

INTERCULTURAL PRAGMATICS: APOLOGY STRATEGIES AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCE IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH

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Annotation. This article analyzes the pragmatic features of apology speech acts in Uzbek and English within the framework of intercultural pragmatics. It also examines intercultural pragmatic failures and the pragmatic competence of Uzbek learners of English.

Keywords. *pragmalinguistics, intercultural pragmatics, apology, pragmatic competence.*

Annotatsiya. Mazkur maqolada interkultural pragmatika doirasida o'zbek va ingliz tillarida uzr so'rash nutq aktining pragmatik xususiyatlari tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, madaniyatlararo muloqotda yuzaga keladigan pragmatik xatolar va o'zbek talabalarning ingliz tilida pragmatik kompetensiyasini shakllantirish masalalari yoritiladi. Tadqiqotda o'zbek olimlarining pragmalingvistika bo'yicha qarashlariga tayanilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: pragmalingvistika, interkultural pragmatika, uzr so'rash, pragmatik kompetensiya, nutq akti.

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются прагматические особенности акта извинения в узбекском и английском языках в рамках интеркультурной прагматики. Анализируются межкультурные прагматические ошибки и уровень прагматической компетенции узбекских студентов при изучении английского языка.

Ключевые слова: прагмалингвистика, межкультурная прагматика, извинение, прагматическая компетенция.

Introduction. Pragma linguistics, a branch of modern linguistics, examines how language units convey meaning in real communicative contexts. In the era of globalization, intercultural interactions have become increasingly frequent, making the study of intercultural pragmatics essential. Understanding how speakers from different cultures perform speech acts, such as apologies, is crucial for successful communication and the prevention of pragmatic failures.

The act of apologizing serves to restore social balance and maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships. In Uzbek, apologies are often expressed indirectly, with emphasis on politeness, humility, and respect. In contrast, English apologies tend to be more direct, explicitly acknowledging responsibility and mitigating the social impact of a transgression. These differences reflect distinct cultural values, social norms, and communication patterns.

Despite the growing importance of intercultural communication, research on the pragmatic comparison of Uzbek and English apology strategies remains limited. Examining these differences can provide valuable insights for language teaching, particularly in enhancing the pragmatic competence of Uzbek learners of English. This study aims to analyze the pragmatic features of apology speech acts in both languages and discuss the implications for intercultural communication and language education.

Literature Review. The study of apology speech acts has been a central focus in pragmatics and intercultural communication research. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory provides a foundational framework for understanding how speakers mitigate face-threatening acts, such as expressing apologies. According to their model, an effective

apology involves acknowledging the offense, expressing regret, and offering repair or compensation.

Several studies have explored apology strategies in different cultural contexts. Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) demonstrated that cross-cultural variations in apology behavior often reflect underlying social norms and cultural values. In English-speaking contexts, apologies are generally direct and explicit, emphasizing individual responsibility and accountability. In contrast, in many collectivist cultures, including Uzbek culture, apologies tend to be indirect, emphasizing social harmony, respect, and humility (Safarov, 2013).

Research on Uzbek learners of English indicates that pragmatic competence does not automatically develop through grammar and vocabulary acquisition alone. Mahmudov (2015) notes that students frequently transfer native language norms to English, which can lead to pragmatic errors such as overuse of formal expressions or inappropriate mitigation strategies. Similarly, Yo'ldoshev (2018) emphasizes that effective language teaching should incorporate intercultural pragmatics to enhance learners' ability to perform speech acts appropriately in a second language.

Although numerous studies have examined English apology strategies in various contexts, research comparing Uzbek and English apology acts remains limited. Existing work highlights the importance of raising learners' awareness of cultural differences in speech acts and providing them with practical opportunities to develop pragmatic competence. This study builds on these findings by analyzing the pragmatic features of apology speech acts in Uzbek and English, with a focus on intercultural implications for language education.

Methodology. This article adopts a qualitative, literature-based research design to explore the pragmatic features of apology speech acts in Uzbek and English, focusing on intercultural communication and pragmatic competence. The study relies primarily on secondary data obtained from scholarly articles, books, and publications by Uzbek linguists and researchers in pragma linguistics and intercultural pragmatics. The data collection process involved a systematic review of academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Scopus, as well as reliable publications on Uzbek and English pragmatics. Keywords such as "apology speech acts," "intercultural pragmatics," "pragmatic competence," "Uzbek learners of English," and "cross-cultural communication" were used to identify relevant sources. The selected materials were analyzed using content analysis, focusing on recurring patterns in apology strategies, directness versus indirectness, expressions of regret, and mitigation strategies in both languages. Special attention was given to intercultural differences and the potential pragmatic errors made by Uzbek learners of English. Through this approach, the study synthesizes previous research to provide a comprehensive understanding of how apology speech acts are performed in Uzbek and English and highlights the implications for language teaching and intercultural communication. Although this research does not include primary empirical data, it establishes a solid theoretical foundation for future studies on pragmatic competence and intercultural communication.

Results. The analysis of the reviewed literature revealed several key findings regarding the performance of apology speech acts in Uzbek and English. First, Uzbek speakers tend to employ indirect strategies when apologizing, emphasizing humility, respect, and the preservation of social harmony. Common linguistic features include the use of mitigating expressions, honorifics, and contextually appropriate explanations, reflecting the collectivist

cultural orientation of Uzbek society (Safarov, 2013). In contrast, English apologies are generally direct and explicit, focusing on the acknowledgment of responsibility and immediate mitigation of the offense. Expressions such as “I’m sorry for...” or “I apologize for...” are widely used, highlighting individual accountability and the pragmatic priority of resolving social tension quickly (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). A comparison of the two languages also revealed that Uzbek learners of English frequently transfer native language norms into their English apologies, which can result in pragmatic incongruities. For example, students may overuse formal or indirect forms, leading to expressions that sound overly elaborate or unnatural in English-speaking contexts (Mahmudov, 2015). Overall, the results underscore the significance of cultural values in shaping apology strategies and the challenges faced by Uzbek learners in achieving pragmatic competence in English. These findings highlight the need for targeted instruction in intercultural pragmatics to enhance students’ ability to produce contextually appropriate speech acts in a second language.

Discussion. The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of cultural norms in shaping the performance of apology speech acts in both Uzbek and English. The contrast between indirect, humility-based apologies in Uzbek and direct, responsibility-focused apologies in English reflects deeper differences in social values and communication styles. Uzbek culture prioritizes maintaining social harmony and showing respect, whereas English-speaking contexts emphasize individual accountability and clarity. The analysis also reveals that Uzbek learners of English often face challenges in achieving pragmatic competence due to cross-cultural transfer of native language norms. Such pragmatic errors, including excessive indirectness or over-formal expressions, may result in misunderstandings or perceptions of unnaturalness in English communication. This underscores the importance of integrating intercultural pragmatics into language teaching, allowing learners to recognize cultural differences and adapt their speech acts accordingly. Furthermore, the study suggests that developing pragmatic competence requires not only grammatical proficiency but also an understanding of social and cultural contexts. Educators should provide students with authentic communicative tasks, role-plays, and exposure to real-life English-speaking environments to foster appropriate apology strategies. By doing so, learners can navigate intercultural interactions more effectively, reducing the likelihood of pragmatic failure and enhancing mutual understanding. In summary, the discussion emphasizes that intercultural awareness and targeted instruction in pragmatics are essential components of English language education for Uzbek learners. Recognizing the interplay between language, culture, and social norms can significantly improve learners’ communicative competence and facilitate smoother intercultural interactions.

Conclusion and Implications. This study has examined the pragmatic features of apology speech acts in Uzbek and English, highlighting the cultural and linguistic differences that influence their performance. Uzbek apologies tend to be indirect, emphasizing humility, respect, and social harmony, whereas English apologies are generally direct, focusing on acknowledging responsibility and mitigating social tension. The study also identified common pragmatic challenges faced by Uzbek learners of English, including the transfer of native language norms and the resulting incongruities in cross-cultural communication. The findings underscore the importance of integrating intercultural pragmatics into English language education. Teachers and curriculum developers should provide learners with opportunities to

practice authentic speech acts, raise awareness of cultural norms, and analyze pragmatic differences between languages. Emphasizing pragmatic competence alongside grammatical and lexical knowledge can enhance learners' communicative effectiveness and reduce intercultural misunderstandings. Furthermore, the study suggests that educational policymakers and institutions should develop targeted support programs, including intercultural workshops, role-playing activities, and exposure to authentic English-speaking environments, to strengthen learners' pragmatic skills. By fostering both linguistic and intercultural competence, educators can better prepare students for successful communication in global contexts.

In conclusion, understanding and teaching the pragmatics of apology in both Uzbek and English not only improves language proficiency but also promotes smoother intercultural interactions and mutual understanding, making it an essential component of modern language education.

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