

Sociolinguistic Interpretation of The Uzbek Language in Internet Comments

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Abstract: This article presents some reflections on the sociolinguistic foundations of classifying uzbek-language internet comments into thematic groups. It is argued that when categorizing comments into thematic groups, one should rely not only on linguistic units but also on social context, audience, and a number of other sociolinguistic factors.

Keywords: Social situation, context, speech situation, review, comment, political comments, religious comments, popular comments, social role, social status, variability, linguistic markers, regional differentiation, professional differentiation, audience, addresser, addressee, virtual space, internet comments, youth comments, sociolinguistic factors, dialects, argot, jargon, internet language, youth language.

Introduction: In the process of globalization, the deep penetration of virtual communication into everyday life and its rapid popularization have created the foundation for the emergence of internet linguistics on the stage of world linguistics. This term, which began to take shape as an independent field at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century, was introduced into linguistics by the English scholar David Crystal. He thoroughly studies linguistic changes such as the functional-pragmatic features of language units in virtual communication and the emergence of new speech genres in the online environment. One such speech genre is internet comments. The complexity and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of internet discourse determine the existence of various scientific approaches to its genre classification. In this regard, studies by scholars such as N.G. Asmus, E.N. Galichkina, E.A. Zhigalina, L.Y. Ivanov, and L.Y. Shpitsina show that, in systematizing communication genres in the internet environment, it is scientifically and theoretically important to take into account the dialectical relationship between both technological and linguistic factors.

In the systematic study of internet communication, the computer-mediated discourse analysis developed by S. Herring (2004) serves as a theoretical foundation for

examining comments as a distinct genre of virtual communication. It should also be acknowledged that in modern linguistics, the views of researchers such as J. Zhu, E. Wickes, and J. R. Gallager (2021), regarding the algorithmic structuring of online comments based on content similarity, are of particular importance in classifying internet comments and user-generated content (UGC) as a unified genre.

In Uzbek linguistics, the issue of classifying internet comments thematically remains one of the pressing areas of research. Alongside the morphological, syntactic, lexical, and pragmatic foundations of dividing comments into thematic groups, sociological factors also play an important role. This is because a sociolinguistic approach to virtual comments is closely connected with the communicative situation, social roles, audience layers, and a number of other social factors. At present, the sociolinguistic study of internet comments is considered an emerging direction in our linguistics. The use of socially marked lexical units in such comments serves to demonstrate the speech characteristics of representatives of different social strata as well as the influence of the social environment on language. Therefore, the study of this topic is regarded as a relevant and significant issue.

In contemporary linguistics, sociolinguistic research is

closely interconnected with several scientific and methodological fields, including cognitive linguistics, linguoculturology, and psycholinguistics. As examples of research related to this topic, we can cite the monographic studies of scholars such as Sh. Iskandarova, S. Muminov, Q. Rasulov, X. Yuldasheva, and X. Ismoilov. Emphasizing that there are a number of units and expressions in language that cannot be studied without a sociolinguistic approach, X. Ismoilov supports his view with Sh. Safarov's statement: "The dialectics of form and content in linguistics is extremely important, because just as any form expresses a certain meaning, any meaning (lexical, stylistic, pragmatic) is embodied in a particular form". In the process of studying sociolinguistics as a discipline, it is necessary to examine its universal as well as political and linguistic characteristics, including the relationships between language and society, language and ideology, language and thought, language and people, language and age, language and gender, the use of language in state institutions, language development planning, as well as the philosophical properties of language.

All these phenomena further increase the significance of sociolinguistic research, requiring new approaches and the application of new methods of analysis. In this regard, in modern linguistics, virtual communication is not merely an exchange of information, but also a reflection of the social landscape of society. In particular, studying internet comments that reflect the social identity of users as a complex discursive field remains one of the pressing tasks of today.

In defining the topic, the following sociolinguistic principles are taken as a basis:

Social situation – the conditions under which a comment is written and the context in which it is produced. As emphasized in existing sources, "only by studying linguistic units in connection with context and the speech situation is it possible to fully understand their meaning". This means that when comments are analyzed in direct relation to the online context in which they appear, it leads to greater thematic accuracy. For example, speech produced in a political context belongs to the political type of comments; comments written under the influence of religion and belief belong to the religious type; those based on everyday conversation are considered popular (general) comments; and comments created in a speech situation related to state policy are also classified thematically as political comments.

Social role and status – these influence the choice of topic based on the position of the comment's author and the audience within society. There is a significant difference between a comment written by a high-

ranking individual and one left by an ordinary user. Professor Sh. Iskandarova describes the concepts of social status and social role as follows: "The concepts of social status and social role are associated with the term variability characteristic of a social group. According to this, such variability is directly related to the social structure of society and is reflected in linguistic and speech differences observed across various social strata and groups. Concepts related to this type of variability include the term 'status,' which is determined by a set of characteristics such as an individual's social and socio-demographic belonging, class affiliation, profession, level of education, gender, and age. In scientific literature, for speech behavior, factors such as the presence of addresser and addressee, means of communication, specifically defined forms of behavior, motive and purpose, the nature of relationships between communicants, social markers, and the formal or informal nature of the situation are identified and divided into stable and variable features. The concept of 'role' is directly connected with situational variability characteristic of the social situation; by role, one understands a person's behavior conditioned by social circumstances".

Observations show that each social group has its own distinctive linguistic features. These include differences related to gender and age, as well as regional and professional variation. Distinguishing each social group based on its specific linguistic markers and studying the social causes of such differences is of great importance.

Thus, the audience in the virtual space consists of representatives of various social strata: social groups, layers, and classes (intellectuals, workers, entrepreneurs, farmers, etc.). For example, comments written by intellectuals are often characterized by scientific topics, those left by religious scholars tend to focus on religious issues, while comments by farmers are typically related to agriculture.

Therefore, it is appropriate to base the thematic classification of internet comments on the above-mentioned social factors (social role and social status). This is because comments are sometimes posted anonymously, making it difficult to determine the user's age or gender. In such cases, the user's social role (such as critic, promoter, researcher, advisor) and social status (such as father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, academic, associate professor, champion, deputy, etc.) are taken as the main criteria.

In fact, communication components (units, participants) are divided into three types: the addresser (the information sender, speaker), the addressee (the information receiver, listener), and

influencing elements (internal and external factors affecting communication: social class, nationality, age, gender; time, situation, state, mood). In internet comments, however, the term addressee is equated with the concept of audience. That is, the audience represents a group of listeners and commentators formed within a specific speech situation, where the commenter is the author of the comment.

Author → text → audience

The social stratification of a speech community speaking a particular language is diverse. The speaker selects linguistic units available in the language and uses them based on their communicative purpose, taking into account both their own and the interlocutor's social status, gender, age, level of familiarity, profession, as well as the situation and place of communication. In internet comments, such social stratification is also reflected through linguistic differentiation related to age- and gender-based language features. It should also be emphasized that the concepts of age and gender serve as additional indicators of the sociolinguistic nature of internet comments, helping to identify the user's speech individuality.

In comments, the age indicator is in turn divided into two groups:

Youth comments. Currently, since a large proportion of internet users are young people, they are much more active in virtual communication compared to adults. According to our observations, the linguistic features of comments left by young users on the YouTube platform are manifested in the following:

1. Frequent use of internet slang;
2. Anglicisms (words and expressions borrowed from English) and concise syntactic structures;
3. Means expressing positivity and negativity;
4. Barbarisms and vulgarisms;
5. Visual texts containing emojis, GIFs, and stickers.

[@ЗаринаРахимова-ф9г](#): Кулдимда карочи, мазза кириб 😂😂😂 (I laughed, and honestly, I really enjoyed it);

[@XayitbekFazlidinov-c7q](#): Vaaaavuv bomba (Wow, that's a bomb!).

In the virtual sentences above, barbarisms such as “karocho” and “bomba” appear—words that have entered our language from foreign languages and become widely used. Although these words belong to other languages and cultures, today they are becoming increasingly popular among young people. The reason

for this can be explained, firstly, by young people's interest in language learning, and secondly, by their desire to achieve uniqueness in speech.

Comments by older adults. Due to their richer vocabulary, older people tend to express their thoughts using their extensive lexical resources. It should also be noted that, having sufficient morphological knowledge, their sentences are usually well-structured and clear. The distinguishing feature of their speech is that they are more experienced, and the experiential context they create helps them express their ideas in a more reliable and sincere manner. Older individuals are cautious commentators. They pay special attention to the speech situation when selecting words and style. Rather than writing controversial comments, they prefer to prevent them and avoid making mistakes in word choice. Thus, they transfer literary language-based forms of communication into the digital environment.

1. Positive wish expressions conveying prayer and praise.
2. Expressions of customary polite speech such as “Baraka topgur” (May you be blessed), “hormang” (don't get tired), “sog' bo'ling” (stay healthy), which reflect formal or traditional social etiquette relations, as well as forms of address like “jonim bolam” (my dear child), “jonim qizim” (my dear daughter).
3. Emojis representing prayers with hands raised, as well as 🙏🌹🙏🙏🌸 flower images.

Gender factor. Studying linguistic units from a gender perspective reveals differences between the speech of men and women as language users, the manifestation of gender stereotypes through linguistic means, as well as the specific features of speech strategies and communicative behavior. Usually, gender-marked linguistic signs in language enter into associative relations with lexical units that carry similar characteristics. This is especially evident in adjectives. For example, in online comments addressed to women, the gender of the addressee is taken into account, and positive adjectives such as go'zal (beautiful), mehribon (kind), samimiy (sincere), faol (active), dilkash (charming), xushbichim (graceful) and nozik (slender) are used, while negative descriptors such as sharmandali / uyatsiz (shameless), vaysaqi (gossipy), yengiltabiat (frivolous), rashkchi (jealous) and nomunosib / axloqsiz (immoral) may also appear, forming associative relations with the female addressee. Similarly, in comments addressed to male users, positive words such as kuchli (strong), aqlli (intelligent), mard (brave), jasur (courageous), oliyjanob (noble) and saxovatli (generous) are used, while negative terms such as qo'rqq (coward), o'jiz

(weakling), nomard (dishonorable), mas'uliyatsiz (irresponsible) and ikkiyuzlamachi (two-faced) may appear.

This situation shows that lexical units, in addition to their semantic features, are also grouped in the human mind based on gender characteristics and are used in different meanings in context through collocations (word combinations).

The description that words used in women's speech in Uzbek differ from those in men's speech, and that this distinction can even be observed in certain parts of speech—particularly interjections and verbs—belongs to the linguist Y.A. Mirzaahmedova: "Women, in everyday colloquial speech, mainly use emotional and imperative interjections such as hoy (hey), ey (hey), voy (oh/alas), hay (oh), voy-ey (oh dear). Among independent parts of speech, the verb category, in particular, actively expresses gender features. In this respect, verbs have the capacity to denote actions and states specific to women, such as turmushga chiqmoq (to get married), farzand ko'rmoq (to give birth), homilador bo'lmoq (to become pregnant), boshqorong'i bo'lmoq (to experience pregnancy cravings), xirom aylamoq (to walk gracefully), ko'z suzmoq (to bat one's eyes), lab burmoq (to pout), soch o'rmoq (to braid hair), o'sma qo'ymoq (to apply eyebrow dye), lab bo'yamoq (to paint lips), and others...".

However, the features mentioned above represent only part of the conclusions drawn from our observations, and there are also some exceptions. The comments and writing styles of the mentioned groups may differ not only according to age but also depending on personality, education, and level of speech culture. In addition, the platform on which the comment is written also plays an important role. For example, comments on Facebook differ from those on Instagram. For a more accurate analysis, large-scale data should be examined using statistical methods.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the thematic classification of comments relies not only on linguistic units but also on social context, audience, and a number of sociolinguistic factors. As a result, identifying the audience and thereby determining the overall meaning—and most importantly, the topic of the comment—becomes possible. Otherwise, if the social stratification of language units such as dialects, argot, jargon, internet language, and youth language is not taken into account, the meaning and content may be misunderstood.

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