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FORMAL FORMS OF ADDRESS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THEIR EVOLUTION IN THE 19TH–21ST CENTURIES

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Статтю присвячено аналізу вживання офіційних форм звертання в британській та американській прозі XIX–XXI ст. На численних прикладах показано, що вони зазнають певної еволюції залежно від зміни стосунків між членами англomовного суспільства.

Ключові слова: спілкування, ввічливість, офіційна форма звертання, співрозмовник.

Статья посвящена анализу употребления официальных форм обращения в британской и американской прозе XIX–XXI ст. На многочисленных примерах показано, что они претерпевают определенную эволюцию в зависимости от изменения отношений между членами англоязычного общества.

Ключевые слова: общение, вежливость, официальная форма обращения, собеседник.

The article analyzes the use of formal forms of addressing people in British and American prose of the 19th–21st centuries. Numerous examples illustrate the fact that they undergo certain evolution due to the changes in relationships between members of the English-speaking community.

Key words: communication, politeness, formal form of address, interlocutor.

The process of communication attracts more attention of different researchers in the light of globalization, broadening the contacts and the media development and as a result, it becomes an object of investigation. Being a member of society, a bearer of any culture is interested in effective communication, whose success depends on the way of establishing communication between interlocutors. Consequently, the problem of address advances to the forefront. It is connected with the shift of linguistics towards pragmatics and the study of functioning of speech in real acts of communication with an increased interest in sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic and linguo-cultural subject matter and broader – in the study of 'the human component' in language [1, p. 4].

Address is included into a wide context of language communication, which takes place in a concrete ethno-cultural social community of people with their interests, intentions, aims, habits and skills of interaction and is regarded as a component of politeness strategies [3, p.157; 6, p. 23].

Politeness is the observance of communicative norms by means of using communicative strategies which reflect the sociocultural values of a given society. H. P. Grice defines politeness as a principle of social interaction based on respect to the personality of a partner [2, p. 224]. During the 19th–21st centuries in conditions of official communication the forms of address to the most privileged strata of society have remained invariable. This phenomenon can be explained by the firmness of the royal power. Moreover, the class of ambassadors, judges, archbishops is comparatively not very large and somehow unified. So, at the beginning of the 21st century the forms of address to a king or queen – *Your Majesty*, to the successors of the monarch – *Your Royal Highness, Your Highness*, to a duke – *Your Grace*, to a marquis, count, viscount or baron – *Madam, Your Lordship*, to a baronet or an owner of knighthood for outstanding services – *Sir, Lady*, to an archbishop – *Your Grace or My Lord*, to a Lord Mayor – *My Lord or Mr. Mayor*, to an ambassador – *Your Excellency or Mr. Ambassador*, to a judge – *Your Honour* are still used. The form '*Your Worship*' is used to a magistrate in this context as an expression of respect and according to the norms of professional etiquette.

As a title of nobility, the uses of '*lady*' in Britain are parallel to those of '*lord*'. It is thus a less formal alternative to the full title giving the specific rank, of marchioness, countess, viscountess or baroness, whether as the title of the husband's rank by right or courtesy, or as the lady's title in her own right [7, p. 541]. The titles of '*lord*' and '*lady*' were

used at the beginning of the 19th century: *Dorian smiled and shook his head: 'I am afraid I don't think so, **Lady Henry**. I never talk during music – at least, during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it in conversation'* [21, p. 31]. From this example we can conclude that it was obligatory to mention the name of the husband in the title. At the beginning of the 21st century the form begins to be used as an informal, often brusque, form of address to a woman: *'Excuse me, **lady**, but I'm Johnny's sister'* [22, p. 304]. In this example the form adds a negative emotional colouring, such as irritation because the speaker is dissatisfied with some actions of the addressee.

Some other honorifics are represented in fiction and have been popular among aristocracy and bohemians: *'And what does she get annoyed with you about, **Duchess?**'* [21: 110]. In the given example Dorian is not quite acquainted with the representative of aristocracy, therefore he uses her title as a form of address. If the title does not concern the members of the aristocracy, it may be used without names/surnames or other add-on: *'The President asked, was the Accused openly denounced or secretly?' 'Openly, **President**'* [11, p. 119].

However, due to the process of democratization the aristocracy can offer their own way of address, the forms of which may include surnames, endearing words, etc: *'**Dear Judge Mattison**, I'm shaken by how difficult this letter is for me to write. I was told that you may need it to better understand my little brother'* [16, p. 311]. We can presume that this letter was written by a very young person who does not know all the formulas of etiquette but surely the judge will accept such a letter as the speaker probably heard somebody calling a representative of the court in the above-mentioned way.

The first stage of evolution in the formal forms of address goes back to the period of the Victorian era. Old aristocratic classes lose their power and instead new classes appear on the stage due to the economic progress and industrial transformations [5, p. 11]. They are descended from the lower classes and after accumulating capital they become landlords, owners of state property, merchants or even bohemians, who can afford servants. Thus, gentlemen are widely addressed as *'sir'*: *The board were sitting in solemn conclave, when Mr. Bumble rushed into the room in great excitement, and addressing the gentleman in the high chair, said: '**Mr. Limbkins**, I beg your pardon, **sir!** Oliver Twist has asked for more!'* [12, p. 20]. From this example we can see that the speaker uses both forms of formal address *'sir'* and *'Mr.'* to emphasize his great respect to the man, though *'sir'* in this context sounds more ceremonial.

The form equivalent to the form *'sir'* among females is *'madam'*, or *'madame'*; it is a polite form of address for women, often contracted to *'ma'am'*. These forms are used when the woman reached a definite status in the society or was the wife of a man with such status. Children from workhouses use this form of address towards landladies or unknown women in the street as they were taught to address them this way. In addition to that, *'ma'am'* is used in combination with some other forms of address, even between the members of the family: *'Mrs. Bumble, **ma'am!**' said Mr. Bumble with a sentimental sternness* [12, p. 419]. In this example we can see that the form *'ma'am'* is used in a ceremonial way to attract a woman's attention.

It is also necessary to mention that the form *'Master'* was used in Great Britain for men of some rank by any manual worker or servant employee addressing his employer (his master), but also generally by those lower in status to gentlemen, priests, or scholars. It was later extended to all respectable men and was the forerunner of *'Mister'*. The form *'Master'* is used sometimes in the UK to describe the male head of a large estate or household who employs many domestic workers.

After its replacement in common speech by *'Mister'*, *'Master'* was preserved as a form of address only for boys who have not yet entered society.

The next level in the process of evolution is connected with the extension of usage of the forms *'Mr.'*/*'Mrs.'*/*'Miss'*. It is marked by the processes in British society when the old bourgeoisie was ousted by the representatives of the new classes and ceremonial address became a thing of the past. The circle of communication of these classes extended and they simply could not address everyone as *'sir'* or *'madame'*. The forms *'Mr.'* and *'Mrs.'* begin to be used by servants, friends, members of a family. They can be accompanied either by the name or surname of the addressee. *'Mr.'* can be used with the name of the addressee if the surname is unknown or is not important for the addresser: *'The old schoolroom, **Mr. Dorian?**' she exclaimed* [21, p. 69]. The servant addresses the

speaker using this form of address. Usually these forms are accompanied by surnames: *'You have not spoiled my pleasure in meeting you, Mr. Gray,'* [21, p. 20]. The form of address is used between the bohemians. *'You, Mr. Bumble!' 'I, Mrs. Mann. We name our foundlings in the alphabetical order'* [12, p. 18]. *'Mrs.'* is used for a married woman who does not carry another rank or title, such as Doctor, Professor, Lady, Dame, Baroness, etc.

During the 19th century the form of address to young ladies *'Miss'* also extends the limits of its usage. The form originates in the 17th century as a contraction of the form *'Mistress'* used for all women. Due to the processes of democratization the form was taken to mark unmarried women: *'Miss Manette, your mother took this course with you'* [11, p. 22]. This form can be accompanied by a name: *'And you, Miss Rose,' said the doctor, turning to the young lady'* [12, p. 333]; by a surname: *'Miss Eyre, have you ever lived in town?'* [8, p. 125]; or both: *'Well, you have been crying, Miss Jane Eyre; can you tell me what about?'* [8, p. 35]. The form *'Miss'* is also used if the conversation occurs by chance, for example, in the street: *'What can I do for you, miss?' he inquired surveying her curiously* [13, p. 25].

For addressing several interlocutors the forms *'ladies'* or *'gentlemen'* are used: *'What'll you give, gen'l'men? Come! Don't be too hard on a poor man'* [12, p. 21]. The industrial revolution and the gradual social changes widened the usage of this term. Now doctors, lawyers, merchants could be called *'gentlemen'*. *'Ladies,' said he, turning to his family, Miss Temple, teachers, and children, you all see this girl?!'* [8, p. 70]. From this example we can see that the same thing concerns women of the above-mentioned profession.

Thus, we can make a conclusion that due to the political stability of constitutional monarchy formal ways of address to the members of royal family and upper classes in the society remained stable as this class is not very large and people in most cases supported their politics. However, new classes appear in the middle of the 19th century and some forms of address undergo concrete changes. The forms *'Mr./Mrs./Miss'* replace the ceremonial *'Master', 'sir', 'madame'*. The usage of the forms widens and the variety of possible contexts changes.

The 20th century was marked by considerable changes in the British society. The country still took the leading positions in the world as for the introduction of machines, industrial transformations and the building of big industrial cities. The working class grows stronger, people are not afraid to claim their rights and justice. All these processes indicate the necessity to simplify the forms of address and make them all unified towards all members of the society.

Thus, the form *'Mister'* widens its usage: it is used to establish contacts between partners in order to have further communication: *'Won't you sit down, Mr. Eden?' the girl was saying* [18, p. 12]. In this example we can see that a girl addresses a young man whom she has just met and she still does not know anything about his personality. Though the interlocutors may be of the same age but have different ranks, the senior one addresses the junior as *'Mister'*: *'Can't say how glad I am to see you, Mr. Eden. Often wondered what you were like'* [18, p. 200].

The form *'sir'* performs several functions in new conditions. First of all, it becomes a fixed form of address in correspondence. This form of address begins to be used in limited circles for the purpose of showing respect in accordance with speech etiquette. At the same time, it is used by the speaker towards the addressee only for the purpose of establishing a contact without a deliberate obligation to continue further conversation.

Speaking of the female formal forms of address, we can observe that they also undergo certain changes. First of all, the form *'Ms.'* is revived in the 20th century. This form was invented in the 17th century and was intended as a general form of address for women, regardless of marital status. This form derived from the then formal *'Mistress'*, which, like *'Mister'*, did not originally indicate marital status. The term was reinvented due to the feminist movement (second wave of feminists of the mid 1960s) in Europe and the USA. The American heritage book of English usage states that: *'Using Ms. obviates the need for the guesswork involved in figuring out whether to address someone as Mrs. or Miss: you can't go wrong with Ms. Whether the woman you are addressing is married or unmarried, has changed her name or not, Ms. is always correct'* [4, p. 274].

However, this form of address did not find proper support among the speakers and was preferable in business and written speech. Only several examples can be found in

our material to illustrate the representation of this form of address in everyday life: *'No, Ms. Gold! Not now! No one can stop Mother. She'll get me back'* [20, p. 59].

The most widespread formal forms of addressing women remain *'ma'am'*, *'Mrs.'*, *'Miss'*. *'Ma'am'* is used for women whom the lower and middle class considers to be aristocratic. This tendency is vivid in the novel *'Martin Eden': Never had he been at such an altitude of living and he kept himself in the background listening, observing and pleasuring, replying in reticent monosyllables, saying 'Yes, miss,' and 'No, miss,' to her, and 'Yes, ma'am,' and 'No, ma'am,' to her mother* [18, p. 22]. In this example we can see that the speaker shows his obligation and duty to address the addressees according to the formulas of etiquettes, and though it sounds a bit obsolete in the given society, he feels enthusiastic about it.

Furthermore, the form *'Mrs.'* is one of the mostly used formal forms of addressing women in the 20th century. We can observe it when the interlocutors are friends regardless of age. The communicative environment can be, for example, the relationship in the pattern *'patient-patient': 'Oh, but Mrs. Carlton, it's not that. It's only – I want to be doing something'* [10, p. 123]. Specialists also address women as *'Mrs.'* if the surname of an addressee is familiar. *'Mrs.'* accompanied by a name is never used.

Finally, the form *'Miss'* is used if the speaker is sure of the age and marital status of the addressee. What is more, if the young interlocutors have just been introduced to each other, the lady can also be addressed as *'Miss'*.

To sum up, the forms *'Mr.'* and *'Mrs.'* become widespread in formal conversation, they lose all shades of ceremony and the range of possible contexts with these forms is rather large.

At the end of the 20th century we can observe a tendency of decrease of social distance between interlocutors which leads to considerable democratization of the forms of address in formal discourse. According to our investigation, the ceremonial forms *'sir'/madam'* get disused. They are restricted by the professional etiquette: *'Sir? May I help you?' A granite-face security guard approached'* [19, p. 242]. In this example we can observe the usage of the form *'sir'* caused by the professional etiquette of the guards. Almost the same rules concern all the service staff. Drivers, police officers, doctors use the forms *'sir' / 'ma'am'* rather as obligation and necessity than as an expression of respect. This form of address seems to be inappropriate between colleagues of the same rank.

'Mister' remains the most widespread form of addressing men. However, this form is not used between colleagues of the same department (except if they do not know each other very well) even if they have a great difference in age. The head of a department addresses his/her workers as *'Mr./Mrs./Miss'* if they are qualified enough: *'Mrs. Godiva, they lost their mother only eighteen months ago –'* [17, p. 10]. The speaker is an honorable man in the city, he has a qualified nurse and he addresses her as *'Mrs.'* Usually the form *'Mr.'* is accompanied by a surname, but the important factor is how the employer asks to address him: *'Dinner in ten minutes, Mr. Adam'* [17, p. 31]. We can see that in this case the formula *'Mr. + name'* is also possible. And the next example shows us how the new nurse gets instructions of how the boss should be addressed: *'The name didn't seem to mean a thing to her.' 'Nice to meet you, Mr. Fortune.' 'Call me Adam'* [17, p. 37].

In the 21st century the formula *'Mr. / Mrs. /Ms. + surname'* is used in the British society towards the people who are older in age and have a definite status in the society. It can be used even between long-term friends or neighbours: *'Mr. Wood, I'm so glad to see you again!' Becky could feel tears running down her cheeks* [22, p. 223]. The given example shows that the speaker is a young lady who addresses her neighbour according to the above-mentioned formula despite their being neighbours. The distance in the relationship between relatives is emphasized by the same formula: *'My father was just leaving,' Adam said, pointedly but quietly, 'Thank you anyway.' 'No problem. It was good to meet you, Mr. Fortune. Be careful out in that cold, won't you?'* [17, p. 40]. To emphasize her respect, the speaker addresses the father of her fiancé.

As we can observe, if 20 years ago the interlocutors could use the above-mentioned formulas for a long period of time until friendly terms were established, nowadays they use names in address even if they are supposed to have hostile relations: *'Taylor was silent for a moment. 'Mrs. Buckley... 'Call me Quinn. We're of an age, after all. Mrs. Buckley always makes me think of Jake's mother'* [14, p. 211]. Here we can

observe that the speakers do not know each other very well, but as the addressee admits they are of an age, there is a tendency to turn the conversation into an informal direction.

According to our investigation, we can see that the form *'Miss'* is used as an equal form of *'ma'am'* only in some communicative situations: *'Ma'am, you'd better give me your name, then,' 'Laura Beaumont,' 'Pleased to meet you, Miss Beaumont. It is Miss Beaumont, isn't it?' 'Yes...Miss'* [17, p. 111]. From this example it is clear that the speaker is uncertain of the marital status of the addressee. So, firstly he addresses her as *'ma'am'* according to the professional etiquette and then wants to get more information about her. For this he needs to establish communicative contacts with the addressee. In general, there is a tendency to ask again politely about the marital status of an addressee: *'Good evening, Miss Beaumont.' He started forward, then stopped and passed a look from Adam to Laura, 'It is Miss, isn't it?'* [17, p. 40]. The next examples also show that the addressees define their status: *'Ms. Johnson, we just need – 'Miss.' 'Excuse me?' 'It's Miss Johnson'* [14, p. 186]. We can conclude that the form *'Ms.'* is more popular nowadays than it was in the 20th century, though everyday communication still does not give us many examples of its usage.

The form *'Miss'* is used to address young ladies in occasional conversations: *'Can I help you, miss?' An older man with a thick head of graying hair approached her. 'I'm looking for Sixth Avenue'* [19, p. 8].

To summarize, we can say that the beginning of the 21st century is marked by gradual though not radical changes in the formal forms of address with a tendency to shorten social distance between interlocutors. Such processes as individualization, contacts with different layers of society, gender equality assist the democratization in the formal forms of address.

The usage of **job titles** for designation of professions or occupations demands special attention. In the 19th century the way of address denoting job titles was not widespread. Communicants from the upper classes preferred to be addressed as *'sir'/madam'* and representatives of the working class were addressed by names. Gradually a new middle class grew in power, whose members originated from the lower classes. Even if they took a high status in the society they tried to get rid of the ceremonial way of address as it was in the previous centuries. Moreover, people from the same social level could send for a doctor or hire a porter, so there was no necessity to address the representatives of the same layer as *'sir'/ma'am'*. With the development of engineering and motor industry new professions appeared which caused the emergence of new titles which were used by addressers. The workers of the rising service sector were often addressed by their job titles: *'There will be a packet to Calais tomorrow, drawer?'* [11, p. 40].

In the United Kingdom the title *'Doctor'* generally functions in both the academic field, for those who hold doctoral-level research degrees, and the clinical field, for those who hold medical degrees and/or related professional doctorates: *'Doctor Manette, look upon the prisoner. Have you seen him before?'* [11, p. 427]. Other medical titles are not popular in this period. However, there can be found the usage of military titles in the 19th century: *'Surely, colonel,' cried Lady Ingram, 'you would not encourage such a low impostor?'* [8, p. 194].

A typical way of address with an emphasis on profession or occupation is described by the formula *'title+surname'* or simply *'title'* depending on the level of acquaintance of the communicants or the level of their culture and education: *'Monitors, fetch the supper-trays'* [8, p. 52]. In this example we see that the superintendent, while giving orders, uses the form addressing a group of children.

A separate group of the forms of address belongs to the nouns which unite potential addressees according to their role for the rest of the society or the whole country: *'Patriots!' said Defarge, in a determined voice, 'are we ready?'* [11, p. 233]. Patriots are people who vigorously support their country and are prepared to defend it against enemies or detractors [7, p. 207]. In the next example we see the unification of people who are native registered or naturalized members of a state, nation, or political community: *'I salute you, citizens. – And the first danger passed!'* [11, p. 233]. In general, such forms of address have been popular till present times.

At the beginning of the 20th century new professions develop and accordingly they are differentiated. As for the medical sphere, *'Doctor'* is one of the most widespread titles:

'But, Doctor, don't you see? We can't wait as long as that' [10, p. 249]. Senior and junior medical workers have different job titles such as nurse, sister, matron. *'Nurse'* is defined as 'a person trained to care for the sick or infirm, especially in a hospital' [7, p. 479]. It is used for the representatives of both genders who perform the functions of a junior medical worker: *'I'll fetch my bag later, Nurse'* [9, p. 98].

'Sister' is used towards the nurses who have a higher position in a hospital and are necessarily females: *'It's no use, Sister, I can't work miracles...'* [10, p. 228]. *'Matron'* is used towards a senior medical worker in a hospital: *'But surely, Matron...'* *It didn't sound like his voice at all* [10, p. 219]. The academic titles in the forms of address also win popularity: *'Don't be so smug, Professor. I may still show you a few tricks one of these days'* [9, p. 323].

In general, the 20th century caused progress in all spheres of life of the British society. More people from the lower classes could receive a good education and therefore get job titles which symbolized their good qualifications. Britain has become one of the most developed countries in the world. New job titles were received by people in the process of development of scientific and military spheres. By the end of the 20th century new ranks in the military sphere appeared. The ranks are differentiated in the following way: Admiral, General, Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Sergeant, Inspector, Officer: *'What's the matter, Sergeant?'* [15, p. 222].

'You're not sending him back, Officer,' said Ms. Gold. *My eyes gleamed with joy* [20, p. 6]. We can find many examples of the usage of military titles at the beginning of the 21st century: *'Yes, Lieutenant'* he answered, *Adam's apple bobbing'* [14, p. 24]. *'You're making assumptions, Captain'* [14, p. 56].

Police perform new functions of maintenance of public order, investigation of criminal cases and that is why new departments and job titles appear: *'Well, Special Agent, since she's missing both hands I'd say we should find another right around this area, shouldn't we?'* [14, p. 24]. Other examples are: *'Send poems to Whitney? What exactly are you accusing me of, Detective?'* [14, p. 359]. *'Thank you, Sheriff. Not much better in Nashville this time of the year'* [14, p. 103]. Usually this form of address is used by representatives of other departments or by common citizens who do not know the staff by surnames. However, in communication between colleagues there is a tendency to shorten the formal forms of address with job titles to make speech laconic. The main idea of a conversation is to exchange information but not to emphasize the professional achievements described in job titles: *'Good morning, Cap. What can I do for you?'* [14, p. 55]. Sometimes abbreviations are used: *'Ok, LT. We'll let you know'* [14, p. 126]. However, if a new junior worker does not know the exact job title of his senior colleague, he/she can interpret it in his/her own way, though it may cause negative emotions: *'Can we move her now, Agent?'* *The voice was tinged with sarcasm* [14, p. 176].

There are occasions when the addressee asks the addresser to call him by name instead of a title: *'Look, Inspector –'* *My name's Jason'* [15, p. 140]. If a citizen calls a service centre, he/she addresses it as a whole structure as he/she does not know the rank of the addressee: *'Then go away, Dispatch. If no one's dead, they don't need me'* [14, p. 315]. The head of an organization is addressed as 'boss' as the form generalizes the fact that the addressee is responsible for the whole department: *'Gotcha, boss. I'll call ahead and have a photo array put together'* [14, p. 324].

Some of the formal forms of addressing common workers are used to draw their attention but they may seem a bit impolite to the addressee and that is why they are scarcely used: *'To Denver, driver,'* she said flatly, *and closed the door* [17, p. 228].

Thus, we can conclude that the forms of address including job titles have been constantly changing. This depends on the level of development or decline of a concrete profession. In the 20th–21st centuries some of the forms of job titles were reduced while being used between colleagues as there is a tendency to shorten the social distance between communicants.

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