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### **LINGUISTIC POLITENESS IN THE DIGITAL AGE: ANALYZING POWER DYNAMICS AND SOCIAL STATUS IN ONLINE INTERACTIONS**

#### **ABSTRACT**

Politeness is integral to fostering effective communication within society. From a contemporary sociolinguistic perspective, politeness strategies are inextricably linked to social power dynamics, including social status and power. This study seeks to examine the influence of social status and power on linguistic politeness within digital communication discourse.

This topic is particularly compelling in modern linguistics, as each language is shaped by its unique cultural and social contexts, such as English and Uzbek. However, the role of social status and power in politeness discourse has not been extensively explored in the context of diverse social media materials of unrelated languages like English and Uzbek, employing both traditional and modern methodologies. The primary objectives of this research are to analyze these relationships through various analytical approaches, interpret the connection between power dynamics and politeness, and trace the evolution of linguistic politeness, particularly from a sociolinguistic perspective.

Sociolinguistic methods have been employed to conduct this investigation. For example, comparative analysis, structural-semantic analysis, statistical analysis, and observation methods were used to analyze various politeness strategies. This approach to analyzing different politeness strategies has ushered in a new era of research into specific, distinct discourses in modern linguistics. Numerous scholars have examined specific fields from a sociolinguistic standpoint.

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### **RAQAMLI ALOQALAR DAVRIDA LISONIY XUSHMUOMILALIK: ONLAYN MULOQOTLARDA KUCH DINAMIKASI VA IJTIMOY MAQOMNI TAHLIL QILISH**

#### **ANNOTATSIYA**

Xushmuomalalik jamiyatdagi samarali muloqotni rivojlantirishda muhim ahamiyat kasb etadi. Bugungi sotsiolingvistik nuqtayi nazarga ko'ra, xushmuomalalik strategiyalarini ijtimoiy kuch dinamikasi – ijtimoiy mavqe va kuchdan ajratib bo'lmaydi.

Tadqiqot maqsadi – ijtimoiy tarmoq diskursida lingvistik xushmuomalalikni shakllantirishda ijtimoiy mavqe va kuchning ta'sirini tahlil qilishdan iborat. Bu zamonaviy tilshunoslikning eng qiziq tadqiqot mavzularidan biridir, chunki har bir til, jumladan, ingliz va o'zbek tillari o'z madaniyati va ijtimoiy muhiti bilan bir-biridan farq qiladi. Shu sababli, an'anaviy va zamonaviy yondashuvlardan foydalangan holda ingliz va o'zbek tillari ijtimoiy tarmoq diskursida xushmuomalalik hodisasi, ijtimoiy mavqe va kuchning ahamiyatini o'rganish ahamiyatlidir.

Tadqiqotimiz vazifalarini quyidagilar tashkil etadi: turli xil an'anaviy va zamonaviy tahlillar yordamida xushmuomalalikka ta'sir etuvchi sotsiolingvistik jihatlar, xususan, jamiyatdagi ijtimoiy mavqe va kuchning xushmuomalalik hodisasiga ta'siri va ular o'rtasidagi munosabatlarni tahlil qilish; kuch dinamikasi va xushmuomalalik o'rtasidagi bog'liqlikni o'rganish va lingvistik xushmuomalalik hodisasining shakllanishi va, ayniqsa, sotsiolingvistik xususiyatlarini aniqlash.

Tadqiqotimizda sotsiolingvistik tadqiqot metodlaridan, jumladan, chog'ishtirma tahlil, struktur-semantik tahlil, statistik tahlil va kuzatuv metodlaridan turli usuldagi xushmuomalalik strategiyalarini tahlil qilishda samarali

The study's findings indicate that the relationship between social status and power in facilitating successful communication is evident, as they manifest through various linguistic approaches and sentence examples in social media discourse. The conclusion drawn is that individuals with high social status tend to exhibit a high level of politeness. Status is defined as the possession of a high social position, while power pertains to the dominance exerted by powerful individuals over their subordinates.

**Key words:** linguistic politeness, sociolinguistics, power dynamics, sociolinguistic aspect, power, social status, digital communication, social settings, social media discourse, dominance.

foydalanilgan. Ayniqsa, sotsiolingvistik yondashuvga alohida e'tibor qaratilgan. Bu yondashuv zamonaviy tilshunoslikda maxsus, ajratilgan kontekstlarni tadqiq qilishning yangi davrini boshlab berdi. Shu bois, tilshunoslarning salmoqli qismi xushmuomilalik hodisasini sotsiolingvistik nuqtayi nazardan o'rganish ishlarini olib borishmoqda.

Tadqiqot natijalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, muvaffaqiyatli muloqotni vujudga keltirishda ijtimoiy mavqe va kuch munosabatlari muhim o'rin tutadi. Ular turli lingvistik yondashuvlar va ijtimoiy tarmoq diskursidagi misollar orqali ijtimoiy muhit bilan bog'lanish masalalari doirasida muhokama qilindi. Xulosa shuki, yuqori ijtimoiy mavqega ega kishilarga munosabatlar yuqori darajadagi xushmuomilalik bilan bog'lanadi. Maqom yuqori ijtimoiy mavqening mavjudligi sifatida belgilansa, kuch qudratli shaxsning o'z qo'l ostidagilarga hukmronligi bilan bog'lanadi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** xushmuomilalik, sotsiolingvistika, kuch dinamikasi, sotsiolingvistik aspekt, ijtimoiy maqom, kuch(mansab), ijtimoiy kelib chiqish, ijtimoiy tarmoq diskursi, raqamli aloqa, ustunlik.

## INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is developed through specific intentions that focus on various speech situations. Language users adopt certain principles to achieve effective outcomes from conversations. When people organise face-to-face communications, they choose the form of speech, register, and even body language. Selected language strategies are primarily aimed at enhancing the speakers' self-esteem to avoid misunderstandings, which can arise during interactions with interlocutors.

The principles of politeness are crucial elements in all uses of language, acting as a counterbalance between meaningful content and its precision, as well as the social harmony of friendly relationships. More specifically, speakers accomplish their communicative goals by using polite and precise language. According to R.Lakoff, a prominent scholar in the field of politeness research, the concept of politeness is a societal construct designed to minimise misunderstandings or conflicts in personal interactions [Lakoff, 2004].

There are a lot of famous researchers who have investigated linguistic politeness in different approaches. R.Lakoff [Lakoff, 1973, 2004], P.Brown, S.Levinson [Brown & Levinson, 1987], J.Holmes [Holmes, 2014], G.N. Leech [Leech, 2016], E.Barach [Barach, 2021] and others are most prominent ones. They analyzed the concept of politeness from various perspectives. However, nowadays sociolinguistic research is becoming more common in different social settings by investigating different

sociolinguistic factors, including power dynamics.

Due to the powerful advancements in technology, online communication is accessible to everyone worldwide. This type of communication differs from traditional face-to-face interaction with its peculiarities, such as no direct meeting and a lack of information about interlocutors. This study investigates politeness in power and social status in online communication.

## METHODS

In this research, various linguistic methodologies have been employed to examine politeness and politeness strategies. One such method is the comparative approach, grounded in the theories of P.Brown and S.Levinson. This approach seeks to analyze the differences and peculiarities of English and Uzbek politeness strategies within social media discourse. Another method utilized is structural and semantic analysis, which aims to identify the semantic and structural characteristics of linguistic politeness in English and Uzbek and analyze their meanings across different social media contexts.

Additionally, the statistical method has been applied to determine the frequency of politeness markers, thereby elucidating the influence of power and social status in English and Uzbek social media discourse. In contemporary research, corpus linguistics, facilitated by advanced technologies, is extensively used to identify frequency, collocations, and other statistical patterns related to politeness markers. This study employed a large corpus using specialized software, such as AntConc or WordSmith tools. Furthermore, large-scale data analysis and concordance analysis were conducted. Large-scale data analysis aids in identifying patterns of politeness strategies across various age groups, genders, social backgrounds, and cultures, while concordance analysis examines the contexts of specific politeness markers, such as hedges, apologies, and compliments.

Discourse analysis and pragmatic analysis have been extensively utilized to ascertain societal meanings and understandings. Importantly, these methods are not only applied independently but also in combination, leading to more robust results.

## RESULTS

Power dynamics refers to the power and social status in the society. They play a pivotal role in developing politeness patterns in communication. Language and society are interconnected to each other deeply, and language choices are selected according to the social settings. One of the prominent scientists P.Brown and S.Levinson analyzed the difference in language choices and their social backgrounds. As they assumed, individuals adjust their speech acts and linguistic choices to maintain or challenge the existing power relations in a given interaction [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80].

Another linguist M.Sifianou researched hierarchical relationships of power dynamics. In hierarchical relationships, such as those found in workplace settings, individuals with higher status tend to adopt more direct and assertive speech acts, while those with lower status exhibit more deference and politeness markers [Sifianou, 1999]. On the other hand, power and status are not always the same and can be

varied through languages. M.B. Kholova's scientific research investigated English and Uzbek fiction books to find the different politeness strategies. According to the conclusions of this research, in Eastern culture, there are two main factors influencing behavior: religious and social. A person must maintain a balance between these two attitudes. On the other hand, religion tells us to show modesty in dealing with other people. On the other hand, society strongly advises an individual to respect himself. The conflict between these two opposing factors often puts a person in a difficult situation [Kholova, 2023; 60].

Nowadays, people use social networks a lot, they cannot imagine their life without online communication. C.Caballini is one of the prominent scholars in the field of linguistic science, who defined the term "digital communication". He refers to the activities of reading, writing, sharing camera videos, and communicating through computer networks. They underlined that two types of digital communication can be carried out, synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous refers to direct communication mediated by computers. A person communicates in real-time through a chat software program with all computer users in the communication at the same time. A-synchronous refers to computer-mediated communication delays in which people communicate in a computer-delayed mode, using WhatsApp programs, e-mail, forums, and reading and writing documents online through the digital world. Digital communication emerged against the background of the influence of information, communication technology, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic [Caballini et al., 2021]. As we use computers every day to deliver different messages, we use online communication. It means that this type of communication makes people use their computer and at the same time their linguistic competence.

Other research reports show that digital communication is the exchange of information by two or more people through gadgets such as smartphones, computers, and the internet ranging from direct telephone lines, and short messages to sending messages through social media [Scolari, 2015; 1092]. This digital communication has both positive and negative implications. The positive implication is that we can easily communicate with other speakers online in a short time and low cost, while the negative implication is that we cannot easily recognize the interlocutor's response.

## DISCUSSION

Power dynamics play a crucial role in shaping the patterns of politeness in communication. According to P.Brown and S.C. Levinson's politeness theory, individuals manipulate and negotiate the level of politeness in their interactions based on their relative power positions [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80].

In a hierarchical relationship, such as between a boss and an employee, the employee is more likely to adopt a deferential and respectful tone to maintain a positive image and avoid potential conflicts. For example, the boss may exercise their power by employing less polite forms of language, asserting their authority and maintaining control [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80]. This power asymmetry influences the strategies individuals employ to convey politeness, including the use of honorifics,

indirect requests, or hedging language. Thus, understanding the relationship between power dynamics and politeness is essential in analyzing social interactions and the pragmatic choices individuals make.

Politeness is a tool that can be used to maintain or challenge power imbalances within social interactions. In many instances, individuals in positions of power will utilize politeness strategies to assert dominance and control over others. They may employ polite language and gestures to manipulate the perceptions and actions of those with less power. By doing so, they can maintain their authority and keep others subservient. Individuals who are aware of power imbalances may also use politeness as a form of resistance and defiance. Through polite challenges and questioning, they can subtly challenge the authority and disrupt the power dynamics at play. Politeness can therefore be seen as a complex sociolinguistic factor that both reinforces and challenges power imbalances within social interactions [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80].

Examples of how politeness is employed in different social contexts to assert or negotiate power can be found in various settings. In a workplace, for instance, superiors may use politeness strategies, such as indirectness and deference to maintain their position of authority and assert power over their subordinates. The use of formal language, honorific titles, and politeness markers like “please” and “thank you” and modal verbs can also serve to establish and reinforce hierarchical relationships in organizational settings [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80]. For example, politeness and power dynamics are intricately linked. Power imbalances often influence the type and degree of politeness used in communication. Here are some examples illustrating this relationship, categorized for clarity:

A. Examples where higher power uses politeness strategically: A manager praising an employee’s work: While the manager holds power, praising an employee is a polite strategy to maintain a positive work environment and encourage continued good performance. This politeness is strategic and aimed at achieving a specific goal.

Extract. Manager (high power) and Employee (low power) discussing a deadline (from Facebook):

*Manager (Sarah): Hey David, just checking in on the Johnson report. The deadline is next Friday, and I wanted to see how things are progressing. Let me know if you need any extra support.*

*Employee (David): Hi Sarah, thanks for checking in. I’m making good progress, but I might need a slight extension until the following Monday. There’s been an unexpected issue with [brief explanation]. I’ll let you know by the end of the day if I’m on track.*

*Manager (Sarah): Okay, David, let’s aim for Monday then. Keep me updated. Thanks!*

Analysis: Sarah, the manager, uses polite language (“checking in”, “extra support”, emoticon) despite her position of power. David, acknowledging the power difference, uses polite language (“thanks”, “I’ll let you know”) and justifies his request.

A judge addressing a defendant: Judges maintain formality and politeness, even though they hold significant power. This creates an appearance of fairness and

objectivity, reinforcing their authority. Politeness is a performative act upholding the legal system's image.

A politician thanking constituents: Even though politicians hold considerable power, thanking constituents is a polite way to cultivate support and maintain a positive public image. This politeness is a tool for maintaining and enhancing power.

B. Here are examples of interactions in which lower power uses politeness to manage the interaction: An employee requesting a raise from their boss uses polite language, hedging ("I was wondering if..."), and indirect requests to soften the demand and avoid appearing overly assertive. This politeness is a strategy for mitigating the power imbalance.

A student asking a professor for clarification: The student uses polite phrases ("Excuse me, Professor", "Could you please explain...") to show respect and avoid appearing challenging or disrespectful. This politeness acknowledges the power differential.

A customer complaining to a store manager: Even when frustrated, the customer might use polite language ("I'm sorry to bother you, but...") to maintain a positive interaction and increase the likelihood of a favorable resolution. Politeness is a tool for navigating a potentially confrontational situation.

Extract. Customer (low power) complaining to a company (high power) on their Facebook page (from Facebook):

*Customer (Anna): I am extremely disappointed with your customer service. I ordered [item] on [date] and it still hasn't arrived. Your tracking information is inaccurate. I'd appreciate it if you could investigate this matter and provide an update ASAP.*

*Company (Acme Corp): We are so sorry to hear about your experience, Anna. We understand your frustration. Please send us a private message with your order number and we'll look into this immediately. We value your business and will do our best to resolve this for you.*

Analysis: Anna uses more formal language and directly states her complaint. Acme Corp, aware of the power imbalance, uses polite language to defuse the situation, apologizing and offering a solution. The use of a private message suggests an attempt to handle the complaint discreetly.

C. Examples highlighting the absence of politeness due to power dynamics: A boss yelling at an employee: The power imbalance allows the boss to forgo politeness, potentially leading to a hostile work environment. The absence of politeness reflects unchecked power.

A police officer giving an order to a suspect: The situation demands directness, and politeness might be perceived as weakness or indecisiveness. The lack of politeness is functional, given the context.

A bully taunting a victim: The bully's power allows them to disregard politeness completely. The absence of politeness is a demonstration of dominance and control.

Extract 1. Friends (equal power) discussing a shared responsibility (from Facebook):

*Friend A (Maria): Hey [Friend B's Name], remember we agreed to pick up the pizza for the party tonight? I can't make it now. Could you maybe grab it? I'll pay you back. Sorry for the inconvenience!*

*Friend B (Carlos): No worries, Maria! I can totally get the pizza. Just send me the money later. See you tonight!*

Analysis: Both friends use polite language (“remember we agreed”, “sorry”, “no worries”) because they have an equal power dynamic. The language is casual and reflects their friendship.

Extract 2. Online argument (unequal power dynamics emerging from perceived expertise) (from Facebook):

*User A (Bob): That's completely wrong! The evidence clearly shows [states fact]. You're misinterpreting the data.*

*User B (Alice): Actually, Bob, I think you'll find that [provides counter-argument with source]. Perhaps you could take a closer look at the methodology before making such strong claims?*

*User A (Bob): Oh, I didn't see that study. Thanks for pointing it out, I may have been too hasty.*

Analysis: While starting with a somewhat aggressive tone from Bob, the polite counter-argument from Alice, and the subsequent acceptance by Bob illustrates how politeness and a rational, well-supported counterargument can diffuse even a conflict where an implied power dynamic existed based on who seemed more informed.

Context is crucial: The appropriateness of politeness varies greatly depending on the context, culture, and relationship between individuals.

Politeness is performative: Politeness is not always genuine; it can be a strategic performance designed to achieve certain goals.

Power is not always explicit: Power dynamics can be subtle and implicit, influencing communication even when not overtly acknowledged.

In the Uzbek language, there are some similarities in terms of power and politeness too (from Telegram):

*Talaba: Assalomu alaykum! Hurmatli Ustoz, yaxshimisiz? Mening bir iltimosim bor edi. Ertaga darsga kelolmayman. Iltimos, sababli qilib belgilab qo'ying.*

*Ustoz: Vaalaykum assalom! Ruxsatnomangiz bormi?*

*Talaba: Ustozjon! Ruxsatnoma olishga ulgurolmadim. Jon Ustozjon! Iltimos.*

*Ustoz: Sababli qilish uchun ruxsatnoma kerak.*

Analysis: Here, the teacher is dominant, higher than the student according to his or her social power. The teacher has the power of control. That is why the student tried to make the teacher more kind and asked for help using polite language units, such as “iltimos”.

These examples illustrate the complex interplay between politeness and power. Politeness is not simply a matter of good manners; it is a social tool used to navigate power dynamics and manage interactions effectively. The absence of politeness, on the other hand, can signal an imbalance of power and potentially lead to conflict.

Similarly, in diplomatic negotiations, politeness can be employed as a tool

to negotiate power dynamics and maintain positive relationships between nations or representatives [Brown & Levinson, 1987; 80]. By using respectful language, diplomats can assert their positions while avoiding confrontations that could threaten diplomatic ties or escalate conflicts. These examples demonstrate that politeness is not simply a superficial social nicety but a strategic tool which can be deployed to assert or negotiate power in various social contexts.

Nowadays, people are connected through social media networks a lot. Easy access to the Internet makes the world more interconnected and addicted to people's mobile devices. Due to the advancements in new technologies, several outstanding shifts are happening in society. One of them is the Internet and social media networks. People use them excessively in their daily lives to accomplish various tasks, such as to enjoy surfing the net, to do online jobs, to waste their time and so on. According to the report of Uzbekistan Statistics Agency, in Uzbekistan, 93,4% of over 10-year-old children and men use the Internet; female Internet users consist of 92,2% of the total female population [“The proportion of male Internet users”, 2024]. As we can assume, the Internet plays an important role in today's society.

From a linguistic perspective, the language used in social media has changed. This phenomenon makes linguists search this field and analyze the peculiarities of online communication. A person's interaction experiences a revolution from the real world to the virtual world by using the internet media. These characteristics of communication in cyberspace are global and cross-generational, geographical, and cultural boundaries [Kusumastuti et al., 2021].

D.Landert and A.H. Jucker defined the term “online comment” and suggested using “comment” and omitting the “online”. They assumed that “online” is not related to the context itself, it belongs to the information technology that has been used to share the context. Their research suggested using the term “digital comment” instead of “online comment” [Landert & Jucker, 2011; 1422].

The context of social networks is named differently, and there is a hot debate on this issue among linguists. As L.N. Stepanova suggested, the term “comment” is commonly used for social media discourse. Accordingly, “comment” is the communication tool to share ideas among virtual discussions in social networks [Stepanova, 2013; 95]. However, this term does not cover all essential elements of online communication, as in virtual world dialogues are mostly used and easy to access various messages.

However, on the Internet, there are two sides: a comment writer and a reader. As verbalization of the message is online, there may be several misunderstandings between them. Another predictable conflict can be observed, it is more critical that comments may be written by other virtual users. Comments are divided into two types according to their meanings: 1) comments about social life; 2) comments about personal and professional life. Each type can be involved in subgroups according to their functions and fields.

Another famous scientist, Y.A. Pogorely studied society divided into sub-social groups and compared their similarities and differences. The first social groups were

“digital communication” in political conferences, online media publication websites and news reports of news agencies. These subgroups are characterized according to the interests of the virtual community. The main peculiarity of the second subgroup is the content of the comments on the social direction of a certain publication. Additionally, there is a third sub-group, and its main feature is the freedom of message contents [Pogorely, 2001].

According to A.V. Sokolov’s report, a Canadian scientist M.McLuhan is considered as “the genius of digital communication”. He thinks that digital technology and online communication are the revolution of communication. He was a scientist who predicted the implementation of online communication would be common and accessible for the majority of people around the world [Sokolov, 2002; 75].

As we can assume, digital communication is rapidly developing. As a result, this development leads to various shifts in the society. From a linguistic point of view, when people write or read online news, they not only read or write but also control the technology that they are using. Consequently, people are becoming multifunctional.

Other scientists also highlight the importance of digital communication. C.Caballini thinks that digital communication can be identified by communicating quickly and avoiding space and time barriers [Caballini et al., 2021]. In addition, people can interact remotely with the interlocutor by no longer looking at physical appearance, age, race, and tone of voice, depending on the perception of the person involved in communication [Suparno et al., 2023].

The results of the study show that it is difficult to analyze the social status in online communication due to the digital characteristics of online communication. Compared to face-to-face communication, the online one is more subtle. In personal interactions, people see each other, their clothes and their emotional positions. However, online communication does not provide visual details about communicants. Social status can be identified by various factors. For example, linguistic styles also play an integral role in digital communication. Most people learn linguistic knowledge from traditional education in different academic settings. They use a formal or informal register according to their situation.

According to the results of the study, various politeness strategies have been used in social media discourse with the influence of power dynamics:

1. Analyzing hedges and modal verbs. Facebook comments often utilize hedges (words or phrases that weaken a statement) and modal verbs (verbs expressing possibility, necessity, etc.) to soften assertions or requests. For example, instead of “*You’re wrong*”, a commenter might write “*I think you might be mistaken*” or “*Perhaps you overlooked this point*”. The hedges (“*I think*”, “*might*”) and the modal verb (“*be*”) reduce the directness and potential for conflict, thus displaying politeness. Analyzing the frequency and type of hedges and modals used in comments can reveal politeness strategies.

2. Identifying positive and negative politeness strategies. This framework distinguishes between positive politeness (emphasizing shared ground and solidarity) and negative politeness (minimizing imposition and respecting the other’s freedom).

For instance, positive politeness might be seen in comments like *“I totally agree with you! Great point!”* or *“Love this idea!”*. These comments emphasize agreement and shared understanding. Negative politeness might appear as *“I’m sorry to disagree, but...”* or *“I hope you don’t mind me saying this, but...”*. These show awareness of potential offending. A linguistic analysis would count the instances of each type and correlate them with commenters’ relationships and the topic’s sensitivity.

3. Examining the use of emojis and emoticons. These visual elements frequently function as politeness markers, softening tone or conveying empathy. For example, a comment ending with special emojis softens the tone compared to a comment lacking such markers. An analysis would categorize emojis and emoticons by their function (e.g., agreement, apology, empathy) and correlate their usage with other politeness markers.

Additionally, according to M.Kejriwal and V.A. Pfeifer, the communicators and communicants employ linguistic tools like words, phrases, and punctuation as well as modalities like emoticons. Verbal and nonverbal cues, facial expressions, spontaneity, feedback, interaction, and personal coherence are all part of face-to-face communication. A single emoji can convey a variety of meanings in digital communication, such as attitudes, emotions, or facial expressions, using icons, pictures, or keyboard character combinations. It is more suitable and diverse to utilize this emoji for self-expression [Kejriwal et al., 2021; Pfeifer et al., 2022]. Emojis thereby shorten and intensify conversations.

4. Analyzing the use of interrogatives. Indirect requests, often phrased as questions, demonstrate politeness by avoiding direct commands. For instance, instead of *“Send me the link”* a comment might say *“Could you please share the link?”*. Analyzing the frequency of indirect requests versus direct commands in a corpus of Facebook comments can show variations in politeness levels.

5. Discourse analysis of comment threads. Analyzing entire comment threads reveals how politeness strategies unfold across multiple turns. For example, analyzing how disagreements are handled – whether through escalating conflict or attempts at negotiation and compromise using polite language – illustrates the dynamic nature of online politeness. The analysis might focus on how commenters adapt their language to maintain or restore politeness in the face of potential conflict.

6. Analyzing the use of directives. The way directives (requests or commands) are phrased in Facebook comments can also reveal politeness. Direct commands can appear rude, whereas indirect requests might be seen as more polite. For instance, a comment such as *“Please tell me more”* might be more polite than *“Tell me more”*. Analyzing the difference in frequency of direct and indirect directives, considering their context, might help to show the politeness strategies used.

According to F.M. Dobrick, digital communication ethics are characterized by several elements, including language usage, timeliness, and emoticons [Dobrick et al., 2018]. Naturally, using language both synchronously and asynchronously necessitates using words and sentences that are appropriate, free of sarcasm or double meanings, and following relevant social standards. When it comes to responding to messages or

leaving comments, punctuality is important. Similarly, it is important to use specific emoticons carefully since they can establish limits on behavior and attitude, make the content of the message clear, and produce a necessary environment.

Additionally, research reports by M.Danesi and L.Pan show that there are seven components to digital communication ethics: (1) paying attention to the time spent on the conversation, (2) starting with courteous sentences, (3) paying attention to the language and wording used, (4) using effective sentences, (5) paying attention to typing errors, (6) using appropriate and not excessive emojis, and (7) asking for reciprocity from the other person [Danesi & Paschalidis, 2017; Pan, 2020].

According to G.N. Leech, like in the real world, politeness in digital communication follows a set of rules that govern language behavior, including extralinguistic and linguistic behavior. The principle of politeness, which encompasses the maxims of wisdom, generosity, praise, humility, agreement, and sympathy, must be observed to achieve language politeness [Leech, 2016].

L.Stark, A.M. Gesselman, and L.L. Jones think that when communicating, individuals often use emojis in communicating with those closest to them [Stark & Crawford, 2015; Gesselman et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2020; Herring & Dainas, 2020]. Examples of WhatsApp student-lecturer communication can be observed in the following (from WhatsApp):

1) *Dear Ms. Martin. When I come to your office to speak to you about the title problem of my thesis?*

2) *Lily, how is your thesis writing progress this Wednesday? Sorry, mom, just replied to I haven't any progress to write it.*

One of the peculiarities of WhatsApp sentences is that they mostly join with emoticons of faces and hands. According to Q.Bai, they consider that emoji is the research topic for digital modalities. They are referred to as a tool which interprets expressions of people [Bai et al., 2019; Boutet et al., 2021]. Besides, M.A. Riordan mentioned that messages with emojis are considered to have a more positive tone of emotion than messages without emojis [Riordan, 2017].

No matter how big or little a society is, how intricately it is organized, or if it is digital, power is always present. Power is the capacity to shape people to suit the wishes of the person in charge. The relationship between parties with the capacity to affect other parties – whether voluntarily or involuntarily – determines whether power exists. A person who embodies power is referred to be a leader, and others who are influenced by him are known as followers [Soekanto & Sulistyowati, 2019]. Without any doubt, each person's social status differs from his or her position in the social setting. For example, Madina Abdullazoda as a community member, and her roles are a researcher, a teacher, her husband's wife, her son's mother, her parents' daughter and others.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that linguistic politeness plays a crucial role in digital communication, particularly concerning power dynamics and

social status. Throughout the analysis of online interactions in both English and Uzbek social media discourse, it has become evident that individuals adapt their politeness strategies based on perceived power relationships. Moreover, the research findings indicate that people with higher social status often receive more polite communication from those in subordinate positions, while those in positions of power may employ politeness strategically to maintain their authority or to achieve specific communicative goals.

Furthermore, the investigation has revealed several distinctive features of online politeness that differ from face-to-face interaction. For instance, in digital environments, communicators must rely on alternative markers of politeness, such as hedges, modal verbs, interrogatives, and emoticons, to compensate for the absence of visual and contextual cues. Additionally, the study has identified specific politeness strategies employed in social media discourse, including indirect requests, positive and negative politeness markers, and specialized emoji usage to convey tone and emotion in written communication.

Despite these findings, it is important to acknowledge that analyzing social status in online communication presents unique challenges due to the often anonymous or ambiguous nature of digital identities. Nevertheless, this research has successfully employed various methodologies, including comparative analysis, structural-semantic analysis, statistical analysis, and discourse analysis to examine the relationship between politeness, power, and social status in digital contexts. As a result, the study contributes valuable insights to the growing field of digital sociolinguistics.

Moving forward, future research should continue to explore the gaps in our understanding of linguistic politeness in social media discourse through refined sociolinguistic approaches. In particular, additional comparative studies between English, Uzbek, and other languages could further illuminate cultural differences and similarities in online politeness strategies. Ultimately, as digital communication continues to evolve rapidly in our increasingly connected world, understanding the complex interplay between politeness, power dynamics, and social status becomes essential for facilitating effective and respectful online interactions across diverse cultural contexts.

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