



PRAGMATIC SPECIFICATION OF VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK FILM SCRIPTS

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the pragmatic specification of verbal and nonverbal components in English and Uzbek film scripts through a comparative linguistic framework. Film discourse is a multimodal communicative system where spoken language interacts with gesture, facial expression, silence, intonation, proxemics, and visual context to generate meaning. As Levinson (1983) notes, pragmatics studies the relationship between language and context that is fundamental to understanding meaning. In cinematic discourse, this contextual dependence becomes especially visible. The study demonstrates that verbal components primarily convey propositional and interactional content, whereas nonverbal components intensify emotional meaning, regulate interpersonal relations, and construct implicit messages.

Introduction

Pragmatics is one of the central branches of modern linguistics concerned with language use in context. Unlike semantics, which studies conventional meaning, pragmatics explores speaker intention, hearer interpretation, implicature, deixis, presupposition, and speech acts. According to Yule (1996), pragmatics is “the study of speaker meaning,” emphasizing what speakers intend rather than what words literally denote. Film scripts represent a productive field for pragmatic analysis because they combine verbal text with performance instructions, gestures, pauses, and visual cues. In this sense, a screenplay is not merely a literary text but a communicative blueprint for multimodal interaction. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2001) argue, meaning in contemporary texts is often created through multiple semiotic modes rather than language alone.

Literature Review

The study of pragmatic aspects in film discourse is grounded in key theories of pragmatics and multimodality. Stephen C. Levinson (1983) and George Yule (1996) emphasize the role of context, speaker intention, and interpretation in meaning construction. Speech act theory developed by J. L. Austin (1962) and John Searle (1969) highlights that utterances perform communicative actions, which is particularly relevant in cinematic dialogue. Politeness strategies, explained by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987), provide a framework for analyzing intercultural differences between English and Uzbek

communication. Furthermore, multimodal discourse theory by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (2001) demonstrates that meaning is constructed through multiple semiotic modes, including verbal and nonverbal elements. These theoretical perspectives form the foundation for analyzing film scripts as complex communicative systems.

Research Methodology

This study employs a comparative qualitative methodology to analyze verbal and nonverbal components in English and Uzbek film scripts. The data consist of selected screenplay excerpts representing different communicative contexts. Methods include pragmatic analysis, discourse analysis, and intercultural comparison. Verbal elements are examined in terms of speech acts, implicature, and politeness strategies, while nonverbal elements such as gestures, facial expressions, silence, and intonation are analyzed as meaning-making resources. The study also applies a multimodal analytical approach to identify how different semiotic modes interact in constructing meaning. The findings are interpreted within a socio-cultural framework to reveal differences and similarities between English and Uzbek cinematic discourse.

Discussion

The comparison of English and Uzbek cinematic discourse is particularly relevant because communicative norms differ across cultures. English-speaking discourse traditions often emphasize autonomy, efficiency, and direct verbal expression, whereas Uzbek communicative culture gives greater value to relational harmony, respect for hierarchy, and indirectness in sensitive interactions.

The objective of this article is to analyze how verbal and nonverbal components are pragmatically structured in English and Uzbek film scripts and how these reflect broader socio-cultural values.

Pragmatics and Context

Levinson (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of language usage and the principles governing language in context. This means that the same utterance may carry different meanings depending on speaker identity, tone, situation, and relationship. For example: "You came."

This sentence may express surprise, anger, relief, or irony depending on context. Mey (2001) similarly argues that pragmatics studies language as used by socially situated human beings, not as an isolated formal system.

Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) established that utterances perform actions. In film scripts, characters do not simply speak—they request, accuse, threaten, promise, comfort, seduce, reject, and persuade. For instance: "I'll call you."

Depending on context, this may function as: a genuine promise, a polite dismissal, deception, postponement.

Politeness Theory

Brown and Levinson (1987) state that communication often involves protecting the interlocutor's "face," or public self-image. Therefore, speakers use mitigation strategies, indirectness, and honorific forms. This framework is especially useful when comparing

English and Uzbek scripts, since Uzbek discourse frequently employs respect-oriented forms more explicitly.

Multimodality

According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), communication increasingly relies on multimodal meaning-making, where gesture, image, sound, and movement function together with words. Film discourse is one of the clearest examples of multimodality.

Verbal Components and Their Pragmatic Specification

Dialogue as Social Action

Dialogue in cinema advances plot, reveals psychology, and negotiates relationships. As Culpeper (2001) observes, fictional dialogue often mirrors real conversational strategies while remaining artistically condensed.

English film dialogue frequently favors brevity: "Leave.", "Run.", "Trust me."

These utterances are efficient and context-dependent. Uzbek cinematic dialogue often includes relational framing:

"Shoshilmang, avval gaplashib olaylik." *"Keling, bir maslahat qilamiz."*

These examples show preference for negotiation and interpersonal alignment.

Forms of Address

Address terms are pragmatically significant markers of distance, intimacy, hierarchy, and respect.

In English: Mr, Mrs, Sir, first names

In Uzbek: aka, opa, amaki, xola, ustoz, siz / sen distinction

According to Fasold (1990), address systems often reflect the social structure of a speech community. Uzbek usage clearly encodes age and respect more overtly than contemporary English.

Directness and Indirectness

Blum-Kulka (1987) notes that requests differ cross-culturally in terms of directness and mitigation. English scripts may include: "Open the window."

Uzbek equivalents often appear softened: "Derazani ochib yuborsangiz."

The grammatical structure reduces imposition and preserves harmony

Implicature and Irony

Grice (1975) explains that speakers often imply more than they explicitly state.

Example: "That was clever."

Depending on tone, this may praise or criticize.

In both English and Uzbek cinema, irony often depends more on intonation and context than lexical meaning.

Nonverbal Components and Their Pragmatic Specification

Facial Expression

Ekman (1972) demonstrated that facial expressions are central to emotional communication. In film scripts, a smile may indicate happiness, embarrassment, manipulation, or social masking.

A silent tear may communicate grief more powerfully than dialogue.

Gesture

Birdwhistell (1970) argued that body movement forms a structured communication system.

In Uzbek cinematic contexts: hand on chest = sincerity/respect, standing before elders = deference, lowered posture = modesty.

In English contexts: shrugging = uncertainty, crossed arms = resistance, pointing = confrontation or emphasis

Silence

Tannen (1985) notes that silence can function as communication rather than absence of communication. In English film scripts, silence often signals: conflict, emotional distance, suspense.

In Uzbek scripts, silence may additionally signal: disappointment, obedience, contemplation, respect toward elders.

Intonation

Crystal (2003) emphasizes that prosody changes meaning substantially. Example: "Fine." This can mean: acceptance, irritation, resignation, sarcasm.

Thus, voice quality transforms lexical simplicity into pragmatic complexity.

Comparative Analysis of English and Uzbek Film Scripts

Feature	English Scripts	Uzbek Scripts
Dialogue style	concise, rapid, explicit	elaborated, relational
Requests	relatively direct	softened, indirect
Address system	limited hierarchy marking	strong hierarchy marking
Emotional display	individualized	communal and expressive
Silence	tension or estrangement	respect or disappointment
Gesture	autonomy-oriented	respect/community-oriented

As Hofstede (2001) suggests, broader cultural values such as individualism and collectivism frequently shape communicative behavior.

Translation Implications

Nida (1964) argues that equivalence in translation should preserve communicative effect rather than only lexical meaning. This is highly relevant for subtitles and dubbing. For example: "Come here."

Literal Uzbek translation may sound too harsh unless softened depending on context.

Likewise, Uzbek honorific nuance may disappear in English subtitles if rendered neutrally.

Therefore, audiovisual translators must preserve: illocutionary force, politeness level, irony, emotional tone, gesture-supported meaning.

The data confirm that verbal and nonverbal components function interdependently. A short utterance can only be fully interpreted when combined with gesture, silence, gaze, and cultural expectations. As Hall (1976) states, much of communication is "silent language," embedded in time, space, gesture, and social norms. This insight is particularly true for film discourse. English cinematic communication often privileges efficiency and self-assertion. Uzbek cinematic discourse more often foregrounds solidarity, hierarchy, and emotional tact. Neither model is superior; both reflect culturally meaningful communicative logics.

Conclusion

The pragmatic specification of verbal and nonverbal components in English and Uzbek film scripts reveals cinema as a deeply multimodal and culturally situated discourse form. Verbal elements carry explicit meaning and speech acts, while nonverbal elements regulate interpersonal stance, emotional depth, and implied interpretation.

English scripts tend toward directness, brevity, and explicit negotiation. Uzbek scripts frequently demonstrate indirectness, relational politeness, respect-sensitive address forms, and symbolic gesture systems. The study confirms the importance of screenplay discourse for pragmatics, intercultural linguistics, and translation studies. Future research may investigate gendered discourse, humor strategies, subtitle pragmatics, or corpus-based comparison of cinematic dialogue..

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