

Expression of Uzbek and English Culture: Pragmatic Features of Nonverbal Politeness in Selected Literary Works

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Abstract—With a focus on two Uzbek literary works by Abdullah Qodiriy, *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929), and two English literary works, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861), this paper addresses nonverbal means of politeness in literary discourse. The study aims to examine if nonverbal politeness tactics, reflected in literary characters and their interactions across cultures, can be effectively examined using the theoretical frameworks proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The paper delves into the use of nonverbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, silence, and spatial behavior as methods of politeness in literary works, which reflect the cultural norms and values of both English and Uzbek societies. Through P. Brown and Levinson's idea of face, special emphasis is paid to the character's use of nonverbal cues to reduce face-threatening acts (FTAs), demonstrate reverence, or preserve social distance. Selected episodes from the novels are analyzed using a qualitative method, offering practical interpretations of nonverbal politeness acts in certain cultural contexts. There are two primary sections in the research. Based on the nonverbal means of politeness, the first gives a summary of the theoretical foundation of politeness, going over important concepts and politeness strategies, while the second section provides a practical examination of what is theoretically discussed. Finally, the nonverbal means of politeness strategies used in the four literary works mentioned above are investigated.

Index Terms—nonverbal politeness, cross-cultural pragmatics, politeness strategies, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Great Expectations*

I. INTRODUCTION

Nonverbal politeness techniques and their pragmatic aspects are represented in two Uzbek literary works by Abdullah Qodiriy—*O'tkan Kunlar Bygone Days* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929)—along with two English literary works—Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861)—and serve as the overall impetus for this research. The concept of face, specifically the actions of preserving or losing face, is considered as a good social value that people want to uphold during encounters. Motivated by the seminal works of Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), specifically their differentiation between positive and negative politeness strategies, this research attempts to investigate how these theories function in the context of literary nonverbal communication.

Brown and Levinson's (1978) theory of politeness states that face is made up of two parts: positive face and negative face. A person's desire to be liked, respected, and accepted by others is referred to as their "positive face". On the other hand, a negative face conveys the person's wish to remain independent and free in their actions. Nonverbal cues like gestures, facial expressions, silence, spatial distance, and haptic behavior are frequently used to control both of these facial features, especially in cultural situations where indirectness and nonverbal expressiveness are highly valued.

"Politeness is developed by societies to reduce friction in personal interaction" is a theory put out by Lakoff (1973, p. 64). Leech (1980) defines tact as a means of avoiding conflict strategically. Linguistic politeness, as Holmes (1995) explains, includes strategies for expressing friendliness and solidarity (positive politeness), as well as maintaining distance and avoiding imposition (negative politeness). These realizations set the stage for examining the significance of nonverbal politeness techniques that serve as pragmatic indicators of power dynamics, social relationships, and cultural standards in literature.

In the 1970s and 1980s, several scholars highlighted the importance of politeness in influencing linguistic choices and navigating social meaning. These prominent academics are Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Lakoff (1973, 1977). Working within the larger discipline of pragmatics, these academics maintained that pragmatic norms, such as the rules of politeness that establish the appropriateness of both verbal and nonverbal behaviors in social

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interactions, govern communication in addition to syntactic rules (Locher, 2012). Since Lakoff, academics have meticulously examined the ubiquitous phenomenon of politeness, especially nonverbal politeness.

Because of her groundbreaking work from a pragmatic standpoint, Lakoff is often referred to as the “mother of modern politeness theory”. Politeness, according to Lakoff’s view as reported by Watts (2003), functions as a socially developed strategy to reduce conflict in communication and ensure harmonious interaction within groups. Accordingly, nonverbal politeness techniques like dropping one’s eyes, keeping quiet, or making respectful gestures become essential parts of being courteous and preserving social harmony. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how characters in Uzbek and English literary works pragmatically employ nonverbal politeness strategies and aims to provide a deeper knowledge of cross-cultural pragmatics and literary discourse by analyzing particular nonverbal acts in the selected novels to show how Uzbek and English cultures think and execute nonverbal politeness differently.

A. *Nonverbal Politeness*

The term “nonverbal politeness” naturally arises from the intersection of politeness theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and nonverbal communication research, even though it is not always defined explicitly as a stand-alone concept in major politeness theories. In their concept of face-work, scholars like Goffman (1967) highlight the importance of nonverbal cues like posture, gaze, and silence in preserving social harmony and face in interactions. In a similar vein, Matsumoto (1988) emphasizes how nonverbal politeness techniques like bowing, avoiding eye contact, and remaining silent serve to reduce face-threatening behaviors in high-context cultures like Japan. Poggi and Pelachaud (2008) provide additional support for this viewpoint by arguing that body language, gestures, and facial expressions are effective nonverbal ways to express politeness and manage interpersonal relationships. According to Kádár and Haugh (2013), nonverbal politeness behaviors, including body orientation, spatial distance, and physical gestures, are culturally specific practices used to convey deference and avoid imposition. Burgoon and Hoobler (2002) specifically name vocal modulation, haptics (touch), and proxemics (use of personal space) as nonverbal cues that convey intimacy, social distance, or politeness. Furthermore, especially in East Asian discourse systems, Scollon and Scollon (1995) investigate how indirectness, silence, and reduced nonverbal expressiveness serve as markers of politeness. Maintaining harmony and navigating hierarchical relationships are made easier by nonverbal cues. Similarly, Watts (2003) backs up the notion that being courteous goes beyond words to include embodied behavior, in which one’s physical conduct conforms to social duties and expectations.

B. *Research Questions*

1. What nonverbal positive politeness techniques do the characters in the chosen English and Uzbek literary works employ per Brown and Levinson's theory?
2. Which nonverbal negative politeness techniques, according to Brown and Levinson’s framework, are used in the chosen literary works?
3. Which nonverbal politeness techniques are most frequently employed by characters in Uzbek and English literary discourse to demonstrate respect and deference to social hierarchy?
4. In what ways do the chosen novels illustrate the application of nonverbal politeness techniques to reduce imposition and steer clear of embarrassing situations?
5. How does the use of nonverbal politeness techniques in Uzbek and English literary works reveal cultural differences and similarities?
6. How much does the literary texts’ use of nonverbal politeness as a practical tool reflect social norms, values, and power dynamics?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nonverbal politeness has increasingly been explored in pragmatics. Grice’s (1975) Cooperative Principle laid the foundation for subsequent politeness research. While his maxims govern effective communication, Grice pointed out that other maxims, like politeness maxims, are necessary to preserve harmony in social interactions. This was followed by the development of politeness frameworks by scholars such as Lakoff (1973, 1977), Leech (1977, 1983), and Edmondson (1979, 1981), who saw politeness as rule-governed behavior intended to prevent conflict, though they still largely concentrated on verbal forms.

Brown and Levinson’s (1978, 1987) model, which was based on Goffman’s (1967) idea of face-work, marked a dramatic change in politeness research. By introducing the extensively researched ideas of positive and negative politeness, Brown and Levinson contended that politeness tactics help to prevent face-threatening behaviors and preserve social order. Their framework recognized the supportive roles those nonverbal behaviors, such as posture, gaze, and gesture, play in expressing politeness, even though it focused primarily on verbal communication. By highlighting the importance of both verbal and nonverbal cues in politeness, Thomas (1995) later broadened this understanding and defined impoliteness as a failure to follow these strategies.

Although it has been contested, Brown and Levinson’s model is still fundamental. Even though politeness tactics and nonverbal communication have been thoroughly examined by academics, the phrase “nonverbal politeness” is hardly ever used in the literature that is currently available. However, by analyzing how nonverbal behaviors, such as posture,

gaze, gestures, facial expressions, silence, and spatial management, contribute to civility and social harmony, numerous works indirectly address the idea. In the context of this study, nonverbal politeness refers to those nonverbal communication behaviors that serve to express deference, minimize face-threatening behaviors, and preserve social equilibrium. This conceptualization acknowledges that nonverbal behaviors frequently serve as just as important indicators of politeness as verbal tactics, drawing on both politeness theory and nonverbal communication studies.

The field of nonverbal communication expanded dramatically in tandem with these linguistic models. By identifying proxemics (physical distance), haptics (touch), and vocalics (tone, pitch) as the three main nonverbal strategies for expressing politeness, scholars such as Burgoon, Guerrero, and Floyd (2016) have made significant contributions. Their research demonstrated the importance of modulated voice, controlled touch, and physical space management in expressing social distance, deference, or respect. Likewise, Poggi and Pelachaud (2008) investigated how body language, gaze, and facial expressions serve as nonverbal indicators of politeness that frequently have more significance in social interactions than spoken words.

The cultural diversity of nonverbal politeness was brought to light by additional cross-cultural research. For example, Matsumoto (1988) studied Japanese interaction and found that avoidance of gaze, bowing, and silence are nonverbal ways to minimize imposition and preserve face. According to Scollon and Scollon (1995), nonverbal cues such as indirect body orientation, limited eye contact, and restrained gestures are crucial politeness tactics ingrained in social hierarchy and power dynamics in East Asian contexts. These findings were supported by Kadar and Haugh (2013), who contended that nonverbal politeness is culturally specific and significantly impacted by ranking imposition and societal norms.

In the study of politeness, empirical research has increasingly looked into nonverbal cues like body language, gestures, and facial expressions. For instance, to convey deference and soften speech acts in cross-cultural communication, researchers looked at the use of smiling, nodding, lowering one's gaze, and strategic silence. These actions are consistent with Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness, especially the Tact and Generosity Maxims, which can be expressed nonverbally to lessen the impact of potentially coercive actions. These theories have been used in several studies in real-world situations.

Altogether, the literature review shows that nonverbal courtesy is a crucial yet occasionally disregarded aspect of pragmatic competence. It expresses respect, deference, and social alignment on its own as well as in conjunction with spoken expressions. To provide insights into how two different cultures pragmatically express politeness beyond words, this research aims to investigate how nonverbal politeness strategies function within Uzbek and English literary works.

A. Nonverbal Politeness Strategies

Although verbal strategies for reducing face-threatening acts (FTAs) are the main focus of Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, nonverbal behaviors are just as important for expressing politeness, managing social relationships, and carrying out face-work. In this research, nonverbal communicative acts such as gestures, facial expressions, eye gaze, posture, silence, proxemics, haptics, and vocal modulation that serve the pragmatic purposes of reducing threats to the hearer's face, communicating deference, or upholding social harmony are referred to as "nonverbal politeness strategies".

It is imperative to mention that the phrase "nonverbal politeness strategies" is not used by academics as a separate theoretical category. Nonetheless, nonverbal communication researchers like Burgoon et al. (2016) classify nonverbal behaviors that are inherently associated with politeness functions in great detail. Nonverbal communication can be classified into various channels, including:

1. Proxemics: Managing physical distance and space during interactions.
2. Haptics: The use or avoidance of touch according to social and cultural norms.
3. Kinesics: Body language, including posture, facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact.
4. Vocalics (paralanguage): Tone, pitch, loudness, and speech rate to express attitudes and emotions.

Burgoon et al. (2016) stress that these nonverbal behaviors control social distance, intimacy, power dynamics, and emotional tone, all of which are fundamental components of politeness theory even though they do not refer to them as "politeness strategies". Therefore, when these actions serve to lessen imposition, demonstrate respect, or convey solidarity, they are interpreted in our research as nonverbal politeness strategies.

B. Nonverbal Positive Politeness Strategies

Nonverbal positive politeness strategies are those behaviors that attend to the hearer's positive face, showing interest, approval, and a desire for connection. These behaviors help to reduce social distance, signal emotional closeness, and express solidarity in interaction. Here we have divided nonverbal positive politeness strategies into six sub-strategies based on the most common ones that highlight politeness in communication.

1. Smiling and Nodding (Kinesics): Smiling and nodding are universal nonverbal cues that express agreement, friendliness, and attentiveness. They function to reinforce the hearer's self-image and create a supportive environment.
2. Friendly Physical Touch (Haptics): When culturally appropriate, small, friendly gestures like a handshake, pat on the back, or holding hands can show empathy and increase emotional intimacy.

3. **Open and Inviting Body Posture (Kinesics):** Reducing the perceived distance between the speaker and hearer and demonstrating genuine interest are achieved by leaning forward, facing the interlocutor, and maintaining an open posture (uncrossed arms and legs).
4. **Expressive Gestures:** Mutual understanding is highlighted, and emotional engagement is increased when speaking while making hand gestures or animated facial expressions.
5. **Sustained Eye Contact (when culturally appropriate):** Keeping a friendly gaze strengthens social ties by communicating sincerity, involvement, and interest.
6. **Laughter or Light-hearted Nonverbal Cues:** Playful body language, a light chuckle, or gentle laughter conveys that the interaction is fun and fosters healthy relationship dynamics.

These nonverbal cues reinforce the hearer's positive face needs and serve as practical examples of positive politeness techniques. People demonstrate empathy, reduce social distance, and fortify relational bonds without exclusively using words by grinning, making warm gestures, or maintaining gentle eye contact. Such strategies not only complement verbal politeness but often convey emotional meaning more powerfully.

C. *Nonverbal Negative Politeness Strategies*

Nonverbal negative politeness strategies are nonverbal actions intended to honor the hearer's negative face, which includes their need for privacy, independence, and freedom from imposition. These tactics convey deference or restraint, preserve social distance, and lessen the chance of intrusion. Like positive nonverbal politeness, it is divided into six subcategories in our research:

1. **Downward Gaze or Avoiding Eye Contact:** Lowering the gaze or avoiding direct eye contact demonstrates respect, especially in hierarchical or formal contexts, and minimizes imposition. It is often culture-based.
2. **Maintaining Physical Distance (Proxemics):** Maintaining a proper social distance respects the other person's autonomy and personal space.
3. **Minimal Gesturing:** Hand gestures that are restricted or controlled avoid being overly noticeable or coming across as too familiar, which is consistent with negative politeness.
4. **Silence or Strategic Pauses:** Silence or pausing signals non-intrusion, gives the other person space, and lowers the possibility of offense.
5. **Slight Bowing:** Bowing slightly or lowering body posture nonverbally shows deference and acknowledges the hearer's higher status.
6. **Softened Vocalics:** Lowering the tone or volume of speech avoids drawing attention and reduces the imposition of one's words. Soft vocalics act as a form of vocal deference, particularly in hierarchical contexts.

By maintaining the hearer's autonomy and avoiding imposition, nonverbal negative politeness techniques are essential in reducing face-threatening behaviors. These nonverbal clues, such as avoiding eye contact, keeping distance, making minimal gestures, and speaking softly, reflect relational power dynamics, social hierarchy, and cultural norms. These actions add a deep level of meaning beyond spoken words and improve pragmatic competence and cultural sensitivity in communication.

D. *Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory*

A framework for examining the underlying cultural values that influence communication styles, including politeness tactics, is offered by Hofstede's (1991) theory of cultural dimensions. Of the six dimensions he identified, individualism vs. collectivism and power distance are especially pertinent to comprehending the distinctions between Uzbek and English nonverbal politeness strategies.

(a). *Individualism vs. Collectivism*

English-speaking nations like the US and the UK were categorized as highly individualistic by Hofstede (1991). These cultures place a strong emphasis on directness, self-expression, and individual liberty in communication. Being courteous is frequently accomplished by employing tactics that honor a person's autonomy, rights, and personal space. This is demonstrated by nonverbal cues like smiling or nodding as expressions of support and good manners, keeping constant eye contact to convey confidence, and displaying open body language to show involvement. Uzbek culture, on the other hand, is primarily collectivistic and emphasizes respect for customs, social harmony, and group identity. Respect for elders and other authority figures is a key component of politeness in these societies, and it is strongly ingrained in nonverbal behaviors. A slight bow or a hand on the chest, for instance, expresses humility and sincerity, while avoiding direct eye contact with an elder is a sign of respect. The general cultural preference for preserving group cohesiveness and refraining from actions that could upset social balance is reflected in these nonverbal politeness techniques.

(b). *Power Distance*

Power distance, or the degree to which a society tolerates hierarchical structures and unequal power distribution, is another crucial component of Hofstede's model. Low power distance indicates that interactions between people of different social ranks are typically more egalitarian in English-speaking cultures, especially those in Northern Europe and North America. Even though professional settings require a certain amount of formality, handshakes, informal

greetings, and casual body language are common ways to express politeness. On the other hand, Uzbek culture has a high-power distance, which means that communication patterns are greatly influenced by social hierarchy. Both verbal and nonverbal politeness techniques, which place a strong emphasis on deference to authority, demonstrate this. As a sign of respect, younger people might, for example, stand up when an elder enters the room, look down when speaking to someone of higher status, and show humility with restrained body language. In social situations, subordinates frequently place themselves physically beneath their superiors or stand at a respectful distance, reflecting hierarchical norms even in spatial positioning.

Nonverbal politeness is significantly impacted by the cultural differences between Uzbekistan and England in terms of power distance and individualism versus collectivism. Individual-oriented nonverbal clues, like firm handshakes, inclusive gestures, and friendly facial expressions, are frequently used to convey politeness in English-speaking cultures. In contrast, politeness in Uzbek culture is status-sensitive and context-driven, meaning that people must modify their body language according to the social hierarchy. A more nuanced comparison of nonverbal politeness across cultures is made possible by an understanding of these dimensions, which emphasize how deeply rooted cultural values influence day-to-day interactions.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Material

Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861) and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) were chosen from English literature, and two of Abdulla Qodiriy's novels, *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929) were chosen from Uzbek literature to be analyzed. These works were chosen due to their rich depictions of social interactions and cultural norms.

B. Instrumentation

The researchers applied the politeness theory, a theoretical model by Brown and Levinson (1987), to this study, which provided the framework for identifying and classifying nonverbal politeness strategies into positive and negative politeness categories, particularly focusing on face-threatening acts (FTAs) and how characters mitigate them nonverbally.

C. Procedures

Four literary works were chosen to represent Uzbek and English cultures: for Uzbek, Abdulla Qodiriy's *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929), were chosen, and for English, the researchers chose Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861). These books were chosen because they provide vivid examples of social interaction in which literary and cultural contexts heavily rely on nonverbal politeness techniques. To find and extract passages that illustrate nonverbal politeness strategies, the researchers carefully read the novels several times. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, the extraction concentrated on situations in which nonverbal behaviors such as gestures, facial expressions, posture, silence, proxemics, haptics, and gaze practically served to convey positive or negative politeness. Additionally, the cross-cultural analysis of nonverbal politeness in both English and Uzbek contexts was supported by Hofstede's (1991) cultural dimensions, particularly Individualism vs. Collectivism and Power Distance. The extracted examples were arranged into comparative tables and classified based on both positive and negative nonverbal politeness strategies. The pragmatic and cultural significance of each nonverbal act within its context was then interpreted through qualitative analysis of the data. Lastly, the analysis showed how the different cultural norms and values of Uzbek and English societies are reflected in nonverbal politeness strategies.

D. Data Analysis

The English literary works *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (1813) and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens (1861), as well as the Uzbek literary works *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929), both by Abdulla Qodiriy, provided the data for this research. The researchers closely examined the texts, paying particular attention to passages that featured unmistakable nonverbal communicative acts that fit the positive and negative politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The analysis was qualitative and comparative. Nonverbal cues, such as body posture, proxemics, haptics, gestures, facial expressions, and silence, were extracted and divided into positive and negative politeness strategies. The pragmatic function of each nonverbal instance, whether it showed deference, strengthened social bonds, or minimized a face-threatening act (FTA), was examined to reflect the cultural norms ingrained in both Uzbek and English societies. The data from the four novels were tabulated with an emphasis on cultural significance, context, and frequency.

There were two primary steps in the analytical process:

1. The screening phase involves finding and categorizing pertinent passages in each book that use nonverbal politeness techniques.
2. In-depth analysis using the frameworks of Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness and cultural theories (Hofstede's dimensions), with an emphasis on hierarchical power relations and man-to-man interactions.

Different cultural patterns were revealed by comparing and contrasting how nonverbal positive and negative politeness strategies were used in the two cultures.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the analysis demonstrate that both positive and negative politeness strategies are conveyed in English and Uzbek literary works primarily through nonverbal communication. These nonverbal cues, such as smiling, bowing, body positioning, gestures, and silence, can be used alone to preserve face, show empathy, or convey deference, or they can be used in conjunction with spoken strategies.

A. Nonverbal Positive Politeness

By demonstrating friendliness and solidarity, positive politeness aims to lessen social distance (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Nonverbal clues, such as touch, gestures, facial expressions, and proximity, are essential for reiterating this tactic across cultural boundaries.

(a). Notice and Attend to the Hearer's Interests, Needs, and Wants

One of the key aspects of positive politeness is the speaker's effort to acknowledge and attend to the hearer's interests, needs, and desires. This strategy is used to enhance social harmony and make the listener feel valued and included. This is best illustrated by Mrs. Bennet's nonverbal cues when she greets Lydia and Wickham following their contentious marriage in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813). Recognizing the possible social disgrace, Mrs. Bennet maintains peace and expresses approval with enthusiastic gestures:

Her mother stepped forward, embraced her, and welcomed her with rapture; she gave her hand with an affectionate smile to Wickham, who followed his lady and wished them both joy with alacrity, which shewed no doubt of their happiness. (Austen, 1813, p. 430)

Mrs. Bennet's actions, like moving forward, giving a handshake, embracing, and grinning broadly, indicate acceptance, eagerness, and a wish to reduce any residual discomfort. Her happy disposition and open body language nonverbally express acceptance and approval, enhancing family ties.

Similarly, in *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1926, 2007), Uzbek culture emphasizes respect and warmth through physical gestures. When Kumush arrives at Mirzakarimboy's house, an elderly woman greets her traditionally:

Xi-xi-xi, aylanay sizdan, poshsha qiz! Mirzakarimboyning havlilari shumi? — deb so'radi. Kumush «shu» javobini bergandan so'ng o'zi bilan ko'rishmakchi bo'lgan bu xotin oldig'a ikki adim yurib tilar-tilamas yelkasini tutdi. Uning to'g'ri mavzun qomatiga yerdan bichib oling'an mudhish xotinning qo'llari zo'rg'a yetdi-da, «esonmisiz, poshsha qiz?» deb so'rashdi. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 96)

"Hi-hi-hi, may you be blessed, dear princess! Are these Mirzakarimboy's houses?" the woman asked. After Kumush answered, the woman moved two steps forward, hesitated slightly, and offered her shoulder for a greeting. The elderly woman, shorter in stature, could barely reach Kumush's shoulder but still touched it lightly and said, "Are you well, dear princess?" (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 91)

In Uzbek culture, stepping forward and lending a shoulder are important nonverbal cues that convey respect, humility, and sincerity. The elder completes the gesture despite her physical difficulty, highlighting the value of reciprocal recognition and social ties. Positive politeness is further reinforced by accompanying laughter and affectionate address ("*poshsha qiz*").

(b). Seeking Agreement

To preserve harmony and unity, seeking agreement is a crucial positive politeness tactic that is frequently communicated nonverbally. Particularly in hierarchical situations, English culture uses nonverbal cues like smiling, nodding, and mirroring body language to convey agreement without the need for explicit verbal confirmation. Dickens (1861) illustrates this in a scene in *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1861, 2008) where Pip goes to Wemmick's house and meets his elderly, hard-of-hearing father. Wemmick emphasizes the importance of nonverbal etiquette in upholding inclusivity and respect by telling Pip to nod in response to the Aged Parent's comments:

"Here's Mr. Pip, aged parent," said Wemmick, "and I wish you could hear his name. Nod away at him, Mr. Pip; that's what he likes. Nod away at him, if you please, like winking!" "This is a fine place of my son's, sir," cried the old man, while I nodded as hard as I possibly could. (Dickens, 2008, p. 112)

Wemmick's advice is supported by Pip's exaggerated nodding, which ensures polite interaction without requiring spoken answers and visually validates the Aged Parent's statements. The politeness standards of the 19th century in England, where tact and restraint were valued in formal or hierarchical interactions, are reflected in these gestures.

Similar to this, in Uzbek culture, nonverbal clues such as smiling or looking at someone else take the place of direct verbal agreement, particularly when speaking with superiors or elders. When serving food in *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (Qodiriy, 1929, 1994), Anvar, who is apprehensive about a promotion, uses a subtle smile rather than a direct rejection:

Anvar qo'li laganda ekan, kulimsib qo'ydi. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 18)

Anvar, while handling the serving tray, smiled slightly. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 18)

This smile conveys respect without being confrontational and acts as nonverbal agreement. Later, Makhdoom and Shahidbek look at each other to confirm in silence that they both agree with Anvar's appointment.

Shahidbek maxdum bilan ko'z urushdirib oldi. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 18)

Shahidbek exchanged glances with Makhdoom. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 18)

In Uzbek culture, these looks stand for unspoken mutual understanding and consensus, upholding social harmony and respect.

(c). *Offer or Promise*

Offers and promises are frequently accompanied by nonverbal clues that convey sincerity while giving the recipient the option to accept or reject them. This is known as positive politeness. When Mr. Darcy is getting ready to pop the question to Elizabeth at Hunsford Parsonage in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813), his reserved demeanor reflects this nuance. Given the tense nature of their relationship, Darcy's nonverbal cues are particularly important.

He sat for a few moments, and then, getting up, walked about the room. Elizabeth was surprised but said not a word. After a silence of several minutes, he came towards her in an agitated manner, and thus began... (Austen, 1813, p. 263)

Elizabeth is given time to get ready for Darcy's proposal thanks to his nonverbal cues of pacing, silence, and eventual approach. His offer is more genuine because his agitation conveys emotional investment. Such hesitancy and indirectness soften potentially awkward situations, such as marriage proposals, per English politeness standards.

Nonverbal clues in *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1929, 2007) also support the sincerity of offers in Uzbek culture, where hospitality customs entail frequent gestures and invitations. Cultural norms of polite refusal and persistence are reflected in the exchange when Otabek visits Usta Farfi.

"Sizniki qaerdan, mehmon?"

"Toshkanddan."

"Juda yaxshi, qani yuqoriga chiqing, mehmon, — dedi."

Otabek rahmat aytib joyidan qo'zg'almadi. Usta Farfi uni yana bir qat ko'zdan kechirib olg'ach, cho'kkalashini buzib chordana qurib oldi. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 122)

"Where are you from, guest?"

"From Tashkent."

"Very good, please come inside, guest," he said. Otabek thanked him but did not move. Usta Farfi observed him once again, then adjusted his sitting position and sat cross-legged. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 122)

Otabek's courteous rejection is in line with Uzbek tradition, which holds that turning down an offer demonstrates humility. The change to a cross-legged, open stance (*chordanak*) by Usta Farfi is a nonverbal indication of his readiness and sincerity in welcoming Otabek. In Uzbek culture, such actions are a sign of true hospitality and respect, where the host continues to provide comfort while the guest remains modest.

(d). *A Hedge of Opinion to Avoid Disagreement*

Hedging opinions is a nonverbal politeness strategy used in both English and Uzbek cultures to reduce disagreement and maintain harmony. Facial expressions, gestures, and indirect cues help soften potential conflict and avoid direct confrontation. In *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1861), Wemmick subtly discourages Pip from financially assisting a friend. Instead of a direct refusal, he uses a metaphor and gestures:

"Mr. Pip," said Wemmick, "I should like just to run over with you on my fingers, if you please, the names of the various bridges up as high as Chelsea Reach. Let's see; there's London, one; Southwark, two; Blackfriars, three; Waterloo, four; Westminster, five; Vauxhall, six." He had checked off each bridge in its turn, with the handle of his safe key on the palm of his hand. "There are as many as six, you see, to choose from." (Dickens, 1861, 2008, p. 198)

When combined with tapping the safe key, this composed list acts as a courteous nonverbal hedge. It enables Pip to change his mind without being directly criticized, which is characteristic of English etiquette, where being indirect prevents awkward situations.

Similarly, *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (Qodiriy, 1929, 1994) uses repetition and laughter as nonverbal hedging to diffuse conflict:

Shahidbek qo'lini artar ekan kuldi:

"*Shu ishonchsizlig'ingizning o'zi ham bir bolaliq.*"

"*Bolaliq, bolaliq,*" deb qo'ydi maxdum. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 19)

Shahidbek wiped his hands and laughed.

"This lack of confidence of yours is nothing but childishness."

"Childishness, childishness," Makhdum added. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 19)

Shahidbek employs comedy instead of addressing Anvar head-on, and Makhdum repeats the line softly. This strategy is in line with Uzbek customs, which permit polite disagreement while maintaining face and social equilibrium through the use of humor, light gestures, or repeated words. Both instances demonstrate how nonverbal clues, such as tapping, laughing, or repetition, can be useful instruments for maintaining harmony and hedging viewpoints.

(e). *Assert or Presuppose Knowledge of and Concern for Others' Wants*

Using nonverbal cues that convey concern and emotional support, this positive politeness technique shows that the speaker is aware of the hearer's needs and feelings. Mr. Gardiner consoles Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813) when she is upset about Lydia's elopement. He strikes a balance between verbal assurance and nonverbal calmness rather than bombarding her with words.

Mr. Gardiner, though he assured her again of his earnest endeavors in the cause, could not avoid recommending moderation to her, as well in her hopes as her fears; and after talking with her in this manner till dinner was on the table, they all left her to vent all her feelings on the housekeeper, who attended in the absence of her daughters. (Austen, 1813, p. 392)

English politeness standards are reflected in his calm demeanor and steady tone, which offer support through quiet empathy and restraint rather than overt emotional outbursts.

In a similar vein, Kumush provides Otabek with nonverbal comfort during a private moment in *O'tkan Kunlar* (Qodiriy, 1926, 2007):

Kumush Otabekning yelkasiga qo'lini tashladi:

"O'shal vaqtlarda hamrohsiz uxlag'anim to'g'ri, dedi, chunki biravlardan butunlay umidim kesilgan, hamrohim menga hamisha umidsizlikgina berar, dah-shatimnigina ortdirar edi. Ammo o'sha kunlarda uyqu menga juda shirin bir narsa bo'lib qolg'an, men uyqudag'ina biravlarni ko'rar va kunduzlari ham uyqu qidirar edim. Endi bo'lsa yana yo'ldoshim xayol... Tag'in nima deysiz?"

"Hech narsa demayman... Lekin siz ikki yil burung'i Kumush emassiz." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 183)

Kumush placed her hand on Otabek's shoulder and said,

"It is true that I used to sleep alone in those days, she said, because I had completely lost hope in others. My companion only brought me despair and increased my fear. But during those days, sleep became something very sweet for me – I would see people only in my dreams and would seek sleep even during the day. And now, once again, my companion is only a thought... What else can you say?"

"I have nothing to say... But you are not the same Kumush from two years ago." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 183)

Otabek's emotional need for reassurance is assumed by Kumush's gentle touch, which reduces social distance and conveys empathy. Such gestures, such as putting a hand on someone's shoulder, are used in Uzbek culture to subtly convey comfort, care, and solidarity. In times of extreme emotion, they frequently take the place of spoken words. Both instances demonstrate how nonverbal cues, such as a calm demeanor, physical contact, or gestures, enhance interpersonal relationships and represent acceptable cultural expressions of concern.

"I understand you."

"I acknowledge your concerns."

"I want to reassure you without forcing a verbal explanation."

This aligns with positive politeness because Kumush's action presupposes Otabek's emotional state; she assumes he needs comfort and reassurance without him explicitly asking for it. In traditional Uzbek families, elders place their hands on younger family members' shoulders to give blessings or encouragement. Spouses or close family members use gentle touches to reassure each other instead of explicitly discussing emotions.

B. Nonverbal Negative Politeness

Negative politeness is used to show deference, minimize imposition, and acknowledge social distance. Unlike positive politeness, which emphasizes closeness, negative politeness seeks to avoid intrusion and maintain the other person's autonomy.

(a). Give Deference or Respect

A crucial negative politeness tactic for expressing respect and preserving social distance is nonverbal deference. Sir William Lucas demonstrates this in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813) by bending down to Mr. Darcy:

Sir William Lucas appeared close to them, meaning to pass through the set to the other side of the room, but on perceiving Mr. Darcy, he stopped with a bow of superior courtesy to compliment him on his dancing and his partner. (Austen, 1813, p. 131)

In keeping with rigorous Regency-era etiquette, where such gestures were expected to acknowledge status and uphold social order, his brief bow avoids imposition.

Likewise, Otabek and his companion kneel before the Kushbegi in *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1926, 2007) as a sign of respect: Kushbegi, a powerful official.

Ikkisi tenglikda qushbegiga qarshi cho'kkaladilar. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 38)

Both of them knelt before the Kushbegi. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 38)

In Uzbek traditions, physical deference—bowing, kneeling, or avoiding eye contact—expresses respect in hierarchical relationships. In this context, kneeling represents submission and acknowledges authority.

(b). Apologize for Doing FTA

Nonverbal cues that express regret and lessen emotional strain are frequently used in negative politeness apologies. In *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1861), Joe pardons Pip through silent reconciliation.

Joe had actually laid his head down on the pillow at my side and put his arm round my neck in his joy that I knew him. "Which, dear old Pip, old chap," said Joe, "you and me was ever friends. And when you're well enough to go out for a ride – what larks!" After which, Joe withdrew to the window, and stood with his back towards me, wiping his eyes. And as my extreme weakness prevented me from getting up and going to him, I lay there, penitently whispering, "O God bless him! O God bless this gentle Christian man!" (Dickens, 1861, 2008, p. 310)

Joe indicates acceptance while minimizing emotional imposition with his silent gesture of touching and turning away. To maintain dignity, English customs encourage such restrained emotional outbursts.

In *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1926, 2007) Qutidor apologizes to Kumush nonverbally for his error.

Qutidor uyalish va o'kinish orasida: "Jaholat kelsa, aql qochadir, qizim," — deb qo'ydi. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 146)

Qutidor, caught between shame and regret, said, "When ignorance comes, wisdom flees, my daughter." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 146)

His lowered posture and quiet voice express regret without offering an outright apology. Lowering one's gaze or speaking quietly are examples of nonverbal humility in Uzbek culture that preserve harmony and reduce the FTA.

(c). *Minimizing Imposition*

In *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813), Elizabeth Bennet discreetly excuses herself from a discussion about her sister to avoid emotional exposure. Minimizing imposition is an essential negative politeness tactic, particularly in societies that place a high importance on restraint and social harmony.

Elizabeth, construing all this into a wish of hearing her speak of her sister, was pleased, and on this account, as well as some others, found herself, when their visitors left them, capable of considering the last half-hour with some satisfaction, though while it was passing, the enjoyment of it had been little. Eager to be alone, and fearful of inquiries or hints from her uncle and aunt, she stayed with them only long enough to hear their favourable opinion of Bingley and then hurried away to dress. (Austen, 1813, p. 360)

Elizabeth shows discomfort without overtly rejecting the conversation by withdrawing nonverbally, which reflects English standards of subtly controlling emotions, particularly for women in the Regency period.

Similar to this, Ra'no downplays imposition in *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (Qodiriy, 1929, 1994) after learning of her arranged marriage:

Bu so'zdan Ra'no uyalib, boshini chaqaloqning bag'riga tiqib oldi. (Qodiriy, 1994, p. 2)

Upon hearing these words, Rano blushed and buried her face into the infant's chest. (p. 2)

Rather than expressing disagreement, Ra'no respectfully expresses her distress by turning to the child and lowering her head. In Uzbek culture, these nonverbal cues preserve social harmony and family honor by demonstrating obedience while subtly expressing inner emotion.

(d). *Go on Record as Incurring Debt or as not Indebting*

By acknowledging the favor or kindness received, this negative politeness technique minimizes the imposition and conveys gratitude or indebtedness. It shows respect and humility, especially when interacting with a higher-ranking individual. A subtle example can be found in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813) when Mr. Collins, who is renowned for his overly polite behavior, publicly acknowledges his gratitude to Lady Catherine de Bourgh for her protection and patronage.

"I am by no means of opinion, I assure you," said he, "that a ball of this kind, given by a young man of character, to respectable people, can have any evil tendency; and I am so far from objecting to dancing myself, that I shall hope to be honored with the hands of all my fair cousins in the course of the evening; and I take this opportunity of soliciting yours, Miss Elizabeth, for the two first dances, especially as a compliment to Lady Catherine." (Austen, 1813, p. 117)

Here, rather than framing his invitation and action as a personal request, Mr. Collins frames it as a duty or compliment to Lady Catherine. By doing this, he is documented as having a social debt to her generosity and status, which is consistent with the negative politeness strategy. This illustrates his wish to avoid coming across as self-serving by framing his actions as being respectful of Lady Catherine's authority.

This tactic is also reflected in *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1929, 2007), where formal language and expressions of thanks are used when interacting with influential people. When Usta Alim discovers who Otabek really is, he is overtaken with emotion and thankfulness. He gives Otabek a loving embrace and even sets up a specific place to sit for him:

"... Men o'zinning yangi mehmonimni ko'rpachaga o'tquzmoqchi bo'laman, — dedi kulib usta Alim." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 138)

"I want to seat my new guest on the cushion," said Usta Alim with a smile. (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 138)

Here, Otabek, showing humility and not wanting to impose, refuses the special treatment:

"...Men sizning ko'rpachangizga ko'b o'tlurganman, endi menga ortiqcha takallufingizning hojati yo'q." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 138)

"I have sat on your cushion many times; there is no need for extra formality." (Qodiriy, 2007, p. 138)

However, Usta Alim insists, acknowledging the favor and expressing deep respect for Otabek's presence:

"...To'g'ri so'zlamaysiz, Otabek... Endi men o'zinning yangi mehmonim bo'lgan Otabekni siylamoqchi bo'laman... Qani, Otabek, ko'rpachaga chiqingiz!" (Qodiriy, 2007, pp. 138-139.)

"You are not speaking correctly, Otabek... Now I want to honor my new guest, Otabek... Come, sit on the cushion!" (Qodiriy, 2007, pp. 138-139.)

In this example, Otabek's refusal to accept special treatment reflects his humility and desire to minimize the imposition on Usta Alim. Usta Alim views Otabek's presence as an honor, which is consistent with the "incurring debt" tactic, which expresses appreciation and respect without making the hearer feel obligated. The scene's profound respect and civility are furthered by the actions of embracing, setting up a cushion, and physically assisting Otabek. In Uzbek culture, nonverbal cues are frequently used to convey respect and thanks instead of spoken acknowledgment. People downplay special treatment to demonstrate humility, avoid giving too many thanks to avoid feeling obligated, and strike a balance between being polite and receiving favors. Otabek and Usta Alim's discussion is a clear example of Uzbek's nonverbal politeness, which is especially noticeable in hierarchical relationships, hospitality, and social etiquette.

V. CONCLUSION

This research aimed to analyze nonverbal means of politeness strategies in English and Uzbek cultures through literary works: two Uzbek literary works by Abdullah Qodiri, *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (1926) and *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (1929), and two English literary works, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861). The researchers used the politeness theory of Brown and Levinson to investigate how politeness is expressed nonverbally as opposed to verbally. We discovered the usage of gestures, facial expressions, spatial behaviors, and haptic signals by characters to convey politeness, reduce imposition, and negotiate social hierarchies through a comparative study. We have effectively addressed the initial research questions with our study. The results showed that both English and Uzbek literature regularly used nonverbal negative politeness, especially in formal and hierarchical encounters when characters aimed to avoid being overly imposing. Key techniques for demonstrating deference and avoiding direct confrontation were noted to include physical disengagement, lowering one's gaze, and keeping physical distance. For instance, Rano's behavior of dropping her head in *Mehrobdan Chayon (The Scorpion from the Altar)* (Qodiriy, 1929) and Elizabeth Bennet's subtly withdrawing from an awkward conversation in *Pride and Prejudice* (Austen, 1813) both showed an attempt to preserve social harmony by not forcing their feelings on others.

However, nonverbal positive politeness was especially common in situations where the goal was to build intimacy and unity. To convey warmth and inclusivity, gestures like tender touch, open body language, and warm facial expressions were frequently employed. Notable examples included Otabek's consoling gestures towards Kumush in *O'tkan Kunlar (Bygone Days)* (Qodiriy, 1926), which demonstrated the significance of nonverbal communication in strengthening social ties, and Pip's physical proximity to Joe in *Great Expectations* (Dickens, 1861), which denoted trust and emotional connection. One key conclusion of this research is that while nonverbal politeness exists across cultures, its expression varies due to cultural values. Uzbek writing highlights hierarchy and familial respect, whereas English literature from the Regency and Victorian eras favors indirectness and emotional restraint. This research demonstrates that politeness is not solely linguistic but also deeply rooted in nonverbal behavior shaped by cultural norms and social expectations, thereby contributing to cross-cultural pragmatics. The results highlight the importance of including nonverbal communication analysis in studies on politeness, especially those that compare cultures. Future studies could build on this research by examining real-world interactions or a wider variety of literary works to confirm the importance of nonverbal politeness techniques in cross-cultural communication.

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