



THE ROLE OF DISCOURSE SIGNS IN EXPRESSING SOCIAL ROLE AND STATUS: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHER–STUDENT AND FATHER–SON INTERACTION

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Abstract. *This study examines the role of discourse signs in expressing social roles and status within Uzbek communicative culture. Through the analysis of teacher–student and father–son dialogues, it reveals how verbal and paralinguistic signs such as pronoun choice, honorifics, intonation, and topic control serve to maintain social hierarchy and relational norms. Discourse patterns reflect power asymmetry, cultural expectations, and emotional proximity. The study applies a sociolinguistic and semiotic framework to explore how social roles are both indexed and performed through everyday language.*

Keywords: *discourse analysis, social roles, power relations, pragmatics, teacher–student interaction, honorifics, politeness, semiotics, Uzbek communication*

Introduction. Language is not only a system of communication but a means of reproducing social structures. In sociolinguistic and pragmatic research, discourse is viewed as a central mechanism for negotiating identity, power, and relationship roles (Fairclough, 1992; Brown & Levinson, 1987). In the Uzbek context, verbal interaction is deeply informed by age, authority, gender, and kinship norms. Address forms, speech levels, and other discourse signs are culturally encoded tools for enacting social roles. This study investigates the use of discourse signs in two prominent relational frameworks in Uzbek culture: teacher–student and father–son dialogues. It aims to show how linguistic features function as indexical signs of respect, power, solidarity, and submission.

Literature Review and Methodology

Theoretical Background

The study is informed by the following theories:

- **Politeness Theory** (Brown & Levinson, 1987): how speakers mitigate threats to face in power-imbalanced relationships.
- **Critical Discourse Analysis** (Fairclough, 1992): language as a vehicle of ideology and power.
- **Goffman's Facework Theory** (1967): rituals of interaction in status-sensitive contexts.
- **Hymes' SPEAKING model** (1974): components of communicative events in sociocultural settings.
- Uzbek scholars such as **Jo'rayev (2020)** and **Qodirova (2019)** have also explored discourse practices in Uzbek culture.

Methodology

- **Corpus:** Transcribed natural and elicited conversations in Uzbek from teacher–student (academic) and father–son (domestic) settings.
- **Analytic Approach:**
 - *Discourse-Pragmatic Analysis:* identification of politeness strategies, turn-taking, honorifics, indirectness.
 - *Semiotic Layering:* interpretation of discourse signs as culturally loaded markers.
 - *Contextual Interpretation:* mapping linguistic forms to social expectations and power dynamics.

All examples are anonymized and conform to ethical research principles.

Results and Discussion

1. Pronouns and Address Forms

- **Teacher–student:** Students consistently use the formal second-person pronoun “Siz” along with honorifics like *ustoz*, *domla*; the teacher often uses the informal “sen” to assert institutional authority.

- **Father–son:** Sons address fathers using “ota”, “dadajon”; fathers use informal “sen”, combined with moral instruction.

Interpretation: Pronouns serve as **indexical discourse signs**, reflecting asymmetrical power relations and expected deference.

. **Speech Act Strategies**

- Teachers frequently issue **direct imperatives** (“Yozing!”, “Tinglang!”) while students use **indirect strategies** (“Agar topshirsam bo‘ladimi?”).
- Fathers use **evaluative speech acts** with moral framing: “Bu ish to‘g‘ri emas, o‘g‘lim.”

Interpretation: Directness functions as a **performative sign of control**; indirectness indexes submission or politeness.

3. **Turn-Taking and Silence**

- Teachers and fathers control topic shifts, interrupt more often, and delay turn allocation.
- Sons and students frequently pause, lower voice, or remain silent when corrected or scolded.

Interpretation: **Pause and silence** act as **semiotic signals** of social positioning — often interpreted as obedience or guilt.

4. **Paralinguistic and Non-Verbal Signs**

- Intonation: Downward pitch in teachers’ or fathers’ speech signals command or disappointment.
- Gestures: Pointing, nodding, or physical distance reinforce hierarchical positioning.

Interpretation: Multimodal signs support verbal cues to sustain role-based status differentiation.

Conclusion. The discourse signs used in teacher–student and father–son interactions in Uzbek culture reveal deeply ingrained mechanisms for expressing and reinforcing social status. Address forms, pronoun choices, politeness strategies,

and nonverbal cues are not merely linguistic preferences — they are culturally coded signs that reflect and shape relational power. Understanding these signs allows for deeper insights into the socio-pragmatic and semiotic functions of everyday speech in Uzbek society. These findings contribute to broader sociolinguistic discourse on how language reflects hierarchical and familial structures.

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