

**Politeness Strategies in Georgian and English Languages:  
A Linguistic and Cultural Comparison**  
(Based on Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its Georgian Translation)

**Dzamiashvili Elene  
Nakhutsrishvili Ekaterine**

Iakob Gogebashvili Telavi State University, Tbilisi  
<https://doi.org/10.52340/idw.2025.40>

**Abstract:** *This paper examines how politeness strategies are expressed in English and Georgian, based on selected dialogues from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and its Georgian translation. Using a contrastive pragmatics approach, the study analyses how key speech acts – such as requests, refusals, apologies, compliments, and expressions of emotion – are realised in both versions. It focuses on how each language encodes politeness through social roles, communication norms, and interactional patterns. The findings reveal that while both English and Georgian cultures place value on interpersonal harmony, they achieve this goal through distinctly different means. English dialogue usually prefers to be indirect and careful in tone. Speakers often use soft or cautious language, avoid exaggeration, and keep a polite or emotionally distant style. This shows that English communication often values personal independence and respectful social behaviour. In contrast, Georgian favours expressiveness, directness within social boundaries, hierarchical sensitivity, and overt emotional engagement. These tendencies point to broader cultural scripts and contrasting views on how respect, solidarity, and authority are conveyed in interaction. This paper also shows how important the translator's role is as a cultural bridge, especially in literature, where politeness is not only in the words but also in tone, style, and hidden meanings. Translating dialogue in fiction is particularly difficult because even small changes in politeness can affect how characters relate to each other. The study helps us better understand how different cultures communicate and shows why it is important to teach and learn how language works in real social situations – not just words, but meaning and context too.*

**Keywords:** *politeness, comparison, translation, cross-cultural communication, literary discourse.*

### **Introduction**

Politeness is a key component of human communication. It is deeply shaped by the cultural and linguistic rules that govern how people interact within and across speech communities. More than a matter of etiquette, politeness involves the strategic management of relationships, the reduction of conflict, and the expression of values such as respect, solidarity, and emotional control. The study of politeness strategies is based on several key theories that help explain how politeness works in language and how it is expressed differently across cultures. The main framework comes from Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, which says that politeness is a universal part of communication, but each culture shows it in different ways. They describe two main types: **positive politeness**, which helps people feel closer and more connected, and **negative politeness**, which shows respect by keeping distance and avoiding pressure (pp. 61-63). These strategies are based on the idea of **face** – a person's public image or social identity.

To explain why English and Georgian cultures use politeness differently, this study also uses Hofstede's (2001) theory of cultural dimensions. Two ideas are especially important: **individualism vs. collectivism** and **power distance**. English culture tends to value independence and indirect communication (linked with negative politeness), while Georgian culture often values emotional closeness and respect for social hierarchy (pp. 210–215).

Wierzbicka's (2008) theory of cultural scripts is also relevant. She shows how each language contains shared ideas about what kind of behaviour is polite in different situations. These ideas are often built into the language itself—in the words and grammar people use (pp. 7-28). This is especially important in literary dialogue, where characters speak in ways that reflect their society's values.

Spencer-Oatey (2008) adds another layer with her relational management theory. This model goes beyond face and looks at politeness as part of broader social relationships—such as roles, group identity, and levels of closeness or formality (pp. 13-32). It helps us understand how characters in *Pride and Prejudice* use politeness to show not just respect, but also emotions, authority, and social roles.

Finally, in analysing the Georgian translation of the novel, the study uses House's (2015) model of translation quality assessment, which looks at how well a translation keeps the original meaning and tone, especially in terms of politeness (pp. 15-70). Together, these theories give us the tools to compare politeness in the English original and the Georgian translation and to understand how language reflects deeper cultural values.

Although politeness is well researched in everyday conversation and formal settings, it has received far less attention in literary dialogue – especially in translation. Fictional dialogue, while scripted, reflects cultural norms and speech patterns. Classic literature, such as Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, presents historical politeness practices that shaped – and still influence – British communication norms.

This paper fills a gap in the study of politeness by analysing selected dialogues from Austen's novel and its Georgian translation by Nino Ramishvili (2014). Georgian and English represent distinct linguistic and cultural systems, with different expectations about hierarchy, emotion, and interpersonal distance. This study compares how politeness strategies – such as directness, apology, formality, and emotional tone – are conveyed and adapted in translation.

### Methodology

This study employs a contrastive pragmatics approach to examine politeness strategies in selected dialogues from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (Global Grey, 2022) and its Georgian translation by Nino Ramishvili (2014). Contrastive pragmatics enables a systematic comparison of language use across different linguistic and cultural systems, with particular attention to context-sensitive meaning and socio-interactive functions. The aim is to investigate how politeness phenomena are encoded in English literary dialogue and how they are re-contextualised in Georgian through translation.

The dataset consists of selected dialogue excerpts that exemplify a variety of politeness strategies, including requests, refusals, apologies, compliments, and face-threatening acts. Key passages were chosen from across the novel – specifically from Chapters 1, 3, 5, 19, 20, 34, 56, 57, 58, and 60 – based on their thematic centrality, character interactional dynamics, and their prominence in secondary analyses (Austen, J. 2022, pp. 5-232; Ramishvili, N. 2014, pp. 7-196). These dialogues feature a diverse range of social relationships (e.g., family members, romantic interests, social superiors) and are particularly rich in pragmatic content, making them well-suited for in-depth analysis.

The analytical process integrates micro-level and macro-level frameworks. On the micro-level, attention is given to:

- Lexical markers of politeness (e.g., modal verbs, honorifics);
- Syntactic structures used for mitigation or emphasis (e.g., conditional clauses, passive constructions);
- Prosodic and rhetorical features such as repetition, hedging, and intensifiers.

This analysis is grounded in Brown and Levinson's politeness model (1987, pp. 61-129), which provides a typology for classifying strategies as either positive or negative politeness, depending on their function and form.

On the macro-level, interpretation is informed by Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions theory (pp. 210-215), particularly in evaluating how politeness reflects cultural values such as individualism, collectivism, or hierarchy. The framework of cultural scripts (Wierzbicka, 2008, pp. 15-28) is also applied to examine how language encodes culturally specific expectations of interaction, especially in emotionally charged or hierarchically asymmetrical situations.

To assess the translation component, the study draws on House's (2015) model of translation quality assessment, which distinguishes between overt and covert translation strategies and emphasizes the preservation of pragmatic equivalence – i.e., whether the interpersonal and social effects of an utterance are retained in the target language (pp. 15-70). Complementing this, Venuti's (2017) work on translator

invisibility provides a critical lens for considering the extent to which the Georgian translator adapts the text to target norms or preserves source-specific pragmatics (pp. 1-31, 201-223).

Data interpretation is carried out through qualitative comparative analysis, whereby each English-Georgian dialogue pair is evaluated for (1) the type and function of the politeness strategy, (2) any shifts in meaning, tone, or intensity, and (3) the implications of such shifts for cross-cultural communication. The ultimate goal is to identify patterns of pragmatic convergence and divergence and to reflect on the translator's role as a cultural mediator.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis offers a comparative analysis of dialogic interactions from the original English text and its Georgian translation. Each excerpt is examined through the lens of pragmatic theory to uncover the cultural underpinnings of politeness expressions, reflecting both micro-pragmatic choices and broader socio-cultural ideologies.

#### **➤ Directness and Negative Politeness in Darcy's Speech**

##### **Example 1**

Original: *"She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me."* — Chapter 3, p. 6  
Georgian: „ჰო, არა უჭირს რა, მაგრამ ჩემი ცდუნებისთვის მეტია საჭირო.“ — გვ. 8  
Darcy's statement exhibits indirect rudeness typical of English upper-class etiquette, where even disparagement is cloaked in formal vocabulary. The Georgian rendering is more blunt, reflecting the lesser use of hedging in equivalent social interactions.

##### **Example 2**

A further example of negative politeness appears in Darcy's distancing language toward Elizabeth:  
Original: *"Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections?"* — Chapter 34, p. 116  
Georgian: „თქვენ რა, გეგონათ დაგცინებდით იმის გამო, რომ ღარიბი ხართ? ან იმის გამო, რომ მღაბიო ნათესავები გყავთ?“ — გვ. 102

This construction uses rhetorical framing and third-person abstraction to maintain social distance. The Georgian version preserves the affront but reduces the mitigation, making the affront sound more personal and emotionally pointed.

#### **➤ Refusal of a Dance and Social Distance**

##### **Example 1**

Original: *"I certainly shall not. At an assembly such as this? It would be insupportable."* — Chapter 3, pg. 6  
Georgian: „არავითარ შემთხვევაში! უცხოთან არ ვიცეკვებ. ამ წვეულებაზე კი არავის გაცნობა არ მოგიწდება“ — გვ. 8

The refusal is expressed through minimal elaboration and strategic distancing, using rhetorical questions to create disalignment. Georgian strengthens the refusal through emotional emphasis, consistent with collectivist, high-context norms where social harmony may involve visible emotional positioning.

##### **Example 2**

Additional rejection scenes highlight cultural encoding of embarrassment and restraint:  
Original: *"You are too hasty, sir. I am not engaged to Mr. Darcy."* — Chapter 56, p. 215  
Georgian: „ძალიან ჩქარობთ, ბატონო. არ ვარ დანიშნული მისტერ დარსიზე.“ — გვ. 190  
Here, Elizabeth rejects Lady Catherine's assumptions using indirect contradiction. The Georgian translation maintains respectful tone but leans toward a firmer, declarative form of negation, suggesting assertiveness over deference.

#### **➤ Confession and Positive Politeness**

##### **Example 1**

Original: *"You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."* — Chapter 34, p. 116  
Georgian: „გთხოვთ, ნება მომეცით გითხრათ, როგორ ძლიერ მომწონხართ და მიყვარხართ.“ — გვ. 101

This proposal blends formal address with affective intensity, reflecting an upper-class speech code that permits emotional sincerity within etiquette. The Georgian version expands the sentiment, using

repetition and intensifiers that align with local discourse preferences for emotional clarity.

#### **Example 2**

A supplementary instance of positive politeness emerges in Bingley's kind appraisal:

Original: "You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room." — Chapter 3, p. 6

Georgian: „ყველაზე სიმპათიურ გოგონასთან შენ ცეკვავ.“ — გვ. 8

This performative compliment serves as social lubrication. While both versions retain direct praise, the Georgian version uses more definite syntax, reinforcing the social bond explicitly.

#### ➤ **Face-threatening Behaviour: Lady Catherine de Bourgh**

##### **Example 1**

Original: "Miss Bennet, you ought to know that I am not to be trifled with." — Chapter 56, p. 212

Georgian: „მის ბენეტ, იცოდეთ, ჩემთან თვალთმაქცობა არ გაგივათ.“ — გვ. 178

Lady Catherine's imperious tone is emblematic of status-marked speech acts. The Georgian version intensifies the threat by introducing moral condemnation, reflecting high power distance tendencies.

##### **Example 2**

A parallel occurs earlier:

Original: "I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?" —

Chapter 56, p. 212

Georgian: „მოვითხოვ, პასუხი გამცეთ, ჩემმა დისწულმა ხელი გთხოვათ?“ — გვ. 179

The English employs repetition and assertiveness. The Georgian version reinforces directness and entitlement, suggesting a culturally amplified authority in elder-female speech.

#### ➤ **Apologies and Accountability: Mr. Collins**

##### **Example 1**

Original: "I must beg leave to apologise for not calling before... I was prevented by my respect for your father's recent affliction." — Chapter 19, p. 67

Georgian: „გთხოვთ, მაპატიოთ, რომ აქამდე ვერ გეწვიეთ... ამის მიზეზი იყო ჩემი ღრმა პატივისცემა მამათქვენის მწუხარების გამო.“ — გვ. 61

Mr. Collins' apology is syntactically ornate and socially exaggerated, typical of negative politeness strategies designed to show deference. The Georgian version simplifies the construction while preserving the deferential tone, reflecting a cultural preference for direct syntax with respectful intent.

##### **Example 2**

Another instance of excessive courtesy appears later:

Original: "Allow me to solicit your company for dinner tomorrow." — Chapter 20, p. 69

Georgian: „ნება მომეცით, ხვალ სადილზე მიგიპატიჟოთ.“ — გვ. 63

While both versions exhibit formality, the English uses ceremonial wording. The Georgian translation, though equally polite, leans toward simpler, action-focused verbs, reflecting Georgian norms of respectful brevity.

#### ➤ **Humour and Indirect Criticism: Elizabeth Bennet**

##### **Example 1**

Original: "I could easily forgive his pride if he had not mortified mine." — Chapter 5, p.11

Georgian: „მე მივუტევებდი, ჩემი თავმოყვარეობა რომ არ შეელახა.“ — გვ. 13

Elizabeth's ironic statement is characteristic of English wit, a form of indirect critique that maintains politeness. The Georgian translation offers a more literal rendition, highlighting the challenges of preserving irony and layered intent in cross-cultural translation.

##### **Example 2**

Another case of humour-infused correction appears in:

Original: "For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?" — Chapter 57, p. 217

Georgian: „ჩვენ ხომ იმისთვის ვცხოვრობთ, რომ მეზობლებს გასართობი მივცეთ და მერე კი დავცინოთ, როცა ჩვენი ჯერი მოვა.“ — გვ. 184

This satirical remark illustrates socially permissible irony. While both versions retain the humour, the Georgian adds a slightly darker undertone, indicating potential shifts in ironic register.

#### ➤ **Gendered Politeness: Male and Female Speech Styles**

##### **Example 1**

Original: Mr. Bennet: "You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves." — Chapter 1, p.2



Georgian: „ცდები, ჩემო კარგო. შენს წერვებს უდიდეს პატივს ვცემ.“ გვ. 4

#### **Example 2**

Original: Mrs. Bennet: “Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in uproar!”  
Chapter 20, p.68

Georgian: „ოო, მისტერ ბენეტ, ახლავე უნდა მოხვიდე; ყველანი აფორიაქებულნი ვართ!“ გვ. 63

Mr. Bennet employs irony and detachment, consistent with masculine politeness strategies privileging indirectness and emotional control. In contrast, Mrs. Bennet uses emotional urgency, highlighting the culturally conditioned gender differences in pragmatic style. These contrasting strategies exemplify the gendered division of emotional labour in language.

#### **➤ Compliments and Strategic Praise**

##### **Example 1**

Original: “You are too generous to trifle with me. If your feelings are still what they were last April, tell me so at once.” — Chapter 58, p. 220

Georgian: „თქვენ მეტისმეტად სულგრძელი ხართ, რომ მაღლობას მიხდით. თუ იგივე გრძნობა გაქვთ, რაც გასულ გაზაფხულს გქონდათ, ახლავე მითხარი.“ — გვ. 186  
Darcy’s utterance combines evaluative praise with a softened imperative, exemplifying positive politeness coupled with vulnerability. The Georgian version intensifies emotional clarity, aligning with discourse conventions that prefer direct, explicit praise and emotional transparency.

#### **Key Cultural and Linguistic Differences**

Comparative analysis of politeness strategies in the English original of *Pride and Prejudice* and its Georgian translation reveals several core linguistic and cultural tendencies.

Indirectness is a key characteristic of English politeness, particularly in Austen’s prose, where modals, conditional structures, and hedging devices are employed to avoid imposition and express respect. In Georgian, while indirectness exists, especially in formal or public contexts, it tends to be less pronounced in private or emotionally expressive interactions. Georgian speakers often favour more direct constructions, reflecting a preference for clarity and sincerity over strategic ambiguity.

Emotional intensity in English is generally restrained, in line with cultural values of composure and reserve. Characters often veil strong feelings behind formal or subdued language. Conversely, the Georgian translation tends to amplify emotional expression, using stronger adjectives, repetition, and intensified phrasing. This aligns with Georgian’s high-context cultural framework, which allows for more overt displays of affect.

English relies on lexical and tonal strategies to indicate deference or respect, while Georgian employs a system of polite pronouns, morphological adjustments, and respectful imperatives. These forms are often added or enhanced in translation, demonstrating how social hierarchy and age-based respect are more explicitly encoded in Georgian.

Irony as politeness is a hallmark of Austen’s style. It allows critique and emotional management without overt confrontation. This rhetorical strategy is challenging to reproduce in Georgian, where irony is less commonly used as a politeness mechanism. Georgian translations sometimes replace irony with literal restatements or emotionally expressive alternatives, leading to a potential loss in pragmatic nuance.

Gendered variation in speech also emerges in both versions. In English, the distinction between male and female politeness styles is nuanced – men’s language may be more detached or ironic, while women’s speech tends toward elaboration and emotional engagement. The Georgian translation tends to amplify these contrasts, perhaps reflecting more traditional gender norms in language use.

Finally, praise and compliments in English are often indirect and modest, intended to maintain equality and avoid appearing insincere. In Georgian, compliments are generally more direct and emotionally explicit, frequently framed as evaluative affirmations. This contributes to a more relational and affective politeness style that prioritises warmth and sincerity.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that politeness is not just a matter of using polite words; it is a culturally shaped way of communicating that helps people interact within their society. This study compared *Pride and Prejudice* with its Georgian translation and showed that while both English and Georgian value respectful communication, they use different methods to express it.

In the English version, politeness is often shown through indirect speech, careful wording (hedging), formal language, and subtle meaning. These features match English cultural values like personal independence, clear communication, and social politeness. On the other hand, the Georgian translation uses more open emotional language, clear respect for social roles, and direct relational messages, reflecting a culture that values group connection and emotional expression.

The analysis of selected dialogues showed that certain speech acts – like refusing, apologising, giving compliments, or dealing with uncomfortable situations – change noticeably in translation. These changes are not accidental; they reflect deep cultural differences in how politeness is understood. For example, English uses humour, understatement, and implied meaning to be polite, while Georgian prefers open emotion and clear signs of respect. This proves that politeness depends on culture and context.

The theories used in this study helped explain how politeness works both as language (pragmatics) and as a social habit. It also showed that translating politeness is not about word-for-word accuracy, but about adapting meaning for a new culture.

These differences highlight the translator's important role – not just to translate the words, but to understand and adapt the meaning behind them. This also applies to language learners, who must learn how polite behaviour works in other cultures to avoid confusion or offence. Comparing translations gives useful lessons about how culture affects meaning and communication.

## References

1. Austen, J. (2022). *Pride and Prejudice*. Global Grey;
2. Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press;
3. Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*. Sage;
4. House, J. (2015). *Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present*. New York: Routledge;
5. Ramishvili, N. (2014). *სიამაყე და ცრურწმენა [Pride and Prejudice, Georgian Translation]*. გამომცემლობა პალიტრა L;
6. Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally Speaking: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*. Continuum;
7. Venuti, L. (2017). *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. Routledge;
8. Wierzbicka, A. (2008). *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: The Semantics of Human Interaction*. Cambridge University Press.

**თავაზიანობის სტრატეგიები ქართულსა და ინგლისურ ენებში:  
ლინგვისტური და კულტურული შედარება  
(ჯეინ ოსტინის „სიამაყე და ცრურწმენის“ და მისი ქართული თარგმანის მიხედვით)**

**მამიაშვილი ელენე  
ნახუცრიშვილი ეკატერინე**  
იაკობ გოგებაშვილის სახელობის თელავის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, თბილისი

## აბსტრაქტი

წინამდებარე ნაშრომი მიზნად ისახავს თავაზიანობის სტრატეგიების გამოხატვის თავისებურებების ანალიზს ინგლისურ და ქართულ ენებში, რისთვისაც გამოყენებულია ჯეინ ოსტინის რომანი „სიამაყე და ცრურწმენა“ და მისი ქართული თარგმანი. კვლევა ეფუძნება კონტრასტული პრაგმატიკის მიდგომას და ასახავს, როგორ რეალიზდება ძირითადი ენობრივი ქმედებები – თხოვნა, უარის თქმა, ბოდიშის მოხდა, კომპლიმენტები და ემოციური გამოხატულებები – ორენოვან ტექსტებში. ყურადღება გამახვილებულია იმაზე, თუ როგორ გამოხატავს თითოეული ენა თავაზიანობას სოციალური როლების, კომუნიკაციური ნორმებისა და ინტერაქციული სტრატეგიების მეშვეობით. შესწავლილი საკითხის ანალიზის საფუძველზე, მიუხედავად იმისა, რომ ინგლისურ და ქართულ კულტურებს საერთო

ღირებულებად მიაჩნიათ სოციალურ ურთიერთობებში ჰარმონიის შენარჩუნება, მათი მიღწევის გზები მნიშვნელოვნად განსხვავდება. ინგლისური დიალოგისთვის დამახასიათებელია ირიბი და ფრთხილი ტონი, ზომიერი ან შერბილებული ენობრივი ფორმები, თავშეკავებულობა და ემოციური დისტანცია – რაც დამოუკიდებლობისა და სოციალური ტაქტის ხაზგასმას ემსახურება. მეორეს მხრივ, ქართულ ენაში უპირატესობა ენიჭება ემოციურობას, სოციალურ კონტექსტში განზრახულ პირდაპირობას, იერარქიის გათვალისწინებასა და ღიად გამოხატულ ემოციურ ჩართულობას. ეს განსხვავებები ფართო კულტურულ ღირებულებებზე მიუთითებს და წარმოაჩენს სხვადასხვა ხედვას, თუ როგორ გამოიხატება პატივისცემა, თანაგრძნობა და ავტორიტეტი ურთიერთობაში. ნაშრომი ასევე ხაზს უსვამს მთარგმნელის, როგორც კულტურული შუამავლის როლს, განსაკუთრებით მაშინ, როდესაც საუბარია მხატვრულ ლიტერატურაზე, სადაც თავაზიანობა არა მხოლოდ სიტყვებით, არამედ ტონით, სტილითა და ქვეტექსტითაც გადმოიცემა. მხატვრული დიალოგის თარგმნა რთულია იმ მხრივაც, რომ მცირე ცვლილებებმაც კი შეიძლება მნიშვნელოვნად შეცვალოს პერსონაჟებს შორის ურთიერთდამოკიდებულება. კვლევა ხელს უწყობს სხვადასხვა კულტურაში კომუნიკაციის თავისებურებების უკეთ გაგებას და ცხადყოფს, თუ რაოდენ მნიშვნელოვანია ენის სწავლება არამხოლოდ ლექსიკურ დონეზე, არამედ კონტექსტისა და მნიშვნელობის გათვალისწინებითაც.

*საკვანძო სიტყვები:* თავაზიანობა, შედარებითი ანალიზი, თარგმანი, კულტურათაშორისი კომუნიკაცია, მხატვრული დისკურსი.