COMMUNICATIVE GENRES IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This article examines the pragmatic significance of communication genre features in English and Uzbek social networks through a comparative analysis. The study applies corpus-informed discourse analysis and speech act theory. Findings show that genre markers regulate credibility, intimacy, stance, and evaluative alignment. The paper proposes operational criteria for describing social-media genres across languages and platforms.

Keywords: Social networks, communication genre, pragmatics, speech acts, discourse, indexicality, audience design.

Introduction

Social media have become environments that reveal the social nature of language in the most immediate and multilayered way. In these spaces, speech does not merely transmit information but also manages relationships, social distance, trust, status, and strategies of self-presentation. For this reason, the concept of *communicative genre* is not only a tool for classifying social media texts but has become one of the central units of pragmatic analysis. Genre features are recurrently manifested in post formats, topic development, forms of address, evaluative devices, modes of commentary, and strategies for building relations with the audience. However, in many studies, genre is interpreted primarily at the structural or thematic level, while its pragmatic function—namely, the mechanisms that coordinate authorial intentions with audience expectations—remains insufficiently operationalized. In particular, comparative studies of English and Uzbek social media lack consistent pragmatic criteria that demonstrate how genre features shape socially acceptable realizations of speech actions such as requesting, advising, criticizing, supporting, self-justifying, or self-promoting.

Within existing scholarly traditions, speech act theory has enabled the analysis of communicative intention, while discourse and genre approaches have illuminated the relationship between texts and social norms. In social media contexts, these approaches converge even more closely: genres such as posts, comments, stories, captions under short videos, or reposts simultaneously function as formats, social expectations, and pragmatic "guidelines" for interaction. In English-language social media, softening personal opinions or cautious evaluation is often achieved through modality, hedging, and partial distancing from epistemic responsibility, whereas in the Uzbek segment, the balancing of intimacy and respect is more commonly realized through forms of address, blessings, collective "we" constructions, and culturally embedded norms of etiquette. These differences stabilize within genres and ensure pragmatic alignment between author and audience. The research problem lies in the fact that genre features are often listed as isolated linguistic elements, while their joint role in "tuning" pragmatic effects—and the points of convergence or divergence between the two linguistic-cultural contexts—has not been systematically demonstrated.

The aim of this article is to conduct a comparative analysis of how communicative genre features construct and regulate pragmatic meanings in English and Uzbek social media. To achieve this aim, the study addresses the following objectives: identifying the pragmatic profiles of common social media genres; explaining the alignment between genre features and speech acts; comparatively describing strategies for expressing credibility, intimacy, status, and evaluation in English and Uzbek segments; and proposing a set of pragmatic criteria that account for platform-related variability. The novelty of the study lies in operationalizing genre pragmatics as a unity of *format + expectation + indexicality* and in developing explicit descriptive criteria for comparative analysis. The theoretical framework draws on sociolinguistic approaches to genre, as well as concepts of speech acts and indexicality [1], [2], [3]. This approach enables social media language practices to be viewed not merely as linguistic phenomena but as forms of social action.

METHODS
The methodology of the study is situated within a comparative pragmatic paradigm and combines qualitative and quantitative elements. The empirical material consists of a corpus of posts and comments collected from publicly accessible

English and Uzbek social media pages and popular topical communities. Topic diversity was ensured by including contexts such as everyday advice and experience sharing, product or service evaluation, reporting personal achievements or events, and expressing positions on controversial issues. To control for platform-specific factors, samples preserving the post–comment chain were prioritized, as pragmatic meaning often emerges not only in the post itself but also in responses and subsequent authorial turns. In accordance with ethical standards, all elements that could lead to personal identification were excluded, and texts were analyzed solely as communicative units.

The theoretical foundation of the analysis is structured into three interrelated layers. At the first layer, the genre approach conceptualizes social media texts as "relatively stable communicative forms" and links their compositional and stylistic features with pragmatic expectations [1]. At the second layer, speech act theory is used to identify illocutionary intentions in posts and comments, their perlocutionary orientation, and expected audience responses [2]. At the third layer, concepts of indexicality and audience design explain how authors position themselves, address specific audiences, and construct social distance [3]. Applied jointly, these layers allow the pragmatic role of genre features to be identified not merely in terms of "which linguistic element is used," but rather "why it is used in this genre and in this specific interactional position."

The analytical procedure consisted of several stages. First, texts were preliminarily classified by genre: advisory posts, personal narratives, promotional-style presentations, argumentative position posts, question–answer invitations, brief evaluative comments, argumentative comments, and supportive comments. Next, a set of pragmatic markers was identified for each genre and coded according to criteria such as authorial stance, degree of audience proximity, politeness strategy, methods of credibility construction, and intensity of evaluation. Coding incorporated not only textual indicators but also contextual features, including how posts "lived on" through responses and how turn-taking unfolded in comment threads. In the comparative phase, genre-equivalent functions across English and Uzbek segments were aligned, even when realized through different formal means. For example, cases of "mitigated criticism" were examined where English texts relied on modality and hedging, while Uzbek texts employed respectful address and intention-justifying prefaces. This methodological design is appropriate to the

research aim, as revealing pragmatic significance requires linking structural features to social function and examining speech actions within context.

RESULTS

The analysis shows that communicative genre features in social media regulate pragmatic meaning along four core dimensions: credibility construction, management of intimacy and distance, indexing of status and authority, and coordination of evaluation and emotional alignment. While these dimensions are present in both language segments, their genre-specific realizations and dominant markers differ.

First, strategies of credibility construction vary significantly by genre and differ in their pragmatic modeling of "evidence" in English and Uzbek segments. In advisory posts and experience-sharing genres, English texts often establish credibility through *bounded personal experience*: recommendations are framed as context-dependent solutions rather than universal rules, leaving decision-making autonomy to the audience. In Uzbek texts, credibility in the same genres is more frequently reinforced through social validation and collective experience, with generalizing references such as "most people do this" or "this is what mentors say" functioning as pragmatic evidence. In promotional-style presentations, English segments prioritize quantifiable results, concise justification, and cautious promises in response to a verification-oriented audience, whereas Uzbek segments tend to strengthen trust through a tone of guarantee, service culture, and personalized address. These differences indicate that while the pragmatic function of genre features remains comparable, their social acceptability relies on different normative foundations.

Second, the management of intimacy and distance is particularly salient in comment genres. In English segments, intimacy is often constructed through direct address, brief supportive signals, and shared-experience statements such as "I've been there too." In Uzbek segments, intimacy is frequently combined with respect: comments often include blessings, well-wishes, expressions of concern, or cautious introductory markers that soften distance while maintaining etiquette norms. As a result, two pragmatic balance models emerge within the same genre: rapid construction of informal equality in English discourse versus intimacy packaged

together with respect in Uzbek discourse. This confirms that genre features function not merely as linguistic tools but as indicators of social relational norms. Third, the indexing of status and authority is most evident in argumentative posts and justificatory comments. In English texts, authority is often displayed through source attribution, delimitation of experiential scope, framing positions as personal observations, or cautiously introducing professional identifiers. In Uzbek texts, authority is more closely tied to socially indexed roles: authors present themselves as experienced, responsible, or entitled to advise, typically in a polite and indirect manner. Notably, explicit "I know" stances are often softened in English to avoid perceived aggressiveness, while overt authority claims are relatively rare in Uzbek discourse and tend to rely on anticipated social endorsement. Thus, genre features function as pragmatic regulators aligning authority display with audience expectations.

Fourth, the regulation of evaluation and emotional alignment is central in personal narratives and supportive comments. In English segments, emotional alignment is achieved through concise empathy signals, shared experiences that create a sense of "being together," and cautious evaluation aimed at conflict reduction. In Uzbek segments, emotional alignment more often involves extended positive wishes, moral encouragement, and activation of patience and hope semantics. Evaluation intensity also varies by genre: critical evaluation in English is frequently legitimized within position-taking genres through argumentation, whereas in Uzbek discourse criticism is often softened by shifting it into advisory or warning genres. These findings reveal the pragmatic "packaging" function of genre: identical intentions produce different social effects depending on genre choice.

An additional observation concerns platform formats, which significantly constrain genre realization and thereby guide pragmatic choices. Short-format posts increase the frequency of "rapid evaluation" and "brief support" genres in both segments. However, while brevity enhances informality in English discourse, Uzbek users tend to preserve polite address even under spatial constraints. This demonstrates that genre should be viewed not as a static unit but as a pragmatic system evolving in interaction with technological affordances.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that genre features in social media function as key mechanisms of pragmatic meaning-making, aligning with approaches that conceptualize genre not as a text type but as a model for performing social action [1]. The pragmatic significance of genre lies in its ability to shape authorial intention into a form predictable for the audience: once a genre is selected, the audience anticipates particular types of responses, evaluations, or support. In this sense, genre features operate as a "contract of expectations" in social media; when violated, misinterpretation, conflict, or failure of intention uptake may occur. This aligns with speech act theory's emphasis on the context-dependence of illocutionary force, which is determined not only by linguistic form but also by situational expectations [2]. In the analyzed material, genre expectations function as a mechanism for calibrating illocutionary force: sharp criticism in advisory posts may be perceived as a "serious warning," while overly cautious formulations in argumentative posts may be interpreted as a lack of commitment.

Differences between English and Uzbek segments can be further explained through the concept of indexicality. Indexicality concerns how linguistic elements point to social meanings, and in social media these meanings often stabilize through genre [3]. In Uzbek discourse, frequent use of respect markers, blessings, and indirectness should not be reduced to "national traits" but understood as a system of indices managing social distance and etiquette simultaneously. This interpretation aligns with politeness and facework research, which emphasizes speakers' efforts to maintain social self-image through mitigation strategies [4]. In English discourse, by contrast, cautious modality and hedging primarily regulate epistemic responsibility, delineating the boundaries of personal opinion to maintain equality and avoid escalation. Thus, the same pragmatic function is realized through different indexical resources: social-ethical indices dominate in Uzbek discourse, while epistemic indices are more central in English discourse.

The results also illuminate the problem of "context collapse" frequently discussed in digital discourse studies: social media audiences are often heterogeneous, and posts are simultaneously accessible to multiple groups. Under such conditions, audience design—authors' assumptions about whom they are addressing—is encoded through genre features [5]. In the analyzed data, question–answer invitation genres in English segments tend to employ neutral, open-address

strategies aimed at a broad audience, whereas Uzbek segments often invoke a close-knit audience model through terms like "dear friends," thereby inviting empathy and positive engagement. This demonstrates genre's role in imagining audience scope and mobilizing corresponding pragmatic resources.

In Uzbek linguistics, studies of pragmatics and speech culture have long emphasized the interrelation of address forms, etiquette, and communicative goals [6]. The present findings extend this tradition into the digital sphere, showing that classical etiquette norms are not eliminated in social media but are reconfigured through genre—for example, criticism being reframed as "warning" and legitimized through good intentions. Russian pragmalinguistic traditions have similarly linked speech genres and discourse units to social institutions and communicative functions [7]. Compared to these approaches, the present study highlights how genres become institutionalized in semi-formal digital environments not through rigid rules but through repetition, platform affordances, and audience sanctioning. While international research often foregrounds multimodality and identity construction in social media discourse [8], the present findings show that genre features remain a central linguistic framework for managing identity, status, and intimacy pragmatically, even without explicit focus on multimodal elements.

A key conclusion of the discussion is that differences between English and Uzbek social media genres should not be reduced to structural differences between languages. Instead, they emerge at the intersection of etiquette norms, audience expectations, cultural models of credibility, and platform practices. Therefore, comparative pragmatic research should conceptualize genre features not as lists of linguistic units but as normative scenarios for performing social action. The genre profiling approach proposed in this article—based on credibility, intimacy, status, and evaluation—offers a foundation for future studies across larger corpora and multiple platforms, contributing to the development of a comparative map of digital pragmatics.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that communicative genre features in English and Uzbek social media systematically regulate pragmatic meaning by creating stable mechanisms for credibility construction, management of intimacy and distance,

indexing of status and authority, and coordination of evaluation and emotional alignment. Comparative analysis reveals that English segments more strongly centralize epistemic caution and equality-oriented mitigation strategies, while Uzbek segments more actively deploy etiquette-based resources that simultaneously maintain respect and intimacy within genres. The theoretical contribution of the study lies in operationalizing genre as a system of pragmatic indexicality integrated with format and expectation. Practically, the proposed criteria offer tools for analyzing social media texts, supporting moderation practices, and identifying genre-specific pragmatic missteps in digital literacy training. Future research should expand the analysis to multimodal resources, age and professional group variation, and the impact of algorithmic recommendation systems on genre pragmatics across platforms.

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