

SPEECH ACTS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK: A PRAGMATIC  
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**Abstract.** *This article explores the use of speech acts in English and Uzbek, focusing on how intentions such as requesting, apologizing, thanking, or commanding are expressed and understood in both languages. Speech act theory, introduced by Austin and developed by Searle, provides the theoretical foundation. The study compares the directness, politeness strategies, and cultural norms that influence pragmatic behavior in English and Uzbek communication. Results reveal notable differences in formality, indirectness, and the use of honorifics, all of which have significant implications for translation, language teaching, and intercultural communication.*

**Keywords:** *speech acts, pragmatics, English, Uzbek, politeness, intercultural communication*

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье рассматриваются речевые акты в английском и узбекском языках с прагматической точки зрения. Основываясь на теории речевых актов Остина и Серля, исследование анализирует, как намерения — просьбы, извинения, благодарности и команды — выражаются в двух языках. Внимание уделяется уровню прямоты, вежливости и культурным нормам, влияющим на коммуникативное поведение. Исследование выявляет отличия в использовании формального стиля, почтительных форм и стратегий косвенности, что важно для перевода, преподавания языка и межкультурной коммуникации.*

**Ключевые слова:** *речевые акты, прагматика, английский язык, узбекский язык, вежливость, межкультурная коммуникация*



Language is not only a tool for conveying information; it is also used to perform actions — such as requesting help, giving orders, or expressing gratitude. These are called speech acts, and their realization varies from one culture to another. This article aims to compare the realization of basic speech acts in English and Uzbek and investigate how pragmatic and cultural norms shape their usage.

## 1. Theoretical Background: Speech Act Theory

J. L. Austin (1962) introduced the idea that uttering a sentence can constitute an action (e.g., "I apologize"). Searle (1975) later classified speech acts into five categories:

1. Assertives (e.g., stating, describing)
2. Directives (e.g., requesting, commanding)
3. Commissives (e.g., promising, offering)
4. Expressives (e.g., apologizing, congratulating)
5. Declarations (e.g., resigning, baptizing)

In this article, we focus on directives and expressives, which often show cross-cultural variation.

## 2. Cross-Cultural Differences in Speech Acts

### a) Requesting

English favors indirectness and softeners:

Could you possibly open the window?

Uzbek often uses honorific forms and euphemisms:

Iltimos, derazani ochsangiz bo‘lardi.

Uzbek tends to use conditional and respectful expressions, even in informal settings.

### b) Apologizing

English:

I’m sorry for being late.

Uzbek:

Kechirasiz, kech qoldim.



Uzbek apologies may be longer, more formal, and accompanied by additional gestures (e.g., hand on chest).

c) Thanking

English:

Thank you very much.

Uzbek:

Katta rahmat, Juda minnatdorman

Uzbek speakers tend to include blessings: Alloh rozi bo'lsin, bardavom bo'ling, which have no direct English equivalent.

d) Commanding

English:

Please take a seat. (uses "please" to soften)

Uzbek:

Marhamat, o'tiring.

While both use polite forms, Uzbek speakers use formal honorifics more frequently, especially for elders or superiors.

### 3. Data and Methodology

Data were collected from:

English and Uzbek textbooks

Translated dialogues and films

Native speaker interviews

Speech acts were categorized, compared, and analyzed for formality, politeness, and structure.

### 4. Findings and Discussion

Speech Act English Strategy Uzbek Strategy Key Differences

Requesting Indirect, modal verbs Polite, conditional More honorific in Uzbek

Apologizing Short, concise Formal, extended Gestural additions in Uzbek

Thanking Verbal only Verbal + blessing Uzbek more expressive

Commanding Softened imperative Honorific invitation Cultural focus on respect





These results show that Uzbek culture emphasizes social hierarchy and respect, while English communication often values efficiency and individualism.

## 5. Implications

Understanding speech act variation helps:

Teachers: Teach culturally appropriate expressions

Translators: Avoid literal translation errors

Learners: Avoid sounding rude or too direct

Intercultural communication experts: Bridge cultural misunderstandings

## Conclusion

Speech acts serve as a lens through which cultural values can be observed. While English emphasizes politeness through indirectness and modal verbs, Uzbek shows deeper attention to social norms, age, and respect. A pragmatic comparison like this enables more effective cross-cultural communication, translation, and language teaching. Further research may include corpus-based studies or experimental data.

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