

Theoretical Foundations of Speech Etiquette and its History of Development: Main Approaches of Russian Researchers

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Abstract. *The article is dedicated to a comprehensive examination of the theoretical foundations of speech etiquette, analysis of its historical formation and cultural development, as well as research on the contribution of Russian scholars to the formation of modern speech behavior theory. Based on the analysis of the scientific works of L. P. Yakubinsky, N. I. Formanovskaya, E. M. Vereshchagin, V. G. Kostomarov, Yu. N. Karaulov, and other researchers, the content of the concepts of "speech etiquette," "communicative norm," "politeness," and "linguistic personality" is revealed. The work presents the main stages of speech etiquette development – from primitive communicative rituals to modern digital forms of communication. Special attention is paid to the national–cultural specifics of Russian speech etiquette, its connection with the traditions and social norms of Russian society.*

Key words: *speech etiquette; communicative norm; speech culture; Russian linguistics; language history; politeness; communication traditions; linguistic personality; etiquette formulas; linguoculturology.*

Speech etiquette is a universal component of human communication and one of the key mechanisms regulating social interaction. It is expressed in a system of stable speech formulas, prescriptions, and norms of speech behavior that allow establishing, maintaining, and completing contact between people while preserving the principles of mutual respect, tact, and cultural correctness.

In modern science, speech etiquette is considered at the intersection of linguistics, sociology, cultural studies, communication psychology, and pragmatics. Its content structure includes both verbal and nonverbal means, as well as socio–role and cultural parameters that determine the choice of speech formulas based on status, age, degree of formality, communicative purpose, and cultural context.

A special place in the study of speech etiquette belongs to the Russian scientific school, which laid the fundamental foundations for its study. The works of L. P. Yakubinsky, N. I. Formanovskaya, E. M. Vereshchagin, V. G. Kostomarov, Yu. N. Karaulov became the basis for the formation of theoretical concepts related to speech behavior, speech culture, and communicative norm, as well as for understanding speech etiquette as a part of linguocultural competence.

In Russian linguistics, speech etiquette is defined as a system of stable, historically established speech formulas and behavioral strategies that regulate interpersonal communication and ensure communicative harmony. According to N. I. Formanovskaya, speech etiquette represents a "normative subsystem of language," which includes various ways of expressing respect, attention, goodwill, and tact. It functions as a tool for social regulation and cultural reproduction of communication.

Thus, speech etiquette is not reduced to individual words of politeness, but acts as a holistic system that includes the choice of addresses, greetings, forms of gratitude and apology, strategies for agreement and disagreement, as well as ways to mitigate conflict and maintain a positive communicative background.

Characteristic features of speech etiquette

Speech etiquette possesses several characteristic features that allow us to consider it as a specific linguocultural phenomenon:

- normativity, which implies adherence to generally accepted behavioral patterns and speech norms;
- traditionality based on the transmission of speech formulas from generation to generation, their consolidation in collective memory;
- social conditioning, expressing the dependence of speech behavior on status, role, age, and communicative situation;
- situativity, which determines the choice of linguistic means depending on the purpose of communication, the degree of formality, and interpersonal relationships;
- a national–cultural specification reflecting the values, mental attitudes, and peculiarities of a particular people's worldview.

Based on this, speech etiquette acts not merely as a collection of prescriptions, but as a part of society's cultural memory, fixed in language and manifested in every act of communication.

The history of speech etiquette development in the world

The history of speech etiquette has deep roots and reflects humanity's social, cultural, and spiritual development. The evolution of politeness norms and speech behavior rules proceeded in parallel with the development of society, the complication of its structure, the emergence of statehood, religious systems, cultural traditions, and social institutions. Speech etiquette was formed gradually – from the elementary ritual actions of primitive people to the modern multi–level and intercultural communicative code that regulates the interaction of billions of people.

Primitive stage: nonverbal origins

In the earliest stages of human existence, speech etiquette manifested itself primarily in nonverbal forms. Gestures, postures, facial expressions, physical distance, and sound signals performed the following functions:

- establishing hierarchy within the group;
- expressing submission or friendliness;
- indicating threat;
- initiating and concluding interaction.

The first prototypes of speech etiquette were:

- greeting rituals (lowering the head, raising the hands, bowing);
- taboos on words and names related to sacred concepts;
- ritual formulas used during hunting, sacrificial offerings, and appeals to spirits.

These pre–communicative actions created behavioral norms, which over time transformed into stable social rituals and laid the foundation for future systems of speech etiquette.

Ancient civilizations: formation of official protocol

With the emergence of states and social stratification, a complex system of official etiquette developed, reflecting the hierarchical structure of society.

Ancient Egypt.

In Egypt, there existed:

- special formulas for greeting the pharaoh;
- strict rules for addressing officials;
- ritual speech acts for religious ceremonies.

The basis of speech behavior was reverence for authority, gods, and elders. Adherence to speech protocol served as an indicator of loyalty and fidelity to the existing order.

Ancient China.

Chinese civilization developed one of the earliest and most sophisticated etiquette systems. The treatise "Li Ji" (Book of Rites) (3rd–1st centuries BC) detailed:

- norms of polite behavior;
- speech formulas of respect;
- rules of communication based on seniority;
- prescriptions for government officials.

Chinese etiquette laid the foundation for such categories as respect, hierarchy, moderation, and indirect expression. To this day, these principles remain relevant in Chinese communicative culture.

Ancient India.

In India, the namaskara greeting tradition is widespread: a gesture and verbal formula with deep spiritual meaning. Here, speech etiquette is closely connected with the religious concepts of Hinduism and Buddhism, and speech formulas serve both etiquette and religious–philosophical functions.

Mesopotamia.

The Code of Hammurabi and other written monuments record:

- forms of address to the king;
- ritual oaths;
- norms of speech behavior for merchants, judges, and officials.

Thus, even in the early stages of history, speech etiquette was formalized as an important part of the legal, religious, and social system.

Antiquity: the first theories of speech and communication

Ancient Greece and Rome developed the first theories of speech and communication, within which etiquette aspects were also considered.

Ancient Greece.

Greek thinkers – Aristotle, Demosthenes, Socrates – viewed speech as a tool for persuasion and social interaction. The greeting χαῖρε (chaire) expressed goodwill and respect. There were norms for:

- the speaker's behavior;
- greeting citizens;
- expressing respect for elders.

A rhetorical tradition formed, in which etiquette became part of public behavior and civic culture.

Ancient Rome.

The Romans developed:

- greetings salve, salvete;

- forms of address in courts;
- rituals of diplomatic speech.

Roman rhetoric systematized the norms of public behavior, and antiquity, in general, for the first time consciously identified etiquette as a socially significant code accompanying both official and private discourse.

The Middle Ages: Religious Regulation and Class Etiquette

The Middle Ages became an era of strict social hierarchy, which was clearly reflected in the system of speech etiquette.

Europe.

In Europe, speech etiquette was closely related to:

- church norms;
- court traditions;
- chivalric culture.

The formulas "milord" and "lady" emerged, complex greeting ceremonies and diplomatic addresses were established. The culture of chivalry formed ideals of courtesy, respect for ladies, and submission to one's lord, which were also expressed in speech behavior.

Byzantium.

Byzantium was characterized by a highly developed court protocol: multi-level formulas of glorification, bows, and ceremonial greetings. Speech was strictly regulated and intertwined with ceremony.

Medieval East.

In Muslim countries, speech behavior norms were determined by the Quran. The greeting formula "Assalamu alaikum" ("peace be upon you") carried religious content and simultaneously performed etiquette, identification, and sacred functions.

The Renaissance and the Early Modern Period: The Birth of Secular Politeness

The 15th–18th centuries marked the formation of European secular etiquette.

Europe as a whole.

Treatises on manners, such as Erasmus of Rotterdam's "On Good Manners for Boys" (1530), became widespread. Politeness gradually transformed into:

- a social virtue;
- a sign of good upbringing;
- a tool of social mobility.

The image of an "educated, polite person," proficient in the rules of speech and behavioral etiquette, was formed.

France.

17th–18th century French salons became the center of European secular culture. The art of speech, compliment, and address takes on a special charm. From this, the French formulas monsieur, madame, mademoiselle, which have become established as pan-European signs of politeness, enter many European languages.

Russia.

Petrov's reforms introduce the European court protocol: "gentleman," "monsieur" forms, new rules of correspondence and official appeals. The literature of the 18th–19th centuries (Pushkin, Turgenev,

Tolstoy, etc.) records the Russian model of speech behavior, reflecting a combination of borrowed European norms and national traditions.

In the 19th century, various countries developed their own national norms of communication, reflecting cultural characteristics and mentality.

England: a culture of distance.

The following are characteristic of English communication tradition:

- restraint;
- formality;
- avoiding direct assessments;
- abundance of words please, sorry, excuse me.

France: a culture of generosity.

French speech etiquette is based on:

- ease of communication;
- a developed culture of compliment;
- elegant formulas of address.

Japan: A Culture of Respect.

The developed Keigo (speech politeness) system includes:

- Respectful and humiliating forms;
- rigid hierarchy of appeals;
- a high level of ritual.

Russia: emotional politeness.

Russian culture has preserved:

- expressive, emotionally colored formulas;
- use of diminutive–laxative suffixes;
- a combination of sincerity, kindness, and politeness.

Thus, in the 19th century, speech etiquette finally acquires national characteristics, becoming part of cultural identity.

The 20th century became the era of scientific understanding of speech behavior.

Speech etiquette is actively researched within the framework of:

- ethnology (B. Whorf, M. Mead);
- linguistics and theories of speech acts (R. Jakobson, J. Austin);
- theories of politeness (P. Brown, S. Levinson);
- linguoculturology and pragmatics (V. G. Kostomarov, N. I. Formanovskaya, et al.).

Based on these studies, speech etiquette began to be considered as:

- social institution;
- cultural system;
- form of linguistic and communicative competence;
- a mechanism of intercultural interaction.

In Russian science, it was precisely in the 20th century that the understanding of speech etiquette as a crucial component of speech culture and linguocultural competence was consolidated.

Speech etiquette, considered in theoretical and historical aspects, appears as a complex, multifaceted phenomenon closely connected with the development of society, culture, and language. It performs regulatory, communicative, emotional–expressive, social–identifying, and cultural–preserving functions, ensuring the harmonization of interpersonal relationships and the stability of social interaction.

Historical review shows that speech etiquette was formed gradually: from primitive society's non-verbal rituals to codified protocols of ancient civilizations, from medieval religious–ritual norms to secular models of the New era and national traditions of the 19th century. In the XX–XXI centuries, the scientific understanding of speech behavior and its transformation in the context of globalization and digital communication comes to the forefront.

The Russian linguistic school made a significant contribution to the development of the theory of speech etiquette, forming an understanding of it as a normative subsystem of language and an important element of the linguistic personality. This allows us to speak of speech etiquette not only as a practical set of rules but also as a crucial object of linguocultural and communicative analysis, reflecting both universal and national–specific values.

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