



PRAGMATIC PATTERNS OF POLITENESS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22787447>

Annotation. This study examines pragmatic patterns of politeness in Uzbek and English classroom communication from a cross-cultural perspective. It identifies how forms of address, requests, feedback, and turn-taking index respect and authority. Using discourse-pragmatic analysis of classroom interactions and metapragmatic comments, it compares strategies and their pedagogical effects. The novelty lies in mapping recurrent politeness templates to classroom goals and reducing misinterpretation risks.

Keywords: linguistic politeness; pragmatics; classroom discourse; address terms; request strategies; teacher authority; cross-cultural communication.

Politeness in classroom discourse can be defined as a set of pragmatic choices that regulate interpersonal distance, institutional authority, and the moral economy of respect while pursuing instructional goals. The mechanism that makes politeness observable is the systematic co-occurrence of linguistic forms with interactional positions such as initiating a task, correcting an error, or allocating a turn, where a single move simultaneously conveys content and relationship. For example, an English teacher's "Could you open your books, please?" and an Uzbek teacher's directive framed with respect markers can both function as task management while signalling social alignment. In classroom corpora of institutional talk, directive moves often constitute a large share of teacher turns, frequently reported around one third to one half of all teacher utterances depending on lesson phase, which makes directive politeness a high-impact domain for learning outcomes. Scientifically, this aligns with pragmatics and conversation analysis in treating politeness not as a personal trait but as an emergent property of sequential organization and cultural expectations of deference and solidarity [1].

A cross-cultural perspective requires defining "Uzbek classroom politeness" and "English classroom politeness" not as fixed national styles but as conventionalized patterns shaped by educational history, norms of address, and models of authority. The mechanism behind cross-cultural difference is pragmatic indexing, where the same form can index different stances across communities, and different forms can index comparable stances due to functional equivalence. For instance, Uzbek address practices may more readily encode status and age through kinship-like terms and honorifics, whereas English address tends to rely



on titles, first names, and prosodic mitigation to manage distance. In practical terms, international classrooms in Uzbekistan and English-medium programs increasingly involve mixed cohorts, and even a modest mismatch rate, such as one in five perceived “over-direct” or “over-formal” teacher moves reported in reflective logs, can affect participation. From a scientific viewpoint, the thesis adopts the pragmatic principle that meaning is inferential and context-bound, so cross-cultural comparison must track not only forms but also interpretations, uptake, and repair sequences [2].

The first analytic domain is address forms, defined as nominal and pronominal resources that position interlocutors in an institutional relationship. The mechanism of address politeness is the activation of social deixis, where a selected term signals relative power, intimacy, and role boundaries, thereby shaping what counts as appropriate participation. In Uzbek classrooms, address terms often encode respect through titles and culturally salient vocatives, while English classrooms may accept first-name address as a solidarity strategy in some settings, or maintain formal titles in others. A typical example is the contrast between a teacher’s use of a respectful vocative before feedback and an English teacher’s use of “everyone” plus gaze and intonation to soften the publicness of evaluation. Quantitatively, observational studies in educational pragmatics regularly show that address terms cluster at boundaries of activities, with higher frequency during openings and transitions than during sustained explanation, reflecting their role in re-aligning the participation framework. The scientific interpretation is that address forms operate as “interactional keys” that recalibrate footing and legitimize the next action, so cross-cultural misalignment can arise when students interpret a solidarity marker as disrespect or a respect marker as excessive distance [3].

The second analytic domain is requests and directives, defined as speech acts that aim to get learners to do something while managing face and institutional rights. The mechanism of directive politeness is the balancing of entitlement and contingency, realized through mitigation devices such as modal verbs, downtoners, conditional framing, and supportive moves that provide reasons. For example, English frequently employs modalized interrogatives and “please” as a routinized marker, whereas Uzbek may combine direct imperatives with honorifics, inclusive pronouns, or justificatory prefaces that legitimize the demand within a respect-based hierarchy. A comparable classroom moment is asking a student to read aloud: in English, “Would you mind reading the next paragraph?” can reduce imposition, while in Uzbek a respectful directive plus role



framing can achieve compliance without appearing weak. In terms of distribution, pedagogical interaction research often reports that softened directives increase during collaborative activities, while more direct forms increase during time pressure, suggesting that situational constraints modulate politeness more than personality does. Scientifically, this supports the view that classroom directives are a hybrid of institutional and interpersonal pragmatics, where politeness is calibrated to maintain authority while preserving learner agency [4].

A third domain is feedback and correction, defined as evaluative moves that respond to learner output and guide improvement. The mechanism of politeness in feedback lies in how negative evaluation is packaged through hedging, partial agreement, reformulation, and the sequencing of praise before correction to reduce threat to competence face. For instance, English teachers may use “That’s a good start, but...” or recasts that implicitly correct without explicit negation, while Uzbek teachers may employ culturally appropriate respect markers and collective framing that protects the student’s public standing. A concrete example is pronunciation correction: an English teacher might repeat the word with corrected stress and rising intonation, whereas an Uzbek teacher might preface with a respectful address and a brief rationale about clarity. Empirically, classroom discourse studies often find that recasts and prompts constitute a substantial portion of corrective feedback moves, sometimes exceeding explicit correction, and students’ uptake rates vary by method, with prompts often yielding higher immediate repair than recasts in some contexts. Scientifically, this indicates that politeness is not merely “softness” but a strategic management of epistemic authority, because correction asserts knowledge rights and must therefore be interactionally legitimized to avoid resistance [1].

Turn-taking and participation management form a fourth domain, defined as practices for allocating speaking rights, handling overlap, and managing silence. The mechanism of politeness here involves recognizing the moral dimension of turns: who is entitled to speak, when interruption is permissible, and how silence is interpreted as thinking time versus disengagement. For example, English classroom interaction in some communicative approaches encourages self-selection and brief overlaps as signs of engagement, while Uzbek classrooms may prioritize orderly allocation with clearer teacher-mediated selection, making unsolicited interruption more face-threatening. A typical scenario is group discussion: an English teacher might allow multiple students to enter quickly, whereas an Uzbek teacher might solicit responses through nomination plus respectful address, thereby maintaining hierarchy and clarity. Observationally,



participation patterns can be measured by the proportion of student turns and average turn length; in many teacher-fronted lessons, student talk time may remain below half of total talk, and politeness strategies influence whether students risk speaking. Scientifically, conversation analysis explains these differences through local norms of preference organization and repair, showing that politeness emerges in the micro-timing of pauses, intonation, and turn design rather than in isolated words [2].

To make cross-cultural comparison operational, the thesis treats politeness as a patterned mapping between form, function, and inferred stance, and it proposes a small analytic matrix that links pragmatic strategies to classroom goals. The mechanism of the matrix is functional equivalence: instead of equating “please” with a single Uzbek marker, it compares how each system realizes mitigation, respect, and rapport in similar sequential environments such as requests, corrections, and refusals. For example, where English uses modalization, Uzbek may use honorific alignment and reason-giving, and both can fulfill the same pedagogical function of securing compliance while preserving dignity. A compact comparative table can be stated in prose as follows: in task directives, English tends toward modal interrogatives and “please,” Uzbek tends toward respectful imperatives and legitimizing prefaces; in feedback, English frequently uses hedges and recasts, Uzbek often uses respectful framing and collective alignment; in turn allocation, English may allow self-selection more readily, Uzbek more often uses nomination with address. Even a modest comparative coding of 200 teacher moves can yield stable patterns, with directive mitigation and feedback softening appearing as the two highest-frequency politeness loci. Scientifically, the matrix reflects pragmatic typology and institutional discourse theory by insisting that cross-cultural similarity is best captured at the level of interactional function rather than surface form [3].

A further analytical layer concerns metapragmatic awareness, defined as speakers’ explicit beliefs about what counts as “polite,” “rude,” “formal,” or “friendly” in a classroom. The mechanism of metapragmatics is that evaluations circulate as norms, shaping future interaction through teacher training, student expectations, and peer modeling. For instance, Uzbek students may interpret a teacher’s first-name address in English-medium settings as unusually intimate, while English-speaking instructors may interpret a highly honorific Uzbek form as creating distance that discourages open questioning. A representative example is reflective journaling after observed lessons, where learners often explain discomfort not by grammar but by perceived stance, such as “too strict” or “too



informal,” which are pragmatic categories. In applied linguistics contexts, surveys frequently show that a sizable minority of learners report pragmatic uncertainty in intercultural classes, and this uncertainty correlates with reduced willingness to communicate, a key variable in language learning outcomes. Scientifically, integrating metapragmatic data strengthens validity because it triangulates analyst coding with participant interpretation, which is central to pragmatics as a discipline grounded in speaker meaning and social cognition [4].

The thesis also considers the historical-institutional backdrop, because classroom politeness is shaped by educational traditions and the social meaning of the teacher role. The mechanism is institutionalization: repeated interactional routines become normative, and deviations are interpreted as stance-taking rather than mere stylistic variation. For example, post-Soviet educational norms in the region have emphasized respectful distance and teacher-centered authority in many settings, while some anglophone pedagogical models emphasize dialogic participation and reduced power distance, though both coexist in practice. A concrete classroom example is questioning: in some Uzbek settings, students may wait for nomination, whereas in some English settings students may volunteer, and each pattern is “polite” within its own normative ecology. Quantitatively, institutional talk research indicates that teacher question types and wait-time strongly affect participation, with increased wait-time often producing longer student responses; politeness strategies interact with these variables by making silence interpretable as thinking rather than defiance. Scientifically, this supports a sociopragmatic account in which politeness is linked to power and distance parameters, but always mediated by local classroom activity types and learning objectives [5].

Conclusion. The cross-cultural comparison of Uzbek and English classroom communication shows that politeness is best understood as a systematic alignment between linguistic choice and institutional action, especially in address, directives, feedback, and turn management. Uzbek patterns often foreground respect and role-based hierarchy through socially indexed address and legitimizing directive framing, while English patterns often foreground mitigation through modalization, hedging, and recast-based correction, though both systems flexibly adapt to lesson phase and teacher persona. The main synthesis is that pragmatic misunderstanding arises less from “wrong words” than from mismatched inferences about authority, solidarity, and the rights to speak. A pedagogically actionable outcome is a functional mapping of politeness templates to common classroom actions, which can be used in teacher education and



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intercultural orientation to improve participation, reduce face-threat during correction, and strengthen rapport without eroding instructional control.

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