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EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE STRATEGIES OF THE CONCEPT OF AGE IN DISCOURSE

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Abstract: The present article examines the concept of age as a complex sociocultural and discursive phenomenon in contemporary linguistic research, with particular emphasis on its emotional, pragmatic, and suprasegmental dimensions. Age is analyzed not merely as a biological or chronological parameter, but as a discursive resource that shapes social interaction and emotional alignment between interlocutors. Drawing on the theories of emotional expression proposed by P. Ekman and W. Friesen and the speech act theory developed by J. Austin and J. Searle, the study explores how age-related meanings are realized through lexical choices, speech acts, and nonverbal and prosodic features. Special attention is paid to the role of illocutionary intention and perlocutionary effect in age-related utterances in English and Uzbek. The analysis demonstrates that emotional attitudes toward age are culturally encoded and manifested through distinct communicative strategies, including intonation, tempo, pitch, and pauses. A comparative perspective reveals both universal and culture-specific patterns in the linguistic representation of age, highlighting its multimodal and dynamic nature in discourse.

Keywords: concept of age, emotional expression, speech act theory, pragmatics, suprasegmental features, prosody, discourse analysis.

In contemporary linguistic research, the social and emotional impact mechanisms of the concept of age in discourse constitute one of the most relevant areas of study. The category of age is viewed not only as a biological and chronological indicator, but also as a significant sociocultural construct and a discursive resource. The expression and perception of the concept of age in speech are mediated by complex cognitive and socio-psychological mechanisms, which contribute to the formation of specific emotional, affective, and social relationships between the speaker and the listener.

The linguistic analysis of the concept of age demonstrates that it is realized in discourse through a variety of linguistic means, and that distinct communicative strategies are characteristic of different age groups[1]. In this regard, the theory of emotional expressions developed by P. Ekman and W. Friesen, as well as the speech act theory proposed by J. Austin and J. Searle, serve as important theoretical foundations[2]. These theoretical approaches are of particular significance for understanding the multimodal nature of the concept of age and its communicative functions. The studies conducted by P.Ekman and W.Friesen indicate that emotional expressions possess a universal character, and age-related emotional states constitute an integral part of this universal system. The concept of age is conveyed not only through lexical

[1] Tagliamonte S. Variationist Sociolinguistics: Change, Observation, Interpretation. Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

[2] Austin J.L. How to Do Things with Words. – Harvard University Press, 1962. – 174 p.

means, but also through facial expressions, voice intonation, and other nonverbal signals. From this perspective, emotional attitudes toward age-such as joy, sadness, nostalgia, or pride-constitute a determining factor in the effectiveness of a speech act. Within the framework of the theory of emotional expressions, the concept of age performs two primary functions: first, it provides information about the speaker's age-related identity (the informational function); second, it evokes a specific emotional response in the listener (the emotive-impact function). Age-related emotional states are culturally encoded, and each society possesses distinctive emotional stereotypes associated with age.

The speech act theory developed by J.Austin and J.Searle plays a decisive role in understanding the pragmatic aspects of the concept of age. Austin's tripartite model of speech acts-locution, illocution, and perlocution-serves as an effective analytical framework for examining the communicative functions of the age concept. At the locutionary level, information about age is conveyed; at the illocutionary level, the speaker's intention-such as praise, criticism, or the expression of empathy-is realized; and at the perlocutionary level, the intended effect on the listener is produced[3].

In English, the emotional expression of the concept of age and its realization through speech acts can be observed in numerous examples. From the perspective of emotional expression, the utterance "How young you look!" carries a positive emotional connotation and performs the speech act of praise. In this case, the illocutionary intention is to please the listener, while the perlocutionary effect is the elicitation of a sense of satisfaction or pleasure.

In contrast, the expression ***"You're getting old"*** demonstrates context-dependent emotional coloring. When used in a friendly conversation, it functions as a joking speech act, whereas in a serious context it may serve as a warning. According to Searle's classification, this utterance belongs to the category of assertive speech acts; however, its illocutionary force may vary depending on the communicative situation. The expression ***"Act your age!"*** exemplifies a directive speech act, in which the speaker demands a particular form of behaviour from the listener. Its felicity condition depends on the speaker's legitimate authority or right to influence the listener's conduct. The utterance ***"I wish I were young again"*** represents a wish speech act, in which the emotional component associated with nostalgia is predominant. This expression belongs to the category of expressive speech acts, as it conveys the speaker's internal emotional state. Finally, the statement ***"She's young for her age"*** constitutes a pragmatically complex structure that emphasizes the distinction between biological and psychological age. It functions as an assertive speech act and fulfills a positive evaluative function.

In the Uzbek language, the emotional and affective expression of the concept of age, as well as its realization through speech acts, exhibits distinctive national characteristics. The expression ***"Yoshligim qaytsa!"*** ("If only my youth could return!") functions as a wish speech act, in which feelings of nostalgia and longing are predominant. This utterance belongs to the category of expressive speech acts and explicitly conveys the speaker's emotional state. In the utterance ***"Hali yoshsan, bolam!"*** ("You are still young, my child!"), motivational and encouraging speech acts are combined. The term of address "bolam" ("my child") intensifies the expression of affection and emphasizes social closeness. The illocutionary goal is to provide

[3] Searle J.R. Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language. – Cambridge University Press, 1969 – 203 p.

psychological support to the listener, while the perlocutionary effect is the evocation of confidence and hope.

Research in the field of suprasegmental phonetics demonstrates that pitch, tempo, loudness, rhythm, and pauses are key factors in the construction and perception of age identity[4]. Younger speakers typically exhibit higher pitch, faster tempo, and greater variability, whereas older speakers tend to display lower pitch, slower tempo, and more stable prosodic patterns. However, these phonetic characteristics reflect not only biological age, but also psychological and social age.

In English, the expression of the concept of age through suprasegmental features is highly rich and multifaceted. The utterance ***"Oh, I'm so old!"*** may be produced differently by speakers belonging to various age groups. When articulated by a young woman, the expression is typically accompanied by a higher pitch and exaggerated intonation for dramatic effect; when uttered by a middle-aged woman, it often conveys genuine concern; and when produced by an elderly woman, it is pronounced with a lower pitch and slower tempo, reflecting deeper emotional involvement.

In the Uzbek language, the expression of the concept of age through suprasegmental means reflects distinctive features of national culture. The phrase ***"Yoshligim esimda…" ("I remember my youth…")*** is typically initiated with a specific intonational pattern. The word *"yoshligim"* ("my youth") is articulated with greater length, while *"esimda"* ("I remember") is pronounced more briefly, followed by a prolonged pause. This prosodic model prepares the listener for a narrative about the past. Similarly, the phrase ***"Bolaligimda…"*** ("In my childhood…") usually begins in a higher register and gradually descends. This intonational contour conveys the vividness of childhood experiences and the pleasure associated with recalling them. The subsequent pause marks a transition to the narrative itself and serves to arouse the listener's interest.

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