

Language and Structure of a Business Email in the Conditions of Russian, Polish and English-language Communication

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Abstract. This article offers a comparative analysis of Polish, Russian and English-language business emails. The results of the research displayed both similarities and differences in linguistic realisation of this genre of business communication. The greatest similarities were observed in those elements of an electronic letter, which are typical only for this particular form of correspondence. The differences are mainly in using para-linguistic devices, such as punctuation, discursive-stylistic devices in writing upper- and lower-case letters, and in the linguo-cultural dependence in the implementation of such elements as the greeting and the closing formula. Polish and Russian emails are distinguished by a high degree of formality and a tendency to maintain an official tone compared to English-language texts of this genre, in which one can notice a greater directness and avoidance of literature, which is particularly characteristic of Polish courtesy formulas.

Similarities detected in the comparative study may be due to adherence to netiquette, while differences are triggered by different norms in the etiquette of each language. This means that despite the universality of netiquette norms and the dominance of English in international correspondence, email still retains linguo-cultural specificity due to differences in ethnic worldviews and the officialdom of Slavic culture in relation to the openness of Euro-American civilisation.

Keywords: email pragmatics; linguistic etiquette; netiquette; linguistic confrontation; cross-cultural communication.

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Introduction

The subject of the study in the article is a comparison of Polish, Russian and English-language business emails to reveal similarities and differences in the linguo-semiotic and para-linguistic realisation of analogous elements of the structure of this genre of correspondence. The following aspects of the business email structure were distinguished: a header, courtesy formula for salutation, an introduction, main body, a closing, courtesy formula for farewell, attachments. On the background of the analogies visible in the characteristics of the electronic form of the letter, it was possible to reveal the differences, which were analysed in terms of formality, syntax, titularity (titling), tone and para-linguistic elements. An additional purpose of the article, representing a novelty in research, was to draw attention to the appropriateness of the wording and phrases used in emails in relation to the linguistic norm defined by linguistic etiquette and netiquette. The study relevance lies in highlighting cultural differences in the realisation of the universal email formula in the context of the Englishisation of digital communication.

1. Status of the study and justification of the validity of the study

The terms *language etiquette*, *business etiquette* and *professional etiquette* have indelibly entered our lives. This subject was presented mainly in handbooks and guides written in Polish, Russian, and English (cf. Robinson, 2000; Pincus, 2003; Kamińska-Radomska, 2003; Cook et al., 2005; Kita, 2005; Shelamova, 2007; Ikanowicz, 2010; Katamidze et al., 2011; Nissen and Karasyova, 2011; Garner, 2013; Pachter, 2013; Gerson and Gerson, 2014; Szymczak, 2018; Marventano and Wallace, 2019). The issue of language etiquette in scientific literature has been discussed in very few publications (Sternin, 1996; Formanovskaya, 2002, 2007; Lobanov, 2013; Marcjanik, 2006, 2013, 2014, 2015).

Among publications on the email genre, there is also a preponderance of guides (Miller, 2003; Cook and Cook, 2011; Wąsacz, 2016; Bujala, 2020; Herman, 2020), while academic studies focus on text analysis in only one language (cf. Kuruc, 2008).

There is a lack of publications based on the confrontation of different languages, especially those that may be intertwined in business activities (in Poland, English- and Russian-language email correspondence in the business sphere is quite common). The presented article aims to fill this gap.

Relatively new terms for this particular realm of communication are *Internet language etiquette* and *Internet business / professional etiquette*, which is why it is worth pointing out their qualities in comparison with traditional business or professional correspondence as well as the differences in its realisation by the users coming from the Polish, Russian or English-speaking cultures. On the Internet, we can find a lot of advice on email correspondence (Szymczak, 2017; Urban, 2018; Bujala, 2020; Rojewska, 2020).

The very term of *internet etiquette* (Polish *netykieta*, Russian *нетикет*, *сетикет*, English *netiquette*, *nethics*) has come into existence as a compound of two English lexemes: *net* (a short form of *internet*) and the French borrowing *etiquette*. Defining a set of rules of

behaviour on the Internet originates from the nineties of the 20th century (Harasim, 1993; Shea, 1994).

2. Methodology of the study

The following research methods are used in the present study: the induction method which involves drawing general conclusions from specific observations and examples, the process of the observation of language facts which allowed the authors to make analytic observations on the types of the texts under analysis, the methods of a non-selective excerption of language facts which facilitated an analysis of all the fixed components of the structure of emails and the method of comparative analysis accounting for the differences in the application of netiquette and linguistic etiquette in Polish, Russian and English emails.

We do not provide sample email texts because the language variability is too large. When analysing individual parts of the email, language models excerpted from the studied correspondence examples are presented.

3. Analysis of the texts of business emails

Email correspondence revised some rules for creating letters and documents in business communication. The general principles of netiquette are implemented by different formal-language means due to the differences in the cultural traditions of the three analysed languages. The analysis will be conducted in relation to the fixed, readily comparable elements of the structure of an electronic letter.

Business correspondence considers it impolite to omit introduction, information about the sender, and determining reasons for choosing this channel of communication. The structure of an electronic letter is analogous to a traditional one. It has specific elements for this genre, which are: header (the invariable part of an electronic letter, determined by its digitality), salutation (addressing the recipient), introduction (formulating the subject), main body (explaining the main issue of the email), closing (the so called ask/action: questions, proposed action, dates of meetings or other forms of communication needed for discussing the main issue) and a courtesy formula for farewell.

3.1 Header of the email

This is the universal part of an email, formalised as a line, or text field. The first detail that should draw attention and be taken care of is a name tag included in the email address of a sender. It should be concise and serious, regardless of whether we plan to start cooperation or apply for a job.

In business and professional correspondence, it is common to place the name of a company or institution in the email address, which gives information about where a letter was sent from.

One should also have regard to the question of filling in the space designated for the recipient's address (To:). It is particularly important when we want to simultaneously send a letter to a few recipients. Modern email systems enable us to address a letter so that other recipients' personal data is not made available to all while simultaneously sending mail to many people.

Sending messages without filling in the "Subject" space is considered impolite and disrespectful both in Poland and Russia and in English-speaking countries. The email system itself points to this issue since a sender is automatically asked if the letter is to be sent without a subject at any attempt by a sender to do so. Besides, a letter with undefined subject may be identified as spam by anti-spam filters and rejected or directed to the folder "Spam" instead of "Received". It is also essential to formulate a brief, precise subject that refers to the content of the letter. It is worth remembering that our recipient may receive many other emails on the same day. In electronic work-related (especially business) correspondence, it is advised to keep the text of a received letter in case our email is a reply to it, because the recipient might not remember its content. Leaving a fragment or the whole of the original text helps remembering what the correspondence regards. It is crucial, however, that our reply precedes the quoted message. Our addressee will not have to search the whole email then.

When our email is a reaction to a previously received message, the most common procedure is using an automatic reply option in the "Subject" field, which is reflected as the abbreviation RE. It is not advised to multiply the word RE: having received a reply with this word in Subject, we must pay special attention to the subject when we send another message to the same person (if we decide to use automatic reply, additional RE will appear in "Subject").

Some letters contain information about the degree of importance. Polish Internet business correspondence uses an exclamation mark to stress the message's priority; that would be an asterisk in Russian. English-speaking business email can apply asterisks or numbers (1, 2 or 3) for the same purpose. It is especially important to select inside-company correspondence from the most to the least urgent messages when employees receive huge amounts of email daily.

The comparison of three languages in building a header of a business email can be presented in the form of a table.

Table 1. Comparison of an email's header in three languages

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Language implementation standardised with linear text field	Language implementation standardised with linear text field	Language implementation standardised with linear text field	No language differences due to standard digital form. Para-linguistic differences are: an exclamation mark to stress the priority of the message in Polish, an asterisk in Russian, and an asterisk or numbers in English.

Salutations in Polish and Russian are more formal and elaborate than in English. Capitalisation norms and titles reflect differing cultural values about hierarchy and politeness. English shifts to first-name use faster, while Polish and Russian maintain surname-based forms longer.

3.2 *Courtesy formula 1 (salutation)*

An electronic letter, both in Polish and Russian and in English, starts with an expression addressing the recipient, a salutation. This formula was borrowed from traditional correspondence. Russian language uses generally accepted polite greetings: Уважаемые господа, Уважаемый + first name + father's name (if the person is a closer acquaintance) or Уважаемый господин + last name, or господин директор, after which we put an exclamation mark (not a comma, like it is in Polish and English correspondence). However, a new trend has been observed lately, which is restraining the use of an exclamation mark in Russian business correspondence, which may be related to the need to underlie a lower level of emotionality. Another explanation is also possible: the influence of English language correspondence, which uses a comma in a salutation in both traditional and electronic forms of communication, such as *Dear Mr. Smith*, *Dear Prof. Black*. In English emails, a comma is also used after phrases directed to any undefined addressee: *To Whom It May Concern* or *Whomever It May Concern* (a colon is acceptable, too). In informal electronic communication, an exclamation mark is only possible after words "Hi!" or "Hello!".

The expression (even to a stranger) Уважаемый господин, *Dear Mr.*, without the further part, i.e. without the first name, last name or the title, is unacceptable both in Russian and in English. The only structures in English business correspondence which do not give names or titles are *Dear Sir / Madam* or *Dear Sirs*; however, an addressee is not defined here. At the same time, in Polish formal correspondence with a defined recipient, we often use expressions: *Szanowny Panie / Szanowna Pani / Szanowni Państwo* (but quoting names is not recommended after them). There is a comma at the end, although traditional Polish correspondence applies an exclamation mark after addressing the recipient: *Drogi Krzysztofie!*, *Szanowna Pani Profesor!* It is worth mentioning here that, because a salutation ends with a comma, the text of the letter starts in a new line with a small letter. It would be reasonable to pay attention to spelling of small and capital letters with the word: Pan – господин. In Russian we use small letters while in Polish all words constituting expressions addressing the recipient are spelled with a capital letter: *Szanowna Pani Dyrektor*, *pragnę Pani podziękować za owocną współpracę między naszymi firmami*. In English, both in traditional and electronic correspondence, all words and abbreviations referring to the addressee are spelt with a capital letter at the beginning (*Dear Ms. Johnson*, *Dear Prof. White*), but not personal or possessive pronouns. Let us note that salutations in English emails contain mainly abbreviations.

One of the structures appearing in salutations in English business correspondence is *Dear* As far as the ending of this expression is concerned, there are a few possibilities. We can address the recipient as *Mr.*, *Mrs.* or *Ms.* when our relations are professional

and/or we do not know them very well. American punctuation uses a period after these abbreviations, while the British variety does not. When we are in closer, cordial relations, we may address people by first name and contact them quite often. We may also use a salutation such as *Hello, Mr. Cho*, which is still polite and professional, after already having a history of email and phone contact.

After exchanging a few letters in Polish business correspondence, it is possible to use different salutation words, such as *Pan / Pani*, with a first name. Still, only the official (full) form, not its diminutive, is acceptable: *Pani Krystyno, Panie Grzegorzu* (Szymczak, 2017). We should point out the restrictions in the use of forms with names and words *Pan* or *Pani*. Firstly, in relations such as supervisor–subordinate, professor–student, teacher–pupil, only the person of the superior status is allowed to use these forms. In contrast, the subordinate student or pupil must strictly obey the nominal regulations. This form of a salutation is characteristic mostly of company employees on a similar level of hierarchy, not knowing each other in person or for people representing separate organisations, but also in similar positions. We have to add that in Russian it is not possible to address a person using a term *господин / госпожа + имя* (there are no forms like: „господин Николай”, „госпожа Ирина”).

Marcjanik (2013) observes that in formal contacts, especially when it is we who are the first to initiate the contact, it is advised to place the title or position of the addressee after the expression *Szanowny Panie*, for example *Szanowny Panie Prezesie, Szanowna Pani Dyrektor* (cf. Mańkowski, 2012). This rule, however, is limited to particular positions and conventionally accepted titles (*Szanowny Panie Mecenasie, Szanowna Pani Przewodnicząca*). We do not use terms like *Szanowna Pani Księgowa* when addressing an accountant) or *Szanowny Panie Informatyku*, when contacting an IT specialist. Even more usage restrictions concern Russian business correspondence, as the only structure possible in communication based on the Russian language is *Уважаемый господин директор*, but it is not possible to use the expression *господин менеджер, господин профессор* or any other expressions including a title or position after the word *Уважаемый*. There is also a clear restriction in addressing the recipient in English business correspondence. It is only possible to use the structure *Dear ...* in compounds such as *Dear Prof. Cooper, Dear Dr. Cooper*, but never *Dear Mr. Director* or *Dear Chairman*.

The differences in the use of courtesy salutation formulas can be presented in a table:

Table 2. Differences in courtesy salutation formulas in business emails in the three languages

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Poles use more elaborate respectful forms (<i>Szanowny Panie</i>). All words in the salutation are capitalised.	Russians use more elaborate respectful forms (<i>Уважаемый господин</i>). Only proper names are capitalised.	English prefers „Dear“ for formal settings. All words in the salutation are capitalised.	Formality levels and name usage reflect deeper cultural norms about hierarchy (Russian uses patronymics, Polish keeps surnames longer) and familiarity (English switches to first names faster).

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Polish cultures maintain surname-based address forms longer.	Russian cultures maintain surname-based address forms longer.	English speakers often use first names quickly, even in business settings.	In Polish and English, all words in the salutation are capitalised. The expression (even to a stranger) Уважаемый господин, Dear Mr., without the further part, i.e. without the first name, last name or the title, is unacceptable both in Russian and in English. In Polish, general formulas, such as Szanowny Panie, are fully normative.
Titles such as naming positions and functions are required to honour the addressee.	Russian culture emphasises hierarchical respect, which is reflected in the mandatory use of patronymics in semi-formal or formal emails (Здравствуйте, Иван Иванович!).	Salutations in English emails contain mainly abbreviations (Mr., Mrs., Prof.).	Using abbreviations in greetings is accepted in English-language emails, while in Polish and Russian it is considered impolite.

3.3 Introduction of the email

It is recommended that electronic letters, unlike traditional ones, be brief and precisely refer to the issue they are concerned with. Extensive letters without brief framing of the subject of a matter may be ignored by the recipients who, overwhelmed with a huge amount of other emails, will not have time to send return letters asking for further description.

On the other hand, presenting the issue too aggressively and using capital letters (all caps or small caps) to stress what is important to the sender is equally impolite. Even if in this way we only try to draw the recipient's attention to the most important for us questions, it may be perceived as screaming and pressure, which is not acceptable by the canons of language etiquette. Besides, the research shows that texts printed in capitals are read more slowly (cf. Miller, 2003, p. 18). To mark important information, it is possible to use full-faced print (using bold font), but only if it is necessary (bold or underline) (cf. Herman, 2020).

The syntactic complexity evident in the textual multiplicity of service languages in Slavic countries is due to the different traditions of state functioning compared to English-speaking countries. In English, we observe greater directness and simplicity of expression.

In Polish linguistic culture, electronic business letters often begin by referring to previous communication or stating the purpose of the message: *Zwracam się do Pani / Pana w sprawie...*. Russian emails have very formal and often longer introductions than Polish emails: *Позвольте обратиться к Вам с вопросом*. Emails in English, in the British variant, begin with short and direct statements: *I am writing to inquire about...*, while in American culture emails tend to include a friendly phrase like *I hope this email finds you well*.

Differences can be seen between business e-mails written in the three analysed languages, which are analysed pictorially in the table below:

Table 3. Differences in the implementation of the introduction to business emails in the three languages

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
The purpose of the email is given in a syntactically complex but precise form, without small talk, reflecting a cultural preference for efficiency and avoiding unnecessary pleasantries in business settings: <i>Zwracam się do Pana / Pani w sprawie.</i>	Russian emails may use more indirect or formal structures (<i>Хотел бы уточнить...</i> = I would like to clarify, which aligns with a more reserved and formal communication style. Russian emails have often longer introductions than Polish emails: <i>Позвольте обратиться к Вам с вопросом.</i>	The purpose of the letter is stated in a simple and direct form, but American speakers often begin with a friendly opening like <i>I hope you're doing well.</i> This is more about establishing rapport than direct communication.	Polish and Russian emails contain a more syntactically complex and formal introduction, but without the familiarity of small talk in American letters. In the British version, the introduction is devoid of personal themes.

3.4 Main body of the email

The content of the email depends on the pragmatics, or purpose of the statement. This is the most thematically diverse part of an email. Polish texts of this genre use full sentences and a formal tone, though without excessive distance. Russians use more formal and courteous expressions, e.g.: *Будем признательны, если Вы сможете рассмотреть наше предложение.* English speakers express their intentions concisely: *Could you please provide more details?* Politeness in the question above is evident, but not excessive.

In business correspondence, one can use subtitles, i.e., headings of paragraphs, if the letter contains so much information that it takes more paragraphs, several sentences each. It would also be good to introduce numbered and bullet-pointed lists (Bujala, 2020).

A summary of the most important differences between the analysed languages concerning this part of the business email can be presented pictorially:

Table 4. Summary of the linguistic differences of the main part of a business email in the three languages

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
The syntax of Polish emails is distinguished by its complexity and flowery style (striving to aestheticise the text). The official tone is preserved.	Russian emails tend to be wordier and more formal, often using indirect phrasing. Russian emails may contain more formal expressions due to the historical influence of bureaucratic and official communication styles.	English email structure is often more concise and uses bullet points or numbered lists.	The preference for indirect politeness in Russian and Polish (e.g., <i>Былбым благодарен, если Вы...</i> / <i>Буду признателен, если Вы...</i>) contrasts with the straightforward nature of English requests (<i>Could you please...?</i>). Preference for formality and indirectness in Russian / Polish vs. conciseness in English.

3.5 Closing of the email

The closing sentences summarise the email or include polite remarks. The example sentences of this part of the email contain formal phrases similar in tone: *Dziękuję za poświęcony czas i czekam na odpowiedź* (Thank you for your time, I'm looking forward to your reply); *I appreciate your time and look forward to your response*; *Заранее благодарю за ваш ответ* (Thank you in advance for your reply). Comparing the linguistic implementation of this element of the email, it can be seen that the Russian emails often use more indirect phrasing than English or Polish.

The similarities and differences in the creation of this element of the structure of a business email in the analysed languages are illustratively shown in Table 5:

Table 5. Closing a business email in three languages – similarities and differences

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Polish emails often include gratitude before the closing (<i>Dziękuję za poświęcony czas</i>), showing cultural emphasis on politeness and appreciation.	Russian emails often include gratitude before the closing (<i>Заранее благодарю за ваш ответ</i>), showing cultural emphasis on politeness and appreciation.	English emails also express appreciation but are typically more direct (Looking forward to your reply).	Polish and Russian emails often include gratitude before the closing. English emails are more direct.
Polish emails often assume a longer response cycle and include additional courtesy (<i>W oczekiwaniu na odpowiedź</i>).	Russian emails often assume a longer response cycle and include additional courtesy (<i>Буду рад вашему ответу в удобное для вас время</i>).	In English-language emails, the emphasis on a quick response is greater.	Differing expectations about response timing and levels of politeness.

3.6. Courtesy formula for farewell

Accepted polite final closing phrases of a letter (both electronic and traditional) in Russian are the following structures *С уважением*, *С уважением и наилучшими пожеланиями*, *С уважением и в ожидании ответа*. They are followed by a comma. In Polish official correspondence the most frequently used expressions are *Z wyrazami szacunku*, *Pozostaje z wyrazami szacunku*, although the phrase *Z poważaniem* may also be used. They are not followed by any punctuation mark, and the next structural part of the text (signature) begins in a new line. However, one can observe that a comma is becoming increasingly common, analogous to punctuation after salutation. Closing phrases *Pozdrawiam*, as well as *Pozdrawiam serdecznie* and *Z pozdrowieniami*, have become very popular lately, but these forms should be used only in less formal correspondence (cf. Mańkowski, 2012). In English correspondence, there are many options for ending the letter: *All the best*, *Best regards*, *Best wishes*, *Respectfully*, *Respectfully yours*, *Sincerely*, *Sincerely yours*, *Thank you*, *Yours respectfully*, *Yours sincerely*, *Cordially*, *Cordially yours*, *With appreciation*, *With gratitude*, *With respect*, *With sincere appreciation*. The most desired ones in business correspondence are: *Regards*, *Best regards*, *Respectfully yours*,

Sincerely yours, Yours respectfully, Yours sincerely, With sincere appreciation. This kind of structure is followed by a comma.

The polite closing phrase of a letter is followed by the sender's signature. In Polish and English letters, it consists of the first and the last name of the sender, while in Russian, it consists of the first name, father's name and the last name or only the first and the last name. It is important to pay attention to the differences in the order of the given names. Structures with the first name before the last name are characteristic of Polish and English, while the rules of Russian official correspondence put the last name at the front. Still, the first name or names are in postposition compared to the family name. The signature includes only the sender's name, a so-called short signature. Under that, other types of data may be found, such as title, position, workplace, website of the institution represented by the sender, phone number, fax number, etc. This one is called email signature and resembles an extended variety of a business card with all information necessary to maintain cooperation with its owner (cf. *Ètika delovogo obšeniâ v seti*). This feature is characteristic of all the analysed language variants of business correspondence.

It is unacceptable in professional correspondence to make spelling or grammar mistakes, especially misspelling names or last names of addressees and names of companies and institutions. To avoid them, one ought to read the letter and check and correct the mistakes before clicking the icon "send". In professional correspondence (especially office-related), we do not use emoticons. It is acceptable in less formal electronic communication with people we know well. We must bear in mind that business correspondence is often kept and stored; that is why in official letters we should not use graphic elements reserved for other forms of communication on the net (comments on FB, Internet chats and fora, where even in contacts with strangers it is acceptable and common to use emoticons).

This part of the business email shows significant differences between the three analysed languages, as shown in the table below:

Table 6. Differences in the implementation of the business email farewell formula in three languages

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Polish sign-offs (<i>Z poważaniem, Z wyrazami szacunku</i>) are closer to English in their level of formality.	Russian farewells tend to be longer and more elaborate in business settings, reflecting a cultural preference for formal expressions of respect (<i>С уважением и наилучшими пожеланиями</i> = „With respect and best wishes“).	English uses simple, standardised sign-offs (<i>Best regards, Yours sincerely</i>).	Polish and Russian prefer a moderate level of formality even in friendly exchanges. Russian and Polish emphasise hierarchy and formality, whereas English prefers brevity and friendliness. Polish and English-language polite farewell formulas are less elaborate than Russian ones.

3.7 Attachments

Electronic letters may also include attachments. These are various documents, e.g. contract drafts, applications, scientific articles, forms, reports or term essays. In that case, it is necessary to indicate the fact of attaching the document in the main body of the email, together with defining the content of attachments. According to the rules of netiquette, an electronic letter should be twice as short as a traditional one. That is the reason for using attachments with additional files.

A summary of the confrontation of this element of the business email's structure is shown in Table 7:

Table 7. A comparison of how attachments are presented in business emails

In Polish	In Russian	In English	Comparison
Depends solely on the type of activity.	Depends solely on the type of activity.	Depends solely on the type of activity.	No formal and linguistic differences indicating cultural background.

Conclusions

As a result of conducted comparative analysis of email correspondence, it turned out that in business and office netiquette in Polish, Russian and English communication, there can be observed both similarities and differences, which are visible on the language level as well as on the level of graphic (formal) means. Certain conclusions also regard the character of internet correspondence compared to traditional correspondence.

Most analogies are found mainly in those elements of electronic letters specific for communication of that kind (they do not appear in traditional correspondence).

- 1) high degree of schematization of the structure of the letter proper and the way of attaching additional files to it;
- 2) using official names of owners in the sender's email addresses (preferably first and last names);
- 3) filling in the Subject field and paying attention to formulating it in a brief, clear and precise way;
- 4) using the function of automatic reply in the correct way (for the recipient's convenience) so that the recipient could receive his or her previous message in our letter, but with special care about placing our message at the beginning of email, not allowing for multiplication of the word RE in the Subject field;
- 5) skilful use of options in the field of the addressee, hiding addressees if showing the full list of addressees could be undesired for us or could violate the privacy of others, paying special attention to the possibility of using the *Reply to all* option.
- 6) no emoticons allowed;
- 7) avoiding such graphic means as capitalising whole words, even for underlining especially significant information (full-faced print also has limited use);

- 8) conventional use of extended version of signature;
- 9) absolute spelling and grammar correctness;
- 10) defined structure of the letter, including fixed elements.

The differences in business email correspondence observed while confronting Polish, Russian and English electronic letters can be pictorially represented in the form of a table:

Table 8. Comparison of Polish, Russian and English-language emails

Characteristics	Polish emails	Russian emails	English emails
Formality	High, but less developed than in Russian.	Very high, often extensive, polite phrases.	Medium, direct communication.
Titling	Attaching great importance to functions and positions.	There is no need to refer to the function and position, but respect is expressed by the expression „honourable sir” used with the surname or by the first name and the paternal name.	Rare use of functions or positions. Tendency to use only first names. Instead of the courtesy word esteemed, the more friendly word <i>dear</i> is used.
Syntax	Clear, logical, complete sentences with a tendency towards stylistic floweriness.	Often longer, more formal sentences.	Short and to the point sentences.
Tone	Polite and formal (use of conditional phrasing).	Official, distancing (use of conditional phrasing).	Neutral, polite, but without unnecessary formalities.
Discursive-stylistic means	Using capital letters in wordings addressing the recipient. Personal and possessive pronouns referring to the addressee are written in capital letters. Capitalising letters in addresses also applies to the word “Pan” and its derivatives, which is specific to the Polish language.	Do not use capital letters addressing the recipient (except for proper names) in wordings. Personal and possessive pronouns referring to the addressee are written in capital letters.	Using capital letters in wordings addressing the recipient. Personal and possessive pronouns referring to the addressee are written in small letters (only the personal pronoun “I” is capitalised).
Para-linguistic elements	Commas respectively after salutations, no punctuation mark after final closing phrase. Exclamation marks are a method of prioritising emails. Sequence of elements of short signature (first name comes before last name).	Exclamation marks after salutations and periods after final closing phrase. Asterisk as a method of prioritising emails. Sequence of elements of short signature (last name comes before first name). Besides, the paternal name is also in use, which is typical for Russian-speaking cultures.	Commas in English are used respectively after salutations and final closing phrases. Asterisk or numbers as a method of prioritising emails. Sequence of elements of short signature (first name comes before last name).

As a result of the comparative analysis, it was revealed that the similarities between emails in Polish, Russian and English relate to those elements of the email structure that are characteristic of the electronic form of the letter and are related to the universality of netiquette rules. On the other hand, differences are visible in those parts of the letter borrowed from traditional correspondence, for which they are culturally determined and dependent on the language etiquette adopted in a given culture.

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