



CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN GREETING EXPRESSIONS

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Abstract: *Greeting expressions are an essential component of cultural norms and etiquette. The primary aim of greetings is to establish friendly, respectful, and socially appropriate interaction between individuals. Different cultures possess unique customs and traditions related to greeting behavior, and understanding these cultural factors helps people use appropriate forms of greeting when communicating with representatives of various cultural backgrounds. This study explores diverse greeting practices around the world and analyzes their sociocultural significance, with a particular focus on English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak greeting traditions.*

Keywords: *greetings, etiquette, customs, cultural differences, intercultural communication, politeness.*

Misunderstandings in intercultural communication often arise not only from insufficient language knowledge but also from a lack of awareness of cultural differences in greeting expressions. A greeting that is considered polite in one culture may be perceived as inappropriate or even disrespectful in another. Therefore, it is important to study cultural norms before interacting with people from different societies or simply ask about customary greeting forms. Investigating and accepting cultural variations enhances mutual empathy, promotes tolerance, and contributes to the development of effective international relationships. For instance, in many Western countries, a firm handshake accompanied by direct eye contact is seen as a sign of confidence, respect, and warmth, whereas in China a lighter handshake is generally preferred.

Types of Greeting Expressions in Different Cultures

Bowing is a traditional form of greeting in Japan, where respect and social hierarchy are core cultural values. The greeting “Konnichiwa” is commonly used to mean ‘hello’ or ‘good afternoon’. The depth and duration of the bow may indicate the level of respect or social status between interlocutors.

Handshakes are widely used in many cultures. In Saudi Arabia, handshakes are typically performed with the right hand and are mainly common among men, as interactions between genders may be culturally restricted. Women often greet each other with hugs or light cheek kisses depending on the social context.

In India, the most respectful and widely used greeting is “Namaste”, which involves placing both palms together at chest level with a slight bow. This gesture symbolizes respect and is used for both greeting and saying goodbye, regardless of the time of day.





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La Bise is a traditional French greeting in which people lightly touch cheeks and make a kissing sound. The number of cheek kisses may vary from two to four depending on the region and social relationship.

Comparison of Greeting Expressions in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak Cultures

This article also examines cultural similarities and differences in greeting expressions in English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak languages. In Uzbek and Karakalpak cultures, greetings are strongly associated with formality, hierarchy, and inquiries about health and well-being. Common expressions include ‘Assalawma aleykum’ and ‘Ahwallarińız qalay, jaqsi ma?’. These greetings reflect respect, social harmony, and collective values.

In contrast, English-speaking cultures generally emphasize brevity, directness, and individualism. Typical greetings include ‘Hello’, ‘Hi’, and ‘How are you?’, which are short but polite. The choice of greeting often depends on the level of familiarity and the communicative situation.

One of the key similarities among these three linguistic cultures is the use of time-related greetings. All of them employ equivalents of ‘Good morning’, ‘Good afternoon’, and ‘Good evening’, such as ‘Good morning’, ‘Xayirli tong’, and ‘Qayirli tan’, to express politeness and respect.

However, significant differences can be observed in terms of physical contact and ritual behavior. In the United States, handshaking practices may vary depending on the region and social context. In Uzbek and Karakalpak cultures, men traditionally shake hands when greeting each other, while women often place their right hand on their heart and slightly bow as a sign of respect. Additionally, in Karakalpak culture, farewell expressions such as ‘Aman-esen’ emphasize wishes for health and well-being, whereas English goodbyes like ‘Take care’ or ‘See you soon’ are generally more informal and casual.

In conclusion, each culture has its own unique way of greeting others, and appropriate greeting behavior serves as the foundation of polite interaction and successful social communication. The analysis demonstrates that greeting rituals function as important social signals reflecting respect, hierarchy, and cultural values. While some cultures prioritize formal gestures such as bowing or handshaking, others prefer more casual forms like hugs or cheek kissing. English, Uzbek, and Karakalpak cultures share the common goal of expressing warmth and politeness through greetings, yet they differ significantly in their forms and sociocultural functions. Therefore, developing intercultural competence and awareness of greeting etiquette is essential for effective global communication.

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