



SPEECH CULTURE OF YOUTH AS A FACTOR IN PRESERVING SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

The article examines youth speech culture as a sociological factor in preserving socio-cultural identity in Uzbekistan. Speech culture is interpreted not only as a set of language norms, but also as a form of social behavior, communication ethics and cultural continuity. The article argues that youth speech practices reflect belonging to a cultural community, attitudes toward national values, respect in interpersonal relations and adaptation to contemporary social changes. Special attention is given to the role of family, education, digital communication and multilingual environments in shaping speech culture. The findings show that speech culture performs normative, ethical-value, cultural-symbolic and integrative functions. These functions help young people maintain connection with cultural memory while adapting to modern forms of communication. The article concludes that the preservation of speech culture should be understood as an important condition for strengthening socio-cultural identity among youth in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: *speech culture, youth, socio-cultural identity, Uzbekistan, communication ethics, language practices, cultural continuity, digital communication.*

1. Introduction

The problem of youth socio-cultural identity remains one of the important issues in contemporary sociology. Young people form their identity in a complex social environment where family traditions, education, media, digital platforms and multilingual communication interact. In such conditions, speech culture becomes more than a linguistic matter: it becomes a visible form of social belonging, value orientation and cultural self-expression.

The theoretical basis of the article is connected with social identity theory, according to which belonging to a group is formed through social categorization, comparison and identification [1]. This idea is important for understanding youth communication, because ways of speaking often show how a person relates to a family, peer group, educational institution, national culture or online community. Identity is also not a fixed quality; it is formed and expressed through social experience, discourse and representation [2].

Language and speech are closely connected with social recognition. P. Bourdieu demonstrated that language is not neutral, because certain ways of speaking may be associated with legitimacy, authority and symbolic capital [3]. Therefore, speech culture can be studied as a sociological indicator: it reflects not only correctness of speech, but also social status, norms of respect, communication ethics and belonging to a cultural environment.

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In Uzbekistan, this topic is especially relevant because youth communication develops at the intersection of national traditions, modernization, multilingual competence and digital communication. Young people use different forms of speech in family, school, university, professional and online settings. These forms may preserve cultural continuity, but they may also change under the influence of slang, foreign words, abbreviated digital messages and global communication patterns.

The aim of this article is to analyze speech culture of youth as a factor in preserving socio-cultural identity in Uzbekistan. The article seeks to answer the following questions: what sociological meaning can be attributed to speech culture; which functions does youth speech culture perform in the preservation of identity; and how can speech culture combine tradition with modern communication practices?

2. Methods

The article uses a theoretical-analytical research design. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is to clarify the sociological meaning of speech culture and to develop a conceptual framework that may later be tested through empirical research. The article does not present new survey data; therefore, the results should be understood as analytical conclusions based on scientific literature and sociological interpretation.

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, the literature was grouped around the concepts of social identity, language, communicative competence, cultural continuity and language practices. Second, the concept of speech culture was interpreted through four dimensions: normative, ethical-value, cultural-symbolic and integrative. Third, these dimensions were applied to the context of youth communication in Uzbekistan.

The methodological logic of the article relies on several theoretical directions. Social identity theory is used for understanding group belonging [1]. The theory of language and symbolic power is used for interpreting speech as a form of recognition and social differentiation [3]. The concept of communicative competence helps explain why speech culture includes not only linguistic correctness, but also social appropriateness [4].

3. Results

3.1. Speech culture as a normative mechanism

The first result of the analysis is that speech culture functions as a normative mechanism. It helps young people understand which forms of communication are appropriate in different social situations. A person speaks differently with parents, teachers, peers, strangers and online audiences. These differences are not accidental; they reflect social norms and expectations of the community.

In this sense, speech culture supports social order. It teaches the speaker to take into account the interlocutor, the communicative situation and the moral expectations of society. For young people, this is especially important because adolescence and youth are periods of active socialization. Through speech, young people learn not only how to communicate, but also how to behave in society.

3.2. Speech culture as an expression of ethical and value orientations

The second result is that speech culture reflects ethical and value orientations. A respectful manner of speaking, careful choice of words, ability to listen and refusal to humiliate others are not only individual qualities. They are also social signs that show how a young person has internalized cultural values and moral norms.

In the Uzbek cultural context, speech culture is closely connected with respect for elders, politeness, modesty, family upbringing and social responsibility. These elements are important because socio-cultural identity is preserved not only through formal knowledge about history or traditions, but also through everyday practices. Speech is one of the most visible everyday practices through which values are transmitted.

3.3. Speech culture as a carrier of cultural-symbolic meanings

The third result is that speech culture preserves cultural-symbolic meanings. Language gives

access to shared cultural meanings, and many expressions contain ideas about respect, solidarity, family, honor, hospitality and social responsibility. Studies on language and culture show that words and forms of expression may carry cultural knowledge and collective experience [7; 9].

Proverbs, respectful forms of address, greetings, traditional expressions and family-related vocabulary are not simply linguistic elements. They transmit cultural memory and help young people feel connected with previous generations. When such forms remain active in youth communication, they strengthen the continuity of socio-cultural identity.

3.4. Speech culture as a bridge between tradition and modernization

The fourth result is that speech culture may serve as a bridge between tradition and modernization. Modern youth communication includes digital platforms, short messages, emojis, slang, foreign words and hybrid language forms. These phenomena should not automatically be interpreted as a loss of identity. The central issue is not whether communication is traditional or modern, but whether it preserves respect, responsibility and cultural meaning.

Young people can participate in global communication and at the same time maintain connection with national values. For this reason, speech culture should be understood as a flexible mechanism. It allows youth to adapt to new social conditions while preserving the ethical and symbolic foundations of their cultural identity.

Table 1. Main sociological functions of youth speech culture

Function of speech culture	Sociological meaning	Contribution to socio-cultural identity
Normative function	Regulates appropriate forms of communication in different social contexts.	Supports social order, respect and communicative responsibility.
Ethical-value function	Expresses moral attitudes, politeness, respect and interpersonal responsibility.	Shows internalization of cultural values in everyday behavior.
Cultural-symbolic function	Preserves culturally meaningful expressions, greetings, address forms and verbal traditions.	Maintains connection with cultural memory and intergenerational continuity.
Integrative function	Combines traditional communication norms with modern and digital practices.	Allows youth to adapt to modernization without losing cultural belonging.

Source: developed by the author based on the theoretical analysis of speech culture, identity and communicative competence [1; 3; 4; 7].

4. Discussion

The results show that speech culture should be interpreted as a multidimensional social phenomenon. It includes language norms, but it is not limited to them. It also includes communication ethics, social roles, cultural memory, intergenerational transmission and the ability to act appropriately in different communicative situations.

The sociological significance of speech culture becomes clearer when it is connected with the idea of symbolic power. If certain ways of speaking provide recognition and legitimacy, then youth speech culture also influences educational success, public communication and social participation [3]. In this sense, speech culture is not only a personal quality, but also a social resource.

Another important aspect is the connection between speech culture and communicative

competence. D. Hymes argued that communication requires knowledge of what is socially appropriate, not only what is grammatically correct [4]. This idea is useful for analyzing youth speech because young people need to learn how to adapt speech to different settings while maintaining ethical responsibility and cultural respect.

Digital communication creates both opportunities and risks. On the one hand, it expands youth participation, access to information and intercultural interaction. On the other hand, it may weaken attention to politeness, careful expression and cultural continuity. However, digitalization should not be seen only as a threat. It can also become a space where young people reproduce cultural meanings in new forms.

Multilingualism also requires a balanced interpretation. The use of foreign languages may provide educational and professional opportunities, while the national language and culturally meaningful speech practices continue to support identity and belonging. Therefore, the preservation of socio-cultural identity does not require isolation from global communication. It requires the development of speech culture that connects openness to the world with respect for national values.

For Uzbekistan, this discussion is relevant because youth speech culture is shaped by family upbringing, educational institutions, national language policy, mass media and digital platforms. The preservation of speech culture requires not only linguistic education, but also value-oriented communication education. Schools, universities, families and media can play an important role in forming respectful, responsible and culturally meaningful speech practices among young people.

5. Conclusion

Speech culture is an important factor in preserving socio-cultural identity among youth in Uzbekistan. It reflects how young people internalize social norms, express cultural belonging, communicate with others and adapt national values to modern conditions. The article has shown that speech culture performs normative, ethical-value, cultural-symbolic and integrative functions.

The main conclusion is that speech culture should not be studied only as a linguistic phenomenon. It should also be understood as a sociological indicator of identity, value orientation and cultural continuity. Through speech, young people demonstrate their relation to family, community, education, national culture and contemporary social changes.

Future empirical research may test the proposed framework through surveys, interviews, focus groups or discourse analysis of youth communication in offline and online contexts. Such research would help identify real tendencies in youth speech culture and develop practical recommendations for strengthening socio-cultural identity among young people.

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