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MODERN RUSSIAN SPEECH ETIQUETTE: TRENDS AND TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract. The article examines the key features and development trends of modern Russian speech etiquette. It analyzes the factors influencing the transformation of etiquette norms, including globalization, the digitalization of communication, and social changes. Particular attention is paid to the dynamics of using the address forms "ty" (informal 'you') and "vy" (formal 'you'), changes in the formulas for greetings, farewells, gratitude, and apologies, as well as the specifics of etiquette in the online environment and business communication. The conclusion highlights the increasing variability and situational dependence of modern etiquette norms, emphasizing the importance of communicative competence for successful social interaction.

Keywords: speech etiquette, Russian language, communicative norms, politeness, forms of address, ty/vy, digitalization, online communication, sociolinguistics, pragmatics.

Introduction

Speech etiquette is a system of nationally specific, stereotypical, stable formulas of communication, adopted and prescribed by society for establishing, maintaining, and breaking contact between interlocutors in a chosen tone. It is an integral part of culture and a crucial tool for social interaction, reflecting social relationships, values, and norms of behavior.

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The relevance of studying modern Russian speech etiquette stems from its dynamic nature and susceptibility to significant transformations in a changing world. Globalization processes, the rapid development of digital technologies, and the transformation of social structures significantly impact the communicative practices of Russian speakers. A mixing of styles, democratization of communication, the emergence of new etiquette forms, and the modification of traditional ones are observed. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main trends and features of modern Russian speech etiquette, identify the factors driving its changes, and characterize the specifics of its functioning in various communicative spheres.

Main Body

Factors of Transformation of Russian Speech Etiquette. The current state of Russian speech etiquette is characterized by significant dynamism, driven by a complex of interconnected factors. These factors do not operate in isolation but intertwine, creating a complex and fluid picture of communicative norms.

Socio-cultural Changes: The democratization of public life, the blurring of strict social hierarchies, and the increased value placed on individuality directly influence speech practices. In some spheres (especially in IT, media, creative industries), there is a trend towards a quicker shift to "ty" (the informal 'you') between colleagues, even those of different statuses, something that was previously less acceptable. Formal address using first name and patronymic may be perceived in such environments as excessively formal or creating distance.

In the service sector, one can encounter both examples of preserved marked politeness (e.g., "Mogu I i ya Vam pomoch'?" - 'May I help you?') and attempts to establish more 'friendly' contact, sometimes bordering on over-familiarity (e.g., comparing the more formal "Cht o- ni bud' eshche dl ya Vas?" with the slightly less formal "Vam eshche cht o- ni bud'?" - both meaning 'Anything else for you?'). Changes in gender roles also have an impact:

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for example, traditional compliments or gallant formulas can be perceived ambiguously depending on the context and the participants involved.

The decrease in formality is not universal or absolute. Rather, it reflects a shifting balance between the desire for social equality/closeness and the need to maintain social distance. The liberalization of norms leads to greater variability: what is acceptable in one social group or situation may be inappropriate in another. This increases the demands on the speaker's communicative competence, their ability to 'read' the context.

Globalization and the influence of other languages: Active international contacts and the dominance of the English language globally lead to the borrowing not only of vocabulary but also of communicative models.

Lexical borrowings in etiquette situations: Khay (Hi), Bay (Bye), Ckey/ Ck (Okay), Sorri (Sorry) have become firmly established in informal speech, especially among young people. Respekt is used as an expression of approval or gratitude.

Calqued constructions (Loan translations): The wish "Khor oshego dnya!" (literally "Good day!") has become almost universal in the service industry and when saying goodbye, serving as an analogue to "Have a nice day!". The phrase "Mbgu [ya] vam pomoch'?" (Can [I] help you?) in shops and service settings is also considered a reflection of the English model "Can/May I help you?».

In business correspondence and presentations, forms of address like "Kollegi!" (Colleagues!) or "Druz'ya!" (Friends!) are sometimes encountered where more formal constructions would previously have been used; this may be linked to the influence of the less formal style of Western corporate communications.

Borrowings are often attractive due to their brevity, expressiveness, or universality (like "Ok"). Calqued models can fill gaps (e.g., providing a universal friendly farewell) or be perceived as more "modern" or "customer-oriented". However, not all borrowings and calques fit organically into the system of the

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Russian language and etiquette; they can sometimes sound foreign or violate stylistic norms.

Digitalization of Communication: The widespread use of the internet, social networks, and messengers has created a distinct communicative environment with its own rules («netiquette").

Trend towards speech compression: Shortening of politeness formulas (e.g., "спс" [sps] instead of "спасибо" [spasibo - thank you], "пжлст" [pzhlst] instead of "пожалуйста" [pozhaluysta - please], "нзч" [nzch] instead of "не за что" [ne za chto - you're welcome]), and the use of abbreviations (e.g., "ЛС" [LS] — "личные сообщения" [lichnyye soobshcheniya - private messages]).

Active use of non-verbal signs: Emojis and stickers compensate for the lack of intonation, facial expressions, and gestures, helping to express emotions, soften statements, or indicate irony or humor (e.g., using \Box or \Box after a potentially critical remark).

Blurring of formality boundaries: In work chats or email correspondence, less formal greetings may be used ("Всем привет" [Vsem privet - Hi everyone], "Добрый день" [Dobryy den' - Good day] instead of "Уважаемый Иван Иванович!" [Uvazhayemyy Ivan Ivanovich! - Dear Ivan Ivanovich!]), and sometimes even a shift to the informal "ty" [you] address form, if this is accepted within the corporate culture.

Priority of speed: In fast-paced messenger dialogues, greetings are often omitted when resuming a conversation during the same day. The expectation of a quick response becomes part of the etiquette, and a lack thereof can be perceived as impoliteness or being ignored.

The digital environment optimizes communication for its conditions: speed, brevity, and visualization. Emojis become an important pragmatic tool, helping to avoid misunderstandings and maintain social contact. However, this informality and speed can lead to conflicts when digital habits are transferred to offline communication or when interacting with people who adhere to more traditional

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norms. "Netiquette" is still evolving, and its rules are not always obvious to all users.

Generational Change: Differences in life experience, socialization conditions, and value orientations among representatives of different generations are inevitably reflected in their communicative behavior and etiquette preferences.

Younger generations often have a more liberal attitude towards switching to the informal 'ty' form of address, perceiving it as a way to establish contact, while the older generation may view too rapid a shift as over-familiarity or disrespect.

The use of slang and specific youth greetings/farewells (e.g., 'Zdarova' [casual 'hello'], 'Chyo kak?' [casual 'what's up?'], 'Davai' [casual 'bye']) may be unacceptable when communicating with elders or in formal situations.

Different attitudes towards digital etiquette exist: for example, the older generation might prefer a phone call in situations where younger people would opt for a text message, considering an unannounced call an invasion of personal space.

Each generation absorbs the etiquette norms of its era. Today's youth grows up amidst high communicative freedom, digitalization, and globalization, which shapes their habits. The older generation relies on the more stable and formalized norms of the past. These differences can lead to communication breakdowns and misunderstandings if participants do not consider each other's generational characteristics and fail to show flexibility.

Dynamics of Using the Pronouns "ty" and «Vy». The choice of address form – "ty" (informal 'you') or "Vy" (formal/plural 'you') – remains one of the most complex, indicative, and socially marked areas of Russian speech etiquette. This is not merely a grammatical choice but a reflection of social relationships, degree of familiarity, differences in age and status, as well as the overall tone of communication. In modern Russian, particularly noticeable and sometimes contradictory trends are observed in this area:

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On the one hand, the traditional system of distribution persists and remains fundamental:

"Vy" is used as the polite, formal, and/or distant form of address. It is the norm when communicating with:

Strangers of any age (on the street, in a store, on transport: Prostite, Vy ne podskazhete, kotoryy chas? – Excuse me, could you tell me the time?; Devushka, vzves'te, pozhaluysta, vot eti yabloki – Miss, could you please weigh these apples?).

People older in age or higher in social status (a professor, a boss, a doctor: *Professor, mogu ya zadat' Vam vopros?* – Professor, may I ask you a question?; *Ivan Petrovich, Vy menya vyzyvali?* – Ivan Petrovich, did you call for me?).

In official settings (at meetings, conferences, when addressing authorities: *Uvazhaemye kollegi, pozvol'te Vam predstavit'...* – Esteemed colleagues, allow me to introduce to you...). Using "Vy" in these contexts emphasizes respect, adherence to social distance, and the formality of the situation. Violating this norm (switching to "ty" without mutual agreement) is perceived as excessive familiarity, disrespect, or even aggression (*Molodoy chelovek, pochemu Vy mne «tykaete»?* – Young man, why are you using "ty" with me? / why are you addressing me so informally?).

"Ty" is used as the informal, close, familiar form of address. It is standard when communicating with:

Close friends and relatives (*Mam*, ty skoro? – Mom, will you be long?; Sergey, privet! Kak ty? – Sergey, hi! How are you?).

Children and teenagers (used by adults).

Well-acquainted colleagues of similar age and status, especially in informal settings (*Ol'*, *poydem na obed?*— Olya, shall we go for lunch?). The "ty" form signals short social distance, emotional closeness, equality (or the speaker's seniority relative to a child), and informality of communication.

On the other hand, a clear and progressive expansion of the use of "ty" is observed:

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Reasons: This trend is fueled by general processes of democratization in public life (a tendency to reduce social hierarchy), the influence of Western (especially English-speaking) communication models, which lack the grammatical "ty"/"Vy" distinction, and a general informalization of communication in certain spheres.

Contexts of Manifestation:

Youth environment: Among young people, especially students, "ty"-communication is often established almost automatically upon meeting, as a sign of belonging to the same group and rejecting formalities.

Professional communities: In some fields (IT, media, advertising, creative professions), it is common to quickly switch to "ty" regardless of age or position to create an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork. Here, phrases like *Slushay, posmotri kod* (Listen, check the code) or *Ty proveril maket?* (Did you check the layout?) are the norm. In more conservative fields (public administration, medicine, law), the "Vy" form maintains its dominant position.

Internet communication: On social networks, forums, and in comments, the "ty" form is often used by default, even when addressing strangers (*Avtor, ty molodets!* – Author, you're great!; *A ty sam proboval tak sdelat'?* – And did you try doing it like that yourself?). This is linked to the illusion of anonymity, the informal nature of most platforms, and the speed of message exchange.

Initiating the Switch: The suggestion to switch to "ty" (*Mozhet, pereydem na* "ty"? – Maybe we switch to "ty"?; *Davay na* "ty" – Let's use "ty") is becoming more frequent and may originate not only from the older person or person of higher status (as strict tradition dictated), but also between peers or colleagues almost immediately after meeting.

The expansion of the "ty" zone indicates a shift towards greater informality and a desire to reduce psychological distance. However, this trend is not universal and strongly depends on the specific community and situation.

Risks and Communication Failures:

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Despite liberalization, a spontaneous, unfounded, or unilateral switch to "ty" [informal "you"] remains one of the common causes of communication failures. This can be perceived as:

Disrespect: Especially when addressing elders or superiors.

Over-familiarity: In situations requiring formality.

Boundary violation: An attempt to reduce distance too quickly. A student addressing an instructor with "ty" during an exam without prior agreement risks not only receiving a reprimand but also creating a negative impression.

The online environment: Exacerbates the problem. What is acceptable in comments under an entertainment post can be completely inappropriate when addressing an expert in a professional group or in private correspondence with someone you don't know well. The absence of non-verbal cues (intonation, facial expressions) hinders the correct interpretation of the interlocutor's intentions. Pseudonymity often reduces users' self-control.

The successful choice between "ty" and "vy" [formal/plural "you"] depends on the speaker's ability to subtly sense the context, the social roles of the interlocutors, and the unwritten rules of the specific communicative situation. Automatically applying the rules of one sphere (e.g., an internet forum) to another (e.g., business correspondence) often leads to errors.

Conclusion for the section: The dynamics of using "ty" and "vy" reflect the general instability and transitional state of modern communicative norms in Russia. The ability to navigate this complex system is an important indicator of a native speaker's sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.

Changes in Standard Etiquette Formulas. Modern speech practice demonstrates not only the preservation of traditional formulas but also their active modification, as well as the emergence of new variants, especially under the influence of the digital environment and the general trend towards the democratization of communication.

Greetings/Farewells:

Traditional Forms:

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Zdr avst vuyt e (Hello) (neutral-polite, universal).

Dobry den' / ut ro/vecher (Good day/morning/evening) (neutral-polite, tied to the time of day).

Do svi dani ya (Goodbye) (neutral-polite).

Stylistically Lowered/Informal:

Pri vet (Hi/Hello) (the main informal formula).

Zdor ovo (Howdy/Hey) (familiar, more common among men).

Zdr ast e (Hiya/Lo) (colloquial shortening of Zdr avst vuyt e, can carry a shade of familiarity or irony).

Poka (Bye) (the main informal farewell).

Uvi di msya (See you), Schast I i vo (Lit. "Happily", used like "All the best"/"Take care"), Vsego dobr ogo/ khor oshego (All the best).

Online/Youth/Borrowed:

Vsem pri vet (Hi everyone/Hello everyone) (common opening in group chats, videos).

Khai (from Eng. Hi).

Ku (from the film "Kin-dza-dza", became an internet meme, ultra-informal).

Bai (from Eng. Bye).

Chao (from Ital. Ciao).

The formula **Do** svyazi (Lit. "Until contact") is often used in business or semi-formal correspondence, indicating an expectation of future contact.

The choice of greeting/farewell clearly marks social distance, degree of acquaintance, and the formality of the situation. Using Privet instead of Zdr avst vuyt e when addressing a stranger or an older person is a serious breach of etiquette. In online communication, especially asynchronous (forums, comments), farewell formulas are often omitted, as the communicative act lacks a clear conclusion. The emergence of Anglicisms (Khai, Bai) and specific

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internet forms (Ku) testifies to the influence of globalization and digital culture, especially among youth.

Gratitude:

Standard/Neutral:

Spasi bo (Thank you).

Bl agodar yu vas/t ebya (I thank you - formal 'vas'/informal 'tebya'). The form Bl agodar yu is perceived as somewhat more bookish or polite than Spasi bo.

Expressive:

Bol'shoe/Ogromnoe spasibo (Big/Huge thanks).

Ochen' vam't ebe bl agodar en(na) (I am very grateful to you - formal/informal, masculine/feminine).

Spasi bo ot vsey dushi (Thanks from the bottom of my heart).

Informal/Colloquial:

Spasi bochki (often with a diminutive, playful tone).

Pasi b(o) (colloquial shortening).

Sps (short form in online chats).

Senks (from Eng. Thanks, informal).

Short forms like SpS are driven by the desire to save effort and time in fast-paced online correspondence (messengers, social networks). However, using them outside of a close circle of acquaintances can be perceived as insufficiently polite or dismissive. Expressive forms (Ogromoe spasi bo!) are used to emphasize the significance of the service or the sincerity of feelings, which is especially important given the lack of non-verbal cues in written online communication. The choice of gratitude formula depends on the extent of the service rendered, the status of the interlocutor, and the communication channel.

Apologies:

Standard/Neutral:

I zvi ni te (pozhal uysta) (Excuse me/Sorry (please)).

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Prostite (pozhal uysta) (Forgive me/Sorry (please)). These are often accompanied by specifying the reason: I zvi nite za bespokoyst vo (Sorry for the trouble), Prostite za opozdanie (Sorry for being late).

The form Proshu proshcheni ya (I ask for forgiveness) sounds more official or emphatically polite.

Formal/Bookish:

Prinosu svoi izvineniya (I offer my apologies).

Colloquial/Informal:

Vi novat (a) (My fault / (I am) guilty - masculine/feminine).

I zvi nyayus' (widespread, but considered stylistically and grammatically debatable, as the reflexive form can be interpreted as "I excuse myself»).

Sorri (from Eng. Sorry).

sor yan (slang derivative of Sorry).

The choice of apology formula directly depends on the seriousness of the offense and the social relationship between the communicators. Using Sor r i or sor yan is appropriate only for minor slip-ups in communication between friends, primarily in the online environment. Such forms are unacceptable in official or formal situations. The form I zvi nyayus', despite being debatable, is actively used in casual spoken language. The absence of an apology in a situation where one is expected is considered a rude breach of etiquette.

Requests:

Politeness Markers: Пожалуйста (Please - universal), Будьте добры/любезны (Be so kind / Would you be so kind - more formal), Если вас не затруднит (If it's no trouble / If you wouldn't mind), Не могли бы вы... (Could you...), Разрешите/Позвольте... (May I... / Allow me... - often for permissions or speaker actions).

Mitigation Strategies: Using questions (*Вы не подскажете...?* - Could you tell me...? instead of *Подскажите* - Tell me...), subjunctive/conditional

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mood (*Хотелось бы узнать*... - I would like to know... instead of *Я хочу узнать* - I want to know...), diminutive forms or words (*минуточку* - just a moment, *немного* - a little bit).

Direct forms (often online): Imperatives without politeness markers (Скиньте файл - Send the file, Дайте ссылку - Give the link, Ответьте срочно - Reply urgently). Sometimes softened with a question mark (Когда встреча? - When's the meeting?, Есть отчет? - Is the report ready?).

There is still a general tendency to use politeness markers and mitigation strategies to minimize face-threatening acts (FTAs) towards the addressee when formulating requests. However, in the fast pace of modern communication, especially in work chats or informal correspondence, there is a noticeable trend towards greater directness and brevity. Direct imperative forms without 'please' or other softeners can be perceived as an order or a sign of disrespect if used outside the circle of close friends or in a situation of clear hierarchy (boss -> subordinate, and even then not always). The balance between efficiency (speed and clarity) and politeness is a key challenge in modern practices of formulating requests.

Specifics of Etiquette in Different Spheres. Speech etiquette norms are not universal or rigid; they manifest differently depending on the sphere of communication, social context, communication channel used, and the relationship between participants. Let's consider two key spheres: business and online communication.

Business Communication. The business sphere traditionally maintains a higher degree of formality compared to everyday life. This is due to the need to maintain professional distance, emphasize status-role relationships, ensure the accuracy and unambiguity of information transfer, and minimize communicative risks in situations often associated with responsibility and obligations.

Forms of Address: Strict adherence to 'Vy' communication (the formal 'you') is the basic norm when interacting with partners, clients, management, and often colleagues, especially in the initial stages of acquaintance or in

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hierarchically structured organizations (e.g., government institutions, large traditional corporations). Using full names and patronymics (e.g., *Uvazhayemy Ivan Petrovich!* - Dear Ivan Petrovich!, *Zdravstvuyte, Anna Viktorovna* - Hello, Anna Viktorovna) remains the standard in official correspondence and when addressing older people or those of high status. Such formality emphasizes respect for the addressee's status and personality, helps avoid familiarity, and maintains professional boundaries.

Written Communication: Special attention is paid to correctness in business letters and email. Standard etiquette frameworks are used: polite address (*Uvazhayemy gospodin Ivanov!* - Dear Mr. Ivanov!, *Uvazhayemyie kollegi!* - Dear Colleagues!), a clear statement of the letter's purpose, expression of readiness for cooperation, standard closing formulas (*S uvazheniyem*,... - Sincerely / With respect,..., *S nailuchshimi pozhelaniyami*,... - Best regards / With best wishes,...). Written documentation requires greater precision and formality, as support from non-verbal signals is absent, and the document may have legal force or serve as official confirmation.

Penetration of **Informality:** However, global trends towards democratization and the influence of digital technologies lead to elements of informality penetrating the business sphere as well, especially in internal communication via corporate messengers (Slack, Telegram, Teams, etc.). Here, addressing by first name is more common (Maria, dobry den! - Maria, good day!, Ivan, posmotri dokument - Ivan, look at the document), more concise formulations are permissible, sometimes including the use of professional slang or appropriate emojis to express reactions (Otlichno! \square - Excellent! \square , Prinyato \square -Accepted/Understood

). This speeds up the exchange of information on operational issues, contributes to building team spirit, and reduces communication barriers within the team. The degree of permissible informality strongly depends on the corporate culture: in IT companies or startups, 'ty' communication (the informal 'you') is often accepted among all employees regardless of position, whereas in the banking or legal sectors, stricter etiquette is maintained.

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Misunderstanding or violating the unspoken rules of corporate etiquette can lead to conflicts or misunderstandings.

Online Communication. The online environment has generated a specific set of rules and norms – "netiquette" (network etiquette) – which is characterized by significant flexibility and variability.

Freedom in Choosing Forms of Address: Unlike offline communication, the choice between "ty" (informal 'you') and "vy" (formal 'you') is less regulated. On many platforms (forums, game chats, some social networks), using the informal "ty" is accepted by default, regardless of the interlocutor's age or offline status. However, on professional networks (LinkedIn), in official groups, or when addressing administrators/moderators, it is customary to use the formal "vy". Unexpectedly using "vy" where "ty" is the norm can be perceived as a sign of coldness or arrogance, and vice versa. Anonymity or pseudonymity, as well as a focus on common interests rather than social statuses, contribute to the erosion of formal barriers.

Abbreviations and Acronyms: The fast pace of communication and the desire to save effort lead to the widespread use of abbreviations and acronyms, such as I MHO (In My Humble Opinion) or PM (Private Message), alongside Russian-specific ones like $C\Pi C$ (sps - thanks) or $\Pi M\Pi$ (pzh - please). Abbreviations speed up communication but may be incomprehensible to new community members or in intergenerational communication. Their appropriateness strongly depends on the platform and the social circle.

Non-verbal Means: Emojis, stickers, and GIFs are actively used to compensate for the lack of intonation, facial expressions, and gestures. They help convey emotions, irony, sarcasm, or soften criticism or the categorical nature of a statement (e.g., "Not sure that's a good idea □", "Great job! □"). Parentheses like) or))) are used to denote a smile or laughter. These tools enrich communication, but their interpretation is not always unambiguous and may depend on the cultural and personal background of the interlocutors. Excessive

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use can be perceived as infantilism or lack of seriousness, especially in semiformal contexts.

Tone Interpretation: The absence of non-verbal signals makes the adequate interpretation of a message's tone a critically important and complex task. A neutral message might be perceived as cold or hostile. Irony or a joke may not be recognized or may be misunderstood. This requires communicators to be more attentive to wording and to actively use means to clarify the tone (such as emojis or explicit indicators: "(joke)", «(sarcasm)").

Specific Etiquette Problems:

Flaming: Personal attacks, aggressive outbursts, insults in response to someone else's opinion (e.g., "Do you even realize what you're writing?! Utter nonsense!"). Violates basic principles of politeness.

Trolling: Deliberate provocations aimed at evoking negative reactions, upsetting interlocutors, or disrupting constructive discussion (e.g., "All your arguments are ridiculous, normal people don't think like that"). Is a destructive communicative strategy.

Privacy Violation: Publishing private correspondence without consent, intrusive adding to groups, excessive use of the "reply all" function in email, spreading confidential information (doxxing). Violates personal boundaries.

Off-topic: Posting messages unrelated to the discussion topic (often irritates participants).

Abuse of CAPS LOCK: Perceived as shouting and aggression.

Thus, a complex dynamic of etiquette norms is observed in both business and online spheres. On the one hand, traditional formal requirements persist (especially in business); on the other hand, adaptation to new technologies and social realities is occurring, leading to greater flexibility, variability, and the emergence of new etiquette challenges. Successful communication in both spheres requires not only knowledge of formal rules but also developed communicative intuition, the ability to read context, and adapt one's speech behavior.

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Conclusion

Modern Russian speech etiquette is undergoing active transformation under the influence of global and local factors, primarily the digitalization of communication and social shifts. A tendency towards greater variability, situational dependence, and democratization of etiquette norms is observed, especially in informal spheres of communication and online. The use of informal and abbreviated formulas is expanding, and a rethinking of the spheres of use for the pronouns "ty" (informal 'you') and "vy" (formal 'you') is occurring.

Despite this liberalization, mastery of speech etiquette norms and the ability to apply them appropriately depending on the situation, the interlocutor's social status, and the communication channel remain key components of an individual's communicative competence. Understanding modern trends and a respectful attitude towards the interlocutor help to avoid communicative failures and foster effective interaction in a multicultural and dynamically developing society. Issues requiring further study include the regional specifics of speech etiquette, its gender aspects in the contemporary context, and the long-term influence of artificial intelligence on communicative norms.

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