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A SOCIO-COGNITIVE-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF POLITENESS AND ADDRESS FORMS IN THE SPEECH OF A DIALECTAL LINGUISTIC PERSONALITY: EVIDENCE FROM SAMARKAND UZBEK

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the socio-cognitive and pragmatic organization of politeness and address forms in the speech of dialectal linguistic personalities in the Samarkand Region of Uzbekistan. The empirical basis is field material collected from 112 native speakers in Samarkand city and several districts of the region between 2024 and 2026 through participant observation and spontaneous everyday interaction. The analysis is explicitly qualitative and does not make population-level frequency claims. The analysis integrates Karaulov's three-level model of linguistic personality with pragmatic approaches to speech action, face, relational work, and culturally situated politeness. Three recurrent tendencies are identified. First, phonetic and formulaic reduction, including forms such as Somalaykum and Sobo', functions as an interactionally meaningful resource in familiar and informal settings, although reduction is treated as an association rather than a deterministic marker of social closeness. Second, politeness resources can be organized provisionally as a core-periphery field in which broadly shared etiquette formulae coexist with regionally salient forms such as aylansin, aylanay, and qoqindiq. Third, self-lowering expressions such as kamina and faqir contribute to relational positioning by elevating the addressee and indexing conventional social deference in culturally marked situations. The findings show that dialectal politeness is best understood as context-sensitive relational practice rather than as a fixed inventory of etiquette formulae. The study contributes qualitative evidence to Uzbek dialectology, pragmalinguistics, and research on linguistic personality while also identifying the need for future corpus-based work with fuller demographic metadata, verbatim interactional transcripts, and quantitative distributional analysis.

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1. Introduction

Language is not only a system of signs but also a socially distributed resource through which speakers enact relationships, display local identities, and reproduce culturally meaningful expectations. Dialectal speech is especially valuable for examining this interaction because regional forms are embedded

in everyday routines and may retain meanings that are weakened, standardized, or redistributed in the literary language. From an anthropocentric perspective, the dialect speaker can therefore be studied not simply as a carrier of a regional code but as a linguistic personality whose lexical choices, conceptual knowledge, and communicative motives are organized through social experience.

Politeness and address are productive domains for such analysis. Greetings, blessings, terms of affection, deferential self-reference, and forms of address do more than satisfy etiquette conventions: they position speakers in relation to age, familiarity, status, shared history, and the immediate communicative situation. Classical pragmatics established that utterances perform social actions and that meaning depends on inferential cooperation as well as linguistic form (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975). Goffman's (1967) account of face and interaction ritual later provided a sociological foundation for understanding how participants sustain a socially recognizable self in interaction. Brown and Levinson (1987) systematized face-related politeness strategies, while subsequent scholarship has emphasized that politeness cannot be reduced to universal face-threat mitigation and must be interpreted through relational, discursive, and cultural norms (Eelen, 2001; Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Locher & Watts, 2005; Terkourafi, 2005; Watts, 2003).

In Uzbek linguistics, the relevance of this perspective is reinforced by work on linguistic economy and pragmalinguistic organization. Eltazarov (2004) treats economy and reduction as important tendencies in spoken language, while Hakimov (2013) develops an Uzbek pragmalinguistic account of how speakers manage communicative relations and intentions. At the same time, Karaulov's (2010) model of linguistic personality offers a framework for linking verbal-semantic resources, conceptual organization, and pragmatic motivation. Ethnolinguistic research on dialect speakers further shows the value of field-based, core-periphery modelling for identifying how local lexical resources encode cultural experience (Tupikova & Starodubtseva, 2023).

Bringing these traditions together requires a method that separates linguistic description from pragmatic interpretation. The present study therefore treats its Samarkand material as qualitative evidence, uses Karaulov's level terminology consistently, distinguishes structurally different greeting and response forms, and interprets face-related meanings through local context rather than assuming that a particular form has a fixed politeness value.

The purpose of the study is therefore to identify recurrent linguistic and pragmatic patterns in politeness and address forms documented in Samarkand dialectal speech and to interpret those patterns through a socio-cognitive framework without claiming statistical representativeness. The study asks how formal reduction, ethnocultural field structure, and relational positioning interact in the speech of the dialectal linguistic personality.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Linguistic personality and dialectal speech

Karaulov's (2010) linguistic-personality model is useful because it separates, while still relating, three analytical planes. The verbal-semantic or zero level concerns the linguistic resources available to a speaker and their formal realization. The cognitive or thesaurus level concerns the concepts, values, and culturally structured knowledge through which those resources acquire significance. The motivational-pragmatic level concerns communicative goals, intentions, and strategies. In the present study, these labels are used consistently as zero, first, and second levels respectively. No additional "third level" is introduced.

Applied to dialectal speech, the model directs attention away from treating regional forms as isolated deviations from a standard. A reduced greeting can be described at the verbal-semantic level, but its interactional value depends on the social knowledge and expectations associated with the situation, while its actual selection reflects a speaker's communicative orientation. This multi-level interpretation is compatible with ethnolinguistic approaches that analyze the lexicon of dialect speakers as a structured representation of local cultural experience (Tupikova & Starodubtseva, 2023). Their core-periphery modelling is particularly relevant to the present material, provided that "core" and "periphery" are treated

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as interpretive categories based on functional breadth and regional specificity rather than as statistically established frequency bands.

2.2. Politeness, face, and relational work

Brown and Levinson (1987) remain important because they connect politeness strategies with the management of positive and negative face. Positive face concerns the desire for one's wants and self-presentation to be appreciated or ratified; negative face concerns freedom from imposition. These concepts should not be equated with a generally "safe" or intimate environment. Familiarity may make some forms of reduction or directness appropriate, but that contextual appropriateness is an empirical interactional matter rather than a definition of positive face.

Later approaches have challenged analyst-imposed judgments about what counts as polite. Eelen (2001) and Watts (2003) distinguish everyday evaluations of politeness from theoretical models, while Locher and Watts (2005) place politeness within the broader concept of relational work: the ongoing negotiation of interpersonal relations, which may be appropriate, polite, over-polite, or impolite depending on participant expectations. Terkourafi (2005) similarly argues for a frame-based account in which recurrent context-form associations become socially recognizable. Kádár and Haugh (2013) emphasize multiple participant and analyst understandings of politeness. These perspectives are especially useful for dialectal data because the same shortened form may be affiliative in one setting and inappropriate in another.

Other accounts broaden the analysis beyond face-threat mitigation. Leech (2014) describes politeness as communicative behavior oriented toward others, while Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport-management perspective incorporates face, sociality rights, and interactional goals. Together, these approaches support a culturally situated interpretation: the present paper uses Brown and Levinson as one analytical lens, not as a universal template that determines the meaning of Uzbek dialectal forms in advance.

2.3. Linguistic economy and Uzbek pragmalinguistics

Eltazarov's (2004) account of economy in language provides a locally relevant explanation for recurrent reduction in spoken Uzbek. Economy can motivate shorter realizations, but economy alone does not establish a pragmatic meaning. A reduced form becomes socially interpretable only when its distribution is linked to recurring contexts and relationships. The present study therefore treats reduction as a formal process whose pragmatic value is inferred from contextual recurrence, not as an automatic index of intimacy.

Hakimov (2013) emphasizes pragmatic intention, interpersonal positioning, and culturally grounded communicative strategies in Uzbek. This is directly relevant to forms of self-lowering such as kamina and faqir, which can elevate the addressee and conventionally display deference. Such expressions are analyzed here as relational resources rather than as literal claims about the speaker's status.

3. Research Questions

RQ1. What recurrent formal patterns characterize politeness and address resources in the documented Samarkand dialectal material?

RQ2. How do communicative setting, interlocutor relationship, and regional ethnocultural conventions contribute to the pragmatic interpretation of these forms?

RQ3. How can the observed patterns be mapped onto Karaulov's verbal-semantic, cognitive, and motivational-pragmatic levels without reducing politeness to a single universal strategy model?

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Research design and field material

The study uses a qualitative, field-based contextual-pragmatic design. The empirical material was collected between 2024 and 2026 in Samarkand city and several districts of the Samarkand Region. The field corpus comprises speech samples from 112 native speakers representing different age groups and

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social backgrounds. Data were gathered through participant observation and spontaneous conversations in everyday communicative settings in order to preserve naturally occurring dialect use.

The field documentation used for this analysis does not include a complete demographic matrix, total corpus duration, or a tokenized inventory of all politeness forms. For that reason, the study does not calculate frequencies, percentages, subgroup comparisons, or inferential statistics. The number 112 describes the field participant pool; it is not used as the denominator for prevalence claims. The analysis is therefore descriptive and interpretive rather than distributional.

4.2. Unit of analysis and inclusion logic

The unit of interpretation is a contextualized politeness or address form documented within a communicative setting. Examples were interpreted in relation to immediate discourse context, interlocutor relationship, setting, and pragmatic intention. The analytic dataset used for this article does not include verbatim transcripts of complete conversational episodes; accordingly, the Results report attested forms and the contextual categories recorded in the field analysis rather than reconstructed dialogue.

Forms were retained for analysis when they were described as recurrent across naturally occurring interactions and when their functional interpretation could be connected to one or more of the following contextual dimensions: familiarity or social distance, informality or ceremony, culturally marked situations such as hospitality, matchmaking, or condolences, and relational positioning through self-lowering or addressee elevation. Idiosyncratic individual uses are not treated as general dialectal patterns.

4.3. Analytical procedure

Table 1.

Analytical framework used in the study

Analytical level	Primary evidence	Question asked	Interpretive output
Verbal-semantic (zero)	Phonetic/formulaic realization; lexical choice; address form	What linguistic form is used and how does it differ from the standard or full formula?	Description of reduction, lexical selection, or formulaic structure
Cognitive/thesaurus (first)	Shared cultural knowledge; field organization; regional salience	What culturally structured meanings or expectations make the form recognizable?	Core-periphery positioning and ethnocultural interpretation
Motivational-pragmatic (second)	Communicative situation; relationship; speaker orientation	What relational work does the form appear to perform in context?	Affiliation, deference, social distance, addressee elevation, or situational appropriateness

Analysis proceeded in three passes. First, formal variants were classified by their relation to fuller or standard forms. Second, the examples were grouped by culturally and interactionally relevant fields. Third, pragmatic interpretations were checked against the documented situation and relationship rather than inferred from form alone. This procedure follows the contextual emphasis of contemporary politeness research (Kádár & Haugh, 2013; Locher & Watts, 2005; Terkourafi, 2005) and the field-modelling logic used in ethnolinguistic dialect research (Tupikova & Starodubtseva, 2023).

No inter-coder reliability coefficient is reported because the coding record does not document independent double-coding. Accordingly, the analysis is interpretive and exploratory rather than a reliability-tested annotation study.

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4.4. Research integrity, privacy, and scope

The article reports linguistic forms and generalized communicative settings only and reproduces no participant names or other personal identifiers. The research record available for this study does not contain an institutional ethics-approval number or a detailed account of the participant-consent procedure; consequently, the paper makes no unsupported claim about either.

The analysis is geographically bounded. Its conclusions refer to the Samarkand field material represented in the corpus and should not be generalized automatically to all Uzbek dialects.

5. Results

5.1. Reduction and formulaic restructuring

The clearest verbal-semantic pattern is reduction of conventional etiquette formulae. The field material documents Somalaykum, Qullu bo‘sin, and Sobo‘ alongside fuller standard forms. Somalaykum is analyzed as a reduced realization of the initiating greeting Assalomu alaykum, whereas Vaalaykum is treated separately as an elliptical or reduced response associated with Va alaykum assalom. The distinction is important because an initiating greeting and its response occupy different positions in the greeting sequence and should not be treated as equivalent phonetic variants.

The data support a qualitative association between reduced forms and informal or familiar interaction. They do not establish that phonetic reduction “determines” socio-pragmatic closeness. Reduction may be shaped simultaneously by economy, routinization, speech rate, local phonology, and interactional familiarity. The strongest defensible claim is therefore that the documented reduced forms were interpreted in the field analysis as recurrent resources in contexts of lower formality and greater shared interactional familiarity.

Table 2.

Attested etiquette forms and linguistic classification

Full / standard form	Attested dialectal form	Linguistic classification	Pragmatic interpretation supported by the field material
Assalomu alaykum	Somalaykum	Phonetic/formulaic reduction of initiating greeting	Associated with familiar or informal interaction; interpreted as compatible with pragmatic closeness, not as a deterministic marker
Va alaykum assalom	Vaalaykum	Elliptical/reduced response formula	A shortened response within a conventional greeting sequence; should be analyzed separately from the initiating greeting
Qutlug‘ bo‘lsin	Qullu bo‘sin	Phonetic adaptation/reduction	Informal realization of a conventional good-wish formula
Sog‘ bo‘ling	Sobo‘	Strong contraction	Informal, routinized realization in everyday interaction

5.2. Core-periphery organization of politeness resources

The second pattern concerns the cognitive organization of etiquette and address resources. The field analysis distinguishes broadly shared religious-etiquette formulae from more locally salient items and from affective or relational forms. This can be represented as a provisional core-periphery field, but the categories should not be mistaken for frequency tiers. In the present study, “core” means broad functional and cultural accessibility across situations, while “periphery” refers to increasing regional specificity or narrower relational use.

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The field material identifies regionally meaningful forms such as aylansin, aylanay, and qoqindiq. These forms are treated as carriers of local ethnocultural meaning because their interpretation depends on culturally shared expectations and patterns of endearment, affection, or relational positioning. The value of the model lies in showing how shared etiquette and regional identity can coexist within one repertoire rather than in ranking forms statistically.

Table 3.

Provisional core-periphery model for the documented politeness repertoire

Zone	Operational criterion	Examples reported in the field material	Interpretive value
Core	Broadly shared etiquette value across multiple settings	Religious-etiquette and conventional politeness formulae	Maintains continuity with widely recognized cultural and etiquette norms
Near periphery	More relationship-sensitive and affective use	Forms of endearment and affection	Indexes emotional closeness and interpersonal involvement
Far periphery	Greater regional specificity or narrower local distribution	aylansin; aylanay; qoqindiq	Makes regional ethnocultural identity more salient and may participate in the management of local social distance or affiliation

5.3. Self-lowering and addressee elevation

A third recurrent pattern occurs at the motivational-pragmatic level. The field material highlights self-lowering expressions such as kamina (“this humble person”), faqir (“this humble servant”), and formulae glossed as “your servant.” In contexts such as hospitality, matchmaking, and condolences, these expressions can position the speaker as deferential while elevating the addressee. Hakimov’s (2013) pragmalinguistic perspective helps explain this pattern as a culturally conventional relational strategy rather than literal self-denigration.

This result is compatible with face-oriented models insofar as the expressions may support the addressee’s desired social standing, but the analysis does not reduce them to positive-face work alone. Rapport management and relational-work approaches are more flexible because they allow sociality expectations, conventional roles, and local norms to shape the interpretation (Locher & Watts, 2005; Spencer-Oatey, 2008).

Table 4.

Contextual functions represented in the field material

Resource type	Illustrative form / context	Primary relational work	Analytical caution
Reduced etiquette formula	Somalaykum; Sobo‘ in informal everyday interaction	Affiliation and routinized ease	Reduction is associated with context; it is not a direct measure of intimacy
Regional-affective form	aylansin; aylanay; qoqindiq	Endearment, affection, or regionally recognizable positioning	Exact force depends on speaker, addressee, and micro-situation

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Resource type	Illustrative form / context	Primary relational work	Analytical caution
Self-lowering expression	kamina; faqir; “your servant”	Deference and addressee elevation	Should be interpreted as conventional positioning rather than literal social self-assessment
Fixed culturally marked expression	Matchmaking (sovchilik) and related ceremonial interaction	Maintaining social equilibrium within a culturally scripted encounter	Interpretation is limited to the recorded contextual category because verbatim dialogue is unavailable

5.4. Integrated three-level pattern

Taken together, the results support a layered rather than linear account. At the verbal-semantic level, speakers draw on reductions, lexical selections, and conventional formulae. At the cognitive level, these forms are interpreted through culturally shared fields, including distinctions between broadly recognized etiquette and locally salient expressions. At the motivational-pragmatic level, speakers use the available repertoire to manage affiliation, deference, social distance, and participation in culturally scripted situations.

The three levels are mutually constraining. A shortened form is not pragmatically meaningful merely because it is short; it becomes meaningful through recurrent cultural and interactional expectations. Conversely, a culturally valued strategy can only be realized through concrete linguistic resources. This interaction between form, shared knowledge, and communicative motivation is the strongest contribution of the dialectal linguistic-personality framework to the present data.

6. Discussion

6.1. Reduction as contextualized practice, not a deterministic social index

The first research question concerned recurrent formal patterns. The field material supports the existence of reduction and formulaic restructuring, consistent with Eltazarov’s (2004) principle of linguistic economy. A contextual interpretation is necessary because it would be circular to identify a form as “close” because it is reduced and then use that reduction as evidence that speakers are close. The present analysis instead treats reduction as a linguistic tendency whose social value emerges through recurring contextual associations.

This approach is compatible with Terkourafi’s (2005) frame-based account: if a reduced form repeatedly occurs in a recognizable type of situation, participants may come to associate that form with the situation without requiring an explicit calculation of face threat. It is also compatible with Watts (2003) and Locher and Watts (2005), who caution against treating all socially appropriate behavior as marked politeness. A shortened greeting among familiar speakers may simply be the expected, unmarked form of relational work in that setting.

6.2. Face theory in a culturally situated analysis

The second research question asked how social and cultural context contributes to interpretation. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory remains useful for describing how speakers attend to interpersonal wants, but the Samarkand material demonstrates why it should not be used as the sole explanatory framework. Positive face is not equivalent to a “safe environment,” and formal reduction is not inherently positive-politeness behavior. The same reduced form may be affiliative among peers but inappropriate in a ceremonial or status-sensitive interaction.

Goffman’s (1967) broader notion of face as socially sustained self-presentation, Spencer-Oatey’s (2008) attention to rapport and sociality rights, and Kádár and Haugh’s (2013) emphasis on multiple understandings of politeness provide a stronger interpretive combination. They allow local norms to determine whether a form counts as deferential, affectionate, merely appropriate, or potentially

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disrespectful. Leech's (2014) account likewise underscores other-orientation but does not remove the need for culturally specific evidence.

6.3. Ethnocultural memory and the dialectal linguistic personality

The core-periphery organization addresses the third research question by showing how linguistic personality links form with culturally structured knowledge. Karaulov's (2010) model is especially useful here. At the zero level, a speaker commands a repertoire of formulae and regional variants. At the first level, those forms are embedded in knowledge about appropriate social relations and locally meaningful situations. At the second level, the speaker chooses among them to achieve interactional goals. Using this hierarchy consistently prevents conflation between formal realization, culturally structured knowledge, and pragmatic motivation.

The comparison with Tupikova and Starodubtseva (2023) is methodologically productive because their ethnolinguistic treatment of dialect speakers also emphasizes thematic segmentation, micro-situations, and field modelling. The present study adapts that logic to politeness resources in Samarkand Uzbek. The resulting core-periphery model should be read as a qualitative representation of cultural salience rather than as a distribution derived from counts.

6.4. Speech action and inference

The data also reinforce a basic pragmatic insight: etiquette formulae are actions, not merely lexical objects. Austin's (1962) speech-act perspective explains why greetings, blessings, deferential self-reference, and ceremonial formulae perform relational work through being uttered in an appropriate setting. Grice's (1975) account of inferential meaning helps explain why interlocutors can recover social intentions from reduced or conventionalized forms when sufficient common ground is available. In dialectal interaction, this common ground includes regional speech norms and shared ethnocultural expectations.

The contribution of the present analysis is therefore not a new universal taxonomy of politeness. It is a context-sensitive description of how a regional repertoire can be organized across formal, cognitive, and pragmatic dimensions. That narrower claim is better supported by the available evidence and is more consistent with contemporary critiques of universalistic politeness models (Eelen, 2001; Kádár & Haugh, 2013).

7. Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The study has four important limitations. First, although field material was collected from 112 speakers, the available field documentation does not provide a complete demographic breakdown by age, gender, education, occupation, district, or rural/urban residence. The study therefore cannot compare social groups statistically. Second, the available record does not provide total corpus duration, token counts, or a complete inventory of politeness occurrences; frequencies and percentages would be misleading and are intentionally omitted.

Third, the analytic dataset does not include full verbatim conversational episodes. This limits fine-grained conversation-analytic claims about sequential position, uptake, and participant evaluation. Future research should archive anonymized excerpts that include speaker metadata, interactional sequence, original dialectal form, standardized Uzbek equivalent, and English translation.

Fourth, the coding procedure is not independently reliability-tested in the available record. A follow-up corpus study should develop an explicit annotation manual and use at least two coders for form type, communicative setting, relationship, and pragmatic function, reporting intercoder agreement. Such a design would make it possible to test whether the qualitative associations identified here are robust and whether they vary by district, generation, or social relationship.

Future comparative work should also extend the framework to other Uzbek regional varieties. Such work could determine which etiquette resources are broadly shared across Uzbek, which are specific to Samarkand, and which change under urbanization, mobility, and standard-language influence. The present

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field study provides hypotheses and analytic categories for that larger program rather than a statistically representative map of Uzbek politeness.

8. Conclusion

This study has examined politeness and address forms in Samarkand dialectal speech through a socio-cognitive-pragmatic account of the dialectal linguistic personality. The analysis supports three conclusions. First, phonetic and formulaic reductions are recurrent resources in the documented material, but their pragmatic meaning must be interpreted contextually rather than treated as a direct or deterministic measure of social closeness. Second, the repertoire can be modelled provisionally as a core-periphery field in which broadly recognized etiquette practices coexist with affective and regionally salient forms. Third, self-lowering expressions such as kamina and faqir function as culturally recognizable resources for deferential positioning and addressee elevation in socially marked interactions.

Karaulov's model provides a coherent way to integrate these findings when its levels are used consistently: linguistic form belongs to the verbal-semantic level, culturally structured knowledge to the cognitive/thesaurus level, and interactional goals to the motivational-pragmatic level. Face theory contributes one perspective on interpersonal concerns, but the findings are better understood when combined with relational-work, rapport-management, and discursive approaches that allow local norms to shape politeness evaluations.

The empirical contribution is deliberately bounded. The findings describe the Samarkand material collected from 112 native speakers between 2024 and 2026; they do not establish population frequencies or universal features of Uzbek dialects. Within that scope, the study demonstrates that dialectal politeness is not a static list of formulas. It is a context-sensitive system in which linguistic economy, ethnocultural knowledge, and relational goals interact. This perspective strengthens the place of dialectal evidence in Uzbek pragmalinguistics and provides a defensible foundation for future corpus-based and comparative research.

Declarations

Data availability. The field materials are not deposited in a public repository. The paper reports only anonymized linguistic forms and generalized communicative settings.

Ethics and consent. The research record available for this article does not document an institutional ethics-approval number or the precise participant-consent procedure. The article therefore makes no unsupported ethics-approval or consent claim and contains no participant names or identifying personal details.

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