

LINGUOPRAGMATIC ASPECT OF OFFICIAL LETTERS (ON THE EXAMPLE OF ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES)

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Annotatsiya

This article examines the linguopragmatic features of official letters in English and Uzbek, focusing on communicative intention, institutional context, speech acts, and politeness strategies. The study employs a qualitative contrastive approach combining genre analysis, speech-act theory, and pragmatic interpretation. Illustrative examples demonstrate how the two languages express requests, instructions, refusals, apologies, gratitude, and institutional obligations. The findings indicate that English and Uzbek official correspondence share the objectives of clarity and professional politeness but employ different linguistic resources. English frequently uses modalized questions and indirect requests, whereas Uzbek often employs respectful grammatical forms and conventional institutional expressions. These differences depend on genre, authority, and communicative purpose rather than fixed cultural patterns. The article emphasizes pragmatic equivalence as a key principle of translation and offers recommendations for professional writing and language teaching.

Keywords: linguopragmatics, official letters, English, Uzbek, speech acts, politeness, communicative intention, institutional discourse, pragmatic equivalence, business correspondence.

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются лингвопрагматические особенности официальных писем на английском и узбекском языках. Исследование основано на качественном сопоставительном подходе и включает анализ речевых актов, коммуникативных намерений и стратегий вежливости. Особое внимание

уделяется просьбам, отказам, выражению благодарности, модальным конструкциям и формулам обращения. Установлено, что оба языка ориентированы на ясность и профессиональную вежливость, однако используют различные языковые средства. Обосновывается необходимость сохранения прагматической эквивалентности при переводе официальных писем.

Ключевые слова: лингвопрагматика, официальное письмо, английский язык, узбекский язык, речевой акт, вежливость, коммуникативное намерение, институциональный дискурс, прагматическая эквивалентность.

1. INTRODUCTION

Official correspondence remains an essential means of institutional communication despite the development of digital technologies. It is used to exchange information, request documents, communicate decisions, establish cooperation, and document administrative procedures. Its effectiveness depends not only on grammatical accuracy but also on the appropriate expression and interpretation of communicative intentions.

Official letters differ from personal messages because they follow professional conventions and operate within institutional relationships. They may request an action, establish an obligation, communicate a decision, or maintain cooperation. Therefore, their linguistic organization should be examined in relation to the sender, recipient, communicative purpose, and institutional context.

Linguopragmatics provides an appropriate framework for investigating these relationships. It explains how linguistic forms perform communicative actions in particular situations. For example, the English expression “Could you please provide the requested documents by Friday?” functions as a request, while the Uzbek equivalent “So‘ralgan hujjatlarni juma kuniga qadar taqdim etishingizni so‘raymiz” conveys a comparable intention through a different grammatical structure.

The comparison of English and Uzbek official letters is important for international academic cooperation, business communication, administrative practice,

and translation. A grammatically accurate translation may still be ineffective if it changes the degree of obligation, creates an inappropriate impression of authority, or fails to preserve professional politeness.

Previous research has examined the pragmatic features of Uzbek official documents, English–Uzbek official letters, and request strategies in English business correspondence. Ashurova (2023) focuses on the comparative linguopragmatic characteristics of official letters, while Lutfullayeva et al. (2020) investigate the pragmatic functions of Uzbek official documents. Zhang and Tong (2025) analyze recurring linguistic patterns used to express requests in English business letters.

However, further analysis is needed to connect speech acts, modality, politeness, and translation decisions within a unified framework.

Research aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to identify and compare the linguopragmatic features of official letters in English and Uzbek and explain how linguistic choices contribute to communicative effectiveness.

The objectives are:

1. To establish a theoretical framework for analyzing official correspondence.
2. To compare the expression of requests, refusals, apologies, gratitude, and obligations.
3. To examine the pragmatic functions of modality, address forms, and politeness.
4. To identify challenges in English–Uzbek translation.
5. To formulate recommendations for professional writing and language teaching.

The study addresses three questions: which linguistic resources express communicative intentions in the two languages; how institutional relationships influence their interpretation; and how pragmatic equivalence can be preserved in translation.

The central hypothesis is that English and Uzbek official letters share communicative objectives but may employ different conventional structures to achieve them.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Pragmatics and institutional communication

Pragmatics examines how linguistic expressions acquire meaning in context. Interpretation depends on communicative intention, shared knowledge, social relationships, and the circumstances of communication.

In official correspondence, the same sentence may function as a suggestion, request, or instruction depending on the sender's authority and the situation. For example, "You may submit the documents electronically" indicates permission or possibility, whereas "You must submit the documents electronically" establishes an obligation.

Uzbek expresses similar distinctions through "Hujjatlarni elektron shaklda topshirishingiz mumkin" and "Hujjatlarni elektron shaklda topshirishingiz shart." These examples demonstrate that grammatical choices directly affect the recipient's understanding of institutional requirements.

Consequently, official letters should be analyzed as contextual communicative events rather than isolated sentences.

2.2. Speech-act theory

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) provide a theoretical foundation for analyzing the actions performed through language.

Austin distinguishes the locutionary act, the illocutionary act, and the perlocutionary act. In an official letter, the locutionary act is the production of a meaningful sentence, the illocutionary act is the action performed through it, and the perlocutionary act concerns its effect on the recipient.

For example, "Please submit the completed application by 10 November" communicates a directive and may result in the recipient submitting the application before the deadline.

Speech acts relevant to official correspondence include:

- Directives: requests, instructions, and recommendations.
- Representatives: reports, confirmations, and explanations.
- Commissives: promises and commitments.
- Expressives: apologies and gratitude.
- Declarations: authorized institutional acts that establish or change a status.

A single letter may contain several speech acts. A university letter, for instance, may confirm a meeting, request documents, establish a deadline, and thank the recipient.

2.3. Politeness strategies

Politeness influences how requests, refusals, and instructions are interpreted. Brown and Levinson (1987) explain that certain speech acts may threaten an individual's autonomy or public self-image. Politeness strategies help reduce such interpersonal risks.

Compare:

“Send us the report immediately.”

“Could you please send us the report at your earliest convenience?”

Both seek the same action, but the second uses conventional indirectness and a politeness marker. Nevertheless, indirectness is not always preferable. A mandatory instruction requires sufficient clarity, and excessive mitigation may obscure the intended obligation.

Uzbek official correspondence employs respectful grammatical forms and conventional expressions such as “Sizdan ... so‘raymiz” and “Hurmat bilan.” Leech (1983) likewise emphasizes the role of pragmatic principles in interpersonal communication.

Politeness should therefore be understood as context-sensitive management of professional relationships, not simply as the avoidance of direct expressions.

2.4. Genre and register

Biber and Conrad (2009) demonstrate that linguistic choices are influenced by genre, register, and communicative purpose.

Official correspondence includes administrative notices, applications, business inquiries, complaints, invitations, and institutional responses. These genres share certain conventions but differ in their organization and objectives.

A business inquiry may emphasize prices and delivery conditions, while an academic invitation focuses on participation and event details. Similarly, “We would appreciate your response” may function as a polite request or a reminder, depending on the context.

Genre analysis is therefore necessary to determine the appropriate interpretation of linguistic forms.

2.5. Previous research and research gap

Research on English and Uzbek correspondence has addressed official-business style, speech etiquette, pragmatics, and translation. Ashurova (2023) examines the linguopragmatic characteristics of official letters in both languages, while Lutfullayeva et al. (2020) discuss the pragmatic purposes of Uzbek official documents.

Zhang and Tong (2025) investigate request patterns in English business letters using corpus-based analysis. Ne'matova (2026) examines the linguopragmatic dimensions of translating international economic correspondence, while Yuldashev (2026) discusses the translation of official educational documents.

Building on these studies, the present article integrates speech-act analysis, politeness, modality, institutional context, and pragmatic equivalence.

The analytical framework consists of five dimensions: communicative intention, speech-act type, linguistic realization, institutional relationship, and translation equivalence. This approach makes it possible to compare expressions according to their functions rather than their grammatical forms alone.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research design

The study uses a qualitative, contrastive, and function-oriented approach. It combines genre analysis, speech-act classification, pragmatic interpretation, and English–Uzbek comparison.

The objective is to explain how linguistic expressions perform communicative functions, rather than to calculate their statistical frequency. The analysis is therefore exploratory and illustrative.

3.2. Materials and analytical procedures

The material consists of constructed examples representing common functions of official correspondence, including requests, instructions, notifications, refusals, apologies, gratitude, and closing formulas. These examples illustrate linguistic patterns and are not quotations from a systematically collected corpus.

Four procedures are applied:

1. Genre analysis identifies the purpose and structure of the letter.
2. Speech-act analysis determines the action performed by the expression.
3. Pragmatic analysis examines modality, directness, politeness, and institutional relationships.
4. Contrastive analysis evaluates whether English and Uzbek expressions preserve equivalent communicative functions.

Each example is examined according to its intention, speech-act force, degree of directness, politeness resources, and translation equivalence.

3.3. Methodological limitations

The absence of a systematically sampled bilingual corpus limits the generalizability of the findings. The examples demonstrate analytical principles but do not establish statistical differences between all English and Uzbek official letters.

Future research could use a balanced corpus of academic, commercial, and administrative correspondence, with independent annotation of speech acts, modal

constructions, and politeness strategies. Quantitative analysis could then test the tendencies identified in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Structural organization and communicative purpose

Official letters commonly perform several functions: addressing the recipient, introducing the subject, stating the purpose, providing supporting information, identifying the expected action, and closing the correspondence.

Consider the following examples.

English:

Dear Professor Williams,

I am writing to request confirmation of the proposed meeting date. Please let us know whether 12 November would be convenient for your department.

Uzbek:

Hurmatli professor Williams,

Rejalashtirilgan uchrashuv sanasini tasdiqlashingizni so‘raymiz. 12-noyabr sanasi bo‘limingiz uchun qulay yoki qulay emasligini ma’lum qilishingizni so‘raymiz.

Both examples identify the recipient and communicate the purpose clearly. The English expression “I am writing to request” explicitly announces the communicative act, whereas the Uzbek expression “tasdiqlashingizni so‘raymiz” uses a conventional institutional request.

The examples demonstrate that comparable functions can be realized through different grammatical structures. Effective organization also requires the main purpose to be identifiable early, while supporting information should clarify rather than obscure the expected action.

4.2. Requests and directives

Requests are central to official correspondence because they seek to influence the recipient’s behaviour. Their linguistic realization depends on the nature of the action, the degree of imposition, and the relationship between the parties.

English examples include:

- Could you please provide the required information?
- We would be grateful if you could send the report.
- Please submit the completed form by Friday.

Uzbek equivalents include:

- Kerakli ma'lumotlarni taqdim etishingizni so'raymiz.
- Hisobotni yuborsangiz, minnatdor bo'lamiz.
- To'ldirilgan shaklni juma kuniga qadar topshirishingizni so'raymiz.

These constructions differ structurally but may serve comparable functions.

4.2.1. Indirect requests

The English sentence "Could you please send us the revised schedule by 12 November?" uses an interrogative structure to perform a request. The modal could and the word please mitigate the directive, while the deadline specifies the expected action.

A possible Uzbek translation is:

"Yangilangan jadvalni 12-noyabrga qadar yuborishingizni so'raymiz."

A more interpersonal alternative is:

"Iltimos, yangilangan jadvalni 12-noyabrga qadar yuboring."

The appropriate choice depends on the institutional relationship and the required level of formality. Zhang and Tong (2025) demonstrate that English business letters employ recurring linguistic patterns to realize requests, highlighting the importance of understanding conventional forms in professional communication.

4.2.2. Directness and institutional authority

Directness is not necessarily impolite. The sentence "Please submit the application by 5 p.m. on Friday" clearly communicates an action and deadline.

Its Uzbek equivalent is "Arizani juma kuni soat 17:00 ga qadar topshiring." If the requirement is mandatory, "Arizani juma kuni soat 17:00 ga qadar topshirishingiz shart" may be more appropriate.

A translation should not weaken a mandatory instruction into an optional request or transform a voluntary request into an unjustified command.

4.2.3. Mitigation in Uzbek

Uzbek official correspondence may use respectful grammatical forms and expressions such as “imkon qadar” to reduce the imposition of a request.

For example:

“Imkon qadar, hujjatlarni belgilangan muddatda taqdim etishingizni so‘raymiz.”

However, this wording is unsuitable if the deadline is strictly mandatory. The degree of mitigation must correspond to the actual obligation.

4.3. Address forms and expressions of respect

Address forms establish the interpersonal framework of an official letter. English examples include “Dear Professor Brown” and “Dear Members of the Committee,” while Uzbek correspondence commonly uses “Hurmatli professor Brown” and “Hurmatli hamkasblar.”

An important grammatical difference is the distinction between familiar and respectful forms in Uzbek. English modern standard usage employs you for both familiar and formal reference, so respect is often conveyed through titles, modal constructions, and conventional formulas.

For example:

English: “We ask you to provide the necessary information.”

Uzbek: “Sizdan zarur ma’lumotlarni taqdim etishingizni so‘raymiz.”

The Uzbek form explicitly encodes respect, while English relies more heavily on the overall construction and context. Translation should preserve this interpersonal meaning without mechanically adding words such as respectfully when they are unnecessary.

4.4. Modality and obligation

Modality helps distinguish possibility, recommendation, and obligation.

Function	English	Uzbek
Possibility	Additional documents may be required.	Qo‘shimcha hujjatlar talab qilinishi mumkin.

Recommendation	Applicants should review the instructions.	Ariza beruvchilarga yo'riqnomani ko'rib chiqish tavsiya etiladi.
Obligation	Applicants must sign the document.	Ariza beruvchilar hujjatni imzolashlari shart.

These examples demonstrate that modal choices directly affect institutional interpretation. The English modal *may* can express possibility or permission, while *must* normally conveys a strong obligation. Uzbek equivalents must be selected according to the intended meaning.

Confusing these distinctions can alter the practical meaning of a letter. Accurate translation therefore requires attention to the force of the original expression, not just its dictionary equivalent.

4.5. Refusals and disagreement

Refusals can threaten professional cooperation because they reject a request or proposal. English formulas include “Unfortunately, we are unable to approve your request” and “We regret to inform you that the application has not been accepted.”

Uzbek equivalents include “Afsuski, so'rovingizni ma'qullash imkoniyati mavjud emas” and “Arizangiz qabul qilinmaganini ma'lum qilishdan afsusdamiz.”

An effective refusal should communicate the decision clearly, provide a reason where appropriate, and identify an alternative when possible.

For example:

“Thank you for your proposal. Unfortunately, the suggested timetable conflicts with our approved schedule. We would be pleased to consider an alternative date.”

Uzbek:

“Taklifingiz uchun rahmat. Afsuski, taklif etilgan muddat tasdiqlangan jadvalimizga mos kelmaydi. Muqobil sanani ko'rib chiqishdan mamnun bo'lamiz.”

The structure acknowledges the proposal, explains the disagreement, and maintains the possibility of cooperation.

It is essential to distinguish rejection from postponement or further consideration. The expression “We will consider your proposal” does not itself constitute a refusal.

4.6. Apologies and expressions of regret

Apologies can acknowledge delays, recognize inconvenience, and help restore professional relationships.

English: “We apologize for the delay in responding to your inquiry.”

Uzbek: “Murojaatingizga javob berish kechikkani uchun uzr so‘raymiz.”

A related expression, “We regret any inconvenience this may have caused,” can be translated as “Yuzaga kelgan noqulaylik uchun afsus bildiramiz.”

The distinction between apology and regret should be preserved. An explicit apology acknowledges a problem directly, while an expression of regret may emphasize the negative outcome without establishing the same degree of responsibility.

The wording should reflect the facts and the institution’s actual position.

4.7. Gratitude and closing formulas

Expressions of gratitude support professional relationships and acknowledge the recipient’s contribution.

English examples include “Thank you for your assistance” and “We appreciate your cooperation.” Uzbek equivalents include “Yordamingiz uchun rahmat” and “Hamkorligingiz uchun minnatdorchilik bildiramiz.”

Closing formulas include “Kind regards,” “Best regards,” and “Yours sincerely” in English, and “Hurmat bilan” in Uzbek official correspondence.

These expressions function as genre conventions rather than literal equivalents. Their suitability depends on institutional practice, formality, and the relationship between the parties.

A closing can also indicate the next step, as in “Please let me know if further information is required” or “Qo‘shimcha ma‘lumot zarur bo‘lsa, bizga murojaat qilishingiz mumkin.”

4.8. Comparative analysis

The principal findings are summarized below.

Function	English example	Uzbek example	Pragmatic function
Request	Could you please send the report?	Hisobotni yuborishingizni so'raymiz.	Directing the recipient toward an action.
Instruction	Please submit the form by Friday.	Shaklni juma kuniga qadar topshiring.	Establishing an action and deadline.
Possibility	Further documents may be required.	Qo'shimcha hujjatlar talab qilinishi mumkin.	Expressing a possible requirement.
Obligation	The applicant must sign the document.	Ariza beruvchi hujjatni imzolashi shart.	Establishing a mandatory action.
Refusal	We are unable to approve the request.	So'rovni ma'qullash imkoniyati mavjud emas.	Communicating an unfavorable decision.
Apology	We apologize for the delay.	Kechikish uchun uzr so'raymiz.	Acknowledging a communication problem.
Gratitude	We appreciate your cooperation.	Hamkorligingiz uchun minnatdorchilik bildiramiz.	Maintaining professional rapport.

Closing	Kind regards,	Hurmat bilan,	Signaling the end of correspondence.
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Source: Compiled by the author from illustrative examples.

The comparison reveals three principal tendencies. First, equivalent communicative functions do not require identical grammatical structures. Second, translations must preserve the difference between possibility, recommendation, and obligation. Third, politeness is expressed through several linguistic resources, including modality, respectful forms, and conventional formulas.

These findings support a functional approach to English–Uzbek correspondence.

4.9. Pragmatic equivalence in translation

Pragmatic equivalence requires the preservation of the communicative function and relevant interpersonal meaning of the source text.

Three dimensions are particularly important:

- Semantic equivalence: preservation of factual content.
- Illocutionary equivalence: preservation of the speech act.
- Socio-pragmatic equivalence: preservation of formality, interpersonal stance, and institutional appropriateness.

Consider:

“I would appreciate it if you could forward the signed document.”

Possible Uzbek translations include:

“Imzolangan hujjatni yuborishingizni so‘raymiz.”

or

“Imzolangan hujjatni yuborsangiz, minnatdor bo‘lamiz.”

The first is more direct and institutionally concise; the second foregrounds appreciation. The appropriate version depends on context.

The translator should identify the intended action, degree of obligation, relationship between the parties, conventional target-language formula, and likely recipient interpretation.

Institutional voice must also be preserved. “I am writing to inform you” differs from “We hereby inform you” because the first presents an individual voice, while the second emphasizes institutional authority. Uzbek similarly distinguishes “Sizga ma’lum qilamanki” from “Sizga ma’lum qilamiz.”

Therefore, pragmatic equivalence requires preserving not only the message content but also its institutional and interpersonal implications.

4.10. Digital correspondence and teaching implications

Electronic correspondence retains many conventions of traditional official letters, including subject lines, greetings, clear requests, deadlines, and signature blocks.

A concise professional email should identify the subject and expected action while maintaining appropriate politeness. Excessive brevity may seem abrupt, whereas elaborate formulas may obscure the purpose of routine messages.

For example:

“Please review the attached draft and send your corrections by 14:00 on Thursday.”

Uzbek:

“Ilovadagi loyihani ko‘rib chiqib, tuzatishlaringizni payshanba kuni soat 14:00 ga qadar yuborishingizni so‘raymiz.”

Both versions identify the document, requested action, and deadline.

These findings are relevant to English for Specific Purposes, Uzbek professional writing, and translation teaching. Learners can practice adapting the same request for a supervisor, colleague, external partner, or student, then compare how directness and politeness change according to context.

Institutions can also improve bilingual correspondence templates by ensuring that requests are clear, obligations are accurately expressed, and address forms are appropriate.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the linguopragmatic features of English and Uzbek official letters through the analysis of communicative intention, speech acts, modality, politeness, and translation equivalence.

The findings indicate that official letters function as institutional communicative events rather than merely formal written texts. Their effectiveness depends on the accurate expression of requests, instructions, refusals, apologies, gratitude, and other communicative actions.

English and Uzbek share the objectives of clarity and professional politeness, but they may use different linguistic resources to achieve them. English often employs modalized questions and conditional request constructions, while Uzbek can make respect explicit through grammatical forms and conventional institutional expressions. These tendencies vary according to genre, authority, and communicative context.

Modality is particularly important because it distinguishes possibility, recommendation, and obligation. Translators must preserve these distinctions to avoid changing the practical meaning of institutional communication.

The study also establishes the importance of pragmatic equivalence. Successful translation requires preserving the intended speech act, degree of obligation, institutional voice, and interpersonal relationship rather than reproducing grammatical structures literally.

The findings have practical implications for professional correspondence, bilingual document preparation, and language teaching. Learners should be trained to analyze communicative situations and select linguistic expressions according to the recipient, institutional setting, and intended action.

The study is limited by its qualitative and illustrative design. Future research should investigate a balanced corpus of English and Uzbek official letters to test the identified tendencies empirically and distinguish language-related differences from institutional and genre-specific variation.

In conclusion, a linguopragmatic approach provides a useful framework for improving the drafting, interpretation, teaching, and translation of English and Uzbek official correspondence.

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