

STYLISTIC AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF THE POLITENESS CATEGORY IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LITERARY WORKS

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Abstract. This article explores the stylistic and pragmatic features of the category of politeness in English and Uzbek literary works. The study examines how politeness strategies are linguistically realized and function within literary texts, emphasizing their role in character construction, interpersonal relations, and cultural representation. The findings demonstrate that politeness is not only a communicative strategy but also a stylistic device that reflects cultural norms, social hierarchy, and national identity.

Keywords: politeness, pragmatics, stylistics, literary discourse, speech acts, English language, Uzbek language, cultural norms, indirectness, communication.

СТИЛИСТИЧЕСКИЕ И ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ КАТЕГОРИИ ВЕЖЛИВОСТИ В АНГЛИЙСКИХ И УЗБЕКСКИХ ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫХ ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯХ

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются стилистические и прагматические особенности категории вежливости в английских и узбекских художественных текстах. Анализируются способы языковой реализации вежливости и её функции в литературном дискурсе, включая формирование образов персонажей, отражение межличностных отношений и культурных ценностей. Результаты показывают, что вежливость выступает не только как коммуникативная стратегия, но и как важное стилистическое средство, отражающее социальную иерархию и национальную специфику.

Ключевые слова: вежливость, прагматика, стилистика, художественный текст, речевые акты, английский язык, узбекский язык, культурные нормы.

Introduction. Politeness is a universal yet culturally specific phenomenon that plays a crucial role in human communication. Within the framework of pragmatics, politeness is viewed as a strategy used to maintain harmonious interpersonal relations and avoid conflict. In literary discourse, politeness acquires additional stylistic significance, becoming a tool for character development and narrative structure.

The study of politeness in English and Uzbek literary works is particularly relevant due to the differences in cultural norms, social hierarchies, and communicative traditions. While English tends to favor indirectness and individual autonomy, Uzbek culture emphasizes respect, hierarchy, and collectivism. These differences are reflected in linguistic choices and stylistic devices. Indirectness is a key feature of English politeness. So, the aim of this article is to analyze the stylistic and pragmatic features of politeness in English and Uzbek literary texts and to identify their similarities and differences.

The concept of politeness has been extensively studied in pragmatics. One of the most influential frameworks is the theory proposed by Brown and Levinson, which introduces the notion of "face" as the public self-image that individuals strive to maintain. They distinguish between positive politeness, which aims at expressing solidarity, and negative politeness, which focuses on respecting personal autonomy. Later developments in politeness theory emphasize the importance of context and cultural variability.

From a pragmatic perspective, politeness is closely related to speech acts such as requests, apologies, and compliments. According to Leech, politeness functions as a principle regulating interpersonal communication and minimizing conflict. They distinguish between:

Positive politeness (showing friendliness, solidarity)

Negative politeness (respecting personal space and autonomy)

In stylistics, politeness is viewed as a means of achieving expressive and aesthetic effects. It contributes to:

characterization

tone

narrative voice

Speech act theory (Austin, Searle) also plays a key role, as politeness is often

realized through:

- requests
- apologies
- compliments
- refusals

From a pragmatic perspective, politeness is realized through various communicative strategies that help speakers achieve their goals while maintaining harmonious interpersonal relations. In literary discourse, authors use politeness markers not only to reflect everyday communication but also to reveal characters' intentions, emotions, and social relationships. In English literary texts, politeness is frequently associated with indirect speech acts. Requests, suggestions, and refusals are often expressed indirectly to minimize potential threats to the interlocutor's autonomy. Modal verbs such as «could», «would», and «might», as well as hedging expressions like «perhaps», «I think», and «if you don't mind», contribute to the mitigation of speech acts.

Example features:

Use of modal verbs: could, would, might

"I would wait forever! I wouldn't want you unless you were quite sure. Please, Miss O'Hara, tell me that I may hope!" ["Gone with the wind" by Margaret Mitchell.p. 123].

Above given example demonstrates politeness through respect, emotional sensitivity, and indirectness. The speaker in his speech tries to express love and desire without forcing or pressuring the listener. Several politeness strategies can be observed:

Respect for the listener's feelings and freedom of choice

The phrase "I wouldn't want you unless you were quite sure" shows consideration for Miss O'Hara's feelings. The speaker does not impose his wishes on her and allows her the freedom to decide independently.

Use of indirect and softened language

Instead of demanding an answer, the speaker says: "tell me that I may hope." This softens the request and makes it more polite and emotionally careful.

Expression of sincerity and devotion "I would wait forever!" emphasizes patience and commitment, which creates a respectful and gentle tone.

Formal address The use of "Miss O'Hara" reflects social etiquette and respectful distance, which was especially important in the cultural context of the novel.

From the perspective of politeness theory Brown and Levinson, the speaker protects the listener's negative face - her right to freedom and non-imposition - while also appealing to her positive face through admiration and emotional warmth.

English literary characters often employ negative politeness strategies, which emphasize respect for personal space and individual freedom. Such strategies help maintain social distance while avoiding conflict. Authors use these linguistic forms to portray educated, refined, or socially conscious characters. In Uzbek literature, politeness is closely connected with cultural norms of respect, solidarity, and collective values. Pragmatic markers of politeness include honorific forms, respectful pronouns, kinship terms, blessings, and expressions of gratitude. Unlike English, Uzbek communication frequently relies on explicit demonstrations of respect toward elders and people of higher social status.

Positive politeness strategies are particularly common in Uzbek literary discourse. Speakers seek to establish closeness, show concern for others, and strengthen social bonds. The use of terms such as «aka», «opa», «ota», and «onaxon» serves not only as a form of address but also as a means of expressing social solidarity and cultural identity.

Although both languages aim to maintain social harmony, significant differences can be observed: Indirectness vs. Explicit Respect

English politeness often relies on indirectness and mitigation.

Uzbek politeness is more frequently expressed through explicit linguistic markers of respect.

Individualism vs. Collectivism

English-speaking cultures generally emphasize individual autonomy and personal choice.

Uzbek culture places greater importance on community values, social obligations, and respect for hierarchy.

Forms of Address

English mainly uses titles such as Mr., Mrs., Miss, and professional designations.

Uzbek employs a wider range of kinship terms and honorific expressions that reflect age and social status.

Pronoun System

Modern English lacks a grammatical distinction between formal and informal second-person pronouns.

Uzbek distinguishes between *sen* (informal) and *siz* (formal and respectful), making politeness more visible grammatically.

The analysis of English and Uzbek literary works demonstrates that politeness is a universal communicative phenomenon shaped by cultural and linguistic traditions. English literary discourse tends to express politeness through indirectness, mitigation, and respect for personal autonomy, whereas Uzbek literary discourse emphasizes explicit respect, social hierarchy, and interpersonal solidarity. Despite these differences, both traditions use politeness as an important stylistic and pragmatic tool for character development, social interaction, and the preservation of harmonious relationships. Therefore, the study of politeness in literary texts contributes to a deeper understanding of cultural values,

communicative behavior, and intercultural communication.

Example features:

- Rahmat sizga, aka, - dedi, lekin uning bu so'zi ham o'rinsiz ketkan edi [O'tkan kunlar, Abdulla Qodiriy, 187 b.].

Above given example taken from Uzbek literary work reflects politeness through gratitude, respectful address, and social etiquette. The phrase "Rahmat sizga, aka" ("Thank you, brother/sir") contains several important elements of politeness in Uzbek culture.

Explanation of politeness

Expression of gratitude The word "Rahmat" ("thank you") is a direct marker of politeness. It shows appreciation and respect toward the other person.

Respectful pronoun usage The use of "sizga" instead of the informal "senga" demonstrates respect and social distance. In Uzbek culture, the pronoun siz is an important linguistic marker of courtesy and honor. Use of kinship term as respect The word "aka" literally means "older brother," but in Uzbek communication it is also used as a polite form of address toward a man, expressing warmth, respect, and recognition of social status or age. Contextual politeness and awkwardness The author adds: "lekin uning bu so'zi ham o'rinsiz ketkan edi" ("but even this remark sounded inappropriate"). This shows that politeness is not only about respectful words but also about the appropriateness of timing and context. Although the speaker used polite language, it did not fit the emotional or situational context.

Differences:

Feature English Uzbek

Directness Indirect More explicit

Focus Individual autonomy Social hierarchy

Markers Modal verbs, hedging Honorifics, pronouns

Style Subtle, implicit Expressive, explicit

Pragmatic Functions of Politeness

Politeness in literary discourse performs several pragmatic functions:

Maintaining social balance

Avoiding conflict

Expressing emotions indirectly

Enhancing realism in dialogue

It also helps readers interpret characters' intentions and relationships.

Stylistic Implications

From a stylistic perspective, politeness contributes to:

tone and mood,

narrative authenticity,

characterization depth.

Authors deliberately manipulate politeness strategies to create contrast, irony, or tension. While both English and Uzbek languages employ politeness strategies to maintain social harmony, their linguistic realization differs significantly. English tends to favor indirectness, whereas Uzbek relies more on explicit forms of respect.

Implications for translation. Politeness poses challenges in translation due to cultural differences. The translation of politeness presents significant challenges because politeness strategies are deeply rooted in the cultural and linguistic norms of each language. When translating English and Uzbek literary works, translators often encounter difficulties in preserving the original pragmatic meaning and social nuances of polite expressions. One of the main challenges is the loss of honorifics, particularly when translating from Uzbek into English. Uzbek contains numerous respectful forms of address, kinship terms, and pronoun distinctions that do not always have direct equivalents in English. As a result, important markers of respect and social hierarchy may be weakened or lost in translation. Another challenge is the potential misinterpretation of indirectness. English speakers frequently employ indirect requests, suggestions, and refusals as a means of expressing politeness. If these forms are translated too literally, the intended level of courtesy may not be fully conveyed to Uzbek readers. Similarly, Uzbek expressions of politeness may appear overly formal or repetitive when translated into English without considering the target culture's communicative conventions. Cultural mismatch also plays a crucial role in the translation process. Expressions that are considered polite and appropriate in one culture may not produce the same effect in another. Therefore, translators must go beyond the literal meaning of words and pay close attention to the communicative situation, social relationships between characters, and cultural expectations of the target audience. To achieve an accurate translation, it is essential to consider the context of the interaction, the cultural norms governing polite behavior, and the principle of pragmatic equivalence. The translator's task is not only to transfer linguistic meaning but also to reproduce the social and interpersonal functions of politeness so that readers of the translated text can perceive the same attitudes, respect, and relationships as those intended in the original work.

Key issues:

Loss of honorifics

Misinterpretation of indirectness

Cultural mismatch

Translators must consider:
context

cultural norms

pragmatic equivalence

Conclusion. The analysis of the category of politeness in English and Uzbek literary works reveals both universal and culture-specific characteristics of human communication. In both linguistic traditions, politeness serves as an important mechanism for maintaining social harmony, expressing respect, and regulating interpersonal relationships. Literary texts demonstrate how speakers use various linguistic and pragmatic strategies to achieve communicative goals while preserving the dignity and social expectations of their interlocutors.

However, the realization of politeness differs significantly between the two cultures. English literary discourse tends to rely on indirectness, mitigation, modal verbs, and other strategies that minimize imposition and respect individual autonomy. Such forms reflect the values of personal freedom and independence that are characteristic of many English-speaking societies. In contrast, Uzbek literary discourse places greater emphasis on explicit expressions of respect, social hierarchy, and communal values. The frequent use of honorifics, respectful pronouns, kinship terms, and formulaic expressions illustrates the importance of age, status, and social relationships in Uzbek culture. The pragmatic analysis of literary texts demonstrates that politeness extends beyond the use of specific words or grammatical forms. It is closely connected with context, communicative intention, cultural expectations, and the relationship between speakers. A polite expression may be interpreted differently depending on the situation, highlighting the importance of pragmatic competence in both language use and literary interpretation. The findings of this study also have practical implications for translation and intercultural communication. Since politeness systems vary across languages and cultures, translators must carefully preserve not only the semantic meaning of utterances but also their pragmatic and social functions. Failure to do so may result in the loss of important cultural meanings and interpersonal nuances. Therefore, an understanding of politeness strategies is essential for achieving pragmatic equivalence and ensuring effective cross-cultural communication.

In conclusion, politeness represents a complex linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural phenomenon that plays a vital role in English and Uzbek literary works. Its study contributes to a deeper understanding of language, culture, social interaction, and literary expression, making it an important area of research within linguistics, pragmatics, stylistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication.

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