

COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF "POLITENESS" IN MODERN ENGLISH AND UZBEK COMMUNICATIVE CULTURES

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Abstract. *This study presents a comparative linguacultural and ethnopragmatic analysis of the macro-concept of "politeness" within contemporary English and Uzbek communicative cultures. Utilizing Brown and Levinson's face-management theory alongside Farzad Sharifian's cultural conceptualisations, the research investigates the fundamental structural divergence between English "negative politeness" (predicated on privacy, non-imposition, and personal autonomy) and Uzbek "positive politeness" (grounded in collective solidarity, hierarchical deference, and hospitable insistence). The paper analyzes the linguistic realisations of these models across indirect speech acts, honorific morphemes, and discursive softeners. The findings offer a concrete pragmatic framework designed to mitigate communicative breakdowns and cultural misunderstandings in cross-cultural professional and academic exchanges.*

Keywords: *politeness concept, cultural linguistics, ethnopragmatics, negative politeness, positive politeness, face-threatening acts, cultural schema.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu tadqiqotda zamonaviy ingliz va o'zbek muloqot madaniyatlaridagi "xushmuomalalik" makrokonsepti lingvomadaniy va etnopragmatik jihatdan qiyosiy tahlil qilinadi. P. Braun va S. Levinsonning "qiyofa" (face) nazariyasi hamda F. Sharifianning madaniy konseptualizatsiya konsepsiyasiga tayangan holda, ingliz "salbiy xushmuomalaligi" (shaxsiy daxlsizlik, majburlamaslik va shaxsiy erkinlik) hamda o'zbek "ijobiy xushmuomalaligi" (jamoaviy birdamlik, iyerarxik ehtirom va mehmondo'stlik qistovi) o'rtasidagi konseptual tafovutlar ochib beriladi. Maqolada ushbu modellarning bilvosita nutq aktlari, hurmat kategoriyasi va nutqiy yumshatkichlar orqali lisoniy ifodalanishi tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot xulosalari madaniyatlararo muloqotdagi pragmatik uzilishlar va madaniy tushunmovchiliklarning oldini olishga qaratilgan amaliy xulosalarni taqdim etadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *xushmuomalalik konsepti, lingvomadaniyatsunoslik, etnopragmatika, salbiy xushmuomalalik, ijobiy xushmuomalalik, qiyofaga tahdid soluvchi aktlar, madaniy sxema.*

Introduction

The globalization of cross-border academic, diplomatic, and socioeconomic communication has positioned intercultural pragmatics at the forefront of contemporary linguistic research. Within the anthropocentric paradigm, natural language is examined not merely as an autonomous formal system, but as an interactive manifestation of cultural cognition, social

rituals, and communal worldviews. As institutional and international partnerships expand between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the wider world, decoding implicit cultural codes becomes an essential prerequisite for effective interaction.

Central to these interactive practices is the macro-concept of politeness; however, its conceptual parameters and discursive manifestations differ markedly across ethnolinguistic communities. In English communicative culture, politeness is historically centered on individual autonomy, personal privacy, and the minimization of social imposition. Conversely, Uzbek communicative culture is historically organized around collective harmony, kinship-oriented solidarity, and overt respect toward age and social hierarchy. When speakers from these two traditions interact, the uncritical transfer of native pragmatic strategies into the target language often induces communicative friction, termed "cross-cultural pragmatic failure" (Thomas, 1983). This thesis investigates the ethnopragmatic and linguacultural architecture of politeness in English and Uzbek to provide a sound analytical basis for cross-cultural communication.

Literature review

The foundational theoretical model of linguistic politeness was formulated by Brown and Levinson (1987), who introduced the dual conceptualisation of "positive face" (the universal desire to be appreciated, approved of, and integrated into the social group) and "negative face" (the desire for freedom of action, personal space, and freedom from imposition). While their framework claimed broad universality, subsequent researchers pointed out that Western pragmatic models disproportionately foreground individualistic negative politeness over collective relational cohesion.

In subsequent decades, the field evolved through interactional and discursive paradigms. Jonathan Culpeper of Lancaster University expanded politeness research into the domain of impoliteness, demonstrating that polite or impolite evaluations are not fixed grammatical categories, but dynamically negotiated relational assessments that depend heavily on context and cultural expectations (Culpeper, 2011). Concurrently, Farzad Sharifian established the paradigm of Cultural Linguistics, establishing that communicative routines and speech acts are grounded in culturally distributed conceptual schemas (Sharifian, 2017).

In Uzbek linguistics, the study of communicative etiquette, honorifics, and anthropocentric semantics has been significantly advanced by N. Mahmudov, who demonstrated that Uzbek linguistic etiquette reflects deep-seated axiological values rooted in communal solidarity, familial respect, and spiritual deference (Mahmudov, 2017). Furthermore, recent studies in cross-cultural pragmatics emphasize that the pragmatic misuse of discourse markers and speech-act modifiers across individualistic and collectivistic speech communities frequently triggers severe evaluative dissonance (Kádár & Haugh, 2013). Integrating these complementary frameworks allows for a robust, multidimensional analysis of politeness across English and Uzbek.

Methodology

To uncover both structural commonalities and pragmatic divergence in the realization of politeness, this study adopts a contrastive pragmalinguistic and cognitive-cultural methodology. The empirical material comprises parallel conversational routines in modern British English and Uzbek across three high-stakes interactional speech genres: requests, refusals, and host-guest hospitality rituals.

The analytical architecture triangulates Brown and Levinson's face-management theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) with Sharifian's cultural conceptualisations model (Sharifian, 2017). Authentic speech patterns were examined using textual selections from contemporary dramatic literature, conversational corpora, and naturalistic field observations of institutional and familial discourse in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, functional speech-act mapping was employed to measure degrees of indirectness, pragmatic hedging, and honorific morphological markers, categorizing occurrences of potential communicative breakdown through the taxonomy of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983).

Main results and discussion

The comparative pragmatic analysis demonstrates clear functional divergences in how the cultural schema of politeness is realized in the two languages:

1. **Negative Politeness vs. Positive Face Affirmation:** In British English discourse, politeness is predominantly organized around negative politeness strategies aimed at safeguarding the addressee's personal boundaries (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Direct imperatives are systematically avoided in favour of conventionalized indirect speech acts containing epistemic and modal modifiers ("Could you possibly check this draft?" or "I was wondering if you might have a moment"). Linguistic softeners and hedges ("a bit", "sort of", "rather") are consistently deployed to lower the illocutionary force and provide the hearer with an effortless opportunity to decline without causing social disharmony.

In Uzbek, by contrast, politeness places primary emphasis on positive politeness and communal solidarity. Direct requests are entirely acceptable and polite when framed by familial terms and affectionate honorific markers ("Uka, mana bu xatni yetkazib yuboring", "Opajon, ozroq yordam bera olmaysizmi?"). Here, the burden of imposition is not alleviated through distance or modal hesitation, but through expressing warmth, closeness, and social solidarity (Mahmudov, 2017).

2. **Hierarchical Morphosyntax vs. Syntactic Modulation:** The Uzbek language possesses a rich, grammatically codified honorific system. Deference toward elders, mentors, and guests is obligatory and marked morphosyntactically through 2nd-person and 3rd-person pluralization ("Otam ishdan keldilar", "Ustozimiz shunday dedilar"). In modern English, which maintains a uniform second-person pronoun ("you"), deference cannot rely on inflectional verbal shifts; it must instead be expressed through syntactic complexity, tentative questions, and intonational modulation (Culpeper, 2011). Non-native speakers who miss this distinction often perceive English as overly informal, or Uzbek as overly hierarchical.

3. **Ritualized Insistence in Hospitality:** A notable ethnopragmatic distinction occurs within host-guest interactions. In British communicative practice, respecting the guest's

negative face requires that an initial refusal ("No, thank you, I'm quite full") be taken at face value; continuing to press the guest is typically considered overbearing or intrusive. In Uzbek culture, however, the foundational cultural schema of "Mehmondo'stlik" (hospitality) explicitly demands repeated, caring insistence ("Oling, oling, hech narsa yemadingiz", "Oshdan oling, iltimos"). The guest's initial decline ("izzat-ikrom" or "istixola") is a polite ritual, and the host's continued insistence is not an invasion of autonomy, but an essential expression of genuine hospitality, respect, and communal warmth (Kádár & Haugh, 2013).

Conclusion and recommendations

The linguistic encoding of politeness in English and Uzbek reflects contrasting conceptual models of social relations. British English foregrounds individual space, non-imposition, and structural indirectness, whereas Uzbek foregrounds interpersonal proximity, hierarchical respect, and communal solidarity.

To turn these findings into practical outcomes, the following measures are recommended:

1. **Curricular Modernization:** Higher education institutions preparing translators and philologists should incorporate applied modules on Ethnopragmatics and Intercultural Communication, moving beyond purely formal grammatical instruction to target pragmatic competence (Thomas, 1983).

2. **Pragmatic Re-framing Training:** Language learners and professional interpreters should be systematically trained in pragmatic re-framing: recognizing that translating Uzbek hospitality insistence literally into English may be perceived as pressuring, while rendering English indirect directives literally into Uzbek can sound detached, uncertain, or cold.

3. **Compilation of Contrastive Pragmatic Glossaries:** Academic working groups should compile contrastive pragmatic guides detailing situational conversational formulas, hedging equivalents, and discourse markers to support seamless intercultural mediation (Culpeper, 2011; Mahmudov, 2017).

References:

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