

Cross-Cultural Politeness in Indonesian and Uzbek Communication: A Linguo-Pragmatic Perspective

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Abstract

Background

Politeness is a key element of communication that reflects cultural identity, social values, and interpersonal ethics. In both Indonesia and Uzbekistan, politeness plays a crucial role in maintaining harmony and respect, yet it is realized differently due to variations in cultural norms and interactional styles.

Methodology

This study employs a linguo-pragmatic comparative approach based on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and Goffman's concept of face. Data were collected through natural observations, recorded conversations, and questionnaires with 120 participants from Indonesia and Uzbekistan. The analysis focused on verbal and nonverbal expressions of politeness in daily communication, marketplace interactions, and hospitality situations.

Findings

The results show that Indonesian speakers tend to use negative politeness strategies emphasizing moderation, indirectness, and hierarchical respect. In contrast, Uzbek speakers prefer positive politeness strategies characterized by expressiveness, warmth, and repeated offers. Both cultures regard politeness as a reflection of communal and moral values, although they differ in the pragmatic realization and social intensity of politeness.

Conclusion

Politeness in both societies serves as a tool for sustaining harmony and social cohesion. The study confirms that Brown and Levinson's theory remains relevant but must be contextualized within Asian collectivist pragmatics to fully capture the moral and relational dimensions of politeness in Muslim-majority societies.

Originality

This research offers one of the first comparative linguo-pragmatic analyses of Indonesian and Uzbek politeness, contributing new insights into intercultural Communication, pragmatic competence, and culturally responsive language education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Politeness as a central aspect of language use goes far beyond simple expressions of courtesy. It reflects cultural values, social hierarchies, and interpersonal ethics that guide how individuals interact in communication. In linguistic pragmatics, politeness functions as a mechanism for managing face, maintaining harmony, and preserving social balance. Foundational theories, such as those proposed by Goffman in 1967 and Brown and Levinson in 1987, have played an essential role in shaping scholarly understanding of politeness as both a linguistic and a cultural phenomenon. However, the relevance and universality of these theories continue to be debated. Recent studies show that politeness is not a static or universal concept. It is a dynamic, context-sensitive practice influenced by cultural, social, and historical factors. The fact that politeness extends beyond linguistic boundaries underscores its importance in constructing identity, maintaining relationships, and facilitating intercultural understanding across different societies.

Recent literature highlights that politeness operates at the intersection of language, culture, and cognition. It reveals a complex relationship between sociocultural values and pragmatic competence. Studies show that while politeness can be expressed through lexical and syntactic choices, its cultural meaning depends on shared values and context-based expectations ([Delahaie and Col, 2024](#); [Park, 2007](#); [Rice and Nguyen, 2015](#)). In East Asian societies, politeness is often expressed through hierarchical linguistic systems, as seen in the honorific forms of Japanese and Korean. In contrast, Western cultures tend to associate politeness with individual autonomy and conversational equality ([Kádár, 2011](#)). These differences reflect broader cultural orientations, such as collectivism and individualism, which shape how respect, humility, and deference are linguistically expressed. However, these distinctions should not be treated as rigid opposites, as such simplifications risk ignoring the diversity of politeness practices within and across cultures. Therefore, more recent comparative studies suggest culturally grounded analyses that combine linguistic, social, and cognitive perspectives ([Kayyali, 2025](#); [Nurjaleka et al., 2022](#)).

Although Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness remains one of the most influential frameworks in pragmatics, it has certain limitations when applied across different cultural contexts. The central concept in their theory is the distinction between positive face and negative face. Positive face refers to a person's desire for approval and appreciation, while negative face refers to the wish for autonomy and freedom from imposition ([Jingtong, 2024](#)).

Critics such as Matsumoto argue that this model is insufficient for cultures that value social discernment and role-based communication over individual autonomy ([Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali, 2016](#)). In many Asian societies, politeness is not a matter of personal choice but a social obligation guided by status, age, and relationship. In the Japanese concept of *wakimae* and the Javanese speech level system, for example, speakers are required to choose their words according to the addressee's social position. This observation shows that a universal theory cannot fully account for the complexity of politeness practices across societies.

To address such limitations, later scholars have revisited and expanded the discussion on politeness. Goffman's concept of face from 1967 provides a crucial sociological foundation for understanding how individuals maintain their self-image in interaction. According to Goffman, face represents the positive social value a person claims during communication, and protecting it requires cooperation between participants. [Haugh \(2013a\)](#) and [Tees and Manusov \(1998\)](#) expanded this idea by showing that facework involves both verbal and nonverbal dimensions. In digital Communication, [Loh and Walsh \(2021\)](#) found that managing face becomes more challenging in online interactions, where the audience is more diverse and context boundaries are unclear. These developments indicate that politeness and facework are flexible concepts that continue to evolve in response to social and technological changes.

The ongoing reassessment of classical theories also highlights a central issue in pragmatics: the dominance of Western perspectives. Many scholars argue that the focus on autonomy and rational choice in Western models does not represent the realities of collectivist and hierarchical societies ([Hahn and Hatfield, 2011](#); [Leech, 2007](#)). In many Asian and Middle Eastern contexts, politeness is understood as a communal practice rather than an individual strategy. It is shaped by social obligation and moral responsibility rather than by personal choice. [Khosh et al. \(2020\)](#) explain that in Middle Eastern cultures, kinship-based address terms and formal honorifics are key expressions of politeness and respect. In Muslim-majority cultures, politeness also reflects moral virtues such as humility and hospitality, which are regarded as religious duties. These examples show that politeness cannot be separated from cultural and ethical frameworks that influence language use.

Because of these cultural variations, researchers have increasingly called for approaches that emphasize the social and cultural embeddedness of politeness. [Grainger \(2018\)](#) analyzed courtroom discourse and demonstrated that Brown and Levinson's theory must be adapted to fit institutional and cultural norms of authority. [Turdieva H. \(2019\)](#) developed Brown

and Levinson's Positive and Negative Face strategies for applying them to Uzbek and Persian communication. [Mambetniyazova et al. \(2024\)](#) also observed that in Uzbek communication, politeness extends beyond language etiquette. It involves cultural principles of humility, hospitality, and solidarity. These characteristics are similar to Indonesian politeness, in which speakers prefer indirectness, deference, and the maintenance of harmony, known as *rukun* and *tepa selira*. Although both cultures emphasize social cohesion and respect, they realize these values through different pragmatic forms. This comparison suggests that politeness functions as a mirror of shared values, which may take distinct linguistic forms across cultures.

Empirical research strengthens this argument. [Mohammed \(2023\)](#) investigated the translation of politeness formulas between English and Arabic and found that literal translation often fails to convey the intended social meaning. [Haryanto et al. \(2024\)](#) analyzed political talk shows in Indonesia and found that speakers used positive politeness strategies to convey warmth and unity, often through inclusive pronouns and humor. In Uzbek interactions, [Mambetniyazova et al. \(2024\)](#) found repeat, emotionally expressive forms of politeness, such as persistent invitations and elaborate greetings, that demonstrate collectivist values and deep respect for guests. Together, these findings reveal that politeness must be viewed as a culturally shaped communicative act rather than a universal set of strategies.

Even with these advancements, comparative studies of politeness across Asian societies remain limited. Most existing research focuses on East Asia, particularly Chinese, Japanese, and Korean contexts ([Kayyali, 2025](#); [Pan, 2011](#)). Studies in other regions, such as Central and Southeast Asia, remain scarce. Mambetniyazova et al. (2024) show that in Central Asia, politeness is influenced by historical and religious traditions, as well as by post-Soviet social transformations. Similarly, in Southeast Asia, linguistic diversity and Islamic values shape distinct politeness systems. However, these aspects are still rarely addressed in the literature. This imbalance contributes to a narrow view of politeness that overlooks the variety of Asian communicative practices. Comparative research between countries such as Indonesia and Uzbekistan can fill this gap by highlighting shared values such as hospitality and humility, while also identifying differences in linguistic realization.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze politeness in Indonesian and Uzbek Communication from a linguo-pragmatic perspective. The research focuses on identifying and comparing politeness strategies across both cultures, with particular attention to hospitality, compliments, and daily conversation. The study applies Brown and Levinson's

framework and Goffman's concept of face to explore both similarities and differences in pragmatic expression. The novelty of this study lies in its comparative focus on Southeast Asian and Central Asian societies, which are rarely examined together. By combining natural observations, cultural analysis, and survey data, this research contributes to the development of cross-cultural pragmatics. It provides empirical evidence of how values such as humility, respect, and harmony are expressed through language in two culturally rich and religiously grounded societies. The findings are expected to deepen understanding of politeness as a vital component of human interaction and to promote intercultural sensitivity in global communication.

2. METHOD

This study employs a linguo-pragmatic comparative method that integrates pragmatic analysis, cultural observation, and sociolinguistic interpretation. The methodology was designed to capture both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of politeness in Indonesian and Uzbek Communication. Drawing on [Brown and Levinson's \(1987\)](#) framework of politeness strategies and [Goffman's\(2017\)](#) concept of face, the study examines how pragmatic behavior reflects underlying cultural values. These theories guide the categorization of politeness expressions into positive, negative, and off-record strategies, while also considering nonverbal behaviors that express respect and harmony. The overall methodological orientation is qualitative, with elements of quantitative support through questionnaires and frequency tables.

2.1 Research Design

The study employs a comparative linguo-pragmatic design, combining descriptive and interpretive methods to analyze politeness strategies in authentic contexts. Data were collected through natural observation, video recordings, and questionnaires, enabling triangulation between qualitative and quantitative findings. The integration of linguistic pragmatics with ethnographic observation allows the research to examine not only verbal politeness but also gestures, intonation, and behavioral etiquette that accompany spoken communication.

The analytical process follows Brown and Levinson’s taxonomy of politeness (positive, negative, off-record, and bald-on-record) and Grice’s Cooperative Principle, particularly his conversational maxims. Violations of these maxims are treated as deliberate pragmatic strategies to maintain harmony or avoid confrontation. This approach enables the identification of both explicit and implicit politeness strategies across two cultural contexts that share collectivist orientations yet differ in expression.

2.2 Data Collection

The data were collected from two primary sources, namely observational recordings and questionnaire surveys. The observations were conducted between July and August 2025 in several regions of Indonesia, including Malang, Jakarta, Surabaya, and Makassar, as well as in Uzbekistan, including Tashkent, Andijan, Fergana, Samarkand, and Karakalpakstan. The study focused on three communication settings: daily interactions among family members and within communities, exchanges between shop assistants and customers in traditional markets, and conversations between hosts and guests in hospitality settings. The observations were supported by audiovisual recordings that captured natural communication in each context. The Uzbek data were collected from honest conversations recorded in local environments and from materials such as *O‘zbek xonadoni*, meaning Uzbek household, and *Bozorda*, meaning in the bazaar. In contrast, the Indonesian data included recordings of market interactions from *Pasar Besar* in Malang. These primary data were complemented by natural conversations retrieved from digital platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, which provided additional examples of spontaneous politeness expressions in both cultures.

Table 1. Observation Contexts in Indonesia and Uzbekistan

Type of Interaction	Indonesia	Uzbekistan
Daily Communication	Conversations within family and workplace settings	Conversations in households and local gatherings
Marketplace dialogue	<i>Pasar Besar</i> (Malang), supermarket negotiations	<i>Yunusobod Bazaar</i> (Tashkent), local markets
Hospitality exchange	Host–guest conversations during meals and visits	Guest–host interactions in traditional Uzbek households

The questionnaire survey involved 120 participants: 60 Indonesians and 60 Uzbeks. Participants were selected to represent a range of ages, professions, and regions. The Indonesian group included respondents from urban and semi-urban areas such as Jakarta and

Surabaya, while the Uzbek group included respondents from Tashkent, Fergana, and Samarkand. The questionnaire adapted scenarios from Shih Pei Chun's and Ozaki Yoshimitsu's politeness instruments, covering themes such as offering food, responding to compliments, and receiving unexpected guests. Each participant was asked to respond in their native language, and their answers were translated into English for analysis.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis was carried out in three main stages, namely transcription, categorization, and interpretation. In the first stage, all recorded conversations were transcribed exactly as spoken in their original languages and then translated into English for comparison. In the second stage, each utterance was classified according to Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness strategies, including positive politeness, which shows solidarity and friendliness; negative politeness, which avoids imposition; and off-record politeness, which uses indirect expressions or figurative language. In the third stage, the meaning of each expression was interpreted in its cultural context to understand the social and emotional motivation behind every linguistic act. To maintain the accuracy of interpretation, two bilingual researchers, both native speakers of Indonesian and Uzbek, checked the categorization to ensure consistency and reliability. The analysis also referred to Grice's theory of conversational principles, particularly to examine how speakers sometimes intentionally break conversational expectations to be polite. For instance, expressions such as *Wah, bisa kurang, Bu?*, which means Can you make it cheaper, Ma'am? in Indonesian, and *Yana tusholmaysizmi?* Which means, can you make it a bit cheaper? In Uzbek, show politeness through gentle, indirect bargaining rather than direct requests. In addition to verbal expressions, the study also considered nonverbal forms of politeness such as gestures and posture. In Indonesia, greeting elders by taking their hands and touching them to the forehead is a sign of deep respect, while in Uzbekistan, younger men often bow their heads and offer their shoulder to older women, who lightly tap it as a sign of blessing. These gestures represent culturally meaningful acts of politeness that reinforce verbal Communication.

2.4 Instrument Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was established through data triangulation and expert validation. Observational data, recorded conversations, and questionnaire responses were cross-verified to ensure consistency of interpretation. Reliability was enhanced through intercoder agreement and participant confirmation, where selected respondents reviewed the

contextual accuracy of transcribed statements. This process followed the validation principles suggested by [Creswell and Creswell \(2018\)](#), emphasizing credibility and transferability in qualitative studies.

2.5 Data Presentation

Findings were presented through tables and descriptive interpretation. For instance, Table 2 illustrates the classification of politeness strategies derived from Brown and [Levinson \(1987\)](#), which was used as a coding scheme for analyzing data from both languages.

Table 2. Analytical Framework of Politeness Strategies

Type	Description	Example Function in Context
Positive Politeness	Builds solidarity and rapport	Complimenting, offering, expressing sympathy
Negative Politeness	Reduces imposition and maintains hierarchy	Using hedges, deferential forms, and indirect requests
Off-Record	Hints or indirect strategies that avoid direct confrontation	Using metaphors, jokes, vague expressions

In addition, comparative figures were used to visualize the frequency and distribution of politeness types among Indonesian and Uzbek participants across contexts, including family communication, market bargaining, and guest hospitality. The analysis revealed both overlapping and divergent tendencies, showing that while both societies prioritize harmony and respect, the pragmatic realizations differ in tone and frequency.

3. RESULTS

This section presents the main findings of the study, which are organized into two major parts: (1) observation-based results derived from natural conversations recorded in both Indonesian and Uzbek contexts, and (2) questionnaire-based findings obtained from 120 respondents. Each part illustrates the pragmatic strategies and cultural characteristics of politeness as expressed in daily Communication, traditional market transactions, and guest–host interactions. The findings emphasize the similarities and differences between the two societies, showing how politeness operates as both a linguistic and cultural construct that maintains social harmony, hospitality, and respect.

3.1 Observation Findings

The observations focused on three communication settings: daily Communication, marketplace interactions, and hospitality situations. The analysis used the framework of Brown

and Levinson's politeness theory and Grice's conversational principles to identify linguistic and nonverbal strategies that represent politeness in both cultural contexts.

3.1.1 Daily Communication

In daily Communication, Indonesian and Uzbek speakers show politeness through a combination of verbal and nonverbal acts that reflect respect for age, status, and social relationships. In Indonesia, one of the most visible forms of politeness is greeting behavior. Younger people usually take an older person's hand and touch it to their forehead or cheek as a sign of deep respect. This act, known as *salim*, is not only a form of positive politeness that shows solidarity and affection but also an expression of negative politeness that emphasizes deference. In contrast, Uzbek people greet elders with verbal and physical gestures that also emphasize respect, but through a different form. Younger men bow their heads slightly and offer their shoulders, while older women touch their shoulders three or four times as a sign of blessing. Men often put their right hand on their chest and say *Assalamu alaikum*, which means Peace be upon you, while the elder responds with *Wa alaikum assalam*, meaning *And Peace be upon you too*.

The greeting practices in both cultures serve not only as social conventions but also as indicators of moral and religious values. Both societies view politeness as part of religious behavior influenced by Islamic teachings that emphasize respect for elders and guests. However, the way these values are linguistically realized differs. In Indonesia, the greeting *Assalamu alaikum* is used flexibly for both arrival and departure, while in Uzbekistan, it is strictly used for meeting someone and rarely for leave-taking. This difference shows that Indonesian politeness serves a broader pragmatic function, while Uzbek politeness follows a more traditional usage rule.

3.1.2 Marketplace communication

The marketplace was selected as one of the main observation sites because it represents a natural space where social interaction and negotiation occur in everyday life. The conversations between sellers and buyers in both Indonesia and Uzbekistan display rich examples of politeness strategies.

Table 3. Comparison of Politeness Strategies in Indonesian and Uzbek Market Interactions

Aspect	Indonesia (Pasar Besar, Malang)	Uzbekistan (Yunusobod Bazaar, Tashkent)	Cultural Function
Opening Greeting	“Selamat pagi, Bu. Mau cari apa hari ini?” meaning “Good morning, Ma’am. What are you looking for today?”	“Keling, nimalar kerak?” meaning “Welcome, what would you like?”	Builds rapport and shows attention to the interlocutor’s needs
Address Terms	“Bu” (Madam) to show respect	“Qizim” (My daughter) to show familiarity and warmth	Indicates social distance or solidarity
Product Emphasis	“Bayamnya baru datang, masih segar,” meaning “The spinach just arrived, it is still fresh.”	“Bu nordon, bu shirin,” meaning “These are sour, those are sweet.”	Creates trust and positive impression of products
Bargaining Style	“Wah, bisa kurang, Bu?” meaning “Can you make it cheaper, Ma’am?”	“Yana tusholmaysizmi?” meaning “Can you make it a bit cheaper?”	Demonstrates politeness through indirect negotiation
Final Blessing	“Semoga sehat selalu,” meaning “May you always be healthy.”	“Bozoringizni bersin,” meaning “May you have many buyers.”	Expresses goodwill beyond the transaction

The market data reveal that both Indonesians and Uzbeks use politeness to maintain social balance in economic exchanges. In Indonesian markets, interactions are usually soft, calm, and indirect. Buyers often begin conversations with greetings and polite titles such as *Bu* or *Pak* to show respect. Sellers, in turn, use inclusive and friendly phrases such as *Mau tambah tomat atau cabai sekalian?* Meaning, would you like to add some tomatoes or chilies? To maintain positive relations. These are examples of positive politeness that seek agreement and avoid conflict.

In contrast, Uzbek market interactions are more expressive and emotionally charged. Sellers frequently use kinship terms such as *qizim*, meaning 'my daughter,' or *o'g'lim*, meaning 'my son,' to create a sense of closeness and trust. They often repeat offers or provide discounts as a sign of generosity. For example, a seller might say *Nordon olma 4500, lekin sizga 4000 qilaman*, meaning The sour apples are 4500, but I will give them to you for 4000. The buyer may respond with blessings such as *Bozoringizni bersin*, meaning may you have more buyers, which reflects positive politeness through reciprocal goodwill.

Both cultures use indirectness to soften requests or refusals, but in different ways. Indonesian speakers tend to avoid direct rejection by offering explanations such as *Aduh, modalnya sudah tinggi*, which means Oh dear, the capital price is already high. In contrast, Uzbek speakers express politeness by offering alternatives or symbolic generosity. Despite these differences, both communication styles aim to preserve mutual respect and harmony.

3.1.3 Hospitality and Social Generosity

In both Indonesia and Uzbekistan, hospitality is a significant expression of politeness and moral responsibility. During home visits, hosts are expected to offer food and drinks as a gesture of care. The observation data show that Indonesian hosts usually invite guests to eat once or twice, using expressions such as '*Silakan*' and '*makan dulu*', which mean '*Please have something to eat*'. Uzbek hosts, however, tend to repeat the invitation several times, often insisting with phrases like *Oling, oling*, meaning Please, take it. This repetition is not seen as impolite or excessive in Uzbek culture but rather as a sign of sincerity and warmth.

These observations illustrate how repetition in language can represent different pragmatic meanings across cultures. In Uzbekistan, repeated offers express genuine hospitality and emotional involvement, whereas in Indonesia, repeating an offer too often might make the guest uncomfortable. Both practices are guided by the same moral principle of honoring guests but realized through distinct linguistic conventions.

4.2 Questionnaire Findings

The questionnaire results provide statistical evidence supporting the findings from the observation. The participants were asked to respond to two main questions about politeness situations: how they would behave when a guest refuses food how they would feel if an uninvited guest came to their home.

4.2.1 Offering food to a Guest

When asked how they would react if a guest were not eating much, the responses differed between the two groups. Among Indonesian respondents, 85% would offer food once or twice by s. In contrast, 72% of Uzbek respondents said they would repeat the offer five to ten times, using expressions such as *Oling, oling*, or *Yemasangiz hafa bo'layan*, meaning I would be disappointed if you did not eat.

Table 4. Comparison of Responses to the Food Offering Scenario

Response	Indonesia	Uzbekistan	Interpretation
Offer food twice	80.5%	22%	Avoids pressure and shows respect for guest's choice
Repeat the offer several times	21%	72%	Expresses sincerity and emotional warmth
Say nothing	0%	0%	Not practiced in either culture

These results show that Indonesian politeness leans toward restraint and respect for personal space, while Uzbek politeness emphasizes persistence as an act of caring. In Indonesia, moderation in food offerings is considered polite because it allows the guest to choose. In Uzbekistan, however, repeating the offer several times is a traditional sign of genuine hospitality and attention.

The open comments from respondents further clarify this pattern. Indonesian participants often added smiling gestures or mild encouragement to make the guest feel comfortable, while Uzbek participants reported that insisting that the guest eat reflects love and respect. This shows that each society's value system culturally shapes politeness.

4.2.2 Reaction to an Uninvited Guest

The second question asked how participants would feel if an uninvited guest, such as a relative, neighbor, or friend, visited their home. The responses again revealed apparent cultural differences.

Table 5. Comparison of Reactions to Uninvited Guests

Response	Indonesia	Uzbekistan	Cultural Meaning
Feels neutral, considers it normal	60%	15%	Reflects acceptance and avoidance of social conflict
Feels happy and honored	20%	54%	Indicates value of warmth and collectivism
Feels uncomfortable	17%	18%	Shows concern about privacy or preparation
Feels worried or anxious	3%	20%	Reflects mixed feelings depending on relationship closeness

Most Indonesian participants considered an unannounced visit normal and acceptable, indicating neutrality and a tendency to avoid confrontation. This reflects a preference for maintaining social harmony through non-imposition, which is a feature of negative politeness. On the other hand, a majority of Uzbek respondents expressed happiness and excitement, interpreting the arrival of an uninvited guest as a blessing and a chance to strengthen social bonds.

In both cultures, hospitality remains central to politeness, but its manifestation differs. Indonesian politeness is guided by the principles of respecting the guest's comfort and avoiding excess, while the principles of emotional generosity and openness guide Uzbek politeness. Neither group showed indifference, which underlines that hospitality and politeness are fundamental social values in both societies.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The discussion interprets the findings of this study in light of existing theories of politeness and cross-cultural pragmatics. The results reveal that both Indonesian and Uzbek speakers employ politeness to express respect, maintain harmony, and reinforce social cohesion, though their strategies differ in linguistic and cultural realization. These differences highlight how politeness is deeply embedded in each society's value system, reflecting collectivist orientations that shape interactional norms. The findings align with Brown and Levinson's view that politeness is a universal principle of communication. Yet, they also confirm that the manifestation of this principle depends on specific cultural values and interactional expectations ([Brown and Levinson, 1987](#)).

In both Indonesian and Uzbek Communication, politeness serves as a moral and social tool for sustaining relationships. However, the Indonesian tendency toward indirectness, modesty, and avoidance of imposition contrasts with the Uzbek preference for expressiveness, emotional warmth, and repetition. This difference mirrors the broader cultural orientation of Southeast and Central Asian societies, where collective identity and religious norms play an important role in shaping speech etiquette. According to [Al-Duleimi et al. \(2016\)](#), collectivist cultures prioritize group harmony over individual autonomy, leading to a communication style that values social balance and relational consideration. Similarly, [Nuraini \(2021\)](#) explains that politeness in collective societies is not merely a linguistic strategy but a reflection of moral values that maintain the integrity of social relations. The repeated offers and insistent hospitality observed in Uzbek communication thus demonstrate a positive politeness orientation aimed at reinforcing communal bonds rather than exerting social pressure.

In the Indonesian context, politeness strategies emphasize refinement, calmness, and sensitivity to hierarchy. The use of deferential forms such as *Bapak* and *Ibu*, the avoidance of direct refusals, and the practice of using softening particles like *mungkin* and *sebaiknya* are typical examples of negative politeness that seek to minimize imposition. This finding resonates with [Morand \(2003\)](#) interpretation that politeness in Asian cultures often serves as a negotiation tool to manage social distance and maintain harmony. It also supports [Yusny \(2013\)](#) observation that Indonesian politeness reflects a harmony-oriented pragmatics that values relational Peace and social equilibrium over assertiveness. Thus, while both cultures exhibit collectivist orientations, the Indonesian approach emphasizes restraint and balance, whereas the Uzbek style values emotional engagement and interpersonal closeness.

The findings also confirm that both Indonesians and Uzbeks interpret politeness through culturally embedded concepts of face. [Goffman \(2017\)](#) defines face as a social image that must be preserved during interaction, and Brown and Levinson later adapted this notion into positive and negative face orientations. However, these distinctions are not always clearly applicable in Asian Muslim contexts, where religious and communal obligations often reshape the meaning of face. In the present study, for instance, the Uzbek insistence on repeatedly offering food is not intended to threaten the guest's negative face but rather to fulfill a moral obligation of care. [Bashir et al. \(2018\)](#) note that in many Muslim communities, silence, repetition, or insistence can be communicative acts that demonstrate attentiveness and humility rather than pressure. This perspective helps explain why Indonesian guests might interpret repeated offers as excessive, while Uzbek hosts perceive them as expressions of warmth and devotion.

Cultural interpretation of politeness must therefore be situated within specific social and religious frameworks. Both Indonesian and Uzbek cultures draw heavily on Islamic teachings that emphasize generosity, hospitality, and respect for elders. As [Jingtong \(2024\)](#) and [Al-Hindawi and Alkhazaali \(2016\)](#) argue, politeness strategies in such contexts are not purely pragmatic choices but also ethical practices grounded in shared beliefs. In this regard, the hospitality data findings, which show that both groups avoided the response "I would say nothing," confirm that silence or indifference toward a guest is considered socially unacceptable. Every communicative act is therefore motivated by a sense of moral responsibility to preserve the dignity of others.

The marketplace interactions in both cultures also illustrate how politeness operates as a cooperative process that merges economic exchange with social bonding. Sellers and buyers maintain politeness by following or selectively violating Grice's conversational principles to achieve relational goals. For example, the Indonesian seller's response *Aduh, modalnya sudah tinggi* or the Uzbek seller's *Mayli, sizga 4000 qilaman* demonstrates how pragmatic exaggeration and justification serve relational rather than informational purposes. Such behavior aligns with [Haugh \(2013b\)](#) claim that anticipated politeness often involves inferred meanings rather than direct speech acts. Similarly, [Nejad et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasize that pragmatic strategies such as hedging, humor, and blessing in market interactions reflect local interpretations of cooperation rather than deception. These findings show that politeness can coexist with apparent maxim violations, as both speakers recognize that social rapport takes precedence over strict truthfulness or efficiency.

When analyzed through the lens of collectivism and individualism, the results provide further insight into the sociocultural logic of politeness. [Al-Duleimi et al. \(2016\)](#) and [Grainger \(2018\)](#) highlight that collectivist societies emphasize interdependence and shared identity, leading to the use of indirect and affiliative language forms. The Indonesian practice of using polite titles and soft negotiation strategies reflects the importance of maintaining social order and face equality. In contrast, the Uzbek preference for emotional expression and kinship terms such as *qizim*, meaning 'my daughter', or *o'g'lim*, meaning 'my son', reflects a relational style grounded in familial intimacy. This difference illustrates that politeness in both societies is contextually appropriate and culturally consistent, reinforcing [Nuraini \(2021\)](#) view that politeness universals must always be interpreted through the lens of local culture.

The discussion of hospitality findings further supports the argument that politeness in these societies functions as a moral duty rather than a strategic choice. The high frequency of repeated invitations among Uzbek speakers and the moderate level of insistence among Indonesian speakers both stem from the desire to express care and humility. Such acts are deeply tied to the community's moral discourse, in which the guest is regarded as a blessing and the host's generosity signifies piety. [Haugh \(2003\)](#) and [Yusny \(2013\)](#) explain that the moral dimension of politeness blurs the boundary between linguistic pragmatics and ethical behavior, suggesting that politeness should be viewed as a culturally constructed moral practice rather than merely a conversational strategy.

From a broader perspective, these findings have implications for cross-cultural Communication and education. The different forms of politeness observed in Indonesian and Uzbek societies demonstrate that pragmatic competence is essential for successful intercultural interaction. [Locher and Larina \(2019\)](#) argue that understanding cultural norms of politeness enhances mutual respect and reduces miscommunication in intercultural contexts. Similarly, [Smith \(2024\)](#) and [Tajeddin and Pezeshki \(2014\)](#) suggest that incorporating comparative studies of politeness into English as a Foreign Language pedagogy can develop learners' awareness of cultural variability in communication. By understanding how politeness operates in Indonesian and Uzbek cultures, learners can better adapt their speech to different social environments, which aligns with the idea of intercultural pragmatic competence ([Taguchi and Ishihara, 2018](#)).

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that politeness in Indonesian and Uzbek Communication represents a vital part of social identity, yet it is expressed through different pragmatic

orientations. Indonesian speakers generally adopt negative politeness strategies that highlight restraint, moderation, and hierarchical respect, whereas Uzbek speakers favor positive politeness strategies characterized by warmth, emotional expression, and symbolic insistence. These differences reveal how both societies interpret politeness not only as a linguistic choice but also as a moral and cultural practice that sustains social harmony. Theoretically, the findings affirm the continued relevance of Brown and Levinson's model while emphasizing the need to contextualize it within the framework of Asian collectivist pragmatics, thereby enriching intercultural pragmatics. Practically, the study provides valuable implications for cross-cultural language education, particularly in English and Uzbek language learning, as well as for international diplomacy and professional training programs that promote cultural sensitivity and respectful Communication. For future research, the study recommends extending this inquiry to digital contexts to explore online politeness practices, investigate gender-based differences in politeness strategies, and examine multimodal aspects such as gesture, intonation, and visual cues to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of politeness across cultures.

6. REFERENCES

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