

THEORIES OF POLITENESS IN FOREIGN AND UZBEK LINGUISTICS

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Politeness is one of the central concepts in pragmatics and sociolinguistics, reflecting how language users manage social relationships and interpersonal harmony through linguistic choices. This article aims to provide a comparative analysis of politeness theories as developed in foreign linguistics and Uzbek linguistics. The methodology is based on qualitative analysis of theoretical sources and comparative interpretation. The results demonstrate both universal and culture-specific aspects of politeness, revealing that while foreign theories emphasize individual face and strategic language use, Uzbek linguistics highlights collectivism, respect for age and status, and culturally embedded norms. The discussion underscores the importance of integrating local linguistic traditions into global politeness research. The article concludes that politeness theories benefit from a cross-cultural perspective that accounts for both universal pragmatic principles and national-cultural specificity.

Keywords: politeness theory, pragmatics, face, Uzbek linguistics, intercultural communication.

Introduction

Politeness has long been recognized as a crucial component of human communication, playing a significant role in maintaining social harmony and regulating interpersonal relations. In linguistics, politeness is studied primarily within the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. The way speakers choose words, grammatical forms, and discourse strategies often reflects their intention to show respect, reduce conflict, or establish social distance or closeness.

In foreign linguistics, politeness has been theorized extensively, especially since the late twentieth century. Foundational models such as Brown and Levinson's theory of face, Leech's politeness maxims, and later discursive and interactional approaches have shaped modern pragmatic studies. These theories often aim to explain universal principles underlying polite behavior across languages and cultures.

Uzbek linguistics, while historically focusing more on grammar, lexicology, and stylistics, has increasingly addressed pragmatics and speech etiquette in recent decades. Politeness in Uzbek linguistic studies is closely connected with national culture, traditions, social hierarchy, and ethical norms. Concepts such as respect for elders, hospitality, and indirectness are deeply embedded in Uzbek communicative behavior.

The relevance of this study lies in the growing importance of intercultural communication and the need to understand how politeness operates across different linguistic and cultural systems. Despite extensive research in foreign linguistics, comparative studies involving Uzbek linguistics remain limited.



The aim of this article is to analyze and compare theories of politeness in foreign and Uzbek linguistics, identifying their similarities, differences, and complementary aspects.

The objectives of the study are:

- to review major politeness theories in foreign linguistics;
- to describe approaches to politeness in Uzbek linguistics;
- to compare these approaches from a pragmatic and cultural perspective;
- to highlight the implications for cross-cultural and intercultural communication.

Methodology. The present study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. The analysis is based on theoretical and comparative methods commonly used in linguistic research.

Data Sources

The data for the study consist of:

- classical and modern theoretical works on politeness in foreign linguistics;
- scholarly publications on pragmatics and speech etiquette in Uzbek linguistics;
- examples of politeness strategies discussed in secondary sources.

No experimental or corpus-based data were used; instead, the focus was on conceptual analysis and interpretation.

Analytical Framework

The research follows a comparative framework. First, major theories of politeness in foreign linguistics are described and systematized. Second, the treatment of politeness in Uzbek linguistics is examined. Finally, the two traditions are compared in terms of:

- underlying theoretical assumptions;
- the role of culture and social norms;
- linguistic realization of politeness.

Results

Politeness Theories in Foreign Linguistics

1. Brown and Levinson's Face Theory

One of the most influential theories of politeness was proposed by Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson. Their model is based on the concept of *face*, which they define as the public self-image that every individual wants to claim.

They distinguish between:

- **Positive face** – the desire to be approved of and appreciated;
- **Negative face** – the desire to act freely without imposition.



According to Brown and Levinson, many speech acts are potentially *face-threatening acts* (FTAs), such as requests, criticisms, or refusals. Speakers use politeness strategies to mitigate these threats. These strategies include:

- bald-on-record strategies;
- positive politeness;
- negative politeness;
- off-record (indirect) strategies.

This theory emphasizes rational choice and strategic language use, suggesting that speakers calculate the degree of politeness based on social distance, power relations, and the weight of imposition.

2. Leech's Politeness Principle

Geoffrey Leech proposed the Politeness Principle as a complement to Grice's Cooperative Principle. He introduced several politeness maxims, including:

- the Tact Maxim;
- the Generosity Maxim;
- the Approbation Maxim;
- the Modesty Maxim;
- the Agreement Maxim;
- the Sympathy Maxim.

Leech's model focuses on minimizing expressions that are unfavorable to others and maximizing expressions that are favorable. Unlike Brown and Levinson, Leech places more emphasis on moral and social norms rather than individual face.

3. Contemporary Approaches

Later approaches, such as Spencer-Oatey's Rapport Management Theory and discursive approaches to politeness, criticize earlier models for being overly universal and static. These approaches view politeness as:

- dynamic and context-dependent;
- negotiated in interaction;
- shaped by cultural expectations and discourse norms.

Politeness in Uzbek Linguistics

In Uzbek linguistics, politeness is often discussed within the framework of *nutq madaniyati* (speech culture), *muomala odobi* (communication ethics), and pragmatic stylistics.

Cultural Foundations of Politeness

Uzbek politeness is deeply rooted in cultural values such as:

- respect for elders and authority;



- collectivism and community orientation;
- hospitality and modesty.

These values influence linguistic choices, including forms of address, honorifics, and indirect speech acts.

Linguistic Means of Politeness

Politeness in Uzbek is expressed through:

- honorific forms and respectful pronouns;
- lexical items expressing respect and humility;
- indirect requests and softening particles;
- formulaic expressions used in greetings, apologies, and thanks.

For example, indirectness is often preferred in requests to avoid imposing on the interlocutor, especially when addressing elders or socially superior individuals.

Theoretical Orientation

Unlike foreign linguistics, Uzbek linguistics has traditionally focused less on abstract theoretical models and more on descriptive and normative aspects of polite speech. However, recent studies increasingly incorporate pragmatic concepts such as speech acts, context, and communicative intention.

Discussion. The comparison of politeness theories in foreign and Uzbek linguistics reveals both convergence and divergence.

From a theoretical perspective, foreign linguistics tends to emphasize:

- universality;
- individual face management;
- strategic choice in communication.

Uzbek linguistics, in contrast, places greater emphasis on:

- cultural norms and traditions;
- social hierarchy and collective values;
- ethical dimensions of communication.

While Brown and Levinson's theory can explain many politeness phenomena in Uzbek, it does not fully account for the strong role of age, kinship, and communal expectations. For instance, politeness in Uzbek communication is often obligatory rather than strategic, as respect for elders is a fixed social norm.

At the same time, integrating foreign theoretical frameworks into Uzbek linguistic studies can enhance analytical precision and allow for international academic dialogue. A culturally sensitive adaptation of politeness theories may provide a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatic behavior.



Conclusion

This article has examined theories of politeness in foreign and Uzbek linguistics within the IMRAD framework. The analysis shows that politeness is a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by linguistic, social, and cultural factors.

Foreign politeness theories offer valuable analytical tools and highlight universal aspects of human communication. Uzbek linguistics contributes rich insights into culturally specific norms and values that govern polite behavior.

The study concludes that:

- politeness cannot be fully understood without considering cultural context;
- comparative research enriches both local and global linguistic theory;
- future studies should combine theoretical models with empirical data from Uzbek discourse.

Such an integrative approach is essential for advancing pragmatics and improving intercultural communication competence.

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