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## Predicative adjectives in the composition of expressions as tactics of positive and negative politeness strategies

### Предикативні прикметники у складі експресивів як тактики стратегій позитивної і негативної ввічливості

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#### Abstract

The present research focuses on analyzing the mechanisms of politeness and the role of adjectives in interpersonal relationships, considering them as important tools for expressing attitudes, emotions, and cultural values. Based on the research results, it has been established that politeness strategies and the use of adjectives vary significantly depending on cultural contexts, underscoring the need for a deeper understanding of linguistic norms and variations. Special attention has been paid to the role of adjectives, which serve not only as descriptive elements but also as means of expressing evaluations and emotions, thus, playing a significant role in intercultural interaction. The research conclusions underscore the importance of integrating intercultural understanding into the process of linguistic interaction. It has been revealed that successful intercultural communication requires not only language proficiency but also a deep understanding of cultural differences in politeness strategies. The research also points to the need for further exploration in this field, in particular, in developing practical recommendations for enhancing intercultural communication. In this context, knowledge and application of relevant linguistic strategies can contribute to better understanding and respect among representatives of different cultures.

**Keywords:** politeness strategies, intercultural communication, use of adjectives, language norms, cultural differences, speech interaction, sociolinguistics.

#### Анотація

Це дослідження зосереджено на аналізі механізмів ввічливості та ролі прикметників у міжособистісних стосунках, розглядаючи їх як важливі інструменти для вираження ставлення, емоцій та культурних цінностей. На основі результатів дослідження встановлено, що стратегії ввічливості та вживання прикметників значно відрізняються залежно від культурного контексту, що підкреслює необхідність глибшого розуміння мовних норм і варіацій. Особливу увагу приділено ролі прикметників, які виступають не лише описовими елементами, але й засобом вираження оцінок та емоцій, таким чином відіграючи значну роль у міжкультурній взаємодії. Висновки дослідження підкреслюють важливість інтеграції міжкультурного розуміння в процес мовної взаємодії. Було виявлено, що успішна міжкультурна комунікація вимагає не лише володіння мовою, а й глибокого розуміння культурних відмінностей у стратегіях ввічливості. Дослідження також вказує на необхідність подальших досліджень у цій галузі, зокрема, у розробці практичних рекомендацій щодо покращення міжкультурної комунікації. У цьому контексті знання та застосування відповідних лінгвістичних стратегій може сприяти кращому розумінню та повазі між представниками різних культур.

**Ключові слова:** стратегії ввічливості, міжкультурна комунікація, вживання прикметників, мовні норми, культурні відмінності, мовленнєва взаємодія, соціолінгвістика.

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## Introduction

Within the contemporary linguistic landscape, special attention is given to studying linguistic mechanisms of interaction and communicative strategies, among which politeness tactics occupy a prominent place. These tactics, being an integral part of interpersonal communication, play a crucial role in the formation and maintenance of social bonds. In the context of this topic outlined, predicative adjectives as part of expressions serve as a means of implementing strategies of positive and negative politeness, allowing speakers to express attitudes, emotions, and intentions with a high degree of precision and variability.

The present academic paper aims to investigate how predicative adjectives function within the context of expressions as instruments of linguistic politeness and how they contribute to the implementation of positive and negative politeness strategies in various communicative situations. Significant attention is devoted to the analysis of linguistic expressions containing predicative adjectives in order to identify their expressive and evaluative functions within the dynamics of interpersonal communication. Special emphasis is placed on how speakers utilize these expressions to achieve communicative goals such as forming a positive social image, demonstrating respect, sympathy, as well as for implementing negative politeness tactics, including criticism, irony, or sarcasm.

In the analysis process, theoretical frameworks from sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and politeness theory will be applied to unfold a multidimensional perspective on predicative adjectives within expressions. This research aims to significantly advance our understanding of the universal and cultural aspects of linguistic politeness through a thorough analysis of examples from a variety of languages and cultures. Additionally, we hope to shed light on the potential use of predicative adjectives as an effective tool in politeness strategies.

## Literature review

The richness of scientific materials from all over the world makes the task of selecting literature very difficult; consequently, we will briefly analyze the main studies that, in our opinion, are of the greatest interest within the chosen research topic.

For instance, Algiovan (2022) in her article focuses on the politeness strategies used by

teachers and students during virtual research supervision. This study emphasizes the importance of adapting politeness to the distance learning format, which is especially relevant in modern educational processes.

The scientific work of Abudayeh and Dubbati (2021), who in their study analyze politeness strategies in translating Donald Trump's offensive language into Arabic, is extremely interesting. This study reveals the difficulty of balancing the accuracy of the message with the need to adapt to cultural norms of politeness. The importance of cultural context in politeness strategies is further revealed in the publications of AlAfnan and MohdZuki (2023), where they investigate positive and negative politeness in the context of nonverbal communication, in particular, the behavior of drivers in Europe.

Brown's (2022) study offers a theoretical overview of the concepts of linguistic politeness, which serves as a foundation for understanding the practical aspects of using politeness strategies in different cultural and linguistic contexts. Deychakivska (2018) analyzes the pragmatic features of adjectives in the function of predicates in her study, which allows us to better understand how these linguistic units can influence the implementation of politeness strategies.

The next link in this chain is the research of Diyani and Putra (2023), which focuses on the politeness strategies used by teachers in preschool education, emphasizing the importance of linguistic adaptation to the age characteristics of the audience. It should also be noted that Erkinovna's research (2021) on negative politeness helps better understand the mechanisms of conflict prevention and reduction of direct criticism through politeness in interpersonal interaction.

Following up the review, Gaglia (2023) in her study draws attention to hybrid agreement in polite forms of address, demonstrating the variability of language tools depending on the context and interlocutor. This study complements the theoretical framework created by previous authors by expanding the understanding of the mechanisms of language adaptation in the process of communication.

An important contribution to the theory of politeness was made by Haverkate (1988), who proposed a typology of politeness strategies in

communicative interaction. His scientific work lays the foundations for much further research in this area, including the analysis of specific linguistic devices such as the use of adjectives. The study by Hollmann (2021) examines the “noun” essence of attributive adjectives and the “verb” essence of predicative adjectives based on phonological data. This analysis makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the structural and functional aspects of adjectives in language, which is essential for apprehending their role in expressing politeness.

Hutahaean et al. (2021) analyze the politeness strategies found in the show “Pesbukers”, pointing out the specifics of using language in entertainment programs. Their findings demonstrate how media content can serve as a source for learning language politeness. Isabella et al. (2022) explore how politeness can be learned through film by analyzing Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies. This study emphasizes the importance of media resources in teaching socially acceptable forms of interaction. Kristyaningsih and Arifin (2022) extend the theme of using media content to analyze politeness by focusing on politeness strategies in the movie “Freedom Writers”. Their scientific work demonstrates how cinema can serve as a powerful tool for exploring language politeness. Kučerová and Szczegielniak (2021) study Polish politeness markers, considering them as a window into the world of assessing personal attributes. This study makes an important contribution to the comprehension of the linguistic specificity of politeness, allowing for a deeper understanding of how language reflects cultural norms and values.

Lenardič and De Maiti (2023) turned their attention to the grammatical and pragmatic aspects of Slovenian modality in socially unacceptable comments on Facebook, highlighting how modality influences the expression of politeness in online discourse. This study provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of language behavior on social media, expanding the horizons of language politeness. Mubarak and Rhaif (2022) analyze politeness strategies in the motivational storytelling of American graduation speeches. Their publication emphasizes the importance of politeness strategies in public speaking, demonstrating how speakers use language to establish a positive connection with the audience. Naghia and Mulatsih (2021) examine politeness strategies used by characters in the TV series “Brooklyn Nine-Nine”, providing examples of politeness in media content. This study illustrates

how politeness can be integrated into artistic narrative structure, reflecting interpersonal communication realities. Njuki and Ileri (2021) focus on strategies of positive and negative politeness used by members of the Kenyan National Assembly. Their research makes a significant contribution to understanding the cultural nuances of politeness in political discourse.

Nurmalasari et al. (2021) explore the use of nonverbal communication in implementing Brown and Levinson’s politeness strategies. This study underscores the importance of nonverbal cues in supporting polite communication, expanding understanding of politeness mechanisms. Pompeu (2021) analyzes politeness strategies in a scene from the series “The Crown”, demonstrating how highly contextual media products can reflect complex interactions of linguistic politeness and social hierarchies.

Rababah et al. (2021) investigate politeness strategies in hotel service in Jordan, particularly in giving directives. This study provides a unique perspective on using politeness in professional interactions, highlighting the cultural specificity of communication in the service industry. Santoso and Julianti (2022) study politeness strategies in the process of teaching English as a foreign language, emphasizing the importance of politeness in the pedagogical process. Their findings demonstrate how instructors can utilize linguistic strategies to create a positive learning environment. Selgas (2022) examines politeness strategies in students’ responses to online announcements by instructors, revealing the importance of adequate linguistic etiquette in digital academic communication. This research emphasizes the significance of politeness in electronic communication between educators and students.

Sikhite et al. (2021) focus on politeness strategies used by presidential candidates in Indonesia during the 2019 debates. The analysis shows how politeness can serve as a tool for shaping a positive image within political discourse and reducing conflict in communication. Surjowati (2021) investigates politeness strategies applied by students with a regional multicultural background, highlighting the diversity of approaches to politeness depending on cultural and regional origins. This research underscores the importance of cultural specificity in politeness strategies.

Suyono and Andriyanti (2021) analyze negative politeness strategies in the television show

“What Would You Do?”, demonstrating how complex moral and ethical dilemmas are reflected through politeness in media content. Terada et al. (2021) explore the impact of politeness strategies in dialogue on negotiation outcomes, showing how linguistic politeness can influence consensus-building and satisfaction among parties.

Van Olmen et al. (2023) examine innate linguistic impoliteness using the offensive expression “you + NP” in Dutch, English, and Polish languages, elucidating mechanisms of verbal aggression. Wechsler and Hahn (2011) study “polite plurals” and adjective agreement, analyzing how grammatical structures in language reflect politeness and social relations. Xafizovna (2022) conducts discourse analysis of politeness strategies in a literary work, studying speech acts and politeness strategies, allowing for a deeper understanding of the correlation between literature and speech pragmatics.

An and Abeillé (2022) examine the agreement of the nearest attributive adjective, demonstrating the importance of grammatical structures in expressing politeness and other social meanings. Betti (2022.) offers a deep analysis of using adjectives and adverbs in the English in his online resource, revealing their role in forming polite and effective linguistic constructions.

Bybee and Thompson (2021) focus on interaction and grammar, analyzing constructions with predicative adjectives in English spoken language, indicating their importance in creating informal and polite interaction. Enwere et al. (2021) conduct a contrastive analysis of adjectives in English and Nkoro languages, revealing linguistic and cultural features in the use of adjectives in these languages. This research contributes to understanding interlinguistic differences and similarities.

Hollmann (2021) studies the “nouniness” of attributive adjectives and the “verbiness” of predicative adjectives, based on phonological data. This study reveals important grammatical and phonological features of adjectives, which are significant for understanding their role in linguistic structure. Jaratjarungkiat et al. (2022) analyze predicative adjectives in the Thai language, focusing on diachronic changes over the past century. This work sheds light on language evolution and changes in linguistic expression, which are crucial for linguistic studies.

Karunakaran and Ang (2023) offer a comparative analysis of adjective types and their functions in print media, analyzing headlines from “The Star” newspaper and “Reader’s Digest” magazine.

This research reveals the specificity of adjective usage in media discourse. Putra (2023) conducts a comparison between Indonesian and English adjectives based on their basic forms, exploring grammatical and semantic features in the context of the two languages. This study contributes to a better understanding of cross-linguistic differences. Ritchie (2021) focuses on essentialism-based conclusions in language, examining how linguistic structures are used to form generalized perceptions of people and groups. This research makes an important contribution to understanding language as a tool of social perception and identification.

The analyzed studies represent a highly significant contribution to the issue under study. However, the aforementioned illustrates that predicative adjectives’ function in politeness techniques is still somewhat of a “blank spot”, which further emphasizes the topic’s importance.

### Aims

The purpose of the present research is to analyze and comparatively study politeness strategies, the use of adjectives, and their functions in various linguistic and cultural contexts, including political debates, media content, online communication, and literary works. This will allow for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic politeness and their impact on intercultural communication, as well as reveal the peculiarities of adjectives usage in the structure of language and ways of their adaptation to different communicative needs.

### Research methodology

The methodology of the present research is based on a comprehensive approach, which includes analysis, comparative analysis, and synthesis. The analysis of linguistic expressions involves a detailed study of specific examples of using adjectives and politeness strategies in practical speech. This includes examining texts, transcripts of communication, media materials, and literary works, allowing for a deeper understanding of linguistic nuances and their impact on communication. The application of comparative analysis aims to identify similarities and differences in politeness strategies and the use of adjectives across different languages and cultural contexts. Finally, synthesis is applied to

formulate new knowledge and patterns, which are reflected in the conclusions of the proposed academic paper.

A comparative analysis was conducted to identify the features of adjectives within expressions as tactics for positive and negative politeness strategies. It primarily involved studying the factors that govern a person's speech behavior, including the relationship between verbal and non-verbal actions of speakers, the link between speech and the speech situation, the social conditioning of the choice of speech means, the relationship between actual speech practice and the standard (norm); the differentiation of speech, its units and means according to age, gender, professional, educational, and other characteristics.

Discourse analysis was implemented as a structural-semiotic study of texts, with the identification of hidden meanings of the text, the context of its creation, and plausible interpretations by the reader. Words were analyzed and divided into subgroups for comparison, correlation, analysis, and identifying specific patterns.

## Results and discussion

First and foremost, we will focus on defining key concepts underlying politeness strategies and the role of adjectives in speech, paying attention to the theoretical frameworks that shape our understanding of these phenomena. Politeness strategies and the use of adjectives are typically studied through the lens of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and politeness theory, which enables a more thorough comprehension of their relevance in language and cultural contexts.

Politeness strategies play a crucial role in interpersonal communication, allowing speakers to mitigate potential conflicts, express respect, and consider the emotional state of the interlocutor. They encompass a wide range of linguistic resources and tactics aimed at fostering positive social relations. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory distinguishes between positive and negative politeness, where positive politeness is aimed at acknowledging the individual's desires for approval within society, while negative politeness recognizes his right to independence and personal space.

Adjectives are integral parts of speech that serve various functions, from describing object characteristics to expressing evaluations and emotions. They have the power to amplify or

change the meaning of the nouns they alter, which affects how the message is perceived by the audience. When using adjectives in a polite manner, one might consider cultural norms and audience expectations and use them to either strengthen or soften words.

The comparative analysis proposed below is based on the examination of literary sources, linguistic corpora, and the analysis of real communicative acts aimed at identifying similarities and differences in using politeness strategies and adjectives. We take into account such aspects as cultural norms of politeness, contextual factors influencing the choice of linguistic means, and the role of adjectives in shaping expressions.

Therefore, in English, adjectives are often used to express respect or admiration. For example, in the phrase 'You made an **excellent** choice!' the word '**excellent**' not only characterizes the choice but also conveys the speaker's positive attitude and recognition of the interlocutor's decision. In this case, the use of the adjective '**excellent**' serves as a strategy of positive politeness, demonstrating acknowledgment and approval of the interlocutor's choice. This reinforces positive interpersonal relationships.

It's interesting to note that various levels of politeness are often used in Japanese, which are expressed through word choice and forms. For instance, one can say 'You must be tired, aren't you?' (*お疲れではありませんか?*), thereby using a more polite form instead of directly asking 'Are you tired?' (*疲れた?*). Such an approach reflects the strategy of negative politeness, which aims to minimize imposition and consider the interlocutor's personal space. Using a more polite form ensures the preservation of harmony in relationships.

For comparison, euphemisms may be used in Ukrainian to soften direct criticism. For example, one can say 'It seems like this is not the best idea' (*Схоже, це не найкраща ідея*) instead of saying directly 'This is a bad idea' (*Це погана ідея*). The use of the phrase '**not the best idea**' is an example of the strategy of negative politeness, aimed at reducing potential negative reactions. Such word choice allows expressing one's opinion softly without causing offense to the interlocutor.

In French, to express concern or care, softening can be achieved with the use of adjectives. For example, one can say 'Maybe you are driving a little fast, aren't you?' (*Peut-être que tu conduis*

*un peu vite, n'est-ce pas?*) instead of 'You are driving too fast' (*Tu conduis trop vite*). This expression uses the strategy of negative politeness, where the inclusion of '*un peu*' (**a little**) and the interrogative form make the statement less categorical and allow the interlocutor to save face by reducing the directness of criticism.

Contrary to the aforementioned, adjectives that intensify emotional load can be used in Spanish to express deep gratitude. For example, the phrase '*muchas gracias por tu amable invitación*' (thank you very much for your kind invitation) is used, where '*amable*' (**kind**) not only describes the invitation but also reinforces the gratitude. The use of the adjective '*amable*' in this context is an example of the positive politeness strategy, which reflects recognition and appreciation of the interlocutor's kindness, fostering positive interpersonal interaction.

Finally, etiquette and politeness are often conveyed through the use of special expressions and formulations in the Chinese language. For instance, it is desirable and more polite to say 'I would like this, if possible' (*如果可以的话 · 我想要这个 - Rúguǒ kěyǐ de huà, wǒ xiǎng yào zhège*) instead of saying directly 'I want this' (*我要这个 - Wǒ yào zhège*). The phrase '*如果可以的话*' (**if possible**) is a negative politeness strategy indicating a desire not to impose one's will and to consider the agreement of the interlocutor, thereby ensuring mutual respect and reducing potential pressure.

These examples illustrate how the choice and use of adjectives in combination with politeness strategies can influence intercultural communication, allowing speakers to adapt to social norms and expectations in different cultural contexts. It should be noted that adjectives are often used to provide evaluation, express attitudes, or emotions, which can be crucial in shaping positive interpersonal relationships. For example, adjectives may serve to enhance the positive image of a person or idea in public speaking, while they may be used to show respect or sympathy towards the interlocutor in everyday communication.

The analysis of speech acts in different situations reveals that politeness strategies are often manifested through the choice of specific adjectives and linguistic constructions. For example, the use of mitigating expressions or euphemisms helps reduce the potential negative

reaction of the interlocutor to criticism or refusal. These strategies play a crucial role in intercultural communication ensuring smooth and effective information exchange.

The above analysis of specific examples of using adjectives and politeness strategies in practical speech allows for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic interaction as well as reveals the specificity of their application in different communicative contexts. Our analysis underscores the importance of considering contextual and cultural factors in choosing linguistic means to achieve communicative goals while ensuring polite and respectful communication.

The multifaceted nature of the topic under study could not but reflect the contentiousness of its individual aspects. Therefore, let us first consider the debate regarding the universality and cultural specificity of politeness strategies. Some researchers believe that politeness strategies are universal since they are based on fundamental human needs for respect and social harmony, which are not dependent on cultural boundaries. However, another viewpoint prevails, suggesting that politeness strategies are deeply rooted in cultural norms and values, making them distinctly culturally specific. They emphasize that what is considered polite in one culture may be perceived as impolite or inappropriate in another.

We believe that both standpoints have their merits; however, the reality of linguistic communication likely lies somewhere in the middle: while there are some general principles of politeness, such as the necessity to mitigate direct conflict, the specific expressions of these principles vary significantly across cultures. Thus, a deep understanding of the cultural specificity of the interlocutor is necessary in one way or another for effective intercultural communication.

The impact of technological advancements on civility practices is another controversial issue. One viewpoint contends that when communication becomes more remote and anonymous online, more direct and impolite interactions may occur, undermining the significance of conventional politeness techniques. In contrast, it is contended that digitization provides new opportunities for politeness through the use of emojis, stickers, and other non-verbal means to convey tones and nuances that may be lost in textual communication. We believe that digitization

indeed transforms the ways we communicate, presenting both challenges and opportunities for politeness. New digital communication tools require the development of additional skills for the effective use of politeness strategies in the online environment. Thus, digitization does not diminish the importance of politeness but rather reformulates its expression.

Finally, we would like to address the role of adjectives in politeness strategies. While it is often believed that adjectives play a marginal role in politeness strategies since the main focus is on choosing polite formulations and constructions, there is an opposing viewpoint that adjectives are key elements in politeness strategies. This perspective argues that adjectives allow speakers to precisely regulate the intensity of their expressions, provide emotional coloring, and express attitudes with great accuracy. In our opinion, adjectives indeed play an important role in politeness strategies since they enable speakers to finely tune their expressions, adapting them to the context and communication needs. They are a crucial tool for achieving the desired level of formality, emotionality, and politeness, making them indispensable in complex interpersonal interactions.

### Conclusion

Concluding this brief investigation dedicated to the analysis of politeness strategies and the use of adjectives in intercultural linguistic spaces, it is worthwhile to summarize the ideas that, seemingly, open up new perspectives for further linguistic inquiries.

First and foremost, the extensive analysis of politeness strategies in various cultural contexts underscores their fundamental significance both for maintaining social harmony and for navigating complex interpersonal relationships. It has been established that despite the universal need for politeness, the specific manifestations of this phenomenon are deeply rooted in cultural traditions and norms, requiring speakers to possess not only knowledge of their own language but also a deep understanding of the cultural peculiarities of their interlocutors.

The comparative analysis of using adjectives has revealed their indispensable role in the structure of linguistic politeness strategies. Adjectives, due to their ability to nuance and emotionally color expressions, become instruments for conveying subtle nuances of attitude and emotions, which is particularly important in intercultural communication.

Examining specific examples of using adjectives and politeness strategies in practical speech not only illustrates theoretical principles but also reveals practical aspects of their application. This, in turn, contributes to a better understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic adaptation and strategies for minimizing linguistic conflict.

Therefore, the research underscores the importance of an integrated approach to studying linguistic phenomena, where theoretical conclusions are verified and supplemented through the analysis of real speech acts. It also emphasizes the necessity for further development of interdisciplinary studies that combine linguistics with cultural studies, sociology, and psychology to delve deeper into the essence of linguistic politeness and its impact on intercultural interaction.

Ultimately, the present research lays the groundwork for further exploration in the field of intercultural communication, offering new directions for analyzing and studying language strategies in the context of a globalized world, where understanding and respect for linguistic and cultural diversity become crucial factors in successful interaction.

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