BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

# CULTURAL SPECIFICITY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT IN ADVERTISING DISCOURSE: A COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK ADVERTISING TEXTS

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**Abstract**. This article investigates the cultural specificity and social context of advertising discourse through a comparative pragmatic analysis of English and Uzbek advertising texts. The study aims to identify the linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms employed in both languages to influence consumer perception and behavior, with particular attention to euphemisms, neologisms, and culturally conditioned communicative strategies. The research is grounded in the theoretical frameworks of pragmalinguistics, discourse analysis, linguoculturology, and cognitive linguistics. The corpus consists of advertising texts collected from print, broadcast, outdoor, and digital media in English-speaking countries and Uzbekistan, supplemented by data from a sociological survey conducted among 134 respondents.

The findings reveal that while both English and Uzbek advertising texts pursue the universal persuasive goal of influencing the target audience, they differ significantly in their linguistic realization and cultural orientation. English advertising discourse tends to emphasize individualism, personal achievement, innovation, and brevity, whereas Uzbek advertising discourse reflects collectivist values, social trust, family relationships, and cultural traditions. Euphemisms in English advertising are primarily motivated by political correctness and social inclusivity, while in Uzbek advertising they function as expressions of politeness, respect, and cultural propriety. Neologisms serve as markers of innovation in both languages; however, English advertisements frequently generate globally recognizable technological terms, whereas Uzbek advertisements adapt them through hybridization with native linguistic elements.

The study demonstrates that advertising discourse is deeply influenced by sociocultural factors and that effective advertising communication requires the integration of culturally appropriate pragmatic strategies. The results contribute to the fields of advertising linguistics, intercultural communication, pragmatics, and translation studies by highlighting the importance of cultural adaptation in the creation and localization of persuasive texts.

**Keywords:** advertising discourse, comparative pragmatics, euphemism, neologism, individualism, collectivism, cultural specificity, linguoculturology, persuasion, English, Uzbek

Advertising constitutes one of the most pervasive and communicatively complex forms of discourse in contemporary society. Far from being a mere vehicle for commercial information, advertising operates as a sophisticated sociopragmatic mechanism that reflects, reinforces, and at times transforms the cultural values, social norms, and ideological assumptions of the communities in which it functions (Van Dijk, 1978; Cook, 1992). As markets become increasingly globalised and as digital platforms extend the reach of advertising messages across national and linguistic

boundaries, the need for rigorous comparative study of advertising discourse across different languages and cultures has never been greater.

English occupies a dominant position in global advertising, functioning as both a source language and an aspirational register for advertising professionals worldwide. Uzbek, by contrast, is a national language in active development within a rapidly transforming post-Soviet market economy, where advertising discourse is still consolidating its own conventions and norms. The juxtaposition of these two languages therefore offers a particularly revealing lens through which to examine the interplay between language, culture, and communicative strategy in advertising.

The present article focuses on the comparative pragmatic analysis of English and Uzbek advertising texts, addressing three interrelated dimensions. First, it investigates the cultural specificity encoded in advertising language, examining how euphemisms and neologisms are deployed differently in the two traditions. Second, it analyses the role of social context—individualism versus collectivism, the construction of the addressee, and the encoding of social values—in determining the communicative strategies adopted. Third, it situates these findings within a broader historical and empirical frame by considering the evolution of advertising as a social institution and the attitudes of contemporary Uzbek consumers as revealed by survey data.

The central hypothesis of the study is threefold: (i) despite belonging to different language systems, English and Uzbek advertising texts share the fundamental pragmatic goal of influencing the addressee and prompting action, but achieve this through culturally differentiated linguistic means; (ii) the effectiveness of advertising is directly conditioned by the appropriate selection of linguopragmatic devices—above all euphemism, evaluative lexis, and emotional-expressive units—in relation to the cultural and social profile of the target audience; and (iii) English advertising texts exhibit a predominance of brevity, precision, and individualistic orientation, while Uzbek advertising texts manifest a stronger social orientation, reliance on trust, and appeal to national values.

The theoretical framework employed draws on discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1978), pragmalinguistics (Searle, 1986; Susov, 1984; Safarov, 2008), linguoculturology (Pelipenko and Yakovenko), and cognitive linguistics (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). The methodology combines qualitative pragmatic and discourse analysis with contrastive linguistic comparison and content analysis of real advertising texts drawn from English and Uzbek media environments, including print, broadcast, outdoor, and digital platforms.

The primary corpus for this study consists of advertising texts collected from English and Uzbek media environments spanning television, radio, print publications, outdoor advertising (billboards and banners), and digital platforms including social networks and mobile applications. English-language data were drawn from internationally circulating advertising campaigns for brands such as Apple, Coca-Cola, Nike, L'Oréal, Samsung, Lexus, Red Bull, and De Beers, as well as sector-specific examples from the automotive, cosmetics, food and beverage, and technology industries. Uzbek-language data were collected from national broadcasting, print media, and digital sources in Uzbekistan, including campaigns for domestic brands (Artel, Muza, Piala, and others) as well as localised versions of international products.

The corpus was supplemented by the results of an empirical sociological survey conducted among 134 respondents aged 19–56 years in Uzbekistan (63 female, 71 male), designed to assess consumer attitudes towards advertising and patterns of advertising-influenced purchasing behaviour. Respondents were asked about their understanding of the concept of advertising, their trust in advertising messages, and the extent to which they relied on advertising when making purchasing decisions.

Seven interrelated analytical methods were employed in the study. The descriptive method was used to identify and systematise the linguistic features of advertising texts in both languages. The comparative (contrastive) method enabled the identification of similarities and differences between English and Uzbek advertising discourse at the levels of lexis, pragmatics, and sociocultural orientation. The pragmalinguistic analysis method was applied to examine speech acts, implicature, presupposition, and euphemism as functional categories. Discourse analysis provided a framework for interpreting advertising texts as communicative events embedded in broader social and cultural contexts. Content analysis was employed for both quantitative enumeration and qualitative characterisation of linguistic units, stylistic devices, and pragmatic categories. Contextual analysis illuminated the situational determination of meaning within advertising discourse. Finally, the linguoculturological method enabled examination of the ways in which national and cultural factors are reflected in linguistic choices.

The analytical procedure involved three stages. In the first stage, examples of euphemism and neologism were identified and categorised in both corpora. In the second stage, the pragmatic functions of these devices were determined with reference to the communicative context and the presumed target audience. In the third stage, the findings from both corpora were compared systematically to identify patterns of convergence and divergence between English and Uzbek advertising practice.

Although English and Uzbek belong to entirely different language families—Germanic and Turkic, respectively—advertising discourse in both traditions makes extensive use of euphemism and neologism as linguopragmatic strategies. The functions and cultural motivations of these devices, however, differ markedly between the two languages.

In English-language advertising texts, euphemism functions principally as an instrument of political correctness and social neutrality. Advertisers systematically replace negative or potentially uncomfortable lexical items with semantically softened equivalents in order to preserve a positive product image, avoid discriminatory connotations, and maintain a tone of sensitivity towards diverse consumer audiences. This practice is closely bound up with the broader cultural norm of political correctness that characterises mainstream Anglophone public discourse.

Several recurrent domains of euphemistic substitution were identified in the corpus. In the domain of price, the lexeme "cheap," which carries semiotic associations with poor quality, is systematically replaced by "budget-friendly," "affordable," "economical," or "reasonably priced." The compound "affordable luxury"—as in the advertising copy "Affordable luxury for everyone"—is particularly revealing in this context: it simultaneously neutralises the negative associations of affordability and elevates the product by invoking the prestige register of luxury. In the domain of age, the adjective "old" is consistently replaced by "mature," "classic," or "vintage" when applied both to persons and to products. Cosmetics advertising provides a paradigmatic instance: "Designed for mature skin" positions an age-related product attribute not as a deficit but as a mark of sophistication and experience. In the domain of body image, "fat" is replaced by "plus-size" or "curvy," and in the domain of used goods, "used car" gives way to "pre-owned vehicle," a substitution that displaces the connotation of previous ownership and substitutes a neutral, even positive, register of prior stewardship.

The pragmatic effect of these euphemisms is to reframe the communicative situation in a manner favourable to the advertiser

In Uzbek-language advertising texts, euphemism operates on a different motivational basis. Rather than political correctness, the governing principles are respect (hurmat), politeness (muloyimlik), and conformity with national cultural and religious norms. These values are deeply

embedded in the Uzbek communicative tradition and shape the rhetorical choices available to advertising copywriters.

In the domain of price, "arzon" (cheap) is replaced by "hamyonbop" (wallet-friendly/affordable) or "qulay narxda" (at a convenient price). While the English substitution "affordable" also softens the association with cheapness, the Uzbek "hamyonbop" additionally indexes a register of considerateness towards the consumer

A further domain of Uzbek advertising euphemism with no direct parallel in English is the mediation of family and social relationships. Phrases such as "butun oila uchun mos mahsulot" (a product suitable for the whole family) or "yaqinlaringiz bilan baham ko'ring" (share with your loved ones) encode collective social values and frame the consumer not as an autonomous individual but as a member of a familial and social network. This collectivist framing of the addressee constitutes a fundamental structural difference between Uzbek and English advertising pragmatics.

Neologisms in advertising serve the rhetorical function of signalling innovation, modernity, and differentiation from competitors. Their deployment, however, reflects quite different dynamics in the two language communities under study.

In English advertising, neologisms are typically generated within the technology and digital economy sectors and subsequently spread to broader advertising contexts. Terms such as "smartification," "phygital" (physical + digital), "contactless," "AI-powered," "blockchain," and "metaverse" have entered advertising copy as markers of cutting-edge innovation. These neologisms carry a strong indexical value: by invoking the latest technological developments, they associate the advertised product with progress and with the aspirational values of the knowledge economy. The brevity and morphological compactness of many English advertising neologisms—"pre-owned," "eco-friendly," "contactless"—align with the more general aesthetic of concision that characterises English advertising style.

In Uzbek advertising, neologism most often takes the form of hybridisation: international (predominantly English) morphemes are combined with native Uzbek bases or suffixes to produce new forms adapted to the phonological and morphological conventions of the language. Examples identified in the corpus include "megaqulaylik" (mega-convenience), "supernasiya" (super-promotion), "ultrasamarali" (ultra-effective), "smartxona" (smart house), and "ekomakon" (eco-space). The prefixes "mega-," "super-," and "ultra-" function as intensifiers borrowed from the global advertising lexicon, but their attachment to Uzbek bases produces forms that are accessible and culturally legible to Uzbek audiences. This hybridisation strategy reflects the broader sociolinguistic situation of Uzbek, which is actively integrating international lexical resources while maintaining the morphological and syntactic structures of the native language.

A comparative summary of the major dimensions of cultural specificity in English and Uzbek advertising texts is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Comparative Features of English and Uzbek Advertising Discourse: Cultural Specificity

Advertising discourse does not exist in a social vacuum; it is constitutively shaped by the social structures, communicative norms, and value systems of the communities within which it operates. This section examines the social contextualisation of advertising in both the English-speaking world and in Uzbekistan, identifying structural parallels and significant divergences.

The social institution of advertising has a long history. Among the earliest documented instances are Egyptian papyrus announcements relating to the sale of goods and persons, a clay tablet from ancient Babylon advertising a commercial establishment, and the approximately 1,500

advertising inscriptions preserved in the ruins of Pompeii—the city entombed by Vesuvius in 79 CE. In ancient Greece and Rome, public criers (praecones) broadcast commercial information orally in public squares, establishing the basic communicative dyad of advertiser and audience that persists to this day. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the fifteenth century enabled the mass reproduction of advertising material in newspapers and pamphlets; the first issue of the Boston News-Letter (1704) is widely cited as an early example of print advertising directed at a mass public. The invention of photography in the late 1830s introduced the visual dimension that has remained central to advertising ever since, enabling the integration of image and text that characterises modern advertising discourse.

The contemporary scale of advertising expenditure reflects its perceived centrality to economic life. By 2020, total advertising spending in the United States alone amounted to approximately USD 225.8 billion, with projections indicating continued growth. This economic reality is itself a social phenomenon: it signals the degree to which producers and distributors of goods and services believe that communicating with consumers through advertising is indispensable to commercial success.

One of the most revealing dimensions of the comparative analysis concerns the way in which English and Uzbek advertising texts construct their addressees. In English advertising discourse, the predominant model is individualistic. The addressee is typically constituted as an autonomous agent endowed with the capacity and the right to make independent choices in accordance with personal preferences, desires, and aspirations. This construction is enacted lexically through the pervasive use of second-person singular pronouns ("you," "your"), through imperatives that address the individual directly ("Be yourself," "Discover your potential"), and through slogans that foreground personal empowerment and self-realisation ("Be yourself. Choose Apple."; "You deserve it."; "Because you're worth it." [L'Oréal]).

The individualistic addressee construction in English advertising corresponds broadly to what Hofstede (1980) identified as the high-individualism dimension of Anglo-American culture. Within this framework, advertising appeals to the consumer

Uzbek advertising discourse, by contrast, constructs the addressee primarily as a social being—a member of a family and a community whose choices are embedded in and evaluated by reference to collective social relationships. The most salient marker of this construction is the ubiquity of family-oriented language: "oilangiz uchun" (for your family), "butun oila uchun" (for the whole family), "yaqinlaringiz bilan" (with your loved ones). The product is positioned not as a vehicle for individual self-expression but as a means of fulfilling collective obligations, demonstrating care for family members, and participating in shared social practices.

This collectivist orientation also manifests in the emotional register of Uzbek advertising. Whereas English advertising tends to privilege emotions associated with personal achievement—motivation, confidence, muvaffaqiyat (success)—Uzbek advertising more frequently invokes emotions centred on social relationships: ishonch (trust), mehr (affection/care), yaqinlik (closeness/intimacy), and baxt (happiness understood in a relational, not merely personal, sense). The contrast is visible in parallel slogans: "Just Do It" (Nike) versus "Oilangiz uchun eng yaxshi tanlov" (The best choice for your family); "You deserve it" versus "Hamyonbop narxlarda sifatli mahsulotlar" (Quality products at affordable prices).

A further significant dimension of difference between English and Uzbek advertising discourse concerns communicative style. English advertising texts are generally characterised by extreme brevity, precision, and creative condensation. The goal is to achieve maximum communicative impact with minimum verbal means, exploiting the semantic density of carefully

chosen lexical items and the pragmatic implicatures that skilled exploitation of context can generate. Slogans such as "Think Different" (Apple), "Just Do It" (Nike), "Open Happiness" (Coca-Cola), and "Because you're worth it" (L'Oréal) achieve their effects not through elaboration but through the compressed suggestiveness of a small number of semantically rich words.

Uzbek advertising texts, in contrast, tend towards greater elaborateness and explicitness. This tendency reflects both the communicative norms of Uzbek public discourse and the practical consideration that Uzbek consumers may be less familiar with—and therefore less trusting of—the elided, allusive style of Anglo-American advertising. In Uzbek advertising, the product

The empirical dimension of the study was provided by a sociological survey conducted among 134 respondents (63 female, 71 male) aged 19–56 in Uzbekistan. The survey was designed to assess consumer understanding of advertising, attitudes towards its reliability, and patterns of advertising-influenced behaviour.

The results revealed that 62% of female respondents and 45% of male respondents defined advertising primarily as a source of information about products or services, suggesting that the majority of the sample understood advertising in terms of its informational function. 36% of all respondents identified advertising as a source of income for mass media, and 9% characterised it as useless or time-consuming. 49% of respondents expressed a generally positive attitude towards advertising, and 60% indicated that advertising facilitated their everyday life by providing useful information. 47.5% reported purchasing products on the basis of advertising, and 27.5% had used services advertised in this way, with 29% indicating indifference. Among product categories, household goods (39.5%) and clothing and footwear (28.5%) were the most frequently purchased on the basis of advertising. 52% of respondents expressed trust in advertising for language learning centres and educational courses, while 30.5% were sceptical.

These findings confirm that advertising discourse occupies a significant and increasingly normalised place in Uzbek consumer culture, while also indicating that a substantial minority of consumers remain sceptical or disengaged. The relatively high level of trust in educational advertising reflects a broader social valorisation of language learning and educational opportunity in contemporary Uzbekistan. The greater proportion of female respondents who defined advertising primarily in informational terms (62% versus 45% of males) may reflect gender-differentiated patterns of consumer engagement, though this finding would require further investigation.

Table 2. Comparative Social and Communicative Features of English and Uzbek Advertising Discourse

The findings reported above permit a number of broader theoretical and practical observations about the nature and functioning of advertising discourse across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

The comparative analysis confirms and extends the thesis that advertising discourse is not merely a universal pragmatic template applied uniformly across cultures, but is rather a culturally specific communicative practice whose forms are deeply shaped by the values, social structures, and communicative norms of the communities in which it operates. The differences documented between English and Uzbek advertising—in the deployment of euphemism and neologism, in the construction of the addressee, and in communicative style—are not arbitrary but systematically reflect the contrasting cultural frameworks of individualism and collectivism within which each advertising tradition has developed.

This finding has direct implications for the practice of advertising localisation and translation. It is not sufficient to translate the lexical content of an advertising text from English into Uzbek (or vice versa) while preserving the original pragmatic structure: a text that constructs the addressee as an autonomous individual, appeals to personal ambition, and achieves its effects through

compressed allusion may fail entirely when transported into a collectivist cultural context in which social belonging, trust, and communal identity are the operative values. Successful localisation requires a thoroughgoing pragmatic adaptation that addresses not only lexis and grammar but also the fundamental communicative orientation of the text.

The analysis of euphemism in advertising discourse reveals that this device operates as far more than a simple softening mechanism. In both English and Uzbek advertising, euphemism functions as a strategically deployed pragmatic instrument that manages the face needs of the consumer, neutralises potential negative associations, and creates a communicative environment conducive to persuasion. In Goffman

The difference in the cultural grounding of euphemism in the two traditions—political correctness in English, social propriety in Uzbek—reflects a deeper difference in the social norms that advertising must navigate. Anglo-American advertising operates within a public discourse that is highly sensitised to issues of discrimination, inclusion, and the equal dignity of all demographic groups; this sensitivity is itself a product of specific historical and political developments. Uzbek advertising, by contrast, operates within a social framework in which deference to age, respect for family, and conformity to religiously and culturally sanctioned norms of propriety remain powerful social expectations. Advertising that violates these norms—whether through excessive directness, inappropriate body references, or disrespect for family structures—risks alienating its audience in ways that no amount of linguistic creativity can overcome.

The contrasting patterns of neologism use in the two corpora illuminate different relationships between advertising language and technological modernity. In English advertising, neologism is a primary vehicle for the performance of innovativeness: by deploying terms from the cutting edge of technology and digital culture, advertising copy signals that the product is at the forefront of progress. The global reach of English as a lingua franca ensures that these neologisms can circulate widely without requiring cultural translation.

In Uzbek advertising, the hybridisation strategy identified in the corpus represents a pragmatic compromise between the desire to signal modernity and the need to maintain cultural accessibility and linguistic legibility. By attaching internationally recognisable intensifying prefixes to native Uzbek bases, Uzbek advertising copywriters simultaneously invoke the prestige of global consumer culture and affirm the distinctiveness of Uzbek linguistic identity. This hybridisation is itself a form of cultural pragmatics: it manages the tension between globalisation and local identity that characterises advertising discourse in many post-Soviet and postcolonial language communities.

The sociological survey data provide a useful empirical check on the discourse-analytic findings. The relatively high levels of consumer trust in advertising (49% positive attitude; 60% finding advertising useful) suggest that advertising discourse in Uzbekistan is broadly accepted as a legitimate and valuable source of consumer information, despite the scepticism of a significant minority. The gender differences in advertising reception—more women than men defining advertising primarily in informational terms—indicate that advertising communicates differently to different audience segments, a finding consistent with the broader literature on gender and consumer behaviour.

The survey also highlights the practical importance of the sociolinguistic adaptation strategies discussed above. In a market where consumer trust is still developing and where a substantial minority (30.5%) remains sceptical even of educational advertising, the emphasis on ishonch (trust) and sifat (quality) in Uzbek advertising texts is not merely a cultural preference but a rational communicative strategy. Advertising that cannot build trust will not persuade, regardless of its linguistic sophistication.

Notwithstanding the significant differences documented above, the comparative analysis also reveals areas of pragmatic convergence between English and Uzbek advertising discourse. Both traditions make systematic use of evaluative lexis (positive attribute terms, superlatives), emotional-expressive devices, imperative constructions, and repetition as basic instruments of persuasion. Both construct an idealised addressee whose desires and values the advertising text seeks to invoke. Both employ implicit communication strategies—implicature and presupposition—to achieve persuasive effects that could not be achieved, or could not be achieved as efficiently, through explicit statement. These shared pragmatic properties reflect the shared communicative goal of advertising across all cultures: to influence the addressee

The divergences, by contrast, concern the culturally specific means by which this shared goal is pursued: the particular values invoked, the specific face needs managed, the social models of the addressee constructed, and the rhetorical styles deployed. Understanding both the universal pragmatic grammar of advertising and its culturally specific instantiations is essential for any practitioner or researcher who engages with advertising discourse across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

This article has presented a systematic comparative pragmatic analysis of English and Uzbek advertising texts, focusing on cultural specificity and social context as the primary determinants of the linguopragmatic strategies deployed. The analysis has demonstrated that the two advertising traditions differ significantly in their deployment of euphemism—politically motivated in English, propriety-motivated in Uzbek—and in their use of neologism: globally generated technological coinages in English, hybridised adapted forms in Uzbek. More fundamentally, the two traditions construct their addressees in strikingly different ways: English advertising operates within an individualistic social model, emphasising personal choice, self-actualisation, and independent agency; Uzbek advertising operates within a collectivist social model, foregrounding family, communal belonging, trust, and social warmth.

These findings carry several implications. For advertising theory, they confirm the cultural determination of advertising pragmatics and underscore the insufficiency of universal models that abstract away from cultural variation. For advertising practice and localisation, they demonstrate that effective cross-cultural advertising requires pragmatic adaptation that goes beyond lexical and grammatical translation to encompass the reconstruction of the addressee, the selection of culturally appropriate emotional registers, and the alignment of communicative style with the norms of the target community. For translation studies, the findings point to the importance of cultural competence as a component of translator expertise in the domain of advertising.

The empirical survey data confirm that advertising occupies an increasingly important place in Uzbek consumer culture, though consumer trust remains uneven. This finding underscores the practical relevance of the research: as Uzbek advertising develops and as the Uzbek market becomes more integrated into the global economy, the ability to create culturally appropriate, pragmatically effective advertising texts will become ever more important for both domestic and international advertisers.

Future research could profitably extend the present analysis in several directions. First, a more detailed investigation of the psycholinguistic mechanisms through which advertising texts achieve their persuasive effects on Uzbek consumers—including the roles of implicature, presupposition, and inferential processing—would deepen understanding of the cognitive dimension of Uzbek advertising pragmatics. Second, a diachronic study of the evolution of Uzbek advertising discourse over the past three decades—from the Soviet period through the transitional post-independence era to the present—would illuminate the sociolinguistic processes through which contemporary Uzbek

advertising conventions have been formed. Third, the extension of the analysis to digital and social media advertising, which raises distinctive pragmatic questions relating to interactivity, multimodality, and audience targeting, represents a particularly pressing research agenda in the rapidly evolving contemporary media environment.

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