

COGNITIVE MODELING OF THE CONCEPT OF “POLITENESS” WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL COMMUNICATIVE BEHAVIOR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

<https://doi.org/10.70728/phil.v05.i03.040>

Sarimsakova Shoiri Ulugbek qizi
sarimsakova_s@nuu.uz
National University of Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article investigates the cognitive foundations of the concept of politeness within the national communicative behaviors of English and Uzbek speakers. The aim of the research is to analyze politeness not merely as a pragmatic strategy, but as a mental model (frame) stored in human memory and activated during interaction. Drawing on Victoria Escandell-Vidal’s cognitive approach, the study models the “Independence” frame characteristic of English discourse and the “Andisha” frame inherent in Uzbek communicative culture. The analysis demonstrates that intercultural miscommunications often arise from a “cognitive clash” of these frames. The paper concludes by highlighting the practical significance of these models for translation studies and foreign language pedagogy.

Keywords: cognitive modeling, politeness frame, mental model, English-Uzbek discourse, Escandell-Vidal, social cognition, cross-cultural pragmatics

INTRODUCTION

The study of human communication as an expression of mental processes has been redefined by the paradigm change in modern linguistics from a strictly structural description to a cognitive-pragmatic perspective. According to this approach, linguistic occurrences are now seen as cognitive structures that represent cultural models of cognition and national identity rather than just collections of grammatical rules. In this sense, one of the most complex categories is politeness, which is an essential mechanism for controlling interpersonal “face” and preserving societal balance. In the past, pragmatic strategies have been used to analyze politeness. Brown and Levinson (1987), for example, described politeness as a collection of verbal and nonverbal techniques meant to lessen face-threatening acts (FTAs). However, politeness is elevated from a “strategy” to a conceptual model or frame within the cognitive paradigm. “Social Hierarchy,” “Distance,” and “Hospitality” are just a few examples of the socially and culturally unique slots that make up this “Politeness Frame,” an organized unit of information in the human mind. The need to investigate the cognitive modelling of politeness within the national communicative behaviour of

English and Uzbek speakers is the basis for relevance of the research. Uzbek communicative behavior is based on "Collectivism" and "High Power Distance," where politeness is inextricably linked to "Andisha" (restraint) and "Iyerarxiya" (deference to elders), whereas English communicative culture is frequently characterized by a "Low Power Distance" and a high degree of "Individualism," favouring the preservation of "Negative Face" (autonomy and privacy). The cognitive processes that control how these cultural norms are projected into mental models are still little understood in a comparative Uzbek-English context, despite the wealth of studies on linguistic politeness. Current research frequently concentrates on how civility is practiced rather than how it is conceptualized by the speaker. By using frame analysis to simulate the idea of "Politeness" in both languages, this study seeks to close this gap by demonstrating how national mentalities influence the selection of linguistic and non-linguistic markers.

This research aims to create a cognitive model that explains the differences in national communicative behavior by identifying the central and peripheral elements of the "Politeness" notion in English and Uzbek discourses. This research aims to address the following questions by examining specific literary and discourse data:

What is the cognitive structure of "Politeness" in Uzbek and English mentalities?

Which cultural factors serve as the main limitations in the cognitive modelling of this idea, according to Hofstede's dimensions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

From social-normative descriptions to intricate cognitive-discursive frameworks, the theoretical terrain of politeness research has experienced a substantial transformation. According to Fillmore's (1982) Frame Semantics, politeness is now considered a mental model or a "structured unit of knowledge" in the cognitive paradigm rather than just a tactical decision. Accordingly, culturally unique slots like Status, Distance, and Social Role make up the "Politeness Frame" in the human mind. These slots are active during social cognition to direct communicative behavior. P. Grice (1975) created the groundwork for pragmatic competence by emphasizing the need for maxims in effective communication through his Cooperative Principle. But politeness serves as a cognitive constraint that frequently overrides these maxims to lessen social friction, as Lakoff (1973) contended. Leech (1983) established the Politeness Principle, which further systematized this functionalist approach. From a cognitive standpoint, speakers might classify a statement as "polite" or "impolite" within their particular cultural framework by using Leech's maxims as conceptual prototypes. Brown and Levinson's (1987) paradigm, which made use of Goffman's (1967) notion of "face-work," brought about a revolutionary change. Modern cognitive linguistics aims to

comprehend how these “face” needs are represented as internal schemas, even though their classification of positive and negative politeness is still fundamental. According to Escandell-Vidal (1996), politeness is a component of the “social knowledge” that is kept as frames in our long-term memory. People are able to anticipate the social ramifications of their language choices because to these frames. According to Escandell-Vidal, politeness is a cognitive mechanism that requires processing social information using highly culturally unique internal mental models rather than an isolated module. Cross-cultural pragmatics has a wealth of information about how national mentality shapes these models. Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions Theory from 1991 is still crucial for understanding the differences between cognitive models. For example, English communicative behavior, which is marked by a high degree of individualism, creates a politeness frame with the “Privacy” and “Autonomy” slots at its core. On the other hand, politeness is a status-sensitive cognitive process where the “Hierarchy” and “Collectivism” slots predominate in the mental map, as evidenced in Uzbek speech. This idea is strongly linked to what Wierzbicka (1991) refers to as “cultural scripts”. Furthermore, Kádár and Haugh (2013) emphasize that politeness is an evaluative cognitive process. This means that when an Uzbek speaker employs the concept of “Andisha,” they are activating a complex cognitive-pragmatic category that governs restraint and social alignment. Unlike the English model of “Independence,” the Uzbek model is rooted in an Interdependent Self-Construal, where the cognitive modeling of politeness requires a constant mapping of the speaker’s position relative to the interlocutor’s age and social status. Thus, integrating Escandell-Vidal’s focus on mental representation with diverse scholarly perspectives allows for a comprehensive modeling of politeness as a dynamic product of the human mind and cultural heritage.

METHODOLOGY

The goal of methodological framework of this research, which is based on a cognitive-pragmatic approach, is to decipher the mental models that control politeness in various cultural contexts. The research examines politeness as a type of social knowledge maintained in the long-term memory as structured frames, adhering to the guidelines set forth by Escandell-Vidal (1996).

Research Design and Approach

To determine the national specificity of “Politeness” concept, a qualitative, comparative, and contrastive research design is used. By rebuilding the mental maps that speakers use during intercultural communication, the study goes beyond superficial language description to cognitive modelling.

Data Corpus and Selection Criteria

The empirical data for this research are drawn from English and Uzbek literary works, which serve as "cultural laboratories" for observing mental models in action. The selection includes:

English Data: Selected chapters from Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, representing the Victorian roots of modern English etiquette, and Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, which illustrates the cognitive tension between professional duty and personal "face."

Uzbek Data: Abdulla Qodiriy's *Mehrobdan Chayon* and O'tkir Hoshimov's *Ikki eshik orasi*. These works provide a rich spectrum of the "Andisha" concept and hierarchical social interaction. A total of 300 communicative situations (verbal and described nonverbal acts) were extracted for frame analysis.

Instrumentation: Cognitive Frame Analysis

The primary instrument of this study is Frame Analysis (Fillmore, 1982; Escandell-Vidal, 1996). The concept of "Politeness" is deconstructed into a cognitive schema with the following slots:

Contextual Slot: Physical and social setting of the interaction.

Participant Slot: Hierarchical relationship (Age, Status, Power).

Behavioral Slot: Expected linguistic and nonverbal output (Hedges, Honorifics, Gestures).

Evaluative Slot: The cognitive mechanism that judges whether an act is "polite" within the activated cultural frame.

Procedures and Data Analysis

The analysis was conducted in four stages:

- a) Extraction: Identifying instances of politeness markers in the corpus.
- b) Categorization: Grouping markers into "Positive Politeness" and "Negative Politeness" (Brown & Levinson, 1987) as a baseline.
- c) Modeling: Mapping these markers onto the English "Independence" Frame and the Uzbek "Andisha" Frame.
- d) Contrastive Synthesis: Comparing the two models to identify "cognitive gaps" that lead to intercultural misunderstanding.

Comparative Metrics

To quantify the cultural divergence, the research utilizes Hofstede's (1991) Cultural Dimensions, specifically focusing on Power Distance Index (PDI) and Individualism vs. Collectivism (IDV), as these are the primary cognitive drivers that fill the slots in the politeness frame.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The investigation shows that being courteous is a dynamic process of cognitive mapping, where social circumstances are filtered through internal mental models, rather than just a language decision. In accordance with Escandell-Vidal's (1996)

approach, we distinguish between two different cognitive models that control communicative behavior in Uzbek and English cultures.

The English Cognitive Model: The "Independence" Frame

The "Privacy" and "Individualism" slots serve as the main anchors for the cognitive modelling of politeness in English communicative behavior. The "Negative Face," which prioritizes individuality and the reduction of imposition, is protected by the mental model. The discourse of Charles Dickens' characters, such as Pip in *Great Expectations*, demonstrates how politeness is cognitively portrayed as a technique for maintaining distance. Pip's observation of Jaggers using his safe key to inspect bridges is a cognitive hedge rather than a random nonverbal behavior. In this case study:

"He had checked off each bridge in its turn, with the handle of his safe key..."

Dickens (1861)

Up to six options may be seen here.

Cognitive Analysis: In this instance, the "Autonomy Slot" of the politeness frame is activated by the key's repetitive tapping. It allows the speaker to offer choices rather than a single instruction by cognitively signalling a non-intrusive position.

Cognitive Trigger is as a fear of violating the other person's personal space (Negative Face protection).

Linguistic Output: Tentative phrases and modal verbs (*could, would, may*) are frequently used.

The Uzbek Cognitive Model: The "/Hierarchy" Frame

On the other hand, "Collectivism" and "High Power Distance" form the foundation of the Uzbek cognitive model of politeness. The idea of "Andisha" - a multi-layered cognitive category involving social restraint, foresight, and hierarchical alignment serves as the frame's main anchor. The "Uzbek Politeness Frame" is status-sensitive, according to an analysis of Abdulla Qodiriy's Mehrobdan Chayon. As soon as the interlocutor's age and social standing are determined, the "Hierarchy Slot" is triggered. For instance, in this case study

"Shahidbek qo'lini artar ekan kuldi... "Bolaliq, bolaliq", deb qo'ydi maxdum" (Qodiriy, 1994).

This is an example of how laughter and repetition are used to reduce conflict between Shahidbek and the Makhdum.

Cognitive Analysis: In this case, the cognitive buffer is provided by the repetition ("Bolaliq, bolaliq"). The mental model initiates a "Harmony-seeking" reaction in place of a direct confrontation in order to preserve the "Social Equilibrium Slot."

Cognitive Trigger: The need to uphold social harmony and demonstrate respect (izzat-ikrom).

Linguistic/Nonverbal Output: Specific kinesics cues, such as placing the hand on the chest, which cognitively conveys the "Submission/Respect" slot, and the repetition of courteous particles (-jon, -xon, bek).

Comparative Analysis: Divergence in Cognitive Schemas

The following cognitive parameters can be used to summarise the differences between the two models:

Cognitive Slot	English "Independence" Model	Uzbek "Andisha" Model
Central Anchor	<i>Autonomy / Privacy</i>	<i>Hierarchy / Social Harmony</i>
Social Distance	<i>Horizontal (Equality-based)</i>	<i>Vertical (Status-based)</i>
Communication Style	<i>Low-context (Explicit)</i>	<i>High-context (Implicit/Nonverbal)</i>
Primary Goal	<i>Minimizing Imposition</i>	<i>Expressing Deference</i>
Cognitive Slot	<i>English "Independence" Model</i>	<i>Uzbek "Andisha" Model</i>

Intercultural miscommunication frequently results from speakers applying their native mental models to a foreign linguistic environment, as shown by Escandell-Vidal (1996). The Uzbek "Hierarchy Slot" may seem excessively formal or constrictive to an English speaker, whereas the English "Privacy Slot" may seem aloof or uncaring to an Uzbek speaker. The modelling of these frameworks demonstrates that social cognition includes civility. In contrast to the more rule-based English paradigm, the "Andisha" frame in Uzbek culture functions as a cognitive filter, requiring the speaker to evaluate the complete social environment before generating a linguistic utterance.

CONCLUSION

By focusing on internal mental representations rather than pragmatic techniques, this study explores the cognitive underpinnings of politeness in English and Uzbek communication behaviors. Instead of being a collection of strict guidelines, politeness is modelled as a flexible mental framework based on Escandell-Vidal's (1996) concept. The results show a notable difference: the Uzbek "Andisha" frame is centripetal, emphasizing societal harmony and hierarchy, whereas the English "Independence" frame functions as a centrifugal model, emphasizing autonomy and privacy. The study shows that a "cognitive clash" the incorrect application of native mental schemas to foreign contexts is frequently the cause of intercultural miscommunication. In the end, pinpointing particular "slots" inside national

politeness frames enables a more sophisticated prediction of cross-cultural interactions, implying that language learners need to develop target mental models in addition to verbal forms. The foundation for future research on the development of cognitive frames in the digital era is laid by this study. Future studies might concentrate on how social media and AI-mediated communication are changing the conventional "Andisha" and "Privacy" positions, especially among younger people. A more thorough grasp of the cognitive-pragmatic terrain of contemporary discourse might also be possible by investigating the cognitive modelling of rudeness and "face-threatening acts" in these two cultures.

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