

FORM OF ADDRESS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: POLITENESS AND CULTURE

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Annotation: This article explores how forms of address function in English and Uzbek, focusing on their connection to politeness, cultural tradition, and social hierarchy. The comparison examines how each language uses pronouns, titles, honorifics, kinship terms, and context-based strategies to express respect or social distance. Findings show that English tends toward egalitarian norms with a single universal second-person pronoun, while Uzbek maintains a more hierarchical system that reflects age and status differences. The analysis relies on major theoretical frameworks, including Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and ;cross-cultural pragmatics.

Keywords: forms of address, politeness, English, Uzbek, communication, pragmatics, honorifics

Introduction Forms of address are crucial elements of spoken interaction because they reveal how people perceive relationships, social roles, and cultural expectations. Through address terms, speakers express closeness, respect, hierarchy, and politeness. Scholars such as Braun emphasize that address systems strongly shape communication patterns and influence how politeness is interpreted in different cultures [1].

English and Uzbek differ considerably in how they encode respect and social distance. For instance, English speakers use the single pronoun you in every situation, while Uzbek speakers carefully choose between sen and siz, reflecting levels of familiarity or respect [2]. These linguistic contrasts represent deeper cultural values: English-speaking societies tend to be more individualistic and equality-oriented, whereas Uzbek society preserves collectivist norms and clear social hierarchies. Studying these differences helps us understand not just language structure, but also how each culture organizes communication, etiquette, and interpersonal behavior.

Theoretical Framework

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory serves as a foundation for analyzing address strategies. They distinguish between: Positive politeness – showing friendliness, closeness. Negative politeness – showing respect, minimizing imposition [3] Another influential model comes from Scollon and Scollon (1995), who identify three cultural factors shaping interaction: 1. Power distance. 2. Social distance. 3. Weight of imposition [4]

Uzbek communication reflects high power distance, meaning hierarchical forms of respect are expected. English, by contrast, reflects low power distance, where formal distinctions are reduced. Forms of Address in English. Pronouns.

Modern English uses a single second-person pronoun—you—for all contexts. Historically, English distinguished between thou (informal) and you (formal), but this system disappeared over time [5]. The remaining universal pronoun reflects Western values of equality and personal autonomy.

Titles. Common titles include Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Sir, Madam, and occupational titles like Doctor, Professor, or Officer. These are generally used in formal, professional, or service-related interactions [6]. English titles do not strongly encode age hierarchy. Kinship-Based or Informal Terms. Although English rarely uses kinship terms for strangers, modern colloquial speech includes expressions like bro, sis, auntie, uncle, mostly among young speakers or in friendly settings [7]. These terms reflect informality rather than cultural obligation. First-Name Preference

In many English-speaking cultures, even workplace communication favors first names. This practice aligns with the cultural emphasis on friendliness and reduced hierarchy [8]. Forms of Address in Uzbek. Pronouns: “Sen” and “Siz” Uzbek has a clear distinction between informal and formal pronouns: Sen – familiar, intimate, used with friends, children, peers. Siz – respectful, formal, used with elders, teachers, strangers, and superiors. Using sen with someone older or of higher status can be considered impolite [2]. Honorifics and Titles. Uzbek has a rich variety of honorifics such as: aka, opa, ustoz, domla, xonim, janoblari, ota, ona. These titles signal respect, age, social role, and status [9]

. Kinship-Based Address in Everyday Speech. A unique feature of Uzbek communication is using kinship terms even with strangers—opa, aka, buvi, xola, tog'a. This reflects collectivism, hospitality, and strong age-based norms [10]. Indirect Addressing. To avoid sounding too direct, Uzbek speakers often use polite expressions such as iltimos, marhamat, rahmat and role-based forms like opalar, otalar. These strategies soften the tone and show respect. Comparative Analysis. Politeness Strategies. English politeness relies on informality and equality, where friendliness is expressed through first names and the universal pronoun you [3]. Uzbek politeness, in contrast, relies on demonstrating respect, carefully choosing honorifics, and

acknowledging social roles. Power Distance Uzbek culture has high power distance, with clear expectations for respectful address. English-speaking societies have lower power distance, where people often speak more directly and with fewer formal markers [4].

Age and Social Status. In Uzbek communication, age is an essential factor. Younger people must use respectful forms with older individuals. English does not require special forms for age differences [9]. Cultural Values Reflected in Language. English emphasizes individualism, equality, autonomy. Uzbek emphasizes community, hierarchy, hospitality, and mutual respect [10]. Cross-Cultural Misunderstandings. Misinterpretations often occur: Uzbek speakers may see English first-name usage as overly informal. English speakers may find Uzbek honorifics excessively formal. Clarifying these cultural differences is important for successful intercultural communications.

Conclusion: Forms of address reveal how language reflects cultural values, politeness norms, and social relationships. English and Uzbek represent two contrasting communicative traditions: English focuses on equality and informality, while Uzbek organizes interaction through respect, hierarchy, and collectivism. Understanding these patterns improves linguistic competence and helps speakers navigate multicultural communication effectively.

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Journal of Central Asian Linguistics, 2(1). (pp. 45–58).