

## Cross-Cultural Analysis of Politeness Strategies in English and Uzbek Communication

SARIMSAKOVA SHOIRA ULUGBEK QIZI  
*National University of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan*

### ABSTRACT

*This article offers a thorough analysis of politeness strategies in communication between Uzbek and English, providing insightful information about the cultural aspects of politeness in cross-cultural settings. Politeness plays a crucial role in effective communication, and cultural nuances can significantly influence how politeness is expressed and interpreted. Through a comparative examination of politeness strategies in English and Uzbek, in this article it is sought to uncover similarities and differences in the ways speakers of these languages convey politeness in their interactions.*

**Keywords:** Politeness, cross-cultural communication, politeness strategies, honorifics

### INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is based on being polite, which is also essential for forming connections and influencing social interactions. It is a dynamic and complex idea that differs greatly among cultures, reflecting the many standards and principles that govern interpersonal relationships. Cultural factors have a significant impact on how people show politeness in their native tongues, creating a complex web of linguistic patterns and social norms. This article begins a comparative investigation of the politeness tactics used in Uzbek and English communication in this scenario. Through an exploration of the nuances of politeness in these language contexts, the article aims to reveal

the cultural foundations that regulate the manifestation of deference, civility, and interpersonal harmony in these diverse language communities.

#### LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

The relationship between language, culture, and courtesy in cross-cultural communication has been thoroughly studied in the past. Brown and Levinson's groundbreaking work on politeness theory established the foundation for comprehending how people use language to maneuver through potentially dangerous circumstances (Brown & Levinson 1987). Their groundbreaking research demonstrated the critical role that cultural norms and values play in influencing these communication methods while also clarifying the tactical application of language skills for handling face-threatening behaviors. Scholars like Watts have recently built upon this notion, stressing the cultural diversity of politeness norms and how they affect communication techniques (Richard 2003). Research comparing politeness techniques among languages has uncovered fascinating variations in the expression of deference and respect. The impact of cultural values on communication patterns has been largely highlighted by Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimensions theory, which shows how aspects like power distance and uncertainty avoidance affect politeness customs. The theory of cultural dimensions offers important insights into how cultural values form norms of politeness by taking these dimensions into account and examining how they affect communication patterns. Greater sensitivity and efficacy in cross-cultural encounters can be fostered by having a better understanding of the relationships between these characteristics and politeness practices. Studies on particular languages and cultures, including those on Italian politeness by Bargiela-Chiappini (2016) and Chinese politeness by Gu, have also shed important light on the influence of cultural norms on communication habits (Gu 1990). These research works highlight how crucial cultural context is for deciphering politeness cues and comprehending social dynamics in linguistically different contexts.

In order to examine politeness tactics in English and Uzbek communication, a mixed-methods approach was used in this article. Naturalistic observations of encounters in the real world and semi-structured interviews with fluent speakers of both languages were the two main techniques used to collect data. In the naturalistic observations several processes have been applied to obtain the result. The first one is sample selection which is a diverse range of English and Uzbek speakers from various age groups and social backgrounds were observed in everyday conversational settings. The second one is data collection that recording audio and video samples of interactions, focusing on instances where politeness strategies were employed and the last stage is transcribing recorded data after which analyzing to identify recurring patterns of politeness, such as the use of honorifics, politeness formulas, and speech acts. For example: In an English-speaking context, a typical scenario might involve a customer politely requesting assistance from a salesperson. For instance, a customer entering a bookstore could approach a salesperson and say, "Excuse me, could you please help me find a book on gardening? I appreciate your assistance." Here, the use of "Excuse me," "could you please," and "I appreciate your assistance" are common politeness markers in English that convey respect and courtesy in a customer service setting. Conversely, in an Uzbek-speaking context, a different interaction might exemplify the use of formal language markers to convey respect in a business setting. For instance, in a formal meeting between colleagues, a junior employee might address their senior counterpart using honorific titles and formal expressions. They might say, "*Baxtiyor aka/Rahmonjanovich, bu masala bo'yicha sizning fikringiz qanday, sizning fikringiz ham biz uchun qiziq, sizni qarashlaringizni qadrlaymiz va inobatga olamiz.*" which translates to "Thank you, Bakhtiyor brother, How is your opinion on this matter, your ideas are also interesting for us, we will appreciate your thoughts and take into account." Here, the use of "Aka/Rahmonjanovich" (Brother or middle name of the person), formal pronouns "*sizning*", honorific suffixes "*...ingiz*" and the formal structure of the sentence including phrases "*qiziq, qadrlaymiz, inobatga olamiz* / will appreciate, take into account"

indicates respect and politeness towards the listeners and improves his public image (face) among colleagues that reflect the cultural norms of respect and hierarchy embedded in Uzbek communication practices (Sarimsakova 2024). By contrasting these two scenarios, one from an English-speaking context and the other from an Uzbek-speaking context, we can observe how politeness is manifested differently based on cultural norms and linguistic conventions. This comparative analysis highlights the intricate ways in which politeness strategies vary across languages and societies, shedding light on the cultural underpinnings that shape communication practices in diverse linguistic contexts.

The semi-structured interview process also required three steps to gain a result, namely, participant selection, the process that native speakers of English and Uzbek were recruited for semi-structured interviews to provide insights into their perceptions and practices related to politeness. The next is interview protocol which asking people open-ended questions about their understanding of politeness, common politeness strategies, and cultural influences on their communication style which brought analysis session where interview responses were thematically analyzed to uncover common themes and variations in politeness strategies between English and Uzbek speakers. The results showed that the participant of the research Sarah, a seasoned marketing executive, presented a compelling work-related scenario that highlighted the need of expressing gratitude in email contact during an insightful interview with an English-speaking expert. Sarah described in detail a crucial instance in which she was working on a high-stakes project with a significant client. When the project was almost finished, Sarah took great care to write an email expressing her gratitude for the client's continuous assistance and cooperation. With a sincere note of appreciation, the email ended, "Thank you for your dedication to this project; your insights have been invaluable." Sarah stressed how important it was to show thanks in this cutthroat corporate world, not just as a matter of etiquette but also as a means of fostering long-lasting professional relationships. This story provides as an example of how being

grateful is a fundamental component of politeness, which promotes trust and goodwill in professional interactions in English-speaking environments.

Through an engaging conversation with a participant who spoke Uzbek, Jamshid, a well-liked community leader known for his observance of traditional values illustrated a cultural standard that perfectly captures the blend of formality and hospitality in Uzbek social interactions. Jamshid shared a special story of a recent family get-together in which he played the part of the kind host. Jamshid greeted visitors to his modest home with the utmost reverence, employing formal language markers that indicated deference and respect. With honorific terms like “Usta” (master) and “hola, amaki,” Jamshid gave the event a dignified and welcoming atmosphere. He made sure each guest felt valued and welcomed throughout the evening, demonstrating the absolute best of Uzbek hospitality. By employing expressions like “*Marhamat To’riga/Tepaga (Uyning tepa qismi) o’ting, olishib o’tiring*” (Please, have a seat at the upper part of the room, help yourself), Jamshid epitomized the cultural expectation of blending formal language markers with gestures of hospitality to create a harmonious and respectful atmosphere. This vivid portrayal underscores how politeness in Uzbek communication transcends mere words, encompassing a tapestry of traditions, respect, and generosity that define social interactions in Uzbekistan.

#### DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS

The cultural norms and values that are present in each society are reflected in the differences in politeness tactics used in English and Uzbek communication. Gaining rapport with language speakers and engaging in successful cross-cultural communication require an understanding of these distinctions. Understanding and honoring the politeness customs of both English and Uzbek can help people communicate across cultural boundaries more effectively and prevent miscommunications that can occur from different standards of decency. The cultural differences in politeness strategies used in English and Uzbek

communication highlight the different cultural norms and values that are present in each country. These variations influence how people behave in social situations, demonstrate reverence, and behave with respect in their own cultural contexts. Here are several examples that we have analyzed in both languages: in English most politeness strategies includes indirectness and hedging. In communication indirectness is often utilized to convey messages tactfully. For instance, rather than directly declining an invitation, a person might say, "I'll have to check my schedule" as a polite way to decline without causing offense. Expressing gratitude is another common politeness strategy in English communication. For example, at the end of a job interview, a candidate might say, "Thank you for considering me for this opportunity," showcasing appreciation and respect for the interviewer's time and consideration while in Uzbek culture politeness strategies mostly consists of formal language markers. Usually communication places a strong emphasis on using formal language markers and honorifics to show respect and politeness. For example, when addressing an elder family member, a young person might use the term "*Ota*" (father) or "*Ona*" (mother) to convey reverence, deference and "*amaki*" (uncle), "*xola*" (aunt) in spite of not being their maternal or paternal siblings or sometimes so as to show a high respect towards their biological mother and father, the Uzbek may call their father "*Padaribuzrikvorim*" and "*Volidai muhtaramim*" the special word for their mother, the uncial words related to Uzbek culture based on politeness. Besides, Hospitality is a cornerstone of Uzbek culture, reflected in elaborate expressions of welcome and generosity. When hosting guests, an Uzbek host might say, "*Olishib o'tiring, O'z uyingizdagidek his qiling, bir payola choyga kiring/mehmon buling*" (Help yourself, make yourself at home, be my guest with a cup of tea.), emphasizing the importance of hospitality and respect for visitors. Comprehending and honoring these variations in politeness is essential for successful intercultural dialogue and the development of relationships. Understanding and adjusting to the politeness methods of Uzbek and English communication can help people negotiate cross-cultural relationships more skillfully

and promote mutual respect and understanding like an English participant who is aware of Uzbek customs can address their Uzbek colleague in accordance with Uzbek politeness rules by employing formal language markers and expressions of respect which would help to build a good connection. Understanding the importance of Uzbek hospitality, an English host can extend a warm welcome to their guest and show them respect by giving tea and saying, "Please, please make yourself at home." People can create harmonious relationships across linguistic and cultural divides, close communication gaps, and promote cultural awareness by identifying and adjusting to the politeness norms of various cultures (Safarov 2008). In cross-cultural relationships, this awareness not only makes things go more smoothly but also aids in preventing miscommunication and fostering respect for one another.

The analysis revealed several key findings regarding politeness strategies in English and Uzbek communication. In English interactions, politeness often involves the use of indirect speech acts, mitigating language, and expressions of gratitude and deference. In contrast, Uzbek communication places a strong emphasis on showing respect through formal language markers, honorifics, and expressions of hospitality.

#### CONCLUSION

The examination of politeness techniques in communication between Uzbek and English highlights the intricate relationship between language, culture, and social conventions. This cross-cultural investigation has shed light on the complex relationship between language use and cultural values by illuminating the subtle ways in which people demonstrate hospitality, courtesy, and respect within these different linguistic contexts. Through an examination of the distinct politeness customs associated with each language, this article expands our understanding of the ways in which cultural variables impact interpersonal relationships and communication methods. The divergent views on politeness in English and Uzbek communication serve as a reminder of the variety of human interaction patterns and the significance of

cultural sensitivity in promoting successful cross-cultural communication. Looking ahead, future research in this field could further explore specific contexts or genres of communication to uncover more detailed and context-specific insights into the role of politeness in intercultural interactions. By focusing on diverse communication settings such as professional environments, family interactions, or online discourse, researchers can refine their understanding of how politeness manifests in various social contexts and how it impacts relationships and outcomes in intercultural exchanges. By continuing to investigate and analyze these nuances, we can deepen our understanding of cross-cultural communication dynamics and cultivate greater sensitivity and effectiveness in our interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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**SARIMSAKOVA SHOIRA ULUGBEK QIZI**  
PHD STUDENT,  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF UZBEKISTAN,  
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN.  
E-MAIL: <SARIMSAKOVA\_S@NUU.UZ>