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THE ISSUE OF SOCIAL STATUS AND SOCIAL ROLE WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF CHARACTERS

(BASED ON THE SHORT STORIES OF ABDULLA KHAKHHAR)

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Abstract:

This article provides a comprehensive study of sociolinguistics, its contemporary significance, and the concepts of social status and role within society, illustrating these aspects through the speech of characters in Abdulla Khakhhor's short stories.

Keywords: story, character, social status, social role, Uzbek literature, individual, society, episode, protagonist, social position.

Introduction

Looking at the history of linguistics, the new field of sociolinguistics emerged in global linguistics during the second half of the 20th century [2; 136]. According to A.Capell, the term "sociolinguistics" is self-explanatory. As the name implies, sociolinguistics is a discipline that arose at the intersection of sociology and linguistics. [2; 83].

Analysis and Results

As noted in the dictionary of linguistic terms: "Sociolinguistics (from Lat. soci (etas) – society + linguistics) is a branch of linguistics that studies the social existence and social development conditions of language. Formed through the synthesis of sociology and linguistics, this field addresses issues such as the



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relationship between language and facts of social life; active processes in language development driven by non-linguistic factors; shifts in the balance between spoken and written language forms due to the widespread reach of radio, television, and cinema; the functions and forms of language policy implementation; and the elevation of the general public's speech culture. Sociolinguistics holds significant importance today because it requires us to examine language issues not merely from a grammatical standpoint, but in relation to the context of speech. Specifically, the ability to select an appropriate discourse for a given speech situation, a speaker's capacity to convey their emotional state to the listener through speech, the reflection of an individual's social stratum in their speech, and the ability to utilize specific aspects of speech within a given society—all these are considered key criteria of sociolinguistics. We know that society consists of various strata, and individuals adhere to speech norms based on the specific social group to which they belong. A clear example of this is social..." We can speak of individuals holding statuses and roles within society. These elements define an individual's identity, and people manifest their social statuses and roles through their speech. With this in mind, we will define the concepts of social status and role from the perspective of sociolinguistics.

Every individual living in society and belonging to various groups holds multiple social positions. For instance, a student (who inherently holds a specific social position) might also be an active member of the "Kamolot" youth movement, a university chess champion, a talented singer within their group, a son and older brother at home, and a companion or friend among peers. Each of these positions is associated with specific rules and duties and is known as a "social status". Most social statuses are attained by the individual; such statuses are called "achieved statuses". One attains the status of a student by successfully passing university entrance exams, the status of a champion by winning a competition, and the status



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of a husband through marriage [1; 155]. In society, every status entails certain obligations. For example, a person holding the status of a student is obliged to attend classes and exams, adhere to university internal regulations, and complete professional and pedagogical internships.

Those around a person holding a particular social status expect behavior consistent with that status. Such standard, generally accepted expectations are referred to as a “social role”. A single status may correspond to multiple roles. For instance, the expectations held by students, colleagues, the department head, the administration, and technical staff regarding a university professor differ from one another. Many roles characteristic of society acquire specific meaning in language: father, spouse, son, classmate, neighbor, teacher, shopper, passenger, client, etc. [1; 186]. A single individual may hold multiple roles; for example, a man might act as a father to his children, a spouse to his wife, a child to his parents, an older brother to his younger sisters, a younger brother to his older sisters, and a friend to his companions. We have stated that an individual’s social status and role are reflected in their speech, and we will analyze these using examples of characters from Abdulla Khakhhor’s stories.

Abdulla Khakhhor selects the protagonists of his short stories from among the ordinary, simple Uzbek people. This aspect accounts for the popularity of his stories and their distinguished position within the tradition of Uzbek short-story writing. When selecting characters, Khakhhor places particular emphasis on their age, their place in society, and their status; consequently, his characters possess distinct social statuses and roles. To illustrate these points, let us analyze brief episodes from Khakhhor’s stories through the lens of social status and role.

“- Comrade wife! Allow me to offer you my personal congratulations on this day, which marks the completion of one full year since we began to honorably continue our cheerful life and fulfill our family duties in an exemplary manner!



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Mistaking this preamble for a joke, the wife squealed with delight and clapped her hands. The speaker continued with an even more serious expression:

- Three hundred and sixty-five days ago, you and I made a decisive turn in our lives and stepped directly into a period of great trials. Since you are already familiar with the issue of the family – which was formerly led only by the man but is now led by both husband and wife – I do not deem it necessary to dwell on this at length” [5]. The speaker begins his conversation with his wife using high-flown, formal expressions – such as “Comrade wife!” and references to “honorably fulfilling our family duty” – revealing a desire to project a higher social status. By portraying family life with the tone of a state meeting, he demonstrates how the formal speech style of the broader society has permeated the domestic sphere; this serves as a clear example of the formalization of status. Although the speaker presents himself as someone “honorably fulfilling a family duty”, his wife’s reaction – squealing and clapping as if his words were a joke – highlights the disconnect between his speech and reality, rendering his pursuit of an elevated “moral status” comical. The character’s comic appeal stems primarily from the fact that the family dynamic is politicized in an artificial, rather than natural, manner. By transplanting his public persona (that of a speaker) into the domestic realm, the husband effectively transfers his societal role into the family setting. This episode illustrates a role conflict arising from the transposition of a social role into an inappropriate context where it does not fit the family environment.

“One night, the patient suffered terribly. With every groan she let out, Sotiboldi would startle violently, as if struck on the temple. He called upon a neighbor – an old woman. The old woman smoothed the patient’s disheveled hair, stroked her gently, and then... sat down and wept. ‘The prayer of an innocent child at dawn is answered; wake your daughter!’ she said. The child cried for a long time, groggy from sleep. Then, frightened by her father’s anger and her mother’s condition, she



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offered the prayer the old woman had taught her: ‘Oh God, grant a cure for my mother’s ailment...’ [4]. In this episode from Abdulla Khakhhor’s short story “The Patient” (Bemor), it is evident that the characters belong to a vulnerable stratum of society with very low social status. Sotiboldi is portrayed as a poor man lacking financial means – unable to seek medical help – and occupying a low social position. His wife holds a social status defined by total dependency due to her health; she possesses no independent social standing and has been relegated to the role of the one requiring care within the family. The child, too, occupies a vulnerable position, in need of social protection. In terms of social roles, Sotiboldi’s natural role is to protect the family and find a way to treat his wife; after all, if she were to die, his little daughter would be left motherless while still an infant. For Sotiboldi, this would be a true tragedy. The old woman’s role is that of a caregiver and comforter. As for the child, though she is in need of care and affection, she plays the role of the one who “prays” for her mother. Hamroev had never attended a school meeting before, but he intended to prepare and go when the opportunity arose, hoping to shame teachers who either did not know how to raise children or were indifferent to the task. His wife, Sobirakhon, fully approved of this plan.

“Speak up! Put them to shame! The children are becoming unruly after attending school. When you are not home, Hamdam makes my life miserable. I used to be able to discipline him with a beating, but now, if I try, he runs up onto the roof and sticks his tongue out at me from up there. “Hamroev jotted something down in his notebook.

“Well, what else does he do?”

“And... if I hit him, he just chuckles and says, it does not hurt anyway... Oh, and another thing: I have not heard him say “Aya” [Mom] once in a year; he always calls me “Turandot”. Hamroev burst out laughing. He was the one who had given



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Sobirakhon that nickname the previous year while they were visiting someone for a holiday, and it had made everyone laugh.

- “‘Turondot,’ is it? But one cannot mention this at a meeting, because... though, on the other hand, perhaps one could—after all, a child should not be repeating what the grown-ups say” [4].

Analyzing this episode from the author’s story “Ayb kimda” (Who Is to Blame?), we see that Hamroev holds the social status of father and husband; acting from this position, he expresses his views on child-rearing. Listening silently to his wife, he reflects on how he has become inattentive toward his child, acknowledging the vital role parents play in a child's upbringing. Children take their parents as role models; a clear example of this is the child beginning to call his mother “Turondot”—a name Hamroev himself had used to refer to his wife at a meeting a year earlier, which stuck in the child’s memory, leading him to adopt the same form of address. Sobiraxon’s social role is depicted as that of the primary caregiver – the person who bears the burden of daily upbringing and deals with issues firsthand. Hamdam, meanwhile, rejects the role of the obedient subject; he evades restrictions imposed by adults, renders punishments ineffective by adapting to them, and occupies a social role defined by the repetition of adult language.

In Khakhhor’s stories, the concepts of social status and role hold particular significance due to the broad scope of their impact. The author has revealed the characters' states of mind to the reader in a clear, simple, and concise manner. We have seen evidence of this in the examples cited above. The characters’ speech clearly demonstrates their positions and social roles within society.

Conclusion

In summary, the subject of modern linguistics is the human being; this signifies “anthropocentric linguistics” – an approach that places the human at the center.



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Consequently, an individual's standing, status, or specific role in society is reflected in their speech, making this one of the key topics in contemporary linguistics. The full range of a language's capabilities and characteristics is defined by the speech of the social groups who speak it.

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