



INTERCULTURAL STRATEGIES OF POLITENESS IN DIGITAL DISCOURSE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Rahima Andashova

PhD in Philological Sciences, Acting Associate Professor
Kyrgyz State University named after I. Arbaev
720026, 49 I. Razzakov Str., Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8232-6540>
rahimaandasova@gmail.com
+996709255505

Mirzalim kyzy Gulmeerim

teacher
Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University,
I. Ch. Isamidinov Pedagogical Institute,
Department of Philological and Socio-Economic Education.
E-mail: meerim.mirzalimkyzy@mail.ru
Тел: +996999 911002

Abstract: *This article is devoted to investigation of intercultural politeness strategies in the context of digital discourse as a new communicative space that generates the peculiarities of speech behaviour among participants in intercultural communication. It analyses the influence of cultural norms and values on the choice of politeness strategies and tactics in online communication (social networks, messengers, forums). Particular attention is paid to the theoretical foundations of politeness (Brown and Levinson's models, speech act theory, pragmatics) and their adaptation to the digital environment. Based on English- and Russian-language internet comments, typical manifestations of positive and negative politeness are identified, as well as cases of communicative misbalance due to cultural differences and digital anonymity. The practical part of the research is aimed at developing recommendations for the effective use of politeness strategies to prevent intercultural misunderstandings and improve the quality of online interaction.*

Keywords: *intercultural communication, digital discourse, politeness, strategies and tactics, pragmatics, Internet communication.*

INTRODUCTION.

Growth of digital tech has totally changed how we chat, opening up new ways to share info worldwide but also bringing up some communication issues. Digital discourse, including email, instant messaging, social networks, and educational platforms, is characterized by a lack of non-verbal cues and cultural context, which requires a reconsideration of traditional models of intercultural communication [Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 87;]. The relevance of the study is due to the need to study politeness strategies in online communication, where distortions of meaning and misunderstandings arise due to cultural differences, the diversity of visual and paralinguistic signs, and the peculiarities of digital speech etiquette. The aim of this research is to reveal key pragmatic strategies of politeness in digital discourse and to develop recommendations for their effective application in an intercultural environment. The objectives include analysing the theoretical foundations of politeness, studying cultural differences in online communication, and identifying practical methods for adapting messages to improve communication effectiveness.

Digital politeness: characteristics and strategies. The digital environment presents special challenges for politeness. The main problems include:

- The ambiguity of visual and paralinguistic cues, leading to misinterpretation of messages;



- Differences in speech etiquette regarding norms of politeness, authority, and form of communication [Bondarenko, 2022; Angela Nkirete, 2024, p. 30];

- The contradiction between high- and low-context communication models, affecting the directness and indirectness of messages [Hall, 1976, p. 64; Moon, 2024, p.125];

- The absence of non-verbal cues, which increases the risk of conflict and aggressive behaviour in an anonymous environment (‘flaming’) [Artemyeva, 2021, p. 78];

- Low linguistic and intercultural competence of users, leading to literal perception of messages and distortion of meaning [Kusmanto & Widodo, 2022, p. 1176].

The following are some of the strategies used to overcome these challenges:

Develop digital intercultural competence, including knowledge of cultural norms, flexible speech behaviour, and the capacity to interpret graphic symbols [Shakeeva, N., Andashova, R., & Jumalieva, G. (2025), p. 63].

Use of positive politeness strategies, such as expressing agreement, showing solidarity and humour, and forming a “we” concept [Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 84; Kusmanto & Widodo, 2022, p. 1178].

Adaptation of messages to the cultural profile of the communicator, taking into account individualistic/collectivist tendencies, time perception, and status [Hofstede, 2001, p. 235].

Optimizing visual cues and media content to reduce the risk of misinterpretation and conflict [Sun, Lasser & Lee, 2022, p.263].

Applying these strategies helps to improve the effectiveness of digital communication in educational, professional and personal spheres, as well as reducing the risk of misunderstandings and conflicts.

Cross- cultural specificity of digital discourse manifests itself in differences in:

Interpretation of visual elements. Memes and emojis may contain ‘insider’ information that is only understandable to members of a particular cultural group [Chen, 2023, p.29; Kusmanto & Widodo, 2022, p. 1181].

Speech strategies. East Asian speakers tend to use indirect forms of expressing gratitude and apologies, while Western speakers use direct forms [Nkirete, 2024, p.30; Moon, 2024, p.64].

Time expectations for a response. In polychronic cultures, a delay in response is perceived with tolerance, while in monochronic cultures it is perceived as ignorance or disrespect [Dmitrieva, 2021, p.58].

Harmonizing these aspects requires a systematic approach to the formation of digital intercultural competence, including media literacy skills, the interpretation of visual and paralinguistic signs, and the flexible adaptation of speech strategies.

The conducted research confirms that digital discourse poses new challenges for politeness and intercultural communication. The main sources of communication failures are:

ambiguity of visual and paralinguistic elements (emojis, GIFs, memes);

differences in digital speech etiquette and politeness strategies;

mismatched expectations of communication participants in high- and low-context cultures;

lack of non-verbal cues;

low level of linguistic and intercultural competence.

These results highlight the need for a comprehensive approach to developing digital intercultural competence, including:

the development of semiotic sensitivity and media literacy;

flexible speech behaviour and adaptation to cultural characteristics;

the use of positive politeness strategies that build trust and support the emotional climate of communication.

Hence, effective digital communication requires not only linguistic competence, but also the ability to adapt to cultural differences, interpret visual and paralinguistic cues, and apply pragmatic strategies of politeness in online discourse.



LIST OF USED LITERATURE:

1. Artemyeva, E. Y. Digital language and politeness strategies. – Moscow: Nauka, 2021. – 250 p.
2. Bondarenko, V. S. Comparative pragmatics: Western and Eastern communication styles. – St. Petersburg: Peter, 2022. – 280 p.
3. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. (1987). Politeness: Some universals in language usage. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
4. Chen, J. (2023). Misinterpretation of emojis in cross-cultural communication. *Journal of Digital Linguistics*, 12(3), 24–38.
5. Dmitrieva, T. M. (2021). Asynchronous communication and trust in digital environments. *Journal of Online Education*, 15(2), 55–63.
6. Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
7. Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
8. Kusmanto, R., & Widodo, H. P. (2022). Politeness strategies in multicultural online learning. *International Journal of E-Learning*, 18(6), 1170–1185.
9. Nkirete, A. (2024). Politeness in cross-cultural digital communication. *African Journal of Pragmatics*, 7(1), 28–34.
10. Semenova, I. V. (2022). *Emoji and cross-cultural interpretation in online communication*. Moscow: Higher School of Economics Press.
11. Shakeeva, N., Andashova, R., & Jumalieva, G. (2025). Intercultural communication in digital space: Challenges and adaptation strategies. *Bulletin of the Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University*, 17(3), 59-67. doi: 10.58649/1694-8033-2025-3 (123)-59-67.
12. Sun, J., Lasser, T., & Lee, H. (2022). Cultural influences on emoji interpretation. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, 159, 256–269.
13. Moon, C. (2024). Electronic correspondence in East Asian and Western cultures. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 190, 120–130.
- ¹ Tukhtasinov, I., & Otabek, Y. (2022). Teaching a Foreign Language According to Age Groups. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 22(2), 238-246.
- ¹ Yusupov, O., Abdazimov, A., Muradov, U., Kuchkeldiyeva, U., & Mirkasimova, M. (2021). Improving writing skills using communicative competence. *International Journal of World Languages*, 1(2).
- ¹ Юсупов, О. (2022). Хорижий тилларни ўқитишда таржиманинг аҳамияти. Анализ актуальных проблем, инноваций, традиций, решений и художественной литературы в преподавании иностранных языков, 1(01), 9-11.
- ¹ Yusupov, O. Y. (2020). ETYMOLOGICAL AND PRO-ETYMOLOGICAL DOUBLETS IN ENGLISH. *Theoretical & Applied Science*, (2), 417-420.
- ¹ Yusupov, O. (2019). Functional-Semantic Features Of Lexical Doublets In English. *Philology Matters*, 3, 98-104.
- ¹ Yusupov, O. (2021). The russification legacy of historical monuments of Uzbekistan. *Linguistics and Culture Review*.
- ¹ Yusupov, O. (2020). Lexical doublets in English and Uzbek linguistics. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(5), 466-468.
- ¹ Yusupov, O. (2016). Testing as an effective tool of an English language classroom. Рецензенты: Ирина Валентиновна Арябкина—доктор педагогических наук, 233.
22. Юсупов, О. Я. (2020). Ўзбек тилига араб ва форс тилларидан ўзлашган лексик дублетлар таҳлили. *Хорижий филология*. No2.