

ADDRESS UNITS AND THE PROBLEM OF SPEECH ETIQUETTE IN UZBEK SHORT STORY WRITING

Abdullayeva Muslimaxon Ubaydulla qizi

Student of Namangan State Pedagogical Institute

E-mail: abdullayevamuslima34@gmail.com

Phone: +998933653217

Abstract: *This article analyzes address units and speech etiquette in Uzbek short story writing from a linguopragmatic and national-cultural perspective. The purpose of the research is to identify how Uzbek short stories use address forms to express respect, intimacy, social distance, age hierarchy, family relations, emotional attitude and communicative intention. The study focuses on address units such as aka, opa, uka, singlim, ota, ona, bolam, qizim, o'g'lim, ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, siz and sen, which frequently appear in Uzbek literary dialogue. Descriptive, contextual, linguopragmatic and cultural methods are used to examine the communicative role of these units in narrative discourse. The results show that address units in Uzbek short stories are not merely lexical elements naming the addressee; they function as pragmatic markers of politeness, ethical norms, social identity and emotional evaluation. They help writers reveal character psychology, interpersonal relations, conflict, respect, irony and national mentality. The article concludes that address units are one of the most effective linguistic means through which Uzbek short prose reflects speech etiquette and the traditional values of Uzbek society.*

Keywords: *address units, speech etiquette, Uzbek short stories, pragmatics, linguopragmatics, politeness, national-cultural features, communicative intention, dialogue, social distance.*

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada o'zbek hikoyachiligida murojaat birliklari va nutqiy odob masalasi lingvopragmatik hamda milliy-madaniy nuqtayi nazardan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotning maqsadi o'zbek hikoyalarida murojaat shakllari hurmat, yaqinlik, ijtimoiy masofa, yosh farqi, oilaviy munosabat, emotsional baho va kommunikativ niyatni qanday ifodalashini aniqlashdan iborat. Maqolada aka, opa, uka, singlim, ota, ona, bolam, qizim, o'g'lim, ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, siz va sen kabi birliklar tahlilga tortiladi. Tadqiqotda tavsifiy, kontekstual, lingvopragmatik va madaniy tahlil metodlaridan foydalanildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, o'zbek hikoyalarida murojaat birliklari oddiy leksik vosita emas, balki nutqiy odob, ijtimoiy munosabat va milliy mentalitetni ifodalovchi muhim pragmatik birliklardir.

Kalit so'zlar: murojaat birliklari, nutqiy odob, o'zbek hikoyachiligi, pragmatika, lingvopragmatika, xushmuomalalik, milliy-madaniy xususiyat, kommunikativ niyat, dialog, ijtimoiy masofa.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются единицы обращения и проблема речевого этикета в узбекской рассказной прозе с лингвопрагматической и национально-культурной точек зрения. Цель исследования заключается в выявлении того, каким образом формы обращения в узбекских рассказах выражают уважение, близость, социальную дистанцию, возрастную иерархию, семейные отношения, эмоциональную оценку и коммуникативное намерение. В статье анализируются такие единицы, как *aka, opa, uka, singlim, ota, ona, bolam, qizim, o'g'lim, ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, siz u sen*. Используются описательный, контекстуальный, лингвопрагматический и культурологический методы анализа. Результаты показывают, что единицы обращения в узбекской

прозе являются важными прагматическими маркерами речевого этикета, социальных отношений и национального менталитета.

Ключевые слова: единицы обращения, речевой этикет, узбекский рассказ, прагматика, лингвопрагматика, вежливость, национально-культурные особенности, коммуникативное намерение, диалог, социальная дистанция.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not only a system of sounds, words and grammatical forms, but also a social and cultural phenomenon that reflects the moral principles, communicative norms and worldview of a nation. In everyday communication, people do not merely exchange information; they also express respect, affection, distance, politeness, hierarchy and emotional attitude. One of the most visible linguistic means performing these functions is the address unit. In Uzbek, address units are especially rich because they are closely connected with family relations, age hierarchy, respect for elders, social etiquette and national traditions.

The problem of address units is particularly important in Uzbek short story writing. Short stories are compact literary texts in which dialogue, speech behavior and subtle details play a decisive role in character portrayal. A writer often reveals a character's social position, inner state, moral quality and relationship with other people through the way he or she addresses others. For example, forms such as aka, opa, ota, ona, bolam, qizim, ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, siz and sen may seem simple at first sight, but in literary discourse they become powerful pragmatic indicators.

Uzbek short stories by writers such as Abdulla Qahhor, G'afur G'ulom, Said Ahmad, O'tkir Hoshimov and Shukur Xolmirzayev contain numerous examples of culturally marked speech behavior. Their works

often depict family life, social inequality, neighborhood relations, respect for elders, conflict between generations, compassion, irony and moral evaluation. In such narratives, address units do not simply identify the addressee; they also shape the tone of communication and reveal the ethical atmosphere of the text.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the growing importance of pragmatics and linguoculturology in modern linguistic studies. Traditional grammatical analysis is not sufficient to explain why a speaker chooses one address form instead of another. The same person may be addressed as *uka*, *bolam*, *janob*, *domla* or *sen* depending on context, social distance and emotional state. Therefore, address units should be studied not only as lexical items, but also as pragmatic and cultural signs.

The aim of this article is to analyze address units and the problem of speech etiquette in Uzbek short story writing. The research seeks to identify the main types of address units, describe their pragmatic functions, reveal their connection with national-cultural values and show their role in literary dialogue. The main tasks are to classify address units used in Uzbek short prose, explain their communicative meanings, analyze their function in expressing politeness and social distance, and demonstrate how they contribute to characterization and narrative meaning.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The theoretical basis of this research is connected with pragmatics, speech act theory, politeness theory, text linguistics and linguoculturology. Pragmatics studies language in use, that is, the relation between linguistic signs, speakers, listeners, context and communicative intention. In this sense, address units are among the

most important pragmatic tools because they directly reflect the speaker's attitude toward the listener.

J. L. Austin's theory of speech acts and J. R. Searle's classification of speech acts are important for understanding the performative nature of utterances. Addressing a person is not a neutral act; it can open a conversation, establish a relationship, soften a request, express respect, create distance, intensify anger or indicate irony. Thus, address units participate in the performance of speech acts and influence the pragmatic force of the utterance.

Politeness theory, especially the ideas of P. Brown and S. Levinson, is also relevant to this study. In many cultures, speakers use linguistic strategies to protect the addressee's dignity, avoid direct pressure and maintain social harmony. Uzbek speech etiquette is strongly based on such principles. However, Uzbek politeness is not limited to universal strategies; it is shaped by national values such as *kattaga hurmat*, *kichikka izzat*, family solidarity, modesty, honor and respect for social roles.

In Uzbek linguistics, issues related to pragmatics, speech culture and the relation between language and culture have been studied by scholars such as M. Hakimov, Sh. Safarov, N. Mahmudov, R. Qo'ng'urov, E. Begmatov and others. Their works show that Uzbek speech behavior cannot be fully understood without considering cultural norms and communicative traditions. Address units are one of the main areas where these norms are clearly reflected.

The literary aspect of the problem is also important. Uzbek short stories are rich in dialogue and social observation. In a short story, every word must be meaningful, and address forms often carry a special artistic load. They may indicate the speaker's character, the addressee's status,

the emotional atmosphere of the scene or the author's implicit evaluation. Therefore, the study of address units in short story writing is relevant both for linguistics and literary criticism.

The material of the article consists of address units and etiquette-related speech forms observed in Uzbek short story writing. The analysis is based on representative features of narrative dialogue in Uzbek short prose, particularly works associated with Abdulla Qahhor, G'afur G'ulom, Said Ahmad, O'tkir Hoshimov and Shukur Xolmirzayev. The focus is not on the quantitative frequency of each unit, but on their pragmatic and cultural functions.

Several methods were used in the research. The descriptive method was applied to identify and classify address units. The contextual method was used to explain how the meaning of an address form changes according to the speech situation. The linguopragmatic method helped reveal the communicative intention of the speaker and the effect on the listener. The national-cultural method was used to interpret address units as signs of Uzbek etiquette, mentality and social values. Elements of literary text analysis were also applied to determine how address units contribute to character portrayal and narrative expressiveness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that address units in Uzbek short story writing can be grouped according to their semantic basis, pragmatic function and cultural meaning. The most productive groups include kinship-based address units, age and status markers, professional or honorific address forms, pronoun-based forms, affectionate forms, evaluative forms and indirect address strategies. Each group performs a specific function in literary communication.

The first and most characteristic group consists of kinship-based address units. Words such as ota, ona, aka, opa, uka, singlim, amaki, xola, bolam, qizim and o'g'lim are originally connected with family relations. However, in Uzbek speech they are often used beyond the family circle. A young man may call an older stranger aka, an elderly woman may address a younger person as bolam, and a speaker may call a respectful elderly woman onaxon. This phenomenon reflects the family-centered nature of Uzbek communicative culture.

Table 1. Main types of address units in Uzbek short story writing

Type of address unit	Examples	Pragmatic function	National-cultural meaning
Kinship-based forms	ota, ona, aka, opa, uka, singlim, bolam	Intimacy, care, respect, advice	Family solidarity and respect for age
Honorific forms	ustoz, domla, otaxon, onaxon, janob	Respect, formality, recognition of status	High value of knowledge and seniority
Pronoun forms	siz, sen	Distance, respect, closeness or conflict	Etiquette-based hierarchy in speech
Affectionate forms	jonim, bolaginam, qizim	Tenderness, sympathy, emotional closeness	Warm family communication

Evaluative forms	yaxshi odam, bechora, zolim, sho'rlik	Approval, pity, criticism or irony	Moral evaluation in narrative discourse
Indirect forms	katta, kichik, mehmon, qo'shni	Avoidance, politeness, social identification	Tact and indirectness in Uzbek etiquette

Kinship address units perform several pragmatic functions in short stories. First, they mark social distance and age hierarchy. Second, they soften the utterance and make communication more polite. Third, they create an atmosphere of intimacy and national warmth. For instance, the address *bolam* may carry affection, pity, warning or moral instruction depending on context. In literary dialogue, this form often indicates the older speaker's protective position and emotional involvement.

The second group consists of honorific and status-based address units such as *ustoz*, *domla*, *otaxon*, *onaxon*, *janob* and *rais*. These forms are especially important in Uzbek speech etiquette because they express respect for age, knowledge, social position and moral authority. In short stories, such forms help the writer show the social structure of the depicted environment. A character who uses *ustoz* or *domla* demonstrates not only politeness but also recognition of intellectual or moral superiority.

The third important group is represented by the pronouns *siz* and *sen*. In Uzbek, the opposition between *siz* and *sen* is pragmatically very significant. *Siz* usually expresses respect, distance, formality or politeness, while *sen* may express closeness, equality, affection or, in certain contexts, anger and humiliation. In short stories, a sudden shift

from *siz* to *sen* may signal a change in emotional tension, the collapse of respect or the beginning of conflict. Conversely, the use of *siz* in a family environment may indicate strong respect and traditional etiquette.

Affectionate address units also occupy an important place in Uzbek storytelling. Forms such as *jonim*, *azizim*, *bolaginam*, *qizim* and *o'g'lim* express tenderness, sympathy and emotional closeness. They often appear in family scenes, conversations between parents and children, or moments of grief and compassion. Such units increase the emotional intensity of the text and help readers feel the sincerity of the speaker.

Evaluative units are closely connected with address units in Uzbek short stories. A character may address another person through a form that carries a positive or negative evaluation. Words expressing pity, reproach, admiration or irony are frequently used in dialogue and authorial narration. Such units reveal not only the attitude of one character toward another, but also the moral position of the narrative. In Uzbek prose, evaluation is often culturally grounded: a person may be praised for modesty, patience, respect for elders and kindness, or criticized for arrogance, rudeness, greed and lack of shame.

Speech etiquette in Uzbek short stories is also represented through indirectness. Uzbek communicative culture often avoids excessive directness, especially when speaking to elders, respected people or guests. Address units help soften requests, warnings and reproaches. For example, a request introduced by *aka*, *opa* or *ustoz* sounds more polite and acceptable than a direct imperative without address. This pragmatic softening is one of the most important functions of address units.

Table 2. Pragmatic functions of address units in Uzbek literary dialogue

Function	How it is expressed	Effect in the short story
Politeness	Use of siz, ustoz, domla, otaxon	Maintains respect and social harmony
Intimacy	Use of bolam, jonim, qizim, uka	Creates emotional warmth
Hierarchy	Age and status markers	Shows social order and role relations
Conflict	Shift from respectful to rude address	Intensifies dramatic tension
Characterization	Individual choice of address forms	Reveals personality and morality
National color	Culture-specific kinship and honorific terms	Reflects Uzbek mentality and etiquette

The tables show that address units are multifunctional elements of narrative discourse. They combine lexical meaning, pragmatic intention and cultural symbolism. In Uzbek short stories, they often replace long explanations. A single form of address may immediately show whether two characters are relatives, strangers, equals, opponents or people belonging to different social levels.

Another important result is that address units contribute to the realism of Uzbek short stories. Many Uzbek writers are known for their ability to reproduce natural oral speech. The use of culturally appropriate address forms makes dialogue believable and expressive. If a character speaks to an elder without proper respect, readers immediately perceive this as a violation of speech etiquette. Thus, the pragmatic effect of address units depends not only on the text itself, but also on the reader's cultural competence.

Address units also help reveal the emotional state of characters. In moments of fear, anger or sadness, speakers may choose sharper, shorter or more expressive forms. In moments of compassion and reconciliation, they may use affectionate forms. This means that address units are connected with the psychological structure of the literary text. They are small linguistic signs, but they carry important emotional information.

In Uzbek storytelling, speech etiquette is not shown as a mechanical set of polite words. It is part of the moral world of the text. A polite character is often associated with modesty, wisdom, respect and moral maturity. A rude character may be shown through rough address forms, direct commands and disregard for social norms. Therefore, address units perform an evaluative function in the artistic system of the short story.

The issue of gender is also relevant. Female characters in Uzbek short stories often use softer and more emotionally colored address forms, especially in family and neighborhood communication. Male characters may use more status-oriented or imperative forms depending on social context. However, this distinction is not absolute; it depends on the writer's artistic intention, the period described and the social position of the character. Still, gendered speech behavior is one of the areas where address units reveal cultural expectations.

The national-cultural nature of address units becomes especially clear when Uzbek forms are compared with languages where kinship terms are used less widely in communication with strangers. In Uzbek, a stranger may be addressed as *aka*, *opa*, *amaki* or *xola* without implying real kinship. This usage creates symbolic closeness and reduces social distance. It also shows that Uzbek etiquette tends to construct communication through the model of an extended family or community.

At the same time, address units can be used ironically. A respectful form may be pronounced with a sarcastic tone, or an affectionate form may be used in a context of reproach. In literary dialogue, this creates pragmatic ambiguity. The surface form may seem polite, but the context reveals criticism or irony. This demonstrates that address units must always be interpreted in context, not in isolation.

The study also shows that the artistic function of address units is inseparable from their communicative function. In short stories, they organize dialogue, mark the beginning of speech, maintain contact between characters and guide the reader's interpretation. They serve as contact-establishing elements, politeness markers, emotional indicators and cultural signs at the same time.

Therefore, the problem of address units and speech etiquette in Uzbek short story writing should be studied as an interdisciplinary issue. It belongs to pragmatics because it concerns language use; to linguoculturology because it reflects national values; to stylistics because it shapes the artistic text; and to literary criticism because it helps reveal character, conflict and moral meaning.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of address units in Uzbek short story writing shows that they are essential components of speech etiquette and literary dialogue. They do not merely name the addressee; they express respect, intimacy, social distance, age hierarchy, emotional attitude, moral evaluation and national-cultural identity. Through address units, Uzbek short stories reflect the ethical norms and communicative traditions of Uzbek society.

Kinship-based address forms such as *aka*, *opa*, *ota*, *ona*, *bolam*, *qizim* and *o'g'lim* reveal the family-oriented character of Uzbek communication.

Honorific forms such as *ustoz*, *domla*, *otaxon* and *onaxon* demonstrate respect for age, knowledge and social authority. The pronouns *siz* and *sen* indicate politeness, distance, closeness or conflict depending on context. Affectionate and evaluative forms add emotional and moral depth to the narrative.

The results confirm that address units are important pragmatic markers in Uzbek short prose. They help writers create natural dialogue, reveal character psychology, show interpersonal relations and express national mentality. Their meanings are context-dependent: the same form may express respect, affection, irony, reproach or conflict in different situations. Therefore, address units should be analyzed in connection with speech situation, cultural background and artistic intention.

In conclusion, the study of address units and speech etiquette in Uzbek short story writing is significant for modern linguistics, literary studies and intercultural communication. It helps explain how language reflects culture and how small speech forms carry deep social and moral meanings. Further research may focus on comparative analysis of address units in Uzbek and other languages, gender-based use of address forms, or the transformation of Uzbek speech etiquette in contemporary prose and digital communication.

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