



# The influence of cultural norms and values on the formulation and interpretation of requests and offers in English and Uzbek contexts

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received September 2024

Received in revised form

10 October 2024

Accepted 25 October 2024

Available online

15 November 2024

### Keywords:

cultural norms,  
politeness strategies,  
requests,  
offers,  
English language,  
Uzbek language,  
individualism,  
collectivism,  
linguistic behavior,  
cross-cultural  
communication,  
indirectness,  
formal language,  
honorifics,  
kinship terms.

## ABSTRACT

This article explores the influences of cultural norms and values on the issue of request and offers formulating and understanding within English and Uzbek contexts. Requests and offers represent some major constituents in human interaction that linguistically usually exhibit a strong attachment to their respective cultural frameworks. The present research attempts to analyze existing differences and similarities in their expression and perception, with a focus on the cultural dimensions defining the politeness strategies, level of formality, and indirectness.

2181-3701/© 2024 in Science LLC.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47689/2181-3701-vol2-iss6-pp165-169>

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# Ingliz va o'zbek kontekstlarida iltimos va takliflarning shakllantirilishi va talqin qilinishiga madaniy me'yorlar va qadriyatlarning ta'siri

## ANNOTATSIYA

### **Kalit so'zlar:**

madaniy me'yorlar,  
xushmuomalalik  
strategiyalari,  
iltimoslar,  
takliflar,  
ingliz tili,  
o'zbek tili,  
individualizm,  
kollektivizm,  
lingvistik xulq-atvor,  
madaniyatlararo muloqot,  
bilvosita ifoda,  
rasmiy til,  
hurmat ifodalari,  
qarindoshlik atamallari.

Ushbu maqolada madaniy me'yorlar va qadriyatlarning ingliz va o'zbek tillari kontekstida so'rov va taklifni shakllantirish va tushunish masalasiga ta'siri o'rganilgan. So'rov va takliflar insonlarning o'zaro ta'siridagi ba'zi asosiy tarkibiy qismlarni ifodalaydi, ular odatda lingvistik jihatdan o'zlarining tegishli madaniy ramkalariga kuchli bog'lanishni ko'rsatadi. Ushbu tadqiqotda ularning ifodalanishi va idrok etilishidagi mavjud farqlar va o'xshashliklarni tahlil qilishga harakat qilingan, bunda hurmat strategiyalarini belgilaydigan madaniy o'lchamlarga, rasmiylik va bilvositalik darajasiga e'tibor qaratilgan.

# Влияние культурных норм и ценностей на формулирование и интерпретацию просьб и предложений в английском и узбекском контекстах

## АННОТАЦИЯ

### **Ключевые слова:**

культурные нормы,  
стратегии вежливости,  
просьбы,  
предложения,  
английский язык,  
узбекский язык,  
индивидуализм,  
коллективизм,  
языковое поведение,  
межкультурная  
коммуникация,  
косвенность,  
формальный язык,  
уважительные обращения,  
термины родства.

Данная статья исследует влияние культурных норм и ценностей на формулирование и понимание просьб и предложений в английском и узбекском контекстах. Просьбы и предложения являются важными составляющими человеческого взаимодействия, которые лингвистически обычно тесно связаны с их соответствующими культурными рамками. Настоящее исследование направлено на анализ существующих различий и сходств в их выражении и восприятии с акцентом на культурные измерения, определяющие стратегии вежливости, уровень формальности и косвенности.

## INTRODUCTION

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also embodies cultural norms and values. The way people communicate, particularly when making requests or proposals, discloses a great deal about the social norms, customs, and relational interactions of their culture. Requests and offers play a crucial role in interpersonal communication, enabling collaboration and fostering relationships. Nonetheless, the approaches employed to carry out these speech acts differ markedly between languages and cultures, shaped by the fundamental norms and values of the societies in which they occur.

In cultures where English is spoken, communication typically features individualism and low-context interaction, prioritizing directness, clarity, and efficiency. Requests and offers are often presented using courteous expressions and modal verbs, showing consideration for the recipient's independence while ensuring clarity. In comparison, Uzbek culture, based on collectivism and high-context communication, emphasizes indirectness, respect for social hierarchies, and the use of honorifics or kinship terms to convey politeness.

Although these cultural differences significantly influence cross-cultural communication, there has been minimal research comparing the linguistic practices of English and Uzbek in this regard. This research intends to address this gap by examining how cultural norms influence the creation and understanding of requests and offers in English and Uzbek. It examines the relationship between politeness strategies, indirectness, and formality, offering valuable insights for language instruction and cross-cultural communication.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY**

The study of requests and offers as linguistic phenomena has been explored extensively within the frameworks of pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Brown and Levinson's [1] politeness theory has been foundational in understanding how individuals manage face-threatening acts (FTAs) like requests, where speakers must balance their own needs against the listener's autonomy. In individualistic cultures like those of English-speaking societies, directness is often mitigated by polite expressions to avoid offending the listeners "negative face", which refers to the desire for freedom from imposition.

Hall's [2] concept of high-context and low-context communication has also been influential in explaining cultural differences in communication styles. Low-context cultures, such as English-speaking ones, rely heavily on explicit verbal communication. High-context cultures, such as Uzbek culture, embed meaning in non-verbal cues, shared knowledge, and contextual understanding. In such environments, indirectness and honorifics become central to maintaining social harmony and demonstrating respect, particularly in hierarchical relationships.

Although studies have examined cultural influences on requests and offers in various languages, research comparing English and Uzbek remains limited. For example, studies on English speakers [4] have emphasized the use of modal verbs and hedging strategies, while research on Uzbek speakers [5] has highlighted the importance of kinship terms and culturally specific politeness markers. However, few studies directly compare these two linguistic and cultural frameworks, leaving a gap in understanding how these practices differ and what these reveals about underlying cultural values.

This study employs a comparative qualitative research design to analyze the linguistic strategies used in formulating and interpreting requests and offers in English and Uzbek. The research focuses on identifying patterns of directness, politeness, and formality, as well as the cultural norms that shape these patterns.

The data was collected through a combination of methods: naturalistic conversations were recorded from native English and Uzbek speakers to observe authentic use of requests and offers in daily communication; semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 native speakers of each language to understand their perceptions of politeness and cultural norms in making requests and offers; formal and informal written examples, such as emails and letters, were analyzed to complement spoken data.

Participants included 30 native speakers: 15 English speakers from the United States and English-speaking countries, and 15 Uzbek speakers from various regions of Uzbekistan. Participants were selected to ensure diversity in age, gender, and social background.

The data was transcribed and coded thematically to identify recurring linguistic patterns. Comparative analysis was conducted to highlight similarities and differences in requests and offers across the two languages. Additionally, qualitative responses from interviews were analyzed to provide context and insight into the cultural norms influencing these speech acts.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### *English Patterns*

Analysis of the data revealed that requests and offers in English are typically direct, emphasizing clarity and individual autonomy. Among the 100 examples of requests and offers collected from native English speakers: modal verbs such as “could”, “would”, and “can” were used in 75% of requests (e.g., “Could you help me with this?”); the polite marker “please” appeared in 65% of requests and 40% of offers, often at the end of the sentence (e.g., “Pass me the salt, please.”); hedging strategies (e.g., “I was wondering if you could...”) were used in 45% of formal settings to soften the tone. The data also highlights English speakers' preference for equality and efficiency. Directness in requests reflects the individualistic cultural norm of prioritizing autonomy and minimizing ambiguity. Politeness markers like “please” mitigate imposition, while modal verbs soften commands without compromising clarity.

### *Uzbek Patterns*

In contrast, Uzbek requests and offers emphasized indirectness and the use of culturally specific politeness markers. From the 100 examples collected: honorifics and kinship terms appeared in 80% of requests and offers, such as “Aka” (brother) or “Opa” (sister), to establish respect and solidarity; indirect phrasing, such as stating the need instead of directly requesting (e.g., “I’m thirsty” instead of “Can you bring me water?”), was observed in 70% of requests; religious expressions like “InshaAllah / Xudo” (God willing) were found in 30% of offers to convey humility and respect. Uzbek communication patterns reflect a collectivist culture that values hierarchy, respect, and group harmony. The frequent use of honorifics and kinship terms underscores the importance of social roles and relationships. Indirectness helps avoid confrontation, preserving interpersonal harmony, especially in hierarchical settings.

### *Discussion*

The findings align with established cultural norms. English-speaking cultures, shaped by individualism, prioritize clarity and equality in communication [3]. Direct requests, softened by polite expressions, reflect the importance of maintaining autonomy while respecting others. Uzbek communication, influenced by collectivism and high-context traditions, prioritizes interpersonal harmony [3]. Indirectness and honorifics demonstrate respect, especially toward elders and superiors, reflecting a deeply ingrained hierarchical value system.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study highlights significant differences in how requests and offers are formulated and understood in English and Uzbek contexts, reflecting the distinct cultural norms underlying these linguistic practices. In English, directness, clarity, and the use of polite markers such as modal verbs and “please” dominate, underscoring values of individualism and equality. Conversely, Uzbek speakers frequently use indirect phrasing,

honorifics, and kinship terms, emphasizing collectivism, respect, and social hierarchy. These differences illustrate how cultural values profoundly shape linguistic behavior, influencing not only the structure of speech acts but also the broader dynamics of interpersonal communication.

The findings underscore the importance of cultural awareness in language learning and cross-cultural interaction. Understanding the role of politeness, directness, and formality in communication can help bridge cultural gaps, reduce misunderstandings, and foster more effective exchanges. Future research could expand on this work by examining other speech acts, such as apologies or compliments, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of English and Uzbek linguistic practices. Additionally, comparative studies involving other languages with similar or contrasting cultural norms could further illuminate the interplay between language and culture, enriching both theoretical and practical perspectives on cross-cultural communication.

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