**MIRZO ULUG'BEK NOMIDAGI
O'ZBEKISTON MILLIY UNIVERSITETI
JIZZAX FILIALI**

KOMPYUTER ILMLARI VA MUHANDISLIK TEXNOLOGIYALARI

XALQARO ILMIY-TEXNIK ANJUMAN MATERIALLARI TO'PLAMI

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Xalqaro miqyosidagi ilmiy-texnik anjuman materiallarida zamonaviy kompyuter ilmlari va muhandislik texnologiyalari sohasidagi innovatsion tadqiqotlar aks etgan.

Globallashuv sharoitida davlatimizni yanada barqaror va jadal sur'atlar bilan rivojlantirish bo'yicha amalga oshirilayotgan islohotlar samarasini yaxshilash sohasidagi ilmiy-tadqiqot ishlariga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. Zero iqtisodiyotning, ijtimoiy sohalarni qamrab olgan modernizatsiya jarayonlari, hayotning barcha sohalarini liberallashtirishni talab qilmoqda.

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WHEN SILENCE SPEAKS: PRAGMATIC ROLES OF PAUSES AND HESITATIONS IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE (ENGLISH AND UZBEK PERSPECTIVES)

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Annotation: Following the general tradition of political discourse studies, this article explores the extralinguistic dimension of silence and hesitation in English and Uzbek political discourse. It examines their pragmatic roles, showing how pauses and hesitations may appear spontaneously or be used strategically in the way of turning silence from a gap in speech into a powerful rhetorical voice in political communication. The study demonstrates silence as a deliberate resource of persuasion within political rhetoric.

Keywords: Political Rhetoric, Discourse Analysis, Silence, Pauses, Hesitation, Contrastive Linguistics, Extralinguistic Paradigm.

Introduction

Political discourse has often been analysed through lexical and stylistic devices, while silence and hesitation remain comparatively neglected. Yet these extralinguistic paradigms influence interpretation by structuring rhythm, signalling emphasis, and shaping interaction. Pauses may dramatise a message, while hesitation can mitigate directness or delay commitment. In English traditions, silence often creates rhetorical impact, whereas in Uzbek settings it generally reflects measured delivery and restraint. This study investigates how silence and hesitation function as pragmatic resources, examining their spontaneous and strategic roles in political communication across the two languages.

Methods

The corpus for this study consists of selected political speeches and debates delivered in English and Uzbek between 2010 and 2025. Materials were drawn from official parliamentary records, televised debates, and media archives to ensure both formal and spontaneous discourse. Sampling was guided by relevance, representativeness, and accessibility, with a balance maintained between the two languages to enable contrastive observation.

All recordings were transcribed following conventions adapted from Conversation Analysis. Pauses were annotated by length (short, medium, extended), while hesitations such as fillers, repetitions, and self-corrections were marked consistently. This system enabled the identification of silence not merely as absence but as a measurable pragmatic resource.

Analytic procedures combined insights from pragmatics and conversation analysis. Instances of silence and hesitation were coded functionally into categories such as emphasis, mitigation, floor-holding, and strategic avoidance. The framework was informed by prior studies highlighting the rhetorical role of silence in political discourse. Coding was performed manually, with iterative refinement to account for

contextual variation across both linguistic traditions.

As the study relies exclusively on publicly available political discourse, no ethical concerns regarding privacy arise. However, careful attention was paid to accurate representation of speakers' voices and contexts to preserve authenticity.

Results

The analysis of D.Trump's Joint Address to Congress highlights the complex interplay between silence, hesitation, and persuasion in English political discourse. D.Trump's delivery shows recurrent use of mid-sentence pauses, often placed before evaluative statements or key policy claims. These moments, far from being accidental, create heightened anticipation and dramatize the message, reinforcing Atkinson's view that pauses function as "applause cues" in political rhetoric.

Hesitations in D.Trump's speech also carry pragmatic weight. Repetitions such as "we will – we will succeed" or elongated fillers serve dual purposes: they buy time for cognitive planning while simultaneously projecting emotional authenticity. Clayman observes that hesitations can enhance a speaker's image of spontaneity, and Trump's discourse provides clear evidence of this. Instead of undermining credibility, these features align him with the audience, portraying him as engaged and "thinking aloud."

Strategic silence further synchronizes speaker and audience. Heritage and Greatbatch note that well-timed pauses create a conversational rhythm, leaving space for applause or vocal affirmation. In Trump's case, these silences consolidate authority by transforming audience reaction into a co-constructed element of the speech. Thus, silence and hesitation emerge not as weaknesses but as calibrated resources of political performance, strengthening the persuasive force of English political communication.

In Uzbek political discourse, pauses and hesitations take on a noticeably different pragmatic load compared to their English counterparts. Whereas English rhetoric often frames silence as a dramatic cue for emphasis or audience interaction, Uzbek traditions tend to employ pauses as markers of measured thought, respect, and cautious delivery. This generally reflects a communicative preference for restraint, where silence maintains dignity and signals careful consideration rather than dramatic tension.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's speech at the Abu-Dhabi Sustainable Development Week shows how pauses and hesitations play a distinctive role in Uzbek political discourse. He often pauses right after formal greetings such as "Hurmatli anjuman ishtirokchilari". These moments of silence are not simply for breathing; they signal a shift in topic, add weight to his words, and strengthen the ceremonial character of his delivery. Hesitations are less frequent, but when they appear in repetitions or in brief delays before outlining major initiatives, they convey careful thought and deliberate planning. Together, these features reflect a style of communication that values composure, respect, and strategic restraint.

Discussion

The findings reveal that pauses and hesitations in political discourse operate as purposeful pragmatic tools. Within the framework of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson's turn-taking system, silence may indicate a natural transition point or be intentionally

prolonged as a means of retaining the floor. In English political oratory, most notably in Trump's speeches pauses often function as prosodic cues that emphasise key arguments, amplify audience attention, and spotlight ideological priorities. In contrast, Uzbek political communication reflects principles outlined in Brown and Levinson's politeness theory, where deliberate pacing and occasional hesitation enhance positive facework by conveying respectfulness, caution, and controlled authority. Taken together, the data suggest that silence fulfils several pragmatic roles: it dramatizes messages, softens delivery, structures interaction, and constructs speaker identity. Crucially, the variation observed between English and Uzbek discourse highlights that silence is not merely the absence of speech but a culturally anchored semiotic resource central to political performance. This reinforces a wider perspective in discourse pragmatics that extralinguistic paradigms such as pauses and hesitations are indispensable to the persuasive impact of political rhetoric.

Conclusion

This study shows that silence and hesitation are not incidental breaks but traditionally shaped strategies in political discourse. English rhetoric employs them for emphasis and audience alignment, while Uzbek traditions frame them as the switch of the speech concentration, markers of respect and composure. Their contrastive functions highlight silence as a semiotic resource, bridging performance and persuasion, and affirm its significance within the broader field of pragmatic and discourse-analytic inquiry.

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