

## THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF POLITENESS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

*Shoira Sarimsakova*

*PhD student of NuU.Uz*

*E-mail: [Sarimsakova\\_s@nuu.uz](mailto:Sarimsakova_s@nuu.uz)*

**Abstract:** *The following article examines the role of politeness in intercultural communication, including its impact on rapport-building, dispute resolution, and social hierarchy negotiation. Intercultural communication involves a complex interaction of language, cultural, and social aspects. Politeness, as a fundamental part of communication, plays an important role in negotiating the complexities of relationships between people from different cultures, specifically, English and Uzbek.*

**Key words:** *Politeness, Intercultural Communication, Cultural differences, politeness strategies, face.*

Intercultural communication, defined as the transmission of messages between people from various cultural backgrounds, is becoming increasingly important in our globalized society. People from different cultures are increasingly interacting in fields such as business, education, and social contexts, making good communication across cultural barriers increasingly important. Achieving effective communication in these circumstances needs more than just language ability; it also necessitates a thorough awareness of the cultural norms, values, and linguistic traditions that influence communication patterns. At the heart of successful intercultural communication lies the concept of politeness. Politeness, broadly defined as the expression of consideration, respect, and deference towards others, serves as a guiding principle for navigating the complexities of cross-cultural interactions. Politeness strategies vary significantly across cultures, reflecting diverse cultural orientations towards social interaction and interpersonal relationships. For instance, cultures may differ in their preferences for direct versus indirect communication, levels of formality in speech, and the importance placed on maintaining harmony and saving face. Politeness plays a vital role in fostering rapport between individuals engaged in intercultural communication. Across various cultures, including

English and Uzbek cultures, employing politeness strategies is instrumental in creating a positive and conducive atmosphere for effective interaction.

In English culture, formal greetings are commonly used as a polite gesture to initiate conversations and show respect. For instance, addressing someone with “Good morning,” “Good afternoon,” or “Good evening” depending on the time of day, accompanied by a smile and eye contact, is considered polite and helps establish rapport. Similarly, in Uzbek culture, formal greetings such as “*Assalomu alaykum*” (Peace be upon you) followed by “*Yaxshimisiz?*” (How are you?) are customary and demonstrate politeness and respect towards others. Expressing gratitude is another politeness strategy that strengthens rapport in both English and Uzbek cultures. Whether it is saying “*Thank you*” in English or “*Rahmat*” in Uzbek, expressing appreciation for someone’s actions or assistance acknowledges their kindness and fosters a positive connection between individuals. Furthermore, demonstrating genuine interest in others’ well-being is universally valued in both cultures. Engaging in small talk and asking about someone’s health, family, or interests shows care and consideration, contributing to the establishment of rapport. In English culture, phrases like “*How have you been?*” or “*What have you been up to lately?*” serve as polite ways to inquire about someone’s well-being. Similarly, in Uzbek culture, asking about family members or expressing interest in recent events in someone’s life demonstrates politeness and fosters a sense of connection. In East Asian cultures such as Japan, China, and Korea, politeness is profoundly entrenched in the concept of “face” which is, according to the scholar E.Goffman, the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Maintaining harmony and saving face are critical in relationships, and politeness acts as a tool to do this. In these societies, common politeness methods include employing respectful language and avoiding direct confrontation. While “face” is not as important in English and Uzbek cultures,

the concepts of civility, respect, and keeping harmony are still essential for creating rapport in international conversation.

In English culture, direct confrontation may be perceived as impolite or aggressive, especially in sensitive situations. Instead, individuals often employ indirect communication strategies to address issues tactfully and preserve harmony. For example, using phrases like *“I understand where you are coming from, but have you considered...”* or *“Perhaps we could explore alternative solutions...”* allows individuals to express their concerns politely while avoiding direct confrontation. Similarly, in Uzbek culture, where maintaining harmony and saving face are highly valued, individuals may employ indirect communication strategies to address conflicts. For instance, using phrases like *“Menga ayta olasizmi?”* (Could you talk to me?) or *“Biror muammo bormi?”* (Is there any problem?) allows individuals to open the conversation without directly accusing or confronting the other party.

Understanding the nuances of politeness in conflict resolution is crucial for preserving relationships and harmony across cultures. By recognizing cultural differences in conflict management styles and employing appropriate politeness strategies, individuals can navigate disagreements effectively while maintaining respect and preserving interpersonal relationships. Whether in English or Uzbek culture, using indirect communication tactics and respecting others' opinions are critical for resolving disagreements gracefully and maintaining relationship harmony. Individuals who recognize and accept cultural differences in conflict resolution can successfully manage intercultural problems while maintaining positive interpersonal relationships.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding cultural differences in politeness standards and practices is critical for handling cross-cultural encounters effectively. Understanding and accepting these distinctions allows people to avoid misunderstandings, create trust, and foster healthy relationships in a variety of cultural circumstances.

Recognizing the significance of saving face in East Asian cultures, for example, or the focus on egalitarianism in some Western communities, enables people to adjust their communication techniques accordingly, increasing mutual understanding and respect. As globalization brings people from all over the world together, the importance of civility in international communication grows. Individuals who practice civility help to overcome cultural gaps and create mutual respect and understanding.

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