

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36719/2789-6919/45/51-54>

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## Communicative-Pragmatic Analysis of Linguistic Means Forming Apology Acts

### Abstract

This article analyzes the communicative-pragmatic features of linguistic means that form the act of apology. It explores functional characteristics of apologies within the framework of speech act theory, focusing on appropriateness to context and links to socio-psychological factors. The article also compares Uzbek and English apology expressions, discussing their linguopragmatic aspects and cultural significance. Additionally, illocutionary and perlocutionary force of apology expressions are examined in cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** *apology act, pragmatics, linguopragmatics, speech act, communication tools, communicative situation, intercultural communication*

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## Üzr aktını formalaşdıran dil vasitələrinin kommunikativ-praqmatik təhlili

### Xülasə

Bu məqalədə üzr aktını formalaşdıran dil vasitələrinin kommunikativ-praqmatik xüsusiyyətləri işıqlandırılır. Dilçilikdəki praqmatik yanaşma, xüsusilə nitq aktları nəzəriyyəsi çərçivəsində üzr ifadələrinin funksional xüsusiyyətləri, nitq vəziyyətinə uyğunluğu və sosial-psixoloji amillərlə əlaqəsi təhlil olunur. Özbək və ingilis dillərindəki üzr ifadələrinin lingvopraqmatik xüsusiyyətləri və onların ünsiyyət mədəniyyətindəki yeri nəzərdən keçirilir. Həmçinin, nitq aktları nəzəriyyəsində üzr sözlərinin illokutiv və perlokutiv təsir gücü və onların mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyətdə oynadığı rol barədə təhlillər təqdim olunur.

**Açar sözlər:** *üzr aktı, praqmatika, lingvopraqmatika, nitq aktı, ünsiyyət vasitələri, kommunikativ vəziyyət, mədəniyyətlərarası ünsiyyət*

### Introduction

Language is the main tool of communication in human society. It not only enables the transmission of information but also plays a vital role in shaping social relationships and maintaining societal harmony. Among the various linguistic functions, speech acts-particularly apologies-serve as essential mechanisms for conflict resolution, expression of regret, and restoration of social balance. Apology acts are employed to acknowledge a breach of social norms or expectations and to seek forgiveness from the affected party. As such, they are crucial in both personal and institutional contexts.

Since the end of the 20th century, pragmatics has emerged as a distinct and rapidly developing branch of linguistics. It explores how language is used in real-life contexts, focusing on the relationship between linguistic expressions and the users' intentions. Within this field, speech acts such as apologies are examined in terms of their structure, function, and communicative

effectiveness. Pragmatics is concerned not only with what is said but also with what is implied, presupposed, or understood in a given context. Thus, the speaker's intention, the listener's interpretation, the situational context, and the underlying cultural norms are all central to the pragmatic analysis of apology acts.

The psychological and cultural contexts that arise during communication significantly influence the form and content of apologies. Emotionally, apology acts are closely tied to feelings of guilt, shame, empathy, or responsibility, and the intensity of these emotions can affect the way an apology is formulated. Culturally, every society has its own norms regarding when and how to apologize, who should apologize, and what constitutes an acceptable apology. These norms are deeply embedded in language and vary widely across linguistic communities.

Particularly, communicative differences between Uzbek and English cultures determine how apologies are expressed and interpreted (Kolshanskiy, 1984; Susov, 1990). In English, phrases such as "Excuse me," "I'm sorry," and "I beg your pardon" are used in a range of contexts—from minor inconveniences to more serious offenses. These expressions can vary in formality, with "Excuse me" often used for attention-getting or minor intrusions, while "I'm sorry" is typically more emotionally loaded. In Uzbek, equivalents such as "Uzr," "Kechirasiz," and "Afv etasiz" fulfill similar functions but are shaped by unique sociocultural conventions. For example, "Uzr" is widely used in both casual and formal interactions and carries a deep cultural connotation of humility and respect. "Kechirasiz" is often used in service encounters or when interrupting someone, while "Afv etasiz" is more formal and commonly used in official or highly respectful contexts. Additionally, body language, tone, and the use of honorifics further influence how apology acts are perceived in Uzbek society (Mo'minov, 2005; Iskandarova, 1993).

Understanding the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of apology acts in both English and Uzbek not only deepens our awareness of cross-cultural communication but also highlights the importance of context-sensitive language use. Comparative studies in this area can reveal important insights into how different linguistic communities manage social harmony and interpersonal relations through language.

### Research

Literature review and methods. This article presents a pragmatic analysis of the units that form apology acts based on the approaches of scholars such as G.V.Kolshanskiy, I.R.Susov, V.M.Alpatov, and V.N.Golovin. Additionally, the views of Uzbek linguists such as S.Muminov, Sh.Iskandarova, M.Hakimov, Sh.Safarov, Sh.Usmonova, and D.Khudoyberganova are also referenced (Usmonova, 2015; Xudoyberganova, 2020; Hakimov, 2001; Safarov, 2010). The expression forms of apology acts in language are elucidated using component, textual, and functional analysis methods.

Research methods include linguopragmatic analysis, component analysis based on communication theory, cross-cultural pragmatic approaches, and text analysis techniques. Special attention is given to how apology phrases in English literary texts are reinforced through phonetic and stylistic devices.

Results and Discussion. The study revealed that the apology act is a significant component of pragmatic competence. Apologies serve as tools for maintaining interpersonal relationships, repairing social breaches, and navigating culturally defined expectations of politeness. The choice of linguistic tools in apologies is closely tied to the speech context, social roles of interlocutors, and the degree of formality. In Uzbek, expressions like "Kechirasiz" and "Uzr" are pragmatically nuanced. "Kechirasiz" is commonly used in everyday situations such as asking someone to move or interrupting a conversation, while "Uzr" conveys deeper regret and is often used in more serious or formal apologies (Qurbonova, 2018). "Afv etasiz" tends to appear in highly respectful or institutional settings, emphasizing social distance and deference.

In English, apology phrases such as "Sorry," "Excuse me," and "I beg your pardon" also vary in formality, emotional weight, and context. For example, "Sorry" can range from casual use to express minor regret to heartfelt apologies in more emotional contexts. "I beg your pardon" is more formal and may imply surprise or the need for clarification in addition to apology. These expressions

often serve dual functions: maintaining politeness and signaling the speaker's social awareness (Golovin, 1985; Searle, 1969).

Apologizing in communication is not only a linguistic action but also a complex socio-cultural phenomenon influenced by values such as honor, respect, group harmony, and emotional expression. In collectivist cultures like Uzbek society, where respect for elders, group cohesion, and hierarchical relationships are emphasized, apologies often include markers of humility and self-effacement (Alpatov, 1991; Golovin, 1981). In contrast, English-speaking cultures, particularly in more individualistic societies, may prioritize sincerity and directness in apology acts, while still observing politeness strategies.

According to speech act theory, the apology act consists of locutionary (the actual utterance), illocutionary (the intended meaning or function), and perlocutionary (the listener's reaction) components (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). From this perspective, an apology not only conveys regret but also serves as a speech act that helps manage social expectations and reestablish mutual understanding. This three-part structure is essential for understanding how apology expressions achieve their communicative function in both languages.

The linguopragmatic analysis in this study also identifies the denotative (literal) and connotative (implied or emotional) meanings of apology expressions. For example, while “*Uzr*” and “*Sorry*” both denote an apology, their connotations may vary greatly — “*Uzr*” may carry an implicit plea for forgiveness and submission, while “*Sorry*” may signal responsibility and remorse depending on intonation and context.

Furthermore, the study addressed pragmatic barriers — instances when communicative failure arises not from grammatical error, but from inappropriate or misunderstood use of speech acts. These barriers can occur in intercultural interactions when speakers are unaware of cultural expectations regarding apologies. For example, a direct “*Sorry*” may be perceived as insincere in cultures that expect more elaborate or emotionally expressive apologies. Conversely, a highly formal or ritualistic apology in Uzbek may be seen as excessive or distant in casual English contexts. In such cases, apologies function not just to express regret but to repair pragmatic failures and restore effective communication.

In literary texts, particularly in English-language fiction such as *Harry Potter*, apology expressions are creatively employed to convey character emotion and narrative tension. Forms like “*S-s-sorry*” or repeated apologies (e.g., “*I’m really, really sorry*”) not only dramatize the situation but also signal hesitation, fear, or deep remorse. These phonetic and stylistic variations highlight how apologies can be emotionally rich and pragmatically complex.

## Conclusion

The communicative-pragmatic analysis of apology expressions demonstrates that apologies are not merely formulaic language structures but are deeply embedded in the psychological, cultural, and social fabric of communication. They reflect the speaker's awareness of social norms, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal sensitivity.

By comparing apology expressions in English and Uzbek, the study emphasizes that speech acts function within culturally defined frameworks. While both languages employ apologies to manage interpersonal relationships, the structure, frequency, and emotional depth of these expressions differ significantly due to cultural values, societal norms, and pragmatic conventions. Understanding these differences is essential for developing effective cross-cultural communication skills.

Within the framework of speech act theory, apologies serve as essential mechanisms for restoring social order, acknowledging responsibility, and expressing politeness. They are integral to the dynamics of everyday communication, conflict resolution, and the maintenance of social harmony.

This analysis has broader implications in pedagogical linguistics, translation theory, cross-cultural pragmatics, and foreign language teaching. For language learners, acquiring the ability to use apologies appropriately in various contexts enhances not only grammatical proficiency but also pragmatic competence, which is vital for real-world communication. Educators and translators can

benefit from understanding the cultural underpinnings of apology expressions to avoid miscommunication and to promote culturally sensitive interpretation.

Future research may explore how apologies are received and evaluated by native speakers, how non-verbal elements (e.g., gestures, facial expressions) accompany apology speech acts, and how technology-mediated communication (e.g., texting, emails) affects the way apologies are expressed and interpreted in different cultures.

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Received: 02.02.2025

Accepted: 15.04.2025