GRAMMATICAL AND SYNTACTIC REALIZATION OF SOCIOCULTURAL COMPONENTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A COMPARATIVE CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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Abstract. *Language encodes not only propositional information but also socially and culturally significant meanings. Interpersonal distance, respect, familiarity, politeness, age, and social status can be expressed through lexical choices as well as through grammatical and syntactic structures. This paper examines the grammatical and syntactic realization of sociocultural components in English and Uzbek from a comparative corpus-based perspective. The analysis focuses on three major domains: second-person reference, polite request constructions, and forms of address. The English data are contextualized through the Spoken British National Corpus 2014 (BNC2014), while the Uzbek analysis draws on the Uzbek National Corpus and comparative linguistic research. The study demonstrates that English and Uzbek differ in the grammatical distribution of sociocultural meaning. English generally relies on modal auxiliaries, interrogative constructions, lexical address forms, and contextual pragmatic strategies, whereas Uzbek more explicitly grammaticalizes interpersonal relations through the* sen/sizdistinction *and corresponding verbal morphology. Recent corpus research on* could you*and* would you *in contemporary British English further confirms that apparently similar politeness constructions display functional and sociolinguistic variation. The comparison demonstrates that formal grammatical equivalence does not necessarily produce sociocultural equivalence. The findings are relevant to contrastive linguistics, corpus linguistics, translation studies, intercultural pragmatics, and foreign-language pedagogy.*

Keywords: *sociocultural component, English, Uzbek, grammatical realization, syntactic realization, corpus linguistics, politeness, address forms, social distance, contrastive linguistics*

1. Introduction

Language is simultaneously a formal linguistic system and a socially situated means of communication. Speakers select grammatical and syntactic structures not only to express events, states, and propositions but also to establish interpersonal relations and communicate culturally appropriate meanings. Consequently, grammatical structures may carry information about politeness, social distance, familiarity, respect, and institutional or interpersonal status.

The sociocultural dimension of communicative competence has become particularly important in contemporary language education. The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Companion Volume* emphasizes sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence, including the ability to recognize social conventions, use appropriate forms of address, adjust register, and interpret politeness conventions (Council of Europe, 2020). Sociocultural competence, therefore, cannot be separated completely from grammatical competence.

The English–Uzbek comparison is particularly relevant because the two languages differ typologically. English is predominantly analytic, whereas Uzbek is an agglutinative Turkic language in which grammatical information is frequently expressed through suffixation and person-number marking. These structural differences influence the way sociocultural meanings are encoded.

One particularly significant example is second-person reference. Contemporary English uses the pronoun *you* for both singular and plural addressees and does not grammatically distinguish formal and informal second-person singular reference. Uzbek, by contrast, distinguishes *sen* and *siz*. This distinction can also affect verbal morphology, as illustrated by the contrast between *sen kelas(an)* and *siz kelas(iz)*. Thus, a sociocultural distinction that is largely contextual in English can become morphologically visible in Uzbek.

Politeness provides another important area of comparison. English frequently employs modalized interrogatives such as *Could you help me?* and *Would you mind opening the door?* to formulate requests indirectly. Uzbek may employ respectful verbal morphology, conditional constructions, and lexical markers such as *iltimos*.

The present study therefore investigates the following research question:

How are sociocultural meanings grammatically and syntactically realized in English and Uzbek, particularly in second-person reference, polite requests, and forms of address?

2. Theoretical Background

Sociocultural meaning has been extensively investigated within sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that speakers select politeness strategies partly in response to social distance, power relations, and the potential threat posed by a communicative act. Their framework is particularly relevant to requests because requests may impose an action on the hearer.

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project further demonstrated that requests and other speech acts are influenced by contextual variables such as social distance, relative power, and degree of imposition (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). From this perspective, a request should not be analyzed exclusively as a grammatical

construction; its interpretation also depends on the social relationship between interlocutors.

Corpus linguistics provides an empirical means of investigating such patterns because naturally occurring language can be examined across large collections of texts and conversations. The Spoken BNC2014 is especially relevant to the present study because it contains contemporary conversational British English collected from real-life interactions. The corpus contains approximately 11.5 million words in 1,251 conversations involving 672 speakers, with data collected between 2012 and 2016 (Lancaster University, n.d.).

Recent research using this corpus provides direct evidence for sociolinguistic variation in English politeness constructions. Pan and Yang (2026), for example, examined *could you* and *would you* in the Spoken BNC2014 and found functional differences between them as well as variation associated with gender, age, and social class. Their findings indicate that *could you* is frequently associated with checking possibilities, whereas *would you* occurs more often in suggestions and offers.

This evidence is important because it demonstrates that modal request forms cannot simply be regarded as interchangeable grammatical variants.

3. Materials and Method

The English component of the present study is based on the Spoken BNC2014 as the principal empirical reference corpus. The corpus is particularly appropriate for sociocultural analysis because it consists of naturally occurring conversations recorded in informal settings, predominantly among friends and family members (Lancaster University, n.d.).

The Uzbek component is contextualized through the Uzbek National Corpus and comparative research on Uzbek sociocultural and grammatical structures. The Uzbek National Corpus provides search functions including lexical and lemma searches, concordances, morphological information, and parallel-corpus resources. Such functionality enables researchers to examine linguistic forms together with their surrounding contexts.

4. Results and Comparative Analysis

4.1. Second-Person Reference and Social Distance

The clearest grammatical difference concerns the expression of interpersonal distance. In contemporary English, *you* is used across informal, neutral, and formal contexts:

Can you help me?

Could you help me, Professor?

The pronoun itself does not specify whether the addressee is a friend, an older person, a stranger, or a professional superior.

Uzbek, in contrast, has the *sen/siz* opposition. The distinction is accompanied by verbal morphology:

Sen qayerga borasan?

Siz qayerga borasiz?

The first construction is associated with informal second-person singular reference, whereas the second uses the respectful/formal form. Comparative research on English and Uzbek address forms similarly identifies *sen/siz* as a major sociocultural distinction in Uzbek and contrasts it with the generalized English *you* system (Boboyozova, 2026).

Table 1

Sociocultural function	**English**	**Uzbek**
Informal singular	*you*	*sen* + informal verb form
Formal/respectful singular	*you*	*siz* + respectful verb form
Plural	*you*	*sizlar* / contextual plural
Social distance	Mainly contextual	Pronoun + verbal morphology
Respect	Titles, register, indirectness	*siz*, verbal morphology, address forms

The contrast demonstrates that sociocultural information is distributed differently across the two grammatical systems. In Uzbek, the social relation between speaker and addressee can become part of the grammatical structure itself.

4.2. Polite Requests in English

English frequently uses interrogative syntax for requests. Examples include:

Could you help me?

Would you open the window?

Would you mind opening the window?

Although these sentences are grammatically interrogative, they perform directive functions. The modal auxiliary contributes to mitigation and allows the speaker to avoid the directness of an imperative such as *Open the window*.

Importantly, recent corpus evidence shows that *could you* and *would you* are not functionally identical. Pan and Yang (2026) demonstrate that their distribution varies according to communicative function and sociolinguistic factors in contemporary British English.

This finding supports the argument that grammatical choice is connected with sociocultural meaning. The modal verb is therefore not merely a carrier of semantic possibility or willingness; it can also participate in interpersonal negotiation.

4.3. Polite Requests in Uzbek

Uzbek employs several strategies for expressing polite requests:

Iltimos, eshikni oching.
Eshikni ochib bera olasizmi?
Eshikni ochsangiz bo‘ladimi?

The first construction combines the lexical politeness marker *iltimos* with respectful verbal morphology. The second uses a modalized verbal construction and the respectful second-person form. The third employs conditional morphology followed by *bo‘ladimi?*.

Thus, the functional equivalent of English politeness is distributed across several linguistic levels:

PolitenessUzbek=lexical marker+person morphology+syntactic indirectness

By contrast, English commonly relies on:

PolitenessEnglish=modal auxiliary+interrogative syntax+lexical mitigation

These formulas are analytical rather than absolute, since both languages possess additional strategies.

Table 2

Communicative function	**English realization**	**Uzbek realization**
Direct request	*Open the door.*	*Eshikni oching.*
Modalized request	*Could you open the door?*	*Eshikni ochib bera olasizmi?*
Lexically mitigated request	*Please open the door.*	*Iltimos, eshikni oching.*
Conditional request	*Would you...?*	*...sangiz bo‘ladimi?*

The table illustrates that English and Uzbek may share the same communicative purpose while employing different grammatical mechanisms.

5. Address Forms as Sociocultural Components

Address forms provide another significant area of contrast. English employs forms such as *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms*, *Dr*, *Professor*, *Sir*, and *Madam*. These forms can signal institutional status, professional identity, or social formality.

Uzbek possesses a broader culturally embedded inventory, including forms such as *aka*, *opa*, *domla*, and *ustoz*. Such forms may encode respect, age, familiarity, professional role, or culturally conventional interpersonal relationships.

Boboyozova (2026) specifically compares Uzbek address forms such as *aka*, *opa*, *domla*, and *ustoz* with English forms such as *Sir*, *Madam*, *Mr*, *Mrs*, *Ms*, *Doctor*, and *Professor*. Her analysis emphasizes the relationship between address forms, respect, social distance, age, and speech etiquette. An important difference is that Uzbek kinship terms may be used beyond literal biological relationships. For example, *aka* may function as a respectful address form

for an older male interlocutor. English generally lacks a direct structural equivalent of this culturally extended kinship-based address.

Consequently:

Aka, bu hujjatni ko'rib chiqasizmi?

cannot always be translated adequately through a formally equivalent English vocative. Depending on context, an English translation might use *Sir*, a professional title, the person's name, or omit the vocative altogether.

This demonstrates that sociocultural equivalence requires interpretation of the communicative context rather than mechanical lexical substitution.

6. Corpus Evidence and Quantitative Interpretation

The corpus perspective strengthens the analysis because it makes it possible to investigate linguistic forms in naturally occurring contexts.

Its sociolinguistic value is also reflected in the corpus documentation, which warns researchers to consider the number of participants in a recording when conducting sociolinguistic analyses. For example, the majority of recordings contain two speakers, while some involve substantially larger groups; this distinction can affect the interpretation of speaker-level social variables (Lancaster University, 2017). For a future full quantitative comparison, the following reporting structure is recommended: This methodological distinction is essential. A conference paper should never present an invented number as an empirical corpus finding.

7. Discussion

The comparison indicates that English and Uzbek do not lack sociocultural grammaticalization; rather, they grammaticalize social meanings in different ways.

The most salient Uzbek feature is the integration of interpersonal meaning into the second-person system. The *sen/siz* opposition may be reinforced by verbal morphology and address forms. English, on the other hand, has generalized *you* and therefore relies more heavily on contextual, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic mechanisms to signal interpersonal distinctions.

Politeness provides a parallel contrast. English modal interrogatives such as *Could you...?* and *Would you...?* allow speakers to mitigate requests through syntactic indirectness. Corpus evidence confirms that these forms themselves display sociolinguistic and functional variation (Pan & Yang, 2026)

Uzbek can achieve comparable interpersonal effects through combinations of respectful person marking, conditional morphology, lexical politeness markers, and address terms.

Therefore, the two languages differ not primarily in the presence or absence of sociocultural meaning but in its **grammatical distribution**.

This finding has direct implications for translation and language teaching. A learner who translates *you* mechanically as *sen* or *siz* without considering the discourse situation may introduce an unintended sociocultural meaning. Likewise, an Uzbek speaker learning English may produce grammatically correct English while transferring Uzbek expectations about explicit respect marking.

The teaching of English in Uzbek-speaking contexts should therefore include sociolinguistic explanations of:

formal and informal interaction;
modalized requests;
address forms;
pragmatic differences between *can*, *could*, and *would*;
the role of *please*;
social distance and register.

8. Conclusion

The study demonstrates that sociocultural components are systematically realizedthrough grammatical and syntactic resources in both English and Uzbek. However, thetwo languages differ in the linguistic level at which such meanings are most prominently encoded.

English commonly expresses sociocultural meaning through modal auxiliaries, interrogative constructions, lexical address forms, indirectness, and contextual register. Uzbek makes interpersonal distinctions more explicitly visible through the *sen/siz*opposition, person-number morphology, respectful verbal forms, and culturally established address terms.

The corpus evidence is particularly significant because it demonstrates that English politeness constructions vary according to function and social context. The Spoken BNC2014 provides a substantial empirical basis for investigating contemporary conversational English, while the Uzbek National Corpus provides tools formorphological, lexical, concordance, and parallel-text analysis.

The principal conclusion is that **formal grammatical equivalence should not beconfused with sociocultural equivalence**. A grammatically corresponding structure may differ substantially in its interpersonal meaning. Consequently, comparative studies of English and Uzbek should integrate grammatical analysis with corpus evidence and sociopragmatic interpretation.

The study contributes to contrastive linguistics by showing how social meanings aredistributed differently across two typologically distinct languages. It also provides amethodological basis for future quantitative research in which raw frequency, normalized frequency, and log-likelihood statistics can be combined with qualitative concordance analysis.

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