

THE ROLE OF PRAGMATIC UNITS IN THE FORMATION OF SPEECH ETIQUETTE IN THE UZBEK LANGUAGE

Abdullayeva Muslimaxon Ubaydulla qizi

Student of Namangan State Pedagogical Institute

E-mail: abdullayevamuslima34@gmail.com

Phone: +998933653217

Abstract: *This article examines the role of pragmatic units in the formation of speech etiquette in the Uzbek language. The purpose of the research is to identify how address forms, apology formulas, gratitude expressions, requests, blessings, wishes, prohibitions, evaluative words and politeness markers participate in regulating interpersonal communication. The study applies descriptive, linguopragmatic, contextual and cultural-interpretive methods. The research material is based on everyday Uzbek speech, examples from speech etiquette practice and theoretical views on pragmatics, speech acts and politeness. The findings show that pragmatic units in Uzbek do not merely transmit information; they organize social distance, express respect, reduce communicative tension, mark age and status relations, and preserve national-cultural norms. In Uzbek communication, units such as “assalomu alaykum”, “marhamat”, “iltimos”, “rahmat”, “kechirasiz”, “aka”, “opa”, “ustoz”, “otaxon” and “onaxon” function as important tools of speech etiquette. The article concludes that pragmatic units are central to the formation of polite, respectful and culturally appropriate communication in Uzbek society.*

Keywords: *pragmatic units, speech etiquette, Uzbek language, politeness, address forms, speech acts, national culture, communication, respect category, linguopragmatics.*

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada o'zbek tilida pragmatik birliklarning nutqiy odobni shakllantirishdagi o'рни tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi murojaat shakllari, uzr so'rash formulalari, minnatdorchilik ifodalari, iltimos birliklari, duo va olqishlar, taqiqlar, baho bildiruvchi so'zlar hamda xushmuomalalik markerlarining shaxslararo muloqotni tartibga solishdagi vazifasini aniqlashdan iborat. Maqolada tavsifiy, lingvopragmatik, kontekstual va milliy-madaniy tahlil metodlaridan foydalanildi. Tadqiqot materiali kundalik o'zbek nutqi, nutqiy odob amaliyotidagi misollar hamda pragmatika, nutq aktlari va xushmuomalalik nazariyasiga oid qarashlarga tayangan holda o'rganildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, o'zbek tilidagi pragmatik birliklar faqat axborot uzatmaydi, balki ijtimoiy masofani belgilaydi, hurmatni ifodalaydi, muloqotdagi keskinlikni yumshatadi, yosh va maqom munosabatlarini ko'rsatadi hamda milliy-madaniy me'yorlarni saqlaydi. Xulosa qilib aytganda, pragmatik birliklar o'zbek jamiyatida odobli va madaniy muloqotni shakllantiruvchi asosiy vositalardan biridir.

Kalit so'zlar: pragmatik birliklar, nutqiy odob, o'zbek tili, xushmuomalalik, murojaat birliklari, nutq aktlari, milliy madaniyat, kommunikatsiya, hurmat kategoriyasi, lingvopragmatika.

Аннотация: В статье анализируется роль прагматических единиц в формировании речевого этикета в узбекском языке. Цель исследования состоит в выявлении функций форм обращения, формул извинения, выражений благодарности, просьбы, благопожеланий, запретов, оценочных слов и маркеров вежливости в регулировании межличностного общения. В работе использованы описательный, лингвопрагматический, контекстуальный и культурно-интерпретационный методы. Материал исследования

основан на повседневной узбекской речи, примерах речевого этикета и теоретических подходах к прагматике, речевым актам и вежливости. Результаты показывают, что прагматические единицы в узбекском языке не только передают информацию, но и организуют социальную дистанцию, выражают уважение, смягчают коммуникативную напряженность, обозначают возрастные и статусные отношения, а также сохраняют национально-культурные нормы. Такие единицы, как “assalom alaykum”, “marhamat”, “iltimos”, “rahmat”, “kechirasiz”, “aka”, “opa”, “ustoz”, “otaxon” и “onaxon”, выступают важными средствами речевого этикета.

Ключевые слова: прагматические единицы, речевой этикет, узбекский язык, вежливость, формы обращения, речевые акты, национальная культура, коммуникация, категория уважения, лингвопрагматика.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a system of grammatical signs, but also a social and cultural mechanism that regulates human relations. Every act of communication includes not only what is said, but also how, why, to whom and under what social conditions it is said. For this reason, pragmatic units are of particular importance in the study of speech etiquette. They reveal the speaker's attitude toward the listener, the degree of politeness, the level of social distance, the emotional state of the participants and the cultural norms that guide communication.

In the Uzbek language, speech etiquette has developed on the basis of national values such as respect for elders, kindness to younger people, modesty, hospitality, consideration, restraint and moral responsibility. These values are expressed in everyday speech through various

pragmatic units: greetings, address forms, wishes, blessings, requests, apologies, gratitude formulas, prohibitions, softening devices, honorific words and evaluative expressions. Their use shows that Uzbek communication is strongly connected with social hierarchy, age relations, kinship culture and moral norms.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the growing attention paid in modern linguistics to the functional and communicative nature of language. Traditional grammatical analysis is not sufficient to explain why the same utterance may sound polite in one context and rude in another. For example, the form “sen” may express closeness between friends, but it may also sound disrespectful when addressed to an elder. Similarly, the word “aka” may refer to an elder brother, but in real speech it is often used to show respect to an unrelated man. Thus, pragmatic meaning depends on cultural context and communicative intention.

Speech etiquette in Uzbek is not a collection of isolated polite words. It is a system of culturally accepted communicative behavior. This system teaches speakers how to begin a conversation, how to ask for something without pressure, how to disagree without insulting, how to show gratitude, how to apologize, how to address people of different age and status, and how to end a conversation politely. Pragmatic units are the main linguistic tools through which these actions are performed.

The aim of this article is to analyze the role of pragmatic units in the formation of speech etiquette in the Uzbek language. The tasks of the research are as follows: to classify the main types of pragmatic units used in Uzbek speech etiquette; to identify their communicative and cultural functions; to analyze the relationship between pragmatic units and categories such as respect, age, social distance and politeness; and to

demonstrate their importance in maintaining harmonious interpersonal communication.

The scientific significance of the study lies in the fact that it treats pragmatic units as linguocultural signs that reflect national mentality. The practical significance of the research is related to speech culture, language teaching, intercultural communication, translation and the development of communicative competence among learners of Uzbek. A correct understanding of pragmatic units helps speakers avoid communicative conflicts and use language in a socially appropriate way.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The theoretical basis of the article is formed by works in pragmatics, speech act theory, politeness theory and Uzbek linguopragmatics. In general linguistics, pragmatics is understood as the study of language in relation to users, context and communicative intention. Austin's theory of speech acts demonstrated that utterances do not only describe reality but also perform actions. Searle developed this idea by classifying speech acts such as requests, promises, apologies and directives. These theoretical views are important for understanding pragmatic units as action-oriented elements of speech.

Politeness theory also plays a central role in the analysis of speech etiquette. Brown and Levinson associated politeness with the protection of the speaker's and hearer's "face". Leech considered politeness as a principle that reduces conflict and supports social harmony. These approaches are useful in explaining how Uzbek speakers use indirect requests, respectful address forms, softening expressions and gratitude formulas to preserve good relations in communication.

In Uzbek linguistics, the study of speech culture, pragmalinguistics and the relationship between language and national mentality has been

developed in the works of N. Mahmudov, Sh. Safarov, M. Hakimov, R. Qo'ng'urov, E. Begmatov, Y. Tojiyev and other scholars. Their studies emphasize that speech norms in Uzbek are deeply connected with cultural values and moral principles. In particular, forms of respect, address and politeness are not merely stylistic features; they express the ethical worldview of the people.

The present research applies several methods. The descriptive method is used to identify and describe the main types of pragmatic units in Uzbek. The linguopragmatic method is used to analyze the communicative functions of these units in real speech situations. The contextual method helps to determine how meaning changes depending on the relationship between speaker and listener. The cultural-interpretive method is applied to explain how pragmatic units reflect Uzbek national values and speech etiquette.

The object of the research is pragmatic units in the Uzbek language. The subject of the research is their role in forming speech etiquette. The material includes commonly used units such as “assalomu alaykum”, “va alaykum assalom”, “marhamat”, “iltimos”, “rahmat”, “kechirasiz”, “uzr”, “aka”, “opa”, “ustoz”, “domla”, “otaxon”, “onaxon”, “bolam”, “qizim”, “o'g'lim”, “yaxshi boring”, “baraka toping”, “xudo xohlasa” and other speech etiquette expressions. These units are analyzed according to their communicative purpose and cultural meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that pragmatic units in Uzbek speech etiquette can be grouped according to their communicative functions. The first group consists of greeting and farewell formulas. Expressions such as “assalomu alaykum”, “va alaykum assalom”, “salom”, “xayr”, “yaxshi boring”, “omon bo'ling” and “ko'rishguncha” serve to open and close

interaction politely. In Uzbek culture, greeting is not a simple formal act; it is a sign of respect, recognition and social connection. Failure to greet an elder or a familiar person may be interpreted as indifference or disrespect.

The second group includes address forms. Uzbek speech etiquette uses a rich system of address units: “aka”, “opa”, “uka”, “singlim”, “amaki”, “xola”, “ustoz”, “domla”, “janob”, “xonim”, “otaxon”, “onaxon”, “bolam”, “qizim” and “o‘g‘lim”. These units indicate the speaker’s attitude, the age and status of the listener, the level of closeness and the cultural frame of interaction. One of the distinctive features of Uzbek address culture is the extension of kinship terms to non-relatives. Calling an unrelated older woman “opa” or “xola” and an older man “aka” or “amaki” creates a respectful and warm communicative atmosphere.

The third group consists of request and permission formulas. Units such as “iltimos”, “marhamat”, “mumkinmi”, “ruxsat bersangiz”, “agar imkon bo‘lsa” and “bezovta qilmasam” soften the speaker’s intention and reduce pressure on the listener. In Uzbek speech etiquette, a direct command may be considered rude if the relationship does not permit it. Therefore, requests are often expressed indirectly or accompanied by mitigating expressions. This shows the importance of tact and consideration in Uzbek communication.

The fourth group includes apology and gratitude formulas. “Kechirasiz”, “uzr”, “ming bor uzr”, “rahmat”, “katta rahmat”, “tashakkur” and “minnatdorman” perform important pragmatic functions. Apologies restore social balance after a communicative inconvenience, while gratitude confirms the speaker’s appreciation of the listener’s help or attention. In everyday Uzbek speech, gratitude is often reinforced by blessings such as “baraka toping”, “umringiz uzoq bo‘lsin”

or “xudo rozi bo‘lsin”. This combination of gratitude and blessing reflects the moral and spiritual dimension of Uzbek etiquette.

The fifth group includes blessings, wishes and evaluative formulas. Expressions such as “baraka toping”, “omin”, “yaxshi niyat”, “omadingizni bersin”, “sog‘ bo‘ling”, “yaxshi kunlarga yeting” and “ko‘p yashang” are used to express goodwill and social solidarity. These units have both pragmatic and cultural meanings. They do not only convey positive wishes; they strengthen interpersonal ties and show that communication is guided by benevolence.

The sixth group consists of prohibition and warning forms that are softened by etiquette. Instead of using a harsh command, Uzbek speakers may say “unday qilmang”, “yaxshisi bunday qilsak”, “to‘g‘ri bo‘lmaydi”, “ma‘qul emas”, “ehtiyot bo‘ling” or “mumkin emas”. Such expressions regulate behavior without openly humiliating the listener. This demonstrates that speech etiquette is also a mechanism for preventing conflict.

A particularly important feature of Uzbek pragmatic units is their connection with the category of respect. Respect is expressed not only by lexical items but also by grammatical forms. The opposition between “siz” and “sen” is one of the clearest examples. “Siz” usually marks respect, distance and politeness, whereas “sen” may indicate closeness, equality or superiority depending on context. In some Uzbek families, even close relatives may use “siz” as a sign of moral upbringing and respect. This shows that politeness in Uzbek is not limited to formal situations; it may operate within family and intimate communication as well.

Pragmatic units also help form speech etiquette by teaching speakers how to control emotional expression. Uzbek communication values restraint and indirectness in sensitive situations. Expressions

such as “mayli”, “bo‘lar”, “nasib bo‘lsa”, “xudo xohlasa”, “inshaalloh”, “ko‘ramiz” and “o‘ylab ko‘ramiz” often function as softening devices. They allow speakers to avoid blunt refusal, maintain politeness and reduce possible tension. For example, instead of saying “no” directly, a speaker may say “o‘ylab ko‘raylik” or “imkon bo‘lsa”, which leaves the conversation open and prevents offense.

The results also show that pragmatic units have a didactic function. Through them, younger speakers learn the rules of polite behavior. Children are taught to greet elders, say “rahmat”, use “iltimos”, avoid addressing older people by name only, and choose respectful forms such as “aka”, “opa”, “ustoz” or “domla”. Thus, speech etiquette is formed not only through formal education but also through daily language practice in the family and community.

The national-cultural nature of Uzbek pragmatic units can be observed in their relation to social hierarchy. Age, knowledge, profession, kinship and social experience influence the choice of address forms and politeness strategies. A teacher is often addressed as “ustoz” or “domla”, not only because of the professional role but also because of the cultural value attached to knowledge. An elderly person may be addressed as “otaxon” or “onaxon”, which expresses respect and moral recognition. These units encode social values directly into speech.

The communicative role of pragmatic units can be summarized in three main directions. First, they organize the structure of interaction: greetings begin communication, farewells close it, and address forms identify the addressee. Second, they regulate interpersonal relations: apologies, requests, thanks and softeners reduce conflict and maintain harmony. Third, they transmit cultural norms: honorifics, blessings and

kinship-based address units express Uzbek values such as respect, modesty, solidarity and kindness.

The following table presents a functional classification of common pragmatic units in Uzbek speech etiquette.

Type of pragmatic unit	Examples	Communicative function	Cultural meaning
Greeting and farewell	assalomu alaykum, salom, yaxshi boring, omon bo'ling	Opening and closing communication politely	Recognition, respect, social connection
Address forms	aka, opa, ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, bolam	Identifying the listener and showing relation	Age hierarchy, kinship culture, respect
Request formulas	iltimos, marhamat, mumkinmi, ruxsat bersangiz	Softening request or directive	Tact, modesty, consideration
Apology formulas	kechirasiz, uzr, ming bor uzr	Repairing communicative inconvenience	Responsibility, self-control, politeness
Gratitude formulas	rahmat, tashakkur, katta rahmat	Expressing appreciation	Goodwill, reciprocity, moral etiquette
Blessings and wishes	baraka toping, sog' bo'ling, ko'p yashang	Expressing benevolence	Spirituality, kindness, solidarity
Softening devices	nasib bo'lsa, xudo xohlasa, o'ylab ko'ramiz	Reducing directness and tension	Indirectness, restraint, harmony

The table demonstrates that the pragmatic system of Uzbek speech etiquette is multifunctional. The same unit may perform several tasks at the same time. For example, “marhamat” may express invitation, permission, politeness or encouragement depending on context. “Rahmat” may be a simple expression of gratitude, but in some contexts

it also marks the end of an interaction or polite refusal. “Xudo xohlasa” may express hope, caution or indirect agreement. Such multifunctionality confirms that pragmatic units should be studied in context rather than as isolated dictionary items.

Another important result is that Uzbek speech etiquette combines positive politeness and negative politeness strategies. Positive politeness is observed in kinship-based address forms and friendly expressions that create closeness, such as “aka”, “opa”, “jonim” or “bolam”. Negative politeness is observed in indirect requests, apologies and softening expressions that respect the listener’s freedom of action. Therefore, Uzbek politeness is not one-dimensional; it balances closeness and distance, warmth and restraint, sincerity and social order.

From a pedagogical point of view, pragmatic units should be included in language teaching. Learners of Uzbek may know vocabulary and grammar, but without pragmatic competence they may still make communicative mistakes. For instance, using “sen” toward an elderly person, giving a direct command without “iltimos”, or forgetting to greet at the beginning of conversation may be interpreted as impolite. Teaching pragmatic units helps learners understand not only the language but also the cultural logic of communication.

The analysis also indicates that speech etiquette changes under the influence of modern communication. In online communication, forms such as “azizlar”, “do‘stlar”, “admin”, “obunachilar”, “hurmatli guruh a‘zolari” and abbreviated greetings are increasingly used. Nevertheless, traditional pragmatic units remain active because they are rooted in cultural values. This continuity shows that Uzbek speech etiquette is dynamic but preserves its basic moral principles.

CONCLUSION

The study of pragmatic units in the Uzbek language shows that they play a central role in the formation of speech etiquette. They are not secondary or decorative elements of speech; rather, they are essential tools that regulate communication, express respect, maintain social harmony and transmit national-cultural values. Through greetings, address forms, requests, apologies, gratitude formulas, blessings, wishes and softening devices, Uzbek speakers create polite and culturally appropriate interaction.

The findings confirm that pragmatic units perform several major functions. They organize the beginning and end of conversation, define the relationship between speaker and listener, mark age and status differences, soften communicative pressure, repair possible offense, express goodwill and strengthen social solidarity. Their meaning is closely connected with context, social roles and national mentality.

The research also demonstrates that Uzbek speech etiquette is based on the balance between respect and closeness. Kinship-based address forms create warmth, while honorifics and the pronoun “siz” maintain distance and respect. This balance reflects the cultural principles of Uzbek society, where politeness is associated with moral upbringing, modesty and attention to others.

In conclusion, pragmatic units are one of the most important linguistic mechanisms in the formation of speech etiquette in the Uzbek language. Their further study is significant for linguopragmatics, cultural linguistics, speech culture, language education and intercultural communication. Future research may focus on the use of pragmatic units in social media, youth speech, official discourse and comparative studies between Uzbek and other languages.

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