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LINGUOPRAGMATIC AND GRAMMATICAL ASPECTS OF NONVERBAL MEANS FORMED BY HANDS AND LEGS

Annotation: This article relates to the linguo-pragmatic and grammatical aspects of nonverbal means formed by hands and legs in Uzbek, English, Turkish and Russian languages. It is obvious that nonverbal means can be utilized to identify grammatical and cognitive features in communication, or express aim of communicators. People tend to use their hands and legs to show clearly their aims in a speech activity. So, different features of nonverbal means by hands and legs are discussed in this article.

Key words: grammatical feature, linguacultural feature, pragmatic feature, nonverbal means, hand and finger gestures, leg gestures.

In contemporary linguistics, the study of nonverbal communication and its components (nonverbal cues) in connection with various fields has entered a new phase. Particularly in recent years, there has been an increased focus on examining nonverbal cues within the context of social, exact, and natural sciences.

It is worth noting that in oral speech, nonverbal cues such as tone, timbre, pauses, and gestures express grammatical features, while in written speech (text), these are realized through punctuation marks and the depiction of communicants' actions. Accordingly, nonverbal cues can be used in speech to clarify meaning, identify grammatical features, and convey communicants' intentions. In written speech, punctuation marks serve to indicate parts of a sentence, specific sections of a sentence, and various syntactic relationships (such as attachment, separation, disjunction, and partition)¹.

In oral speech, these relationships are expressed through suprasegmental units such as intonation, pauses, stress, and melody. These studies have been reflected in the works of scholars such as A. Nurmonov, Sh. Safarov, A. Mehrabian, E. Sapir, and N. Dmitriev within the linguistics of Uzbek², Ottoman Turkish, English, and Russian languages. For example, N. Dmitriev compared grammatical categories in verbal and nonverbal elements of Turkic languages, while S. Mosheva investigated the process of using graphic means in paralinguistics as the graphic representation of grammatical categories and rules referred to as "grammatogram."

However, it can be argued that these studies have not yet thoroughly examined the expression of grammatical categories in speech through nonverbal cues. For instance, the role of nonverbal cues in expressing parts of speech during communication has largely been overlooked by scholars. Admittedly, researchers such as A. Nurmonov, E. Sapir, S. Mosheva, and G. Kreidlin have studied the expression of grammatical elements like gender, demonstrative verbs, and antonymic units through nonverbal cues. Nonetheless, their works have not addressed the grammatical and linguopragmatic aspects related to expressing parts of speech using nonverbal cues.

¹ Назаров К., Эгамбердиев Б. Ўзбек тили ишора-имло қоидалари. –Т.: Ўқитувчи, 1996. –Б. 7.

² Нурмонов А. Ўзбек паралингвистик воситалари // Танланган асарлар. 1-жилд. –Т.: Академнашр, 2012; Сафаров Ш. Прагмалингвистика. –Т.: Давлат илмий нашриёти, 2008; Sapir E. Language: An introduction to the study of speech. –New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1921; Mehrabian A. Silent Messages: Implicit Communication of Emotions and Attitudes (англ.). 2-nd. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1980; Дмитриев Н. Строй Тюркских языков. –М.: Восточная литература, 1962.

The exploration of how grammatical categories are expressed through nonverbal cues involving hand and foot movements has been motivated, in part, by rejecting certain theoretical ideas proposed by other scholars. For example, Ottoman Turkish linguists M. Küçük and U. Eriş argued that due to the lack of specific configurations in nonverbal cues, there cannot be a set of grammatical rules in nonverbal communication. According to them, it is not even possible to discuss the existence of formal and grammatical rules in nonverbal cues.³

From a linguistic perspective, nonverbal (paralinguistic) cues in communication typically involve gestures and other signs that convey the meanings of verbs. Through nonverbal actions, individuals can express their internal emotions or attitudes (e.g., longing, joy, gratitude, affection, embarrassment, sarcasm, sadness, regret, dissatisfaction, and other moods). Nonverbal cues can also convey the name of an object, describe its qualities (e.g., fat, thin, tall, short), and provide meaning through depiction. These representations are primarily realized through nonverbal cues involving hands and feet.

Our observations and analysis of collected materials indicate that hand-related nonverbal cues are the most frequently used gestures in communication. They are employed both independently and in conjunction with other body movements to ensure effective and comprehensible nonverbal communication. These cues reveal the stylistic richness, communicative economy, linguopragmatic, and grammatical features of speech.

For instance:

In Uzbek: Эллиқбоши оломонга қайрилиб, бир қўли билан шиш кўзларини яширган ҳолда, иккинчи қўлини мушт қилиб, дўқ урди. (Ойбек. Кутлуғ қон).

In Turkish: Müdür, eliyle beni gösterdi: – Beyefendi, siz sevabı seversiniz. Bu çocuk, bir Fransız mektebinden çıkmış. (Güntekin R. Çalikuşu).

In English: “‘That would be me,’ said Algernon pleasantly, raising his hand.” (Spendlove O. Stanley Brambles and the Lost City).

In Russian: Сказав это, он вдруг, молча и с улыбкой, протянул руку сестре. (Достоевский Ф. Преступление и наказание).

In these excerpts from literary texts, nonverbal cues associated with the hand, such as "hiding his watery eyes with one hand and shaking his fist with the other," "pointed at me with his hand," "raising his hand," ("бир қўли билан шиш кўзларини яширган, иккинчи қўлини мушт қилиб дўқ урди", "eliyle beni gösterdi", "raising his hand") and "extended his hand to his sister," ("протянул руку сестре") serve to reveal linguopragmatic and grammatical aspects of speech.

Moreover, hand gestures can be categorized as nonverbal cues expressed using one or both hands, fingers, touching the interlocutor, or in combination with other body movements. These gestures facilitate the effective and comprehensible transmission of information. For example, gestures involving only one hand include waving, shaking (indicating refusal, reluctant agreement, dissatisfaction, sarcasm, greeting, farewell), dropping the hand loosely (indicating helplessness), raising the hand (to attract attention, indicate oneself, request permission, or signal a stop), pulling someone's hand (to urge, guide, or encourage), withdrawing the hand (indicating disapproval or resentment), waving the hand (to signal or give directions), pointing with the hand (to specify details in addition to verbal cues), trembling hands (indicating fear or excitement), saluting with the fingertips (indicating indifference or disdain), making a fist (indicating anger or excitement), and others.

It is noteworthy that the gesture of shaking hands is commonly used as a greeting in the etiquette of almost all nations. Research has identified approximately 20 meanings for this gesture, including greeting, farewell, congratulation (in sports or events), affirmation (in jest), making bets, introduction,

³ Küçük M., Eriş U. İletişim bilgisi. Ünite 3.–Eskişehir: Anadolu Üniversitesi, 2012. –S. 49-52.

expressing admiration, negotiating (as a broker), reaching agreements (in diplomacy), making vows, expressing consent (e.g., a high-five), reconciliation (after disagreements), wishing luck, sharing affection (in love), showing seriousness (in disputes), apologizing, expressing gratitude, and others. Comparative analysis of these 17 gestures across four languages has shown that they are nearly universal in form, with their use being determined by context, communication purposes, and interaction types. These gestures convey clear, heartfelt, affectionate, and guaranteed sentiments to the interlocutor, while also providing psychological encouragement and support.

The findings confirm that hand gestures perform a fundamental role in nonverbal communication and are among the most semantically rich nonverbal cues.

For example:

In Uzbek: Фойданинг тўртдан бири сизники, – Асадбек шундай деб ўрнидан туриб, қўл узатди. Шариф беихтиёр қўл берди. Асадбек хайрлашиш учун қўл олишдими ё шартни тасдиқлатдими – Шариф англай олмасдан қолди. (Тоҳир Малик. Шайтанат).

In Turkish: Ellerini tuttum, gözlerim dolu dolu, donuk bir sesle: – Sen çirkinmisin abla? dedim. (Güntekin R. Çalikuşu).

In English: In a moment or two the conversation ceased, and the three Guardsmen and the Musketeer, after having cordially shaken hands, separated, the Guardsmen going one way and Aramis another. (Dumas A. The Three Musketeers).

In Russian: – Соня ничего не говорила. Раскольников пожал ей руку и вышел. (Достоевский Ф. Преступление и наказание).

In the provided examples, gestures such as "қўл узатди, қўл берди," "ellerini tuttum," "after having cordially shaken hands," and "пожал ей руку" convey speech economy through actions like saying farewell, expressing consent, and imparting psychological influence.

Gestures involving both hands include clapping (to show admiration, gratitude, or to call attention, with specific meanings depending on the number of repetitions), raising hands in prayer (indicating intention, a wish, gratitude, or asking permission to leave or conclude something), raising both hands (surrender), spreading hands to the sides (helplessness, surrender, or impatience), opening palms upward (indicating inability), raising both hands upward (supplication), rotating hands in a wheel-like motion (indicating continuation), dusting off hands (indicating completion, readiness to leave, satisfaction with completed work, or respect before greeting), repeatedly moving raised palms backward 2–3 times (signaling dismissal or conclusion), greeting with both hands (enhancing respect), spreading hands while explaining (intensifying the meaning of verbal cues or attempting to persuade), mimicking an object in the air with hands (depicting), crossing hands (indicating deceit or excessive lying), clasping hands (showing respect or sincerity), and placing hands in opposite directions to form an "X" shape (indicating "enough" or "stop"). These 15 nonverbal gestures encompass nearly 30 meanings. When these gestures were comparatively analyzed across four languages, it was found that 25 of the 30 nonverbal meanings were applicable to Uzbek, 24 to Ottoman Turkish, 16 to English, and 16 to Russian. Some gestures, however, were not observed in English and Russian due to their association with religious or cultural practices.

Moreover, the analysis revealed that certain gestures performed to depict objects or items can represent numbers, pronouns, adjectives (and their degrees), or demonstrative verbs (predicates) in sentences.

For example:

In Uzbek: – Шу масала юзасидан сўрайдиган гапларинг бўлса, сўранглар. Орқа қатордан ўрта яшар киши қўл кўтарди. (Саид Аҳмад. Уфқ).

In Turkish: Bu çocuk kimdi? Birdenbire nereden çıkmıştı? Elimle işaret ettim. (Güntekin R. Çalikuşu).

In English: He indicated that I have children, and with his hand showed that one is big, the other smaller. (Winkler H. Ghost Riders of Upper Egypt).

In Russian: Размахнув руками, он описал в воздухе широкий круг. – Вот так поймите. (Горький М. Жизнь Клима Самгина).

In the provided examples, gestures such as "кўл кўтарди" (raising a hand) are used as a substitute for personal pronouns, "elimle işaret ettim" (I pointed with my hand) replaces interrogative pronouns like "who," "with his hand showed that one is big, the other smaller" expresses numbers, adjectives, and degrees of comparison, and "размахнув руками, он описал в воздухе широкий круг" (waving his arms, he described a wide circle in the air) depicts adjectives by pointing and illustrating the lexical-grammatical categories of words in the text.

It is important to note that when communicants' verbal interaction is limited or when they aim to enhance the effectiveness of their speech, grammatical categories can also be expressed through the depiction of objects or items using hands and fingers. For instance, gestures like forming a fist with the thumb and pinky extended near the ear (indicating a phone), touching the lips with the index and middle fingers (indicating smoking), or forming a fist with the thumb and index finger extended (indicating a gun) are examples of gestures that represent nouns and contribute to speech economy.

Additionally, in nonverbal communication, gestures involving only fingers are also common. Examples include repeatedly moving the index finger sideways or up and down (signaling disapproval or denial), pointing with the index finger (depicting the number 1: one minute, one second, one item; indicating silence, attention, a question, stopping a vehicle, calling a waiter, or summoning someone), displaying the index and middle fingers (depicting the number 2, representing victory in English-speaking cultures, or conveying an insult in Turkish culture), showing three fingers (indicating the number 3 or targeting in military contexts), showing four fingers (indicating the number 4 or displaying a ring with the palm upward), spreading all five fingers (indicating the number 5, signaling a stop, or for greeting or farewells), raising fingers in a waving motion (greeting, farewell, self-introduction, or drawing attention), crossing the index fingers of both hands (indicating an "X" symbol, meaning stop or enough), rubbing the thumb and index finger together (symbolizing money, wealth, or service charges), giving a thumbs-up (indicating approval or excellence), giving a thumbs-down (indicating disapproval or failure), biting a finger (expressing regret, anger, or frustration), or blowing a kiss by touching fingertips and sending it forward. These gestures not only depict nouns, numbers, and adjectives but also enhance the expressiveness of speech.

Nonverbal communication involving feet is used less frequently than hand gestures but serves as a critical component when verbal cues are insufficient. Examples of such nonverbal cues include stomping to announce entry into a room, crossing legs (indicating relaxation or boredom), tiptoeing (indicating stealth or avoiding disturbance), crossing ankles while seated (expressing protection, calmness, or confidence, sometimes indicating insecurity), shaking a foot (indicating enjoyment of music), scanning with one's foot (indicating general observation), hugging one's knees (indicating deep thought), tapping feet to show respect (indicating high regard), stepping on a new shoe (a unique congratulatory gesture), falling to one's knees or kissing someone's foot (indicating supplication, longing, or apology), and closing a door with one's foot (indicating anger, disrespect, or limited hand movement).

When these gestures were compared across four languages, it was found that 11 nonverbal cues were applicable to Uzbek, 9 to Ottoman Turkish, 8 to English, and 10 to Russian. Among these, stepping on a new shoe is a culturally specific gesture, while the others arise from natural human needs. Despite their origins, these gestures convey specific meanings to the listener in communication.

For example:

In Uzbek: Айвончага оёқ учида юриб борди. Кампир уйкуда эканига ишонгач, юраги бирдан тинчланди. (Ойбек. Кутлуғ қон).

In Turkish: Bir zaman bileklerime dayanarak büyükanneme baktıktan, onun uyuduğuna kanaat getirdikten sonra yavaşça karyolamdan indim; ayaklarımın ucuna basarak odadan çıktım. (Güntekin R. Çalikuşu).

In English: Part of her had hoped he would have thrown himself at her feet and begged her forgiveness...(Quinn L. Elfin).

In Russian: Вдруг он весь быстро наклонился и, припав к полу, поцеловал ее ногу. (Достоевский Ф. Преступление и наказание).

In the provided examples, nonverbal gestures such as "оёқ учида юриб борди" (walking on tiptoe) in Uzbek and "ayaklarımın ucuna basarak odadan çıktım" (leaving the room on tiptoes) in Turkish convey secrecy and the intent to avoid disturbance. Meanwhile, gestures like "thrown himself at her feet and begged her forgiveness" in English and "наклонился и, припав к полу, поцеловал ее ногу" (bent down and kissed her foot) in Russian symbolize reverence, apology, and historically, high respect toward individuals of noble status.

It is important to note that intercultural differences in gestures involving hands and feet are particularly evident in greetings. These differences arise from shared ethnopsychology, geographical location, cultural values, and ethical norms, which vary significantly between nations, even in terms of appearance. However, the essence of these gestures typically conveys universal meanings of goodwill, prosperity, and wishes for success.

Additionally, in nonverbal (paralinguistic) communication, the use of gestures often aligns with national or universally accepted norms and varies by gender. Gender-specific nonverbal gestures, such as a soft smile or delicate tone often associated with women, play a significant role. For instance, in European cultures, when a man and a woman greet each other by shaking hands, the woman is expected to extend her hand first. However, this etiquette holds little importance in Uzbek and Russian cultures. G. Kreidlin noted that gendered nonverbal gestures in Russian culture generally manifest similarly for men and women, though certain situations show distinctions. For example, in expressing "surprise," Russian men might scratch their nose or jaw, while women are more likely to scratch their neck.⁴

Russian linguists E. Kashina and A. Egunova conducted an analytical study on the effectiveness of male and female gestures in English advertisements. Their findings revealed differences in nonverbal communication between genders, indicating that gestures, movements, and body language by women appeal equally to both male and female audiences.⁵

In Uzbek culture, gender-specific nonverbal gestures also hold significant value. These gestures are often rooted in national traditions, customs, and values. At times, even native speakers may misinterpret the full meaning of such gestures. Therefore, within the scope of this research, we recommend categorizing nonverbal greetings in Uzbek, Ottoman Turkish, English, and Russian languages into the following ten groups:

1. **Cultural Greetings:** Examples include elders shaking hands first in Uzbek culture or the lack of necessity for English women to remove gloves during a handshake.
2. **Formal Diplomatic Greetings:** Such as mutual handshakes with firm palm contact between men and women during official meetings.

⁴ Крейдлин Г. Невербальная семиотика. –М.: Новое литературное обозрение, 2002. –С. 91.

⁵ Кашина Е., Егурнова А. Гендерный аспект невербальной коммуникации в англоязычной рекламы // Успехи современного естествознания, 2012. № 5. –С. 137.

3. **National Value-Based Greetings:** For instance, older Uzbek women blessing a man by patting his shoulder, or Englishmen tipping their hat as a greeting.
4. **International Greetings:** The use of similar greeting gestures across various nationalities, such as handshakes among athletes during international sports events.
5. **Religious Tradition-Based Greetings:** Such as embracing others after the "Eid" prayer to convey blessings.
6. **Gender-Specific Greetings:** Men hugging and patting each other on the back in Uzbek culture, women lightly tapping their elbows, or men and women kissing as a greeting in European cultures.
7. **Military Greetings:** Examples include soldiers saluting by bringing their right hand to their headgear, with the British and Americans often omitting the headgear.
8. **Social Group Greetings:** Close relatives or friends kissing as a greeting or professionals using unique forms of salutation.
9. **Situation-Based Greetings:** Subtle nods to avoid drawing attention, brief glances, or blinking to indicate acknowledgment or agreement.
10. **Unconventional (Informal) Greetings:** Modern greetings such as bumping heads, elbows, fists, or feet.

These categories can be further subdivided based on context, environment, time, relationships, emotional state, international etiquette, and even the presence or absence of headgear. For instance, while British people may limit themselves to verbal greetings when meeting close friends, Americans might lightly pat a friend's shoulder. In European countries, even unfamiliar men and women may greet or bid farewell with a kiss, which could be perceived as inappropriate in some cultures. This is particularly evident in Muslim countries, where women shaking hands with unfamiliar men is prohibited due to religious norms. Such restrictions also apply to international sporting events, formal award ceremonies, and other occasions.

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