

## LINGUISTIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARALINGUISTIC DEVICES IN THE ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES

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**Abstract.** *The present article examines the linguistic characteristics of paralinguistic devices as they function within the English and Uzbek language systems. Special attention is directed towards prosodic patterns, kinesic elements, proxemic conventions and graphic markers employed in written discourse. A contrastive analysis reveals both universal tendencies and culturally specific regularities in the deployment of paralinguistic units across two typologically distinct languages. It is argued that paralinguistic means perform not merely an ancillary but a constitutive function in the organisation of communicative acts.*

**Keywords:** *paralinguistics, prosody, kinesics, proxemics, communicative act, English, Uzbek, contrastive linguistics.*

Paralinguistics — the discipline concerned with non-segmental phenomena that accompany speech — has moved from the periphery of linguistic inquiry to occupy a recognised position within communication studies [1]. Despite this shift, contrastive research into paralinguistic devices across typologically distant languages remains limited. English and Uzbek represent a particularly instructive pairing: the former is an analytical Indo-European language with a rich nuclear-tone inventory; the latter is an agglutinative Turkic language whose prosodic and gestural norms reflect a distinct cultural tradition. The aim of the present article is to describe the linguistic characteristics of paralinguistic means in both languages and to identify points of convergence and divergence between them.

The term 'paralinguistics' was introduced by A. Hill in 1958 to cover para-speech phenomena — tempo, pitch, pauses and vocal intensity [2]. Subsequent scholars, most notably R. L. Birdwhistell and A. Kendon, broadened the concept to include kinesic, proxemic and graphic dimensions [3]. From a semiotic perspective, paralinguistic means form a non-verbal sign system that operates in parallel with the verbal one [4]; from a pragmatic standpoint, they function as instruments for reinforcing, modifying or contradicting the verbal message [5]. The present study adopts this wider definition and distinguishes universal paralinguistic features from those that are culturally or ethnically conditioned [6].

English possesses a well-developed system of nuclear tones — falling, rising, fall-rise, rise-fall and level — each bearing a distinct communicative value. The falling tone signals finality and certainty; the rising tone marks incompleteness or interrogation [7]. English rhythm is stress-timed, generating a perceptual alternation of prominent and reduced syllables.

Uzbek word stress is comparatively fixed, normally falling on the final syllable of the stem, which restricts prosodic variation at the word level. At the utterance level, however, intonation remains central: interrogativity, emphasis and syntactic non-finality are conveyed primarily through tonal means [8]. Crucially, Uzbek frequently combines intonation with word-order variation to achieve the semantic prominence that English realises through nuclear placement alone. Pausing behaviour also diverges: English hesitation vocalisations ('um', 'er') carry specific pragmatic implications, whereas in Uzbek oral discourse pause placement is more tightly governed by morphological phrase boundaries [7].

English communicative culture prescribes restrained gesticulation; excessive bodily expressivity tends to be read as a loss of self-control [1]. Uzbek practice permits a broader gestural repertoire in informal settings, although strict norms related to gender, age and social hierarchy apply. The greeting ritual illustrates this contrast sharply: the English handshake is brief and standardised, while Uzbek men may greet one another with a two-handed clasp or by placing the right hand over the heart — an ideocultural sign signalling deep respect that has no direct English equivalent [1].

Proxemic norms diverge in a corresponding fashion. E. Hall's 'personal zone' of roughly 60–120 centimetres governs comfortable conversational distance in English-speaking cultures [2], whereas in Uzbek interaction a considerably closer distance is both acceptable and connotatively positive among acquaintances. Misjudging these spatial norms in cross-cultural encounters constitutes a paralinguistic failure that is often harder to diagnose than a purely verbal error.

In written discourse, paralinguistic functions are performed by graphic and punctuational markers. English employs italics, capitalisation, the ellipsis and bold type to replicate intonational prominence and signal emotional register. Contemporary Uzbek, written in the Latin script since 1993, inherited its punctuation conventions largely from Russian editorial practice, though adaptation to norms more suited to Turkic syntax is ongoing. Digital communication has introduced a further layer: emoji serve as paralinguistic substitutes for facial expression and gesture in both languages, yet Uzbek digital practice retains distinctive features, including informal script-switching between Latin and Cyrillic characters.

A contrastive examination of English and Uzbek demonstrates that both languages command rich and systematically organised paralinguistic repertoires. Universal tendencies — the use of intonation to mark interrogation, the rhetorical value of pause, the expressive function of typography — coexist with culturally specific divergences



that are most pronounced in kinesics and proxemics. These differences carry direct implications for language pedagogy, translation and intercultural communication, where non-verbal misalignment frequently generates misunderstanding that neither party can easily attribute to a specific source. Future research should trace the ongoing transformation of paralinguistic norms under the accelerating influence of digital communication and cross-cultural contact.

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