THE ROLE OF ADDRESS FORMS IN EXPRESSING SOCIAL DISTANCE IN UZBEK LITERARY DIALOGUE

Buzakhro Marufjanovna Begmatova
Associate Professor, Oriental University,
Tashkent, Uzbekistan
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5794-5695
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.24274830

Abstract: This article examines how forms of address express social distance between characters in Uzbek literary dialogue. Drawing on a qualitative pragmalinguistic analysis of selected exchanges from Uzbek prose, it considers personal names, kinship terms such as *aka* and *opa*, titles such as *ustoz*, and the second-person pronouns *sen* and *siz*. The analysis focuses on how age, social status, familiarity, and the immediate communicative context influence speakers' choices. Particular attention is paid to shifts between forms within an exchange and to the ways in which the same form can convey affection, deference, or emotional distance in different contexts.

Keywords: Uzbek language, forms of address, social distance, literary dialogue, kinship terms, second-person pronouns, pragmalinguistics.

Introduction

A character in Uzbek literary dialogue may address the same person by name in one scene, use a respectful title in another, and switch from *siz* to *sen* during a disagreement. Such choices can help readers infer how characters understand their relationship and how that relationship changes over the course of the narrative. The meaning of an address form depends on who is speaking, whom they are addressing, and what is happening at that moment.

This article examines how personal names, kinship terms, titles, and second-person pronouns express social distance in Uzbek literary dialogue. Social distance here refers to the degree of familiarity or formality between interlocutors. It is considered alongside social hierarchy, since differences in age or status can coexist with considerable emotional closeness. The analysis adopts a qualitative pragmalinguistic approach, interpreting address forms in relation to the characters' roles, the purpose of the exchange, and the surrounding dialogue. The examples below are constructed to illustrate how this approach can be applied to passages from Uzbek prose.

Main Part

The second-person pronouns *sen* and *siz* are among the most visible markers of interpersonal relations in Uzbek dialogue. *Sen* can express familiarity between friends or family members, while *siz* can convey respect or formality. Their interpretation also depends on whether the speakers use the same form reciprocally. For instance, if an older character uses *sen* and a younger character replies with *siz*, the asymmetry may reflect an age difference or a convention of deference within the relationship.

Compare the following examples:

Sen ham ertaga kelasanmi? – "Are you coming tomorrow too?"

Siz ham ertaga kelasizmi? – "Are you coming tomorrow too?"

The questions seek the same information. The pronouns and corresponding verb endings give the utterances different interpersonal meanings. Within a close relationship, the first question may sound affectionate or routine. In a conversation with an unfamiliar person, the second may convey courteous distance. The same form can express respect within a close relationship, as when a younger character addresses an older relative as *siz*.

© 2026 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Applications . All Rights Reserved.

Kinship terms such as *aka* ("older brother") and *opa* ("older sister") can be used to address people outside the family. When added to a personal name, they can acknowledge the addressee's seniority while giving the exchange a familiar tone. In *Anvar aka, bir daqiqa vaqtingiz bormi?* ("Anvar, do you have a minute?"), *aka* marks the interpersonal relationship, while the polite possessive ending in *vaqtingiz* reinforces the respectful tone of the request. The English rendering conveys the request but does not reproduce the social nuance carried by *aka*.

Titles can draw attention to a character's role in a particular exchange. In *Ustoz, fikringizni bilmoqchi edim* ("I wanted to hear your opinion, teacher"), *ustoz* foregrounds the addressee's position as a teacher or mentor. A personal name used alone can have a wider range of effects. Among friends it may signal familiarity, while in a tense exchange it can direct a warning or rebuke at a particular person. The speech act and the surrounding dialogue therefore shape how readers interpret the name or title.

A shift in address becomes especially meaningful when the dialogue has already established how the characters usually address each other. Consider the following exchange, imagining that the first speaker normally uses *siz* with the second:

– *Siz bu gapni jiddiy aytyapsizmi?* – "Are you serious about what you're saying?"

– *Ha, jiddiy aytyapman.* – "Yes, I'm serious."

– *Unda nega menga oldin aytmading?* – "Then why didn't you tell me earlier?"

In the last turn, the speaker omits the pronoun, but the singular verb ending in *aytmading* signals a move to the *sen* form. Here, the shift accompanies a move from questioning to reproach and may suggest that the speaker is abandoning the deference maintained at the start of the exchange. A comparable shift in a scene of reconciliation could instead signal growing intimacy. To interpret either case, readers need to consider the characters' usual pattern of address, the immediate reason for the shift, and the reaction it elicits.

Conclusion

In Uzbek literary dialogue, forms of address help writers portray familiarity, deference, and changes in the relationships between characters. The choice between *sen* and *siz*, the addition of *aka* or *opa* to a personal name, and the use of titles such as *ustoz* can each convey a different aspect of the relationship. Their meanings become clearer when examined alongside the speech act, the characters' relative ages and roles, and their established ways of addressing each other. Shifts within an exchange are particularly revealing because they allow a writer to show a moment of intimacy, tension, or withdrawal through the characters' own speech.

References

1. Copeland M. Socratic Circles: Fostering Critical and Creative Thinking in Middle and High School / M. Copeland. – Stenhouse, 2005.
2. Paul R., Elder L. The Thinker's Guide to the Art of Socratic Questioning / R. Paul, L. Elder. – Foundation for Critical Thinking, 2007.
3. Korayem, S. M. A., Shamusarov, S. G., Mutalova, G. S., Begmatova, B. M., & Saidova, N. M. (2024). Calling for the Use of Intermediate Language in Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers, Its Foundations and Problems. Power System Texnology Journal, ISSN, 1000-3673.
4. Shakhnoza Akramovna Kuldasheva, Ikrom Yusupovich Bultakov, Buzakhro Marufjanovna Begmatova, Malokhat Rikhsibaevna Pulatova, Yulduz Turdaliyevna Berdiyeva, Muslimabonu Abduvositkizi Tursunalieva. (2025). Journal of Applied Bioanalysis, 11(S10), 06-12. https://doi.org/10.53555/jab.v11si10.1332
5. Begmatova B. Translation in an audiovisual context: cultural words and their adaptation //International Journal of Artificial Intelligence. – 2025. – Т. 1. – №. 3. – С. 125-128
6. Бегматова Б., Қурбонов С. ИСЛОМ ҲУҚУҚИ (ФИҚҲ) ГА ОИД ТЕРМИНЛАР ВА УЛАРНИ ТАРЖИМА ҚИЛИШ МАСАЛАСИ //Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences. – 2024. – Т. 4. – №. 27. – С. 278-283.

© 2026 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Applications . All Rights Reserved.

7. G. K. Khasanova and S. K. Sayfullayevna, "Leveraging Natural Language Processing to Enhance Journalism Training and Language Learning Accessibility: A Cross-Disciplinary Framework," 2026 1st International Conference on Sustainable Solutions in Engineering Technologies and Earth Science (ICSSETES), Greater Noida, India, 2026, pp. 1397-1401, doi:10.1109/ICSSETES69816.2026.11764971. https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/11764971
8. Begmatova B. M. R. ARAB TILINI O ‘QITISHDA AUDIO MATERIALLARIDAN FOYDALANISH USULLARI //Oriental renaissance: Innovative, educational, natural and social sciences. – 2023. – Т. 3. – №. 22. – С. 30-35.
9. Бузахро М. Б. ЗАИМСТВОВАНИЯ-КАК ОДНА ИЗ ФОРМ ОБОГАЩЕНИЯ ЛЕКСИЧЕСКОГО СОСТАВА ЯЗЫКА //Актуальные проблемы арабской филологии и методики преподавания арабского языка. – 2016. – С. 89-92.

© 2026 International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Applications . All Rights Reserved.