A Comparative Analysis of Ethical Behavior Models in Karakalpak and English Ethnic Communities

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Abstract:

This study examines ethical behavior in British and Karakalpak cultures through a cross-cultural analysis of linguokinemes—kinetic units of language that convey social and ethical norms. Based on 19th-century literary texts and contemporary sources, we analyze the use of handshakes, physical contact, gaze, and facial expressions, highlighting both commonalities and differences in ethical norms and social interaction styles. The methodology includes categorization of positive, negative, conditionally positive, and conditionally negative nominations, construction of thematic clusters, and comparison within and between cultures. Results reveal that handshakes and physical contact are used differently across the two cultures, reflecting historical, religious, and social influences, while gaze and facial expressions serve as significant indicators of passive-aggressive behavior and emotional attitudes. The study demonstrates that variations in laughter and smiles, as well as the frequency and type of kinesic actions, can inform psycholinguistic profiles and deepen understanding of cultural expectations, ethical norms, and social cohesion within and across ethnolinguistic communities.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Kinesics, Ethical Behavior, Linguokinemes, British and Karakalpak Cultures, Facial Expressions and Gestures, Psycholinguistic Profiling, Ethical Norms

Introduction

In our previous studies, we examined the features of kinesics within each of the cultures under consideration (British and Karakalpak), as well as the LCCKS (Linguo-Cognitive Characteristics of Kinesic Signs) based on works by 19th-century authors. The LCCKS were identified on the basis of typical, core linguokinemes. However, it is equally valuable to conduct a comparative analysis

of their usage across different historical periods and to explore the cross-cultural specifics of LCCKS.

Starting with the second point, it can be noted that both British and Karakalpak representatives perceive themselves as civilized citizens living in socially developed societies. Each of these cultures possesses its own set of kinesic patterns characteristic of various types of everyday social behavior. Thus, when examining the textual representation of ethical properties of British linguokinemes, we observed the following feature: a handshake is not always considered obligatory, and its absence is not regarded as offensive by either party.

Essentially, the previously conducted descriptive analysis of linguokinemes revealed that not only the lexical meaning of a kineme itself is important for its decoding, but also the context (the situation) in which the described action occurs, as well as the LCCKS performed by the actor of the speech act simultaneously with the main kineme, since they contribute to a clearer interpretation and decoding of the action.

Thus, in earlier stages of the research, we identified the most salient linguokinemes found in the literary works and compared them within each culture—the British and the Karakalpak. At the same time, we deliberately did not include nearly all linguokinemes present in the texts, as this would have shifted the analysis toward examining the author's individual style.

However, despite demonstrating the variability of the LCCKS in the analyzed texts, we did not achieve several objectives that we consider essential for identifying the most commonly used kinemes within an ethnic group, namely: we did not compare the identified kinemes diachronically within a single culture, which deprives us of the opportunity to understand changes in linguoculture and, consequently, in culture itself; we did not compare the identified kinemes across different cultures, which limits our understanding of cultural connections or their uniqueness; we did not correlate the entire set of kinemes with each culture's value orientations, lifestyle, and patterns of social behavior (This is an ambitious task, as it requires a large amount of data, but in some cases it remains important even when data are limited).

Methodology

The methodology of the study is founded on a comparative linguacultural and psycholinguistic approach to the identification and interpretation of models of ethical behavior in the speech and linguokinemes of the Britons and the Karakalpaks. The empirical data utilized is nineteenth century literary texts and contemporary texts from both linguocultures that were chosen to allow for maximal cultural relevance and contextual diversity. Ethical interaction-related linguokinemes, such as handshake, touch, eye-contact, and facial expression, were extracted from the texts and coded as units of analysis. All nominations were categorized as positive, negative, and conditionally-positive or conditionally-negative based on the ethical classification title (e.g. "Nursing is bad") depending on the communicative context. Kinesic categories with dominant and insignificant nominations were then subjected to quantitative frequency analysis, from which thematic clusters were built grounded in dominant ethical patterns. Such clusters were interpreted to be suggestive of culturally specific interaction styles and ethical norms. Inter and intra-cultural comparison uncovered similarities, differences and changes in ethical kinesic behaviour Results were interpreted with reference to models of intercultural communication, interaction strategies, and uncertainty avoidance (based on Hofstede's value-based classification system) to show how the results were able to be situated within broader cultural systems. This unified methodological framework allows for a systematic reconstruction of ethical-klinokinetic models, and helps in delineating psycholinguistic profiles characterized by cultural-level norms of social behavior.

Results and Discussion

These objectives can be achieved not only by identifying positive and negative nominations derived from lexemes that imply ethical linguokinemes, as was done in the previous work, but also by extracting from these nominations' certain complexes or clusters. These clusters generalize and

reflect their semantic structures, functional characteristics, and mental representations, thereby facilitating the identification of ethical cognitive models and cultural values both within and between the linguocultures under comparison.

Such ethical lexical complexes are conceptually more defined and extend beyond the simple dichotomy of "positive nomination" versus "negative nomination." They indicate the cultural vector of goal-setting through the LCCKS and are typically described in terms of culturally specific interaction styles within a given culture or ethnic group. In essence, these complexes are closely related to the component previously examined in psychiatrist A. Scheflen's system of analysis, referred to as "themes." Let us recall that Scheflen understood a "theme" as verbal utterances and actions that describe the encoder's/decoder's stance toward their needs (for example, listening, defense, narration, etc.). In this way, A. Scheflen constructed his understanding of a behavioral complex (such as "attentive listening") of the communication partner—the addressee—based on the concentration of kinemes (e.g., "head supported by a fist," "direct eye contact with the interlocutor," "moderately tense posture," etc.) [1].

Thus, our methodology is based on the following sequential steps:
1. Based on the procedures described above, we extract the nominations, dividing them into positive, negative, conditionally positive, and conditionally negative categories.
2. We calculate their overall frequency within specific LCCKS categories (for example, "handshake linguokinemes") and record the results in a table.
3. We identify the dominant nominations (those with the highest total frequency) and the insignificant nominations (those with the lowest total frequency).
4. Based on the dominant nominations, we construct thematic clusters and determine these themes primarily according to their ethical features (for example, "handshakes are normative in the linguoculture").
5. We compare the different thematic clusters within the same culture.
6. We compare the same types of thematic clusters across different cultures.

As a result of applying this methodology, several metacategories may be derived, which can serve to characterize the linguoculture of an ethnic group—representing, in turn, a projection of the group's actual culture (in our case, the observance of codified ethical norms).

A comparative analysis of the meanings of generic lexical units representing ethical norms in the languages of the cultures under study makes it possible to identify both common and specific features of ethical behavior in these ethnic groups. This is due to the fact that the meanings of these lexemes reflect various culturally relevant characteristics in the consciousness of the speakers of the respective languages.

Point 3 of the methodology for analyzing texts to identify ethical LCCKS requires clarification for accurate data processing. Thus, when calculating the totals of individual LCCKS in the literary texts, any lexical unit describing kinesics may become either a dominant or an insignificant type of nomination. In some cases, there may also be instances in which the values assigned to certain cells that determine the total number of "ethical" LCCKS are equal or differ only slightly. Likewise, the difference between dominant and significant types of nominations may be so small that determining its relevance becomes difficult.

Taking these factors into account, we propose the following approaches to data processing. If one of the themes is predominantly positive, this indicates a preference for ethical behavior corresponding to that style of interaction. For example, if within the category of handshake-related lexicon we identify a significant majority of positive nominations (compared to other types of nominations in this category), we may confidently conclude that handshakes are preferred during greetings and farewells (and possibly in other ethically significant situations) within the given linguoculture.

Conversely, if negative nominations constitute a significant majority, this suggests that the corresponding linguokinesic behavior is either ignored or not employed as an ethical norm within that ethnic group. If one of the themes is predominantly conditionally positive, this indicates that

the linguoculture does not fully consider the given linguokineme acceptable. It may be losing its relevance or may possess ambiguous meanings. Likewise, if conditionally negative nominations dominate, this suggests that the corresponding linguokinesic behavior is largely unacceptable for the given linguoculture. If the absolute difference between the positive and negative nominations is greater than that between the conditionally positive and conditionally negative nominations (i.e., explicit themes exceed implicit ones), this indicates the openness of the ethnos's linguokinesic system to an external observer. If the absolute difference between the implicit themes is greater than that between the explicit ones, this indicates greater ambiguity within the ethnos's linguokinesic system and the difficulty of determining its ethical norms.

All of these nominations are grouped into themes or topics. Based on these topics, we can, with varying degrees of probability, construct the psycholinguistic profile of a given ethnos.

The psycholinguistic profiles of different ethnic groups may then be compared to one another. Psycholinguistic conclusions can be drawn on the basis of concepts related to interaction styles in various cultures, for example:

- The concept of predominantly formal versus informal interaction styles. Gesteland argues that formal cultures generally rely on hierarchies that reflect the status and authority of their members. In contrast, informal cultures place greater value on egalitarian societies with smaller differences in status and power [2].
- The concept of predominantly expressive versus predominantly restrained interaction styles.
- The concept of uncertainty avoidance in interaction. Measurement of uncertainty avoidance reflects ambiguity, low tolerance, and the need for formal rules. It indicates the extent to which people in a society perceive uncertain situations as threatening and strive to avoid them [3].
- The concept of predominantly expressive versus predominantly restrained interaction styles.

It is also possible to use the concept proposed by Yu.E. Ivanova, according to which interaction strategies in communication are realized through the following styles [4]:

- Cooperative – characterized by a focus on collaboration (interest of all participants in the interaction, respect for others, flexible role and turn-taking, minimal interruptions, feedback).
- Conflictive – characterized by exerting pressure on the other (focus on one's own opinion, ignoring the opinion of others, frequent interruptions).
- Mixed – in which the roles of communicants cannot be clearly determined.

These concepts can be taken into account when interpreting the distribution of different linguokinemes and identified themes, both within a single ethnos and across different ethnic groups.

Firstly, based on the ancient ritual of handshaking, we have found that handshakes in British culture have historically been, and continue to be, relatively rare. Many in Britain consider them optional. At the same time, the Karakalpak people have come to use handshakes more frequently than in the past [5].

The ethical implications of the preference of these two different ethnic groups for handshaking in communication relate to whether such an action can be interpreted as polite or rude. Although a handshake is often regarded as a sign of respect and connection between two people, it may not always be well received in certain cultural contexts where it is not customary [6].

The British ethnic group tends to refrain from using the traditional handshake in social interactions. This decision may be based on various cultural or religious beliefs and practices, such as avoiding unnecessary physical contact or considering overly close physical contact inappropriate. Since those who avoid handshakes may feel uncomfortable in public settings where handshakes are customary, this group may regard it as an ethical obligation to communicate their stance to prevent misunderstandings arising from their refusal to shake hands [7]. Additionally, members of this group may be concerned about certain illnesses that can be transmitted through physical contact, such as handshakes; thus, they abstain from engaging in what may constitute risky behavior for themselves and others.

On the other hand, the Karakalpak ethnic group has gradually increased the use of handshakes in communication with one another. This change demonstrates how the adoption of certain customs

can make this particular culture more hospitable and, ultimately, help break down barriers between different cultures by establishing common ground through shared customs and gestures, such as handshakes [8]. Moreover, because most people find comfort in familiar social gestures when interacting with strangers, the use of gestures like handshakes can provide ease between unfamiliar parties, potentially leading to better mutual understanding despite their differences, and demonstrating mutual respect through shared rituals such as handshakes, which may foster stronger connections over time when used appropriately.

Ultimately, both approaches have their advantages as well as potential pitfalls. Therefore, it is important for individuals to assess each situation from an ethical perspective before deciding whether participating in a gesture like a handshake is reasonable or unreasonable, depending on the context of each situation, the people involved, and whether refusal or acceptance of the handshake is likely to produce positive outcomes.

Secondly, we can also gain a broader understanding of physical contact with another person in general. Here, we observed a similar trend: in British culture, physical contact with others has historically been, and continues to be, relatively rare, whereas among the Karakalpak people, such interactions have become more frequent than in the past.

The tendency characteristic of the British ethnos is rooted in various factors, such as religious beliefs or social norms, which have become entrenched in this culture over time. Ultimately, people from this group generally avoid unnecessary physical contact during conversation. Many members of this culture even consider such behavior inappropriate and believe it should be avoided at all costs, as it infringes upon personal space without consent or prior notice [9]. In practice, gestures such as handshakes or hugs are typically used only in cases of necessity and only after obtaining permission whenever possible; otherwise, they are considered intrusive in most situations involving casual interactions between strangers or new acquaintances.

The Karakalpak ethnos, by contrast, has adopted a much more democratic approach to physical contact during conversation. Many members of this community now consider physical contact an acceptable part of everyday social interaction, regardless of whether they know each other well, provided both parties feel comfortable [10]. This shift from restraint to openness has occurred for several reasons, including increased comfort levels among certain demographic groups, making them more inclined toward tactile interaction than in the past, as well as greater opportunities for international travel, which over time have led to better understanding and acceptance of different cultures worldwide. This facilitates interactions with people outside their usual social circles, who may hold different views, including regarding the use of physical contact in effective communication. Such exposure prepares individuals to navigate diverse situations arising from these differences, thereby reducing misunderstandings, largely due to the factors mentioned above, and contributing to smoother social interactions overall [11].

It should be noted that there is no definitive answer as to which approach is better when discussing what constitutes ethically acceptable behavior regarding physical contact during conversation. Each situation must be assessed individually, based on mutual respect among all parties involved, and the recognition by all participants that each person deserves autonomy over their own body, regardless of whether they consent to physical contact during interaction, whether positively, negatively, or indifferently. In this way, potential issues can be addressed effectively without causing unnecessary distress or harm, ensuring the emotional well-being of all participants throughout the interaction [12]. By maintaining respect for each other's opinions and boundaries, a harmonious and constructive outcome can ultimately be achieved, allowing both parties to benefit from the interaction, gain valuable experience, and acquire insights into different aspects of life, thereby fostering broader understanding and contributing to a balanced, fulfilling, and socially enriched existence.

Thirdly, we do not consider nods or bows, as it has been found that they do not occur as forms of greeting in either culture and will therefore be disregarded in this context.

However, we discovered that in British culture, the linguokineme of gaze has been used twice

as often. Previously, it was more frequently associated with negative nominations, but now it appears in conditionally negative ones. The Karakalpak ethnos shows a similar trend: gaze has also been used twice as often and predominantly remains in the negative nomination.

The following conclusions can be drawn. The use of gaze to convey a negative attitude has long been recognized as a form of passive-aggressive behavior. Instead of directly addressing a problem or honestly expressing their feelings, a person may send silent signals intended to diminish or undermine the other individual [13]. Such behavior disregards the feelings of the other person and does not provide an opportunity for dialogue or problem resolution. This creates an environment in which neither party feels heard or respected, leaving both sides feeling misunderstood, which can lead to tension, confusion, misinterpretation, and resentment.

The use of gaze, more than other kinetic means (e.g., gestures), to convey a negative attitude toward another person is unethical, as it disregards their feelings, sending silent messages that only hurt without offering any real opportunity for resolving the situation.

Fourth, the most indicative form of kinesics in both linguocultures proved to be facial expressions. In British literature, laughter continues to carry a positive nomination as before, but the number of laughter nominations has decreased by a factor of 2.5. The number of smiles, on the other hand, has increased by 0.5 times, but among the British, smiles more often carry a negative nomination.

From the perspective of contemporary Karakalpak writers, the number of smiles, conversely, has decreased by half, while the number of laughter lexemes has increased fourfold. Similar to the British, laughter in Karakalpak culture mainly carries a positive nomination.

On one hand, an increase in the number of smiles may indicate that this group is happier than before. On the other hand, it can be argued that smiles are not necessarily sincere, being given only out of politeness or obligation.

When considering the ethics of an ethnic group, laughter often serves as a key indicator of how the group perceives itself and its place in the world. Generally, when a group laughs heartily and frequently, this is regarded as a positive sign; conversely, when laughter decreases noticeably over time, it may be considered a sign of underlying issues.

It is crucial to take into account the historical and cultural context of the group in question [14]. The group may have long-standing traditions of using laughter as a form of communication and emotional expression. Additionally, the group may have a strong sense of communal identity and shared history, which can explain why laughter has been adopted as a primary form of interaction.

Furthermore, more frequent use of laughter as a form of interaction can be seen as reflecting a positive outlook on life. Laughter is often regarded as an expression of joy and pleasure, which can be interpreted as a sign of the group's positive attitude [15]. It may also indicate the group's willingness to adopt a more lighthearted approach to life and to use humor as a means of emotional expression.

On the other hand, it is important to consider the ethical implications of the group's decreased use of smiles as a form of kinesics. A smile is often seen as a sign of politeness and is commonly used to express warmth and acceptance. By reducing the use of smiles, the group may be interpreted as intentionally creating distance from others and demonstrating a more serious approach to life. This could be perceived as a rejection of values such as politeness, warmth, and acceptance, which may be regarded as unethical.

Conclusion

The present study shows that ethical norms in British and Karakalpak linguocultures are subjectively and systematically reflected by means of linguokinemes (handshakes, physical contact, gaze and facial expressions). These results show the limited and contextual nature of tactile interaction in British culture, as opposed to the increased tolerance toward haptic communication in Karakalpak context, whereas gaze serves as a mostly negative moral indicator in both nations. The

facial signals of laughter and smile show specific cultural variations, with historical shifts representing sociocultural shifts in emotional expression and attitudes about them. These findings indoor nonverbal behaviorbring out the significance of contextual interpretation in understanding ethical communication and reducing lack of understanding in nonverbal behaviors across cultures. Future work might apply diachronic and cross-cultural investigation utilizing larger textual corpora to improve our models of ethical kinesic behavior across time and human cultures.

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