather than rigid.

Proposed Scalar Model of Respect: Based on the analysis, respect can be modeled as a continuum:

Low respect → Neutral → Polite → Highly respectful → Honorific/exalted

Each level corresponds to specific linguistic strategies and social meanings. This scalar model allows for a more flexible and realistic interpretation of respect in discourse.

Implications for Translation: The scalar nature of respect poses significant challenges in translation. Direct equivalence is often impossible because:

- Uzbek encodes respect morphologically
- English encodes it pragmatically

As a result, translators must rely on functional equivalence, adjusting linguistic forms to preserve the intended level of respect rather than the exact structure.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates that respect should be understood as a scalar pragmatic category characterized by gradation and flexible boundaries. The comparative analysis of Uzbek and English reveals that while the two languages differ in their linguistic mechanisms, both exhibit a continuum of respect shaped by social and cultural factors.

Recognizing respect as a scalar phenomenon provides new insights into pragmatics, cross-cultural communication, and translation studies. Future research may focus on empirical validation of the proposed model and its application in computational linguistics and language teaching.

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