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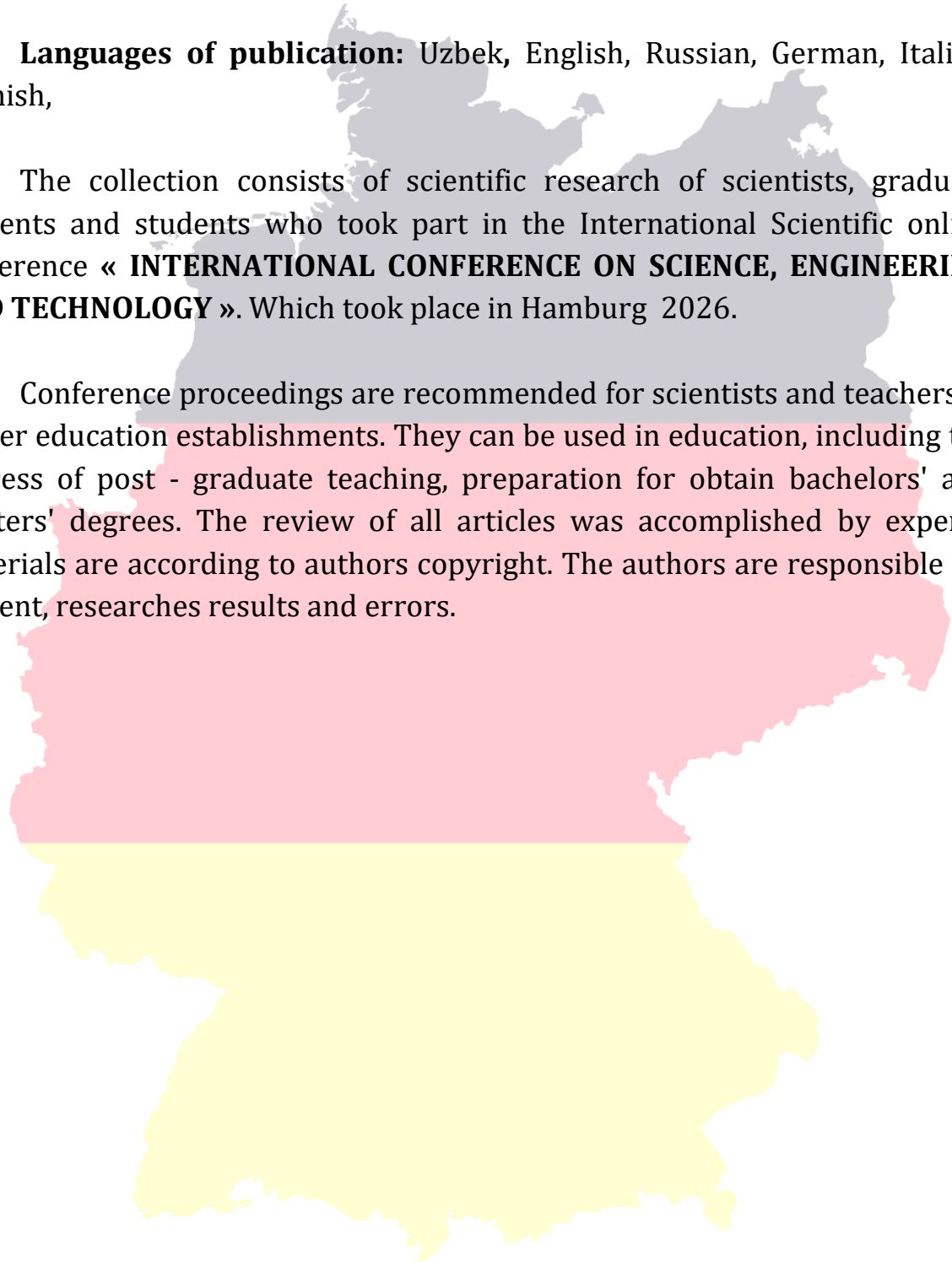


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## THE ROLE OF SPEECH IN SOCIETY

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**Abstract:** This article examines the multifaceted role of speech in society from linguistic, sociological, psychological, educational, and cultural perspectives. Special attention is devoted to the functions of speech in interpersonal communication, social integration, identity formation, public discourse, technological development, and intercultural relations.

**Keywords:** speech, society, communication, language, verbal interaction, culture, sociolinguistics, public discourse, interpersonal communication, social identity.

Speech is a defining characteristic of human civilization. Unlike other forms of communication observed in the animal world, human speech possesses extraordinary complexity, symbolic structure, creativity, and adaptability. Through speech, people establish relationships, organize communities, preserve traditions, and transfer knowledge from one generation to another.

Without speech, collective cooperation and organized social life would be impossible. Consequently, speech represents not merely a linguistic phenomenon but also a social, psychological, cultural, and cognitive process.

In contemporary society, the importance of speech has increased significantly due to globalization, digital communication, and technological progress. Social media platforms, international communication, and online education have transformed traditional speech practices and introduced new communicative norms. Therefore, investigating the role of speech in society remains an actual and interdisciplinary issue.

Speech is commonly defined as the practical realization of language in the process of communication. While language is a system of symbols and grammatical rules, speech represents the active use of that system by individuals in concrete communicative situations.

Linguists distinguish between language competence and speech performance. Language competence refers to knowledge of linguistic rules, whereas speech performance involves the practical application of those rules during communication. Speech can be oral or written, formal or informal, monologic or dialogic.

Speech performs several important functions:

1. **Communicative function** – transmitting information.



2. **Expressive function** – expressing emotions and attitudes.
3. **Cognitive function** – organizing thought and knowledge.
4. **Social function** – maintaining interpersonal relationships.
5. **Cultural function** – preserving traditions and cultural values.

The complexity of speech demonstrates the intellectual and social nature of humanity. Human speech is shaped not only by grammatical rules but also by social norms, cultural contexts, psychological states, and communicative goals.

In interpersonal communication, speech helps individuals build friendships, family relationships, and professional connections. Effective speech contributes to trust, empathy, cooperation, and emotional intimacy. In institutional settings such as schools, universities, courts, hospitals, and workplaces, speech functions as an organizational tool. Teachers educate students through speech, lawyers defend legal positions through speech, and political leaders influence citizens through speeches and debates.

Mass communication through television, radio, newspapers, and digital media demonstrates the enormous social power of speech. Public speeches can unite nations, inspire social movements, or provoke conflicts. Historical examples show that influential orators often shape political and social transformations. Therefore, speech acts as the foundation of social interaction and collective human activity.

Speech plays a crucial role in psychological development and mental functioning. Psychologists emphasize that speech is closely connected with thought, memory, perception, and consciousness.

According to psychological theories, especially those developed by Lev Vygotsky, speech is essential for cognitive development. Children acquire knowledge and social norms through verbal interaction with adults. Internal speech later becomes a mechanism for self-regulation and thinking.

Speech contributes to psychological processes in several ways:

- development of logical thinking;
- formation of self-awareness;
- emotional expression;
- social adaptation;
- problem-solving abilities.

People often use speech to manage emotions, explain experiences, and seek psychological support. Communication reduces loneliness and strengthens emotional stability.

Furthermore, speech disorders can negatively affect self-confidence, social participation, and educational achievement. Consequently, society must support speech development through education, therapy, and inclusive communication practices.

The relationship between speech and psychology demonstrates that communication is not merely informational but also deeply emotional and cognitive. Speech serves as a carrier of culture. Every language reflects the traditions, worldview, values,



customs, and historical experiences of a particular society. Through speech, cultural knowledge is transmitted across generations.

Folklore, literature, proverbs, myths, songs, and oral traditions preserve collective memory and national identity. Speech therefore functions as a mechanism of cultural continuity.

Different societies possess distinct communicative styles. Cultural norms influence:

- politeness strategies;
- conversational behavior;
- gestures and intonation;
- forms of address;
- attitudes toward silence and directness.

For example, some cultures value indirect speech and politeness, while others prioritize directness and efficiency. Misunderstandings may occur when communicative norms differ across cultures.

Globalization has intensified intercultural communication. As people interact internationally, multilingualism and intercultural competence become increasingly important. Speech thus becomes a bridge between cultures and civilizations.

Speech occupies a central position in human society. It functions not only as a means of communication but also as a mechanism of social organization, cultural preservation, psychological development, education, and political influence.

The role of speech extends across all spheres of human activity. Through speech, individuals express thoughts and emotions, establish relationships, preserve traditions, construct identities, and participate in collective social life. Modern technological transformations continue to reshape communicative practices, creating both opportunities and challenges. Despite these changes, the fundamental social importance of speech remains unchanged.

Understanding the role of speech in society is essential for improving education, intercultural communication, social integration, and ethical public discourse. Future research should continue investigating the interaction between speech, technology, culture, and human cognition in the rapidly evolving global environment.

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