


# Chapter 5


## Politeness Strategies in Turkish Educational Textbooks: A Pragmatic Analysis

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study analyzes politeness and rudeness strategies in Turkish primary and secondary school textbooks, identifying their use in social settings. Social norms are learned through family and school, with language playing a key role. In Turkish culture, politeness strategies, such as respecting elders, reflect social hierarchy. Understanding these strategies helps individuals grasp cultural codes and communicate effectively. Using Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, 18 textbooks (Life Science 1-3, Social Studies 4-7, and Turkish 1-8) were examined, identifying 730 actions. Positive politeness (355) was most frequent, followed by negative politeness (231), bald-on-record (92), and off-record (52). The limited emphasis on politeness and rudeness strategies in textbooks highlights their role in social integration and interpersonal skills. Expanding real-life examples in textbooks and providing teachers with additional materials can enhance students' understanding of pragmatic language use.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Individuals acquire social norms and etiquette largely through informal learning, primarily within the family. However, schools and other educational settings introduce additional norms, helping individuals align with societal expectations. As knowledge accumulates through formal and informal experiences, individuals internalize these norms and integrate into society.

“Language, as a central tool of human interaction, plays a pivotal role in this socialization process. People learn linguistic rules informally within families and socially, as well as formally in schools. This dual acquisition applies to politeness and impoliteness strategies, essential for effective communication.

Globally, ministries of education aim to prepare individuals for active social participation. In Turkey, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) outlines these objectives in the Basic Law of National Education (Mevzuat, 2025).

**Article 2:** To cultivate individuals who possess a balanced and healthy personality and character in terms of physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, and emotional development; who have the ability to think freely and scientifically, hold a broad worldview, respect human rights, value individual personality and initiative, and are socially responsible, constructive, creative, and productive.

**Article 3:** To prepare individuals for life by developing their interests, talents, and abilities, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, behaviors, and teamwork habits, and enabling them to acquire a profession that will ensure their personal happiness and contribute to the well-being of society. Thus, the aim is to enhance the prosperity and happiness of Turkish citizens and Turkish society, support and accelerate economic, social, and cultural development within national unity and integrity, and ultimately make the Turkish nation a distinguished, constructive, and creative partner in contemporary civilization.

These articles emphasize cultivating individuals with balanced, healthy personalities, critical thinking skills, and a broad worldview. They highlight respect for human rights, social responsibility, and productive habits that enhance personal and societal well-being. Achieving these goals requires strong language proficiency and an understanding of politeness strategies. To facilitate this, appropriate strategies must be introduced in effective learning environments, primarily through textbooks, which remain central to formal education. Despite alternative learning tools, textbooks continue to provide essential inputs for communication skills and play a crucial role in preparing individuals for effective social interaction.

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