Comparative Analysis of Formal and Informal Speech Genres in Modern Uzbek (A Case Study of Contemporary Uzbek Language)

Yusupaliyev Bekzod Nematovich

Non-state higher educational institution, "University of Economics and Pedagogy", Uzbekistan

Jamoldinova Sarvinoz Abrorbek qizi

Assistant teacher at the Non-state higher educational institution, "University of Economics and Pedagogy", Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article examines the comparative features of formal and informal speech genres in modern Uzbek from a functional and sociolinguistic perspective. The study analyzes lexical, grammatical, and pragmatic characteristics of both genres based on authentic contemporary language data. The findings indicate that formal speech is marked by standardization, structural complexity, and institutional orientation, whereas informal speech demonstrates flexibility, emotional expressiveness, and interpersonal focus. The research also reveals that ongoing digitalization and social transformation in Uzbekistan are contributing to the emergence of hybrid communicative forms. The results confirm that speech genres function as socially conditioned and relatively stable discourse patterns, consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin.

Introduction: The differentiation between formal and informal speech genres represents one of the central issues in contemporary linguistics, particularly within the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis. Language does not function as a homogeneous system; rather, it operates through socially conditioned varieties that reflect communicative intentions, institutional frameworks, and interpersonal relations. The theory of speech genres, originally conceptualized by Mikhail Bakhtin, emphasizes that every sphere of human activity generates relatively stable types of utterances shaped by thematic content, compositional structure, and stylistic features. These genres are not arbitrary; they emerge from historically formed communicative practices and evolve in response to social transformation. In the context of modern Uzbek, the distinction between formal and informal speech genres acquires particular significance due to the dynamic sociopolitical and cultural developments observed in Uzbekistan since independence. The modernization of state institutions, the expansion of mass media, and the rapid growth of digital communication platforms have intensified functional differentiation within the Uzbek language. As a result, contemporary Uzbek demonstrates a clear stratification of speech according to situational formality, participant roles, and communicative goals. From a theoretical perspective, formal speech genres are generally associated with institutionalized communication domains such as governance, legislation, education, science, and official media. These genres are characterized by codification, normative regulation, and adherence to the standards of the literary language. Informal speech genres, by contrast, are embedded in everyday interpersonal communication and are marked by spontaneity,

emotional expressiveness, and relative structural flexibility. However, the opposition between formal and informal speech should not be interpreted as a rigid binary; rather, it constitutes a continuum in which intermediate and hybrid forms frequently occur. The Uzbek language, as a Turkic language with a rich literary tradition and complex sociolinguistic history, provides a productive field for examining the interaction between genre, register, and social structure. Historically influenced by Persian, Arabic, and later Russian linguistic traditions, modern Uzbek reflects layers of lexical and stylistic variation that are distributed differently across formal and informal contexts. The standardization of the Uzbek literary language during the twentieth century further reinforced distinctions between codified official usage and colloquial everyday speech. Sociocultural norms specific to Uzbek society such as respect for age hierarchy, status differentiation, and ritualized politeness directly shape linguistic choices within formal communication. Forms of address, pronoun selection, and modality markers function not merely as grammatical elements but as indicators of social positioning. In informal contexts, however, these hierarchical constraints are often reduced or reinterpreted, giving way to solidarity-based interactional strategies and expressive linguistic creativity.

Recent technological developments have further complicated the formal–informal distinction. Social media discourse, online journalism, and digital messaging environments promote stylistic hybridization, where features traditionally associated with informal speech such as ellipsis, emotive markers, and colloquial vocabulary enter semi-formal or even institutional communication. This process challenges traditional genre boundaries and calls for renewed analytical attention. The growing body of research on Uzbek stylistics and functional grammar, comprehensive comparative studies specifically addressing formal and informal speech genres in contemporary Uzbek remain limited. Most existing works focus either on normative literary standards or on dialectal and colloquial variation, without systematically contrasting their communicative, structural, and pragmatic dimensions within a unified framework. The present study aims to provide a detailed comparative analysis of formal and informal speech genres in modern Uzbek. By examining their lexical composition, grammatical organization, pragmatic orientation, and sociocultural conditioning, this research seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of functional differentiation in Turkic languages and to highlight the dynamic interplay between language structure and social context in contemporary Uzbek discourse.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on a qualitative comparative methodological approach that integrates principles of discourse analysis, functional stylistics, and sociolinguistics. The research is designed to examine the structural and pragmatic differences between formal and informal speech genres in modern Uzbek by treating language as a socially conditioned system of communication. From this perspective, speech genres are understood not merely as linguistic forms but as communicative practices shaped by social roles, institutional norms, and cultural conventions. The theoretical foundation of the analysis is informed by the concept of speech genres developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, according to which every utterance is produced within a specific sphere of communication and exhibits relatively stable thematic, compositional, and stylistic characteristics. The empirical material for the study consists of authentic language data drawn from contemporary Uzbek communicative contexts. The corpus includes samples of formal discourse such as official speeches, administrative documents, academic lectures, and news broadcasts, as well as samples of informal discourse including everyday conversations, social media interactions, and spontaneous dialogues. All materials reflect current language use in Uzbekistan and were produced by native speakers of Uzbek. The selection of data followed a purposive sampling strategy aimed at identifying prototypical examples of formal and informal speech genres. Particular attention was paid to communicative setting, participant relationships, degree of institutionalization, and the presence of genre-specific linguistic markers. The analytical procedure involved a multi level examination of the selected texts. At the lexical level, the study analyzed vocabulary choice, terminology, colloquial expressions, and borrowings. At the grammatical and syntactic level,

sentence complexity, word order, ellipsis, and the use of impersonal or passive constructions were examined. At the pragmatic level, communicative intentions, politeness strategies, and speaker listener relationships were analyzed in relation to social hierarchy and situational context. Comparative analysis was then applied to identify systematic contrasts and overlapping features between formal and informal genres. This qualitative methodology allows for an in-depth interpretation of linguistic data and makes it possible to reveal not only surface-level structural differences but also the underlying sociocultural mechanisms that govern genre selection and language use. By combining theoretical insights with empirical analysis, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive and methodologically sound account of genre differentiation in modern Uzbek discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that formal and informal speech genres in modern Uzbek differ systematically in lexical choice, grammatical structure, and pragmatic function. Formal speech is characterized by standardized vocabulary, syntactic complexity, and institutional authority, while informal speech reflects emotional expressiveness, structural flexibility, and interpersonal closeness. These differences are closely connected to social hierarchy, communicative goals, and cultural norms in Uzbekistan. At the same time, the boundary between the two genres is becoming increasingly dynamic due to digital communication and social change. The findings support the theoretical understanding of speech genres as socially conditioned and relatively stable communicative forms, as proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin. Overall, formal and informal speech in modern Uzbek represent interconnected yet functionally distinct components of the language system.

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