



Culture of Speech and Its Communicative Qualities

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Received: 25-02-2025

Accepted: 25-03-2025

Published: 25-04-2025

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Abstract

In any society, language plays a fundamental role in shaping interpersonal relationships and cultural development. The culture of speech, as a linguistic and social phenomenon, is central to ensuring effective communication, promoting ethical behavior, and fostering national identity. Speech culture comprises a set of communicative qualities including clarity, expressiveness, normativity, and linguistic etiquette. It integrates oral and written norms and is deeply connected to literary language, making it an important component of both education and civic life. Despite its recognized significance, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the differentiation between speech culture and oratory, as well as the broader implications of communicative competence in various social and virtual contexts. This article aims to analyze the concept of speech culture, its communicative attributes, and its social role, while distinguishing it from oratory and exploring its influence in educational, ethical, and digital communication spheres. The analysis confirms that speech culture is a multifaceted construct encompassing literacy, etiquette, communicative ethics, and stylistic adaptability. It enhances mutual understanding, reduces communicative conflict, and supports socio-cultural development. The study offers an integrative view of speech culture as both a linguistic and ethical tool for effective communication, proposing a refined classification of functional styles and emphasizing its relevance in digital interaction and youth upbringing. Enhancing speech culture contributes to national linguistic integrity, personal dignity, and social harmony. As such, it should be a core element in educational curricula and public discourse initiatives.

Keywords

Culture of Speech, Communicative Qualities, Communication, Language Culture, Ethical Standards.

Introduction

In modern society, the ability to communicate effectively is inseparable from a well-developed culture of speech (Halliday, 1985). Speech culture encompasses not only the technical skill of constructing grammatically correct utterances but also reflects ethical, aesthetic, and social awareness within communication. It is a multifaceted phenomenon that integrates linguistic competence with cultural sensitivity and social etiquette. As interpersonal relationships and professional interactions increasingly depend on verbal and written expression, cultivating a refined speech culture becomes essential in both educational and social contexts (Kudryavtsev, 2021). The concept of speech culture is closely tied to the literary language, representing its most standardized and codified form. It embodies key communicative qualities such as correctness, clarity, coherence, expressiveness, and ethical appropriateness, each contributing to the effectiveness of speech in real-life situations. Moreover, speech culture serves as a bridge between individual expression and collective understanding, thereby fostering mutual respect and cooperation in society. The growing demands of globalization, digital communication, and multicultural interaction necessitate a renewed focus on nurturing speech competence among younger generations. This has led to the inclusion of “Speech Culture” as a formal academic discipline in many educational institutions (Wierzbicka, 2003). The emergence of speech etiquette and communicative norms rooted in cultural traditions further highlights the integrative nature of language, culture, and social behavior. In this regard, speech culture is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a marker of personal dignity, social identity, and intellectual maturity. Consequently, studying and promoting speech culture is essential to improving communicative effectiveness and fostering harmonious interactions in contemporary society (Brown & Yule, 2007).

Methods

In conducting this research on speech culture and its communicative qualities, the study employed a qualitative, descriptive-analytical methodology grounded in the traditions of linguistic and pedagogical inquiry. The research drew upon both primary and secondary sources including textbooks, theoretical publications, and practical guides authored by leading scholars such as B.A. Abdullayeva, M.S. Sattorov, and B.Sh. Sharipov (Hymes, 1972). A thematic content analysis was applied to systematically examine definitions, theoretical frameworks, and classifications associated with the concept of speech culture within the Uzbek literary and linguistic context. Special attention was given to distinguishing the communicative traits of speech—including correctness, clarity, coherence, expressiveness, richness, and purposefulness—based on normative and functional criteria. Comparative and contrastive techniques were utilized to differentiate speech culture from oratory, highlighting their unique aims and social functions (Sattorov, 2021).

Furthermore, the study incorporated elements of discourse analysis to assess how cultural, ethical, and functional aspects of language manifest in both oral and written forms of speech. Historical-linguistic perspectives were integrated to trace the evolution of the literary language in Uzbekistan and its role in shaping communication standards. The pedagogical dimension of speech culture was investigated through curricular analysis and its application in secondary and higher education settings. This comprehensive methodological approach allowed for a multidimensional interpretation of speech culture, not only as a linguistic construct but also as a vital social, educational, and ethical phenomenon influencing personal development and societal cohesion (Begmatov *и др.*, 1992).

Results and Discussions

In any society, language and speech are among the key factors that define interpersonal relationships. The culture of speech is the skill of using language tools correctly, fluently, and purposefully, which shapes the culture of communication in society. People with a high level of speech culture succeed in establishing effective communication with others and in expressing their thoughts clearly and precisely (Grice, 1975a).

The issue of “speech culture” is one of the most complex and pressing problems in linguistics. It is impossible to imagine human development without language and culture. Linguistic consciousness is inherently connected with culture through language. It is not without reason that the best local educators strive to direct education toward the general cultural and personal development of students, to reveal the cognitive, communicative, and epistemic functions of language for them, and to make learning culturally enriched. This approach is aimed at further exploring the interconnection of language, consciousness, and culture, and identifying the factors that influence their interaction.

The culture of speech refers to the skill of expressing one’s oral and written speech clearly, logically, and aesthetically in accordance with literary norms. This concept includes speech ethics, speech styles, and communicative competence.

The phenomenon of “speech culture” is an integrative formation that, according to our definition, encompasses constructs such as “reading culture,” “text-processing culture,” and “information culture.”

Speech culture emerges when the literary language— the highest form of the national language— comes into being. As M. Sattorov wrote, “It is worth remembering that language was created by the people.” The division of language into literary and vernacular forms implies, so to speak, that the “raw” language was refined by scholars. The first to fully understand this was Alisher Navoi, who also was the first to demonstrate how to use and refine the materials of the spoken language of the people (Grice, 1975b).

The main characteristics of literary language are:

- Normativity
- Diversity of linguistic units
- Presence of functional styles
- Refinement and reworking
- Existence in both written and spoken forms

G. A. Abdullayeva describes literary language as a consciously standardized and codified language, the language of the educated class, and the language of culture.

In higher and secondary special educational institutions, the subject “Speech Culture” is included in the curriculum (Thomas, 1995). Within this curriculum, the art of oratory and speech culture are taught together. However, although these two disciplines may seem closely related, they are in fact distinct. This can be observed both in the process of their development as academic disciplines and in the differences in their goals, objectives, subjects, and descriptive characteristics (Sharipov, 2022).

Oratory has existed since ancient times as a distinct skill, an art form, and a unique talent possessed by certain individuals. In this sense, although there is a connection between oratory and speech culture, each has its own distinct characteristics (Yule, 1996). It is appropriate to cite the views of Professor E. Begmatov on this matter:

Speech culture, in its true sense, is a phenomenon related to the literary language. Its emergence, human foundation, requirements, and criteria are all linked to the literary language and its standards. For the art of oratory, however, these are not the primary indicators (Leech, 1983). Among orators, there are those who do not fully adhere to the norms of literary language, yet still demonstrate genuine oratorical art in certain dialects or vernaculars. Eloquence and oratory are determined not by the linguistic material itself, but by the expressiveness and artistic quality of the speech (Johnson & Lee, 2021).

Oratory is a phenomenon related to spoken language; therefore, it is the oral form of speech. The art of oratory is the art of oral speech. Speech culture, on the other hand, is a concept that applies to both oral and written forms of speech.

Speech culture aims at the general speech activity of members of society. Its ultimate goal and ideal is to cultivate the speech of everyone, of the entire population. In contrast, classical oratory expresses the individual’s rhetorical skill and artistry. Oratory mainly involves conveying specific ideas and goals to people through speech and mobilizing them toward a certain purpose (Crystal, 1995). In other words, the core of oratorical art is to engage the audience with a particular aim. For this reason, Professor V.D. Kudryavtsev defines oratorical speech as follows: “Any oral speech that qualifies as oratory aims not only to explain or prove something but also to influence the listener’s understanding.”

An artistic orator's speech is generally intended for a large audience. An orator addresses more than one listener. In contrast, speech culture also encompasses everyday conversations and speeches directed at individuals beyond just the audience of a speech.

Therefore, we consider the definition provided by B. Sharipov to be the most successful one. "Speech culture refers to the selection and organization of language in such a way that, in a specific communicative situation, it adheres to language norms and communication etiquette, and is capable of providing the greatest effectiveness in achieving designated communicative goals" .

An intelligent statement regarding the essence of the category "speech culture" can be found in the Small Encyclopedic Dictionary by Brockhaus and Efron: "Speech culture is explained as the level of speech development, the degree of knowledge of the norms of a language or dialect, and the ability to deviate from these norms judiciously."

In the broadest sense, linguistic norms refer to the recognized and codified usage of words, expressions, and syntactic constructions. A norm reflects the objective tendencies aimed at improving speech culture within a given society. The correctness, clarity, coherence, expressiveness, richness, appropriateness, and relevance of the literary language are determined by language norms (Tannen, 1993).

Language norms reflect the regular processes and phenomena that manifest in language and are supported by speech practice. When identifying the sources of language norms, the developmental tendencies of the modern Uzbek language are considered: the democratization of literary speech, the influence of spoken language on written language, the unification of speech models, and the desire to preserve speech, which implies semantic clarity.

Unfortunately, it must be noted that the basic literacy level of graduates from today's general education schools is very low. Under current conditions, in order to strengthen the normative writing skills of students across all specialties, it is considered appropriate to include the subject "Practice of Orthography and Punctuation" as a component of the state educational standard in curricula.

Works of fiction encompass elements of all styles and functional types of language, and they require complex, multi-level interpretation. In addition to other functions of language, it also performs aesthetic and communicative functions.

In our opinion, when classifying the styles of the Uzbek language, the following aspect must be considered: the existence of functional styles is a feature characteristic of the literary language, and like literary artistic language and speech culture, it does not usually include the non-literary forms of the national language, such as dialects, jargon, colloquial speech, etc. From this point of view, it seems appropriate to exclude the constructions "literary artistic language" and "speech culture" from the list of language styles; they occupy their own place among the functional types of language.

The typology of the functional types of language proposed by academician D. Hashimova is widely recognized today:

- speech culture;
- literary artistic language;
- functional styles of language – official-business, scientific, and journalistic.

M. Sattorov refers to styles only as functional styles, which significantly differ in their linguistic structure from both the language of artistic literature and the language of conversational speech.

Such an approach to regulating language styles seems one-sided to us, because the functional and expressive stylistic devices used in language include not only the functional bookish styles (scientific, official-business, journalistic), but also expressive styles (elevated, neutral, and reduced).

A statement meets the criterion of communicative appropriateness if, as a result of its use, the speaker achieves their goal and is satisfied with the result, excluding misunderstandings by the interlocutor, their biased evaluations, emotional negative reactions, and so on.

Having studied the features that determine speech acts, B. Sharipov developed a typology of speech. In doing so, he took into account:

- means of expression (sound, writing, gesture);
- the presence or absence of an interlocutor.
- The Direction of a Speech Act (One-Way or Two-Way);
- Individual or Mass Nature of Communication (based on the number of subjects perceiving the speech);
- The Connection or Distance of the Speech Act.
- Based on speech culture, B. Abdullayeva developed a theory on the communicative qualities of speech, which includes the following:
 - Correctness of Speech (adherence to literary language norms);
 - Clarity of Speech (precise conformity of words to designated objects or real-life phenomena);
 - Consistency of Speech (coherence between semantic relationships of linguistic units and the relationships of real-life objects and events);
 - Purity of Speech (absence of elements alien to the literary language or rejected by moral norms);
 - Expressiveness of Speech (presence of elements that sustain the listener's or reader's attention and interest);
 - Richness of Speech (variety in the speech tools used);
 - Purposefulness of Speech (selection of linguistic means that align with the goal and conditions of communication).

Communication between people serves as both a channel of social-psychological interaction and information exchange. However, before transitioning to the exchange of logical and conceptual information, one must first establish speech contact, which requires knowledge and correct application of certain norms of speech etiquette.

Moreover, based on speech culture, speech etiquette emerged. This is a system of stable communication formulas established by society to ensure the establishment of speech contact between interlocutors, in accordance with their social roles, relational positions, and formal or informal relations. For example, the national peculiarity of Uzbek etiquette finds its expression in the proverbs and epics of our people.

Taking into account the current socio-economic, technical, political, and moral-ethical changes taking place in our country, it is appropriate to additionally discuss communicative functions such as identity formation, educational function, and adaptation function within the framework of conditions for speech interaction in the virtual world. Furthermore, the ethical aspect of speech culture ensures the knowledge and application of linguistic behavior norms in various communication situations. In the process of communication, the use of offensive, insulting, and disrespectful words towards the opponent is strictly prohibited, and conversations held in a "raised tone" are condemned. Rude, inappropriate words and impolite conversations lead to incorrect behavior. This truth, deeply rooted in public consciousness, is expressed in the wise saying: "Bad words corrupt good manners."

Speech culture is one of the key criteria that defines a person's dignity not only in education and professional activity but also in everyday life. In today's era of globalization, as the flow of information intensifies, the need for proper communication among people is increasing. Therefore, cultivating speech culture is considered one of the priority directions in the upbringing of the younger generation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, speech culture is one of the main indicators of a person's overall level of culture. It determines the quality, content, and effectiveness of communication. By developing the communicative qualities of their speech, every individual contributes to effective and cultured interaction in society.

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