

PAPER

THE INFLUENCE OF POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND MAXIMS IN RELIGIOUS TEXTS: A LINGUOPRAGMATIC STUDY BASED ON QUR'AN TRANSLATIONS

Rustamova Mohinabonu Sherzod qizi^{1,*}

¹A student of Kokand State University

*mohinaxonrustamova@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the presence and function of politeness strategies and maxims in selected translations of the Qur'an. Religious texts such as the Qur'an employ highly respectful, emotionally balanced and ethically guided communication aimed at instructing, comforting and guiding the believers. By applying a linguopragmatic approach the research examines how translators employ positive and negative politeness strategies to convey respect, humility and social norms inherent the source text. The study also investigates the influence of Leech's and Brown Levinson's politeness theories on translation choices. Findings suggest that translator's decisions significantly impact reader's perception of politeness, interpersonal relationships and cultural nuances. The study contributes to a better understanding of cross-linguistic politeness realization in religious discourse. Drawing primarily on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, complemented by Leech's (1983) maxims and Goffman's (1967) concept of face, the research examines how Qur'anic discourse employs strategies such as indirectness, mitigation, honorifics and vocatives to navigate diverse communicative texts. The study seeks to demonstrate that politeness in Qur'an is not merely a social convention but a deliberate feature of divine communication, offering a model for ethical discourse in both religious and intercultural contexts.

Key words: Pragmatics; Politeness strategies; Qur'anic discourse; English translations of the Qur'an; Communicative competence; Linguistic politeness; Leech's politeness maxims; Brown and Levinson's theory; Divine-human communication; Religious discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Language is used for communication to convey one's intention to each other in social interactions.

Compiled on: January 17, 2026.

Copyright: ©2025 by the authors. Submitted to *Advances in Science and Humanities* for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the [Creative Commons Attribution \(CC BY\) 4.0 license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Thus, politeness strategies play a pivotal role in every realm as the Qur'an, the central sacred text of Islam, is revered not only for its theological guidance but also for its linguistic precision and rhetorical elegance. Beyond its legal and moral directives, it provides a sophisticated framework for communication, emphasizing respect, empathy and thoughtful interaction in human relations. In this paper it is illustrated that the pragmatic aspects of politeness in the Qur'an, focusing on the linguistic strategies used to express deference, maintain harmony and guide interactions – whether between God and humanity, prophets and their communities or among individuals. Additionally, language serves as a vital medium through which individuals express their intentions, attitudes and emotions in social interaction. In communicating intentions speakers employ various linguistic strategies which form an essential component of communicative competence. This competence is closely connected with pragmatics, as it governs how language is interpreted and produced across different social and cultural contexts (Glaser 2009).

Pragmatics shapes our selection of words, tone and expressions determining how communication is adapted when addressing different audiences and situations. Among the key areas of pragmatics is politeness plays a substantial role in maintaining respect, harmony and appropriate social behavior. Politeness strategies and maxims are therefore significant to investigate, as they guide speakers in knowing and noticing what they say, how to say, when to say and how to interact with others in socially acceptable and respectful ways (Yule, 1996). Therefore, politeness is widely regarded as a universal communicative value and is often associated with good manners, courtesy, ethical behavior and interaction. According to Leech (1993), politeness can be defined as a strategic effort to avoid conflict, ensure social harmony and establish a sense of mutual respect between interlocutors. This conscious effort to maintain comity becomes especially meaningful in religion discourse, where communication not only informs or shapes but also guides, consoles and morally shapes individuals. In Qur'an translations, politeness is reflected through strategies such as respect, humility,

reassurance, indirectness and mitigation, which contribute to the preservation of dignity and interpersonal harmony within divine-human and human-human communication.

Furthermore, the present study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What types of politeness strategies are reflected in the speech attributed to Allah, Prophets and human interlocutors in the English translations of the Qur'an?
2. Which politeness strategies are employed in English translations of the Qur'an across divine, prophetic and human communication?
3. Which politeness principles appear as the most dominantly used in the discourse of Allah, Prophets and humans?
4. Which politeness strategies are most frequently used and dominantly applied in conveying messages within Qur'anic discourse?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Politeness strategies and maxims are central to maintaining social harmony and effective communication. Yule (1996) defines politeness strategies as knowing what to say and interact socially. Leech (1983) proposed six politeness maxims – tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy while Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed positive and negative politeness strategies to manage face in social interactions. Research has applied these theories across media and literature. Budiarta and Rajita (2018) found tact, approbation and generosity maxims prevalent in the Indonesian animation Adit dan Sopo Jarwo with violations in tact, generosity and agreement. Kurniasih (2017) identified agreement as the dominant maxim in Harry Potter, while Noviani (2014) and Handayani (2013) and Prihatini (2006) further show how speaker intentions affect maxim use and violations.

In religious texts, Gittan Jewed et al. (2020) analyzed five Qur'anic Surahs using Brown and Levinson's strategies and Leech's maxims. Positive politeness was more frequent, followed by negative politeness, while Leech's maxims were less common; generosity was absent. The study emphasizes the role of politeness in mediating communication and reflecting social and ethical

norms norms in Qur'anic discourse. Ultimately, previous research underscores politeness strategies' significance in literature, media and religious texts, providing a framework for analyzing strategies and maxims in Qur'anic translations.

METHODS

*Research design

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design in order to explore how politeness strategies and maxims are reflected in Qur'anic discourse. The qualitative approach is suitable because the data consist of textual utterances and the focus is on meaning, interpretation and pragmatic function rather than numerical measurement. However, simple quantitative elements (frequencies and percentages) were also applied to determine the dominance of specific details and strategies.

*Materials / Data Source

The data of the study were taken from five Surahs of the Holy Qur'an translated into English by Arberry (1955). The selected Surahs include:

- Surah Maryam
- Surah Al-Kahf (The Cave)
- Surah An-Naml (The Ants)
- Surah Yusuf
- Surah Nuh

These Surahs were purposefully selected because they contain rich narrative dialogues, interactions between prophets and their people, and divine-human communication in different social and emotional contexts, which provide a fertile ground for pragmatic and politeness analysis.

*Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected through several systematic steps:

The English translated texts of the selected Surahs were obtained and documented. The texts were read repeatedly to gain familiarity with the context.

Utterances that contained interpersonal communication, requests, commands, refusals, advice, warnings, gratitude, and other interactional features were identified. Relevant utterances were extracted and compiled into a dataset.

Each extracted utterance was numbered and categorized to facilitate further analysis. No

external respondents were involved because the study is entirely text-based

*Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis. The following analytical procedures were employed:

Each utterance was examined to identify indicators of politeness. The utterances were classified according to Geoffrey Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle, which includes six maxims: tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement, and sympathy.

In addition, Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory was applied to examine positive and negative face needs and strategies such as:

- Bald-on-record
- Positive politeness
- Negative politeness
- Off-record strategy
- Avoidance of speech acts

After classification, the frequency of each politeness maxim and strategy was calculated. Percentages were used to determine which maxims and strategies were the most dominant. This analytical procedure helped reveal not only the presence of politeness strategies but also the way they function within Qur'anic discourse.

*Research Instrument

The main research instruments were theoretical frameworks rather than physical tools. The study relied on:

- Leech's (1983) Politeness Principle
 - Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory
- These frameworks served as analytical lenses to interpret politeness expressions within the Qur'anic text.

*Ethical Considerations

Although the study does not involve human participants, ethical sensitivity was maintained by showing respect toward the sacred nature of the Qur'an. Interpretations were conducted academically and objectively without altering the meaning of the text.

RESULTS

The analysis revealed that politeness strategies are widely reflected in the selected English translations of the Qur'an. Politeness appears consistently

in the discourse of Allah, the Prophets, and human interlocutors, showing its essential role in maintaining respect and harmony. Positive politeness strategies were found to be the most dominant, especially in verses expressing reassurance, guidance, encouragement, and compassion. Negative politeness strategies were also frequently used, particularly in commands, prohibitions, and warnings, where indirectness and mitigation helped reduce imposition. Off-record strategies appeared in advisory and moral contexts, while bald-on-record strategies were less frequent and mainly used in urgent or direct instructions. Regarding Leech's maxims, the tact and approbation maxims appeared most prominently, followed by generosity and sympathy maxims, which highlighted comfort, kindness, and emotional support. Agreement and modesty maxims were present in contexts emphasizing humility and acceptance. Overall, the findings indicate that politeness in Qur'anic discourse is systematic and intentional, shaping respectful communication and positively influencing reader perception of divine, prophetic, and human interaction.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Qur'anic discourse prioritizes respect, harmony, and human dignity. The dominance of positive politeness demonstrates the Qur'an's emphasis on encouragement, compassion, and emotional closeness, while the presence of negative politeness reflects sensitivity to the listener's autonomy and face needs. The Qur'an also employs indirectness and mitigation to soften potentially face-threatening acts, particularly in instructions and prohibitions.

The results support earlier studies, showing that politeness in the Qur'an is not only a linguistic feature but also an ethical and spiritual strategy guiding social interaction. The translators' ability to preserve politeness strategies highlights the importance of pragmatic awareness in religious translation. Overall, politeness strategies in Qur'anic discourse serve as a model for respectful, morally conscious, and socially responsible communication.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the applied approach effectively improves learners' performance by enhancing engagement, clarity, and skill integration. The findings suggest that structured, learner-centered strategies can significantly support academic outcomes. Future studies may expand the sample and context to validate and deepen these results.

References

1. Abbas, N. F. (2013). Strategic Politeness in Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*. *World Journal of English Language*, 3(1), 1.
2. Abdesslem, H. (2001). Politeness strategies in the discourse of drama: A case study. *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 30(2), 111–138.
3. Al-Hindawi, F. H., & Alkhazaali, M. A. R. (2016). A critique of politeness theories. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6(8), 1537–1545.
4. Arberry, A. J. (1955). *The Koran interpreted* (Vol. 2).
5. Arberry, A. J. (1996). *The Koran interpreted: A translation*. Simon and Schuster.
6. Bousfield, D. (2008). *Impoliteness in interaction*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
7. Brown, G., Gillian, B., & Yule, G. (1983). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language usage* (Vol. 4). Cambridge University Press.
9. Goffman, E. (1967). On face-work. *Interaction Ritual*, 5–45.
10. Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. London: Longman.
11. Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. New York: Oxford University Press.