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Applications of AI-driven Tools in Translating and Drafting Commercial Correspondence – A Slovenian-English Perspective

ABSTRACT

The recent emergence and the widespread use of AI-driven tools have significantly affected various aspects of human communication, including business-related professional communication. This pilot study explores how AI-driven tools can be used in drafting commercial correspondence by considering its genre conventions. To this end, we carried out a small-scale study to assess AI-driven tools for translating and drafting commercial correspondence. We used ChatGPT, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash to translate 15 letters from Slovenian into English and to draft 10 letters in English based on the prompts in Slovenian. Our key findings show that although the translations are similar, slight differences occur mainly at the level of formality and the scope of formulaic expressions. Concerning the drafts, the AI-driven tools produced adequate letters which might sometimes need light human editing.

Keywords: Business English, commercial correspondence, translation, drafting, AI-driven tools, English, Slovenian

Uporaba orodij umetne inteligence pri prevajanju in sestavljanju poslovnih dopisov – slovensko-angleški vidik

IZVLEČEK

Nedavni razmah in obsežna uporaba orodij, ki temeljijo na umetni inteligenci (UI), imata velik vpliv na različne vidike človeške komunikacije, vključno s strokovno komunikacijo v poslovnem okolju. Ta pilotna študija ugotavlja, kako lahko orodja, ki jih poganja UI, uporabimo pri pisanju poslovne korespondence z upoštevanjem njenih žanrskih značilnosti. V ta namen smo izvedli manjšo raziskavo, v kateri smo ocenjevali orodja, ki temeljijo na UI, za prevajanje in oblikovanje poslovne korespondence. Uporabili smo ChatGPT, Claude 3.5 Sonnet in Gemini 2.0 Flash za prevod 15 pisem iz slovenščine v angleščino ter za pripravo 10 pisem v angleščini na podlagi navodil v slovenščini. Naše ključne ugotovitve kažejo, da so prevodi med seboj razmeroma podobni, vendar se rahle razlike pojavljajo predvsem na ravni formalnosti in obsega rabe ustaljenih izrazov. Uporabljena orodja UI so pripravila ustrezna pisma, ki pa vendarle včasih potrebujejo manjše popravke.

Ključne besede: poslovna angleščina, poslovna korespondenca, prevajanje, pisanje, orodja UI, angleščina, slovenščina

1 Introduction

In the past couple of years, the surge in the usage of AI-driven tools (e.g., ChatGPT) has greatly impacted text production. Today, AI-driven tools can significantly facilitate text production and, consequently, impact written communication. They can be used to prepare written documents for both general and professional purposes, including various types of business-related documents. Among the latter, they can be used as an aid in translating and drafting commercial correspondence. According to a recent study by Cardon et al. (2023), AI-driven tools have transformed the way people communicate for business purposes. Since several AI-driven tools can translate texts from one language to another, their use can be especially beneficial to businesses, given current trends of increasing internationalization of business operations and consequent communication in, predominantly, English (Halimi and Shiyab 2015). Employees working in sales and purchasing may take advantage of these tools when communicating with business partners and customers in a language different from their first language.

A substantial proportion of business communication is carried out in writing (Halimi and Shiyab 2015). Thus, it is crucial that any commerce-related letter be appropriately structured and written in a clear and professional manner. With a well-structured commercial letter or e-mail, the recipient can easily understand the message and the action they need to take based on its content. Also, a well-written message shows the sender's professionalism and competence and their respect for the receiver. This professionalism adds to credibility and trust among business partners and customers and contributes to strong business relationships. On the other hand, a poorly written message can harm a company's reputation. In other words, there is a correlation between well-written business-related communication and positive business results (Rogerson-Revell 2007, 1).

The primary purpose of commercial correspondence is to address commerce-related matters (e.g., product enquiries, order confirmations, or complaints) (Ashley 2003). Therefore, it should be written clearly, concisely and without any ambiguities. Well-written commercial correspondence increases the chances of achieving the set goals: e.g., agreeing to proposed sales terms, finalizing or concluding the sale. In short, commercial correspondence should be written in the appropriate professional tone, observing genre conventions and including accurate specialised, sales-related terminology (Talbot 2009; Wilson and Wauson 2010; Sankrusme 2017).

Following the above, the overall goal of this paper is to explore the ways in which AI-driven tools can be used to (1) translate commercial correspondence from Slovenian into English, and (2) draft commercial correspondence in English based on prompts in Slovenian by examining specific elements related to the genre conventions of commercial correspondence. First, we present the theoretical framework for our study. Next, we describe how we carried out our research. Third, we present and discuss the results of the study. In the final part, we summarize our findings and propose potential areas of research together with implications for practice.

2 Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework first gives an overview of commercial correspondence as a specific text type and text genre. Second, the application of AI-driven tools in the context of commercial correspondence translation and drafting in English is examined.

2.1 Commercial Correspondence as Text Type and Text Genre

Commercial correspondence refers to professional written texts related to sales and purchase of goods and provision of services. At its core, it is a communication channel between buyers and sellers as the two key participants in commercial transactions. Its purpose is to address aspects of commercial transactions: enquiries and replies to enquiries regarding general terms of sale and terms of payment, quotations, placing of orders and replies to orders, complaints and replies to complaints, etc. (Abegg and Benford 1999b, 1999a; Armitage-Amato 2005; Ashley 2003; Sankrusme 2017; Bennie 2021).

If viewed through the prism of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 61), commercial correspondence is created for specific communication purposes within the business context (the ideational level). Commercial correspondence also creates the relationship between the seller and the buyer by laying down their rights and obligations (the interpersonal level). The third level, the textual level, is the actual linguistic realisation of the purpose of the message and the interpersonal relationships between the two parties. This level is subject to lexical and grammatical characteristics and to the purpose of commercial correspondence and is realized through the typical structure of commercial letters.

This view on commercial correspondence shows that it needs to be considered as a text type and as a text genre. As a text type (see Krajnc Ivič (2020) for a definition), commercial letters can be classified as a professional text type because they integrate the use of specialized sales-related terminology and form part of written business discourse that serves to fulfil specific tasks or functions. Via commercial correspondence, a company builds rapport with partners, suppliers, and customers, thus establishing and maintaining sales-related cooperation. More specifically, commercial correspondence is used to convey specific information (e.g., product or service details, prices, discounts, terms of delivery, or terms of payment) to negotiate and confirm sales-related agreements (e.g., stating and negotiating terms and conditions sale of a particular good or service), or to address any issues arising from non-performance of either the seller's or customer's obligations (e.g., dealing with customer complaints, delivery or payment delays, or faulty products) (Davis 2010).

Like the interrelatedness of the ideational, interpersonal and textual levels of texts, the concepts of text type and text genre are also interrelated (Krajnc Ivič 2020). While text types are defined via functions of a specific group of texts (i.e., the ideational and interpersonal level), text genres are defined via the structure of this same group of texts (i.e., the textual level). As a specific text genre within the broader context of business-related communication, commercial correspondence should adhere to its established structural and linguistic conventions.

Above all, commercial correspondence letters should follow a clear structure, which includes the salutation, the main body (the message of the text) and an appropriate closing (Ashley 2003; Lougheed 2003; Taylor 2012). Although the content of these letters varies, it is recommended that the information be presented in a clear and logically structured way. If the contents are complex, one is allowed to use bullet points to increase the readability of the text (Wilson and Wauson 2010).

The structure of commercial correspondence letters is rather uniform and generally consists of four sections: the introduction, the core of the letter, the action required based on the letter, and a polite and positive ending. In the introduction, the sender frames the message into the context known to both the sender and the receiver (e.g., reference to an advertisement, or reference to previous contact or correspondence). The core of the letter addresses the reasons for writing (e.g., an enquiry about the product, or a reminder about the payment) and guides the reader to the next section, which provides information about the action that is expected from the receiver based on the previous section (e.g., sending a reply with the requested product information, or addressing concerns about late payment). The body of the letter ends with a polite and positive conclusion in which the sender expresses gratitude for the reader's attention to the letter, a desire for the continuation of cooperation, and a clear indication of the next steps.

As regards the language of the commercial correspondence, several key observations should be made. As professional written communication, commercial correspondence should primarily be written in a professional tone. That is, the language used should be professional and polite without colloquial expressions. However, employing an overly formal and somewhat outdated style of writing is also discouraged, particularly in the context of English in an international context as the *lingua franca* of the business world (Terk 2016; Terk and Chan 2014; Wallwork 2014; Gajšt 2014). The current trend in business writing leans towards a neutral, straightforward style of writing (Abegg and Benford 1999b; Taylor 2012), which adds to the clarity and conciseness of the message (Wilson and Wauson 2010, 454; Carey 2002). Finally, the language in commercial correspondence letters should be polite to reflect respect and professionalism on the part of the sender.

Linked to genre conventions and the professional tone and style of writing in English, two characteristics should be pointed out: the use of passive voice and nominalization. In general, passive voice is used to place focus on the action rather than on the doer of the action (e.g., the doer of the action is unknown or irrelevant; highlighting the doer may be sensitive in nature, or avoidance of personal pronouns such as *you* or *we*) (Biber et al. 2021; Leech and Svartvik 1990; Quirk et al. 1985; Hribar 2021, 2018; Kalin Golob 2002). In commercial correspondence, the use of passive voice may be appropriate in complaints or refusals or other types of messages where direct reference to the doer of the action may not be appropriate from a politeness standpoint (e.g., 'blame'). From the perspective of using plain English in the context of business-related writing in an international context, the use passive voice is used only when absolutely needed (Bailey 1996; Taylor 2012).

The second characteristic is the use of nominal structures. Nominalization is common in professional texts since it adds to the formality and conciseness of the message. Like the passive voice, it also depersonalizes messages ('*They delayed the shipment.*' vs '*There was a*

delay in shipment.'), compacts them and adds to the formality of the text ('*The shipment of the purchased goods will begin next month*.' vs '*We will begin shipping the purchased goods next month.*'). However, nominal structures may result in the text being more difficult to read; in that case, verbal structures are preferred.

Summing up, good business writing in English in the international context should be polite, accurate, brief and clear (i.e., written in plain English and in an easy and natural style).

2.2 AI-Driven Tools for Text Drafting and Translation

Today, AI-driven tools which can be used to either translate a text into English or write it in English based on a prompt in another language are widely available. They can perform a wide variety of tasks from grammar checks to creating written texts without much human intervention (Marzuki et al. 2023, 2). Several studies have been performed regarding the usefulness of these tools for text production and text translation. Most of these address such tools in a pedagogical context as an aid in writing or translation skills in a foreign language. Several studies have shown that students favour the use of AI as an aid in their learning, which was also supported by the results of writing tests and improved language proficiency (O'Neill 2016; Emara 2024; Kruk and Kałużna 2025). On the other hand, some studies have shown that the overuse of AI translation systems, despite saving time and increasing efficiency, can lead to the impairment of independent writing development and hinder critical thinking and deeper learning (Jaruwatsawat et al. 2024). That is, overreliance on AI-driven tools may lead users to become passive users of these tools.

AI-driven tools for text production and text translation have both strengths and weaknesses. Regarding their strengths, they are fast, easily accessible and cost-effective (Saitkhanova 2024; Moneus and Sahari 2024). They are designed to continuously evolve and improve their output with every user interaction (e.g., linguistic patterns and idiomatic expressions). In addition, they can translate between multiple languages, which caters for diverse translation needs (Saitkhanova 2024; Suhardiman et al. 2024). In contrast, the main reported weaknesses or limitations of AI-driven tools for translation lie in contextual understanding, cultural sensitivity and capacity to deal with complex documents. They have limited ability to understand nuances in language or idiomatic expressions and metaphors and are not always able to fully comprehend cultural references, which may result in inappropriate translations. When it comes to complex documents or highly specialized texts (e.g., medical, technical, or legal), AI-driven tools do not show a high degree of accuracy, such as when translating highly specialized terminology (Moneus and Sahari 2024; Suhardiman et al. 2024; Alisherovich 2024).

The challenges related to the uncritical use of AI-powered tools in translation thus demand a far more careful as well as critical evaluation of AI-translated texts in the post-translation stage to detect and eliminate inaccuracies in translation (Ning and Ban 2024). Orel Kos (2024) reports a similar finding in a study concerning translation for the screen, where the subtitles are often of lower quality if done with the help of machine translation than when done exclusively by humans. Although AI offers a quick, cost-effective translation, human post-editing of AI-translated texts has proven positive when specialized texts such as legal documents, marketing materials, technical manuals, and business reports are concerned,

as it improved the linguistic accuracy, clarity and cultural appropriateness of the texts (Suhardiman et al. 2024).

2.2.1 AI-Driven Tools for Translation and Drafting of Commercial Correspondence – Case Selection

For our study, we decided to use the following AI-driven tools: ChatGPT 4 (OpenAI n.d.), Claude 3.5 Sonnet (Claude.ai n.d.), and Gemini 2.0 Flash (Gemini 2024) since these offer mostly free access and can thus be used by anyone. Moreover, they can be used both for translating texts from Slovenian into English and for drafting letters in English based on prompts in Slovenian. To get a better understanding of these three AI-driven tools, we prompted them to give us their own description of their scope, their strengths and their weaknesses regarding their ability to translate and draft commercial correspondence letters. Our prompt was: "*How would you describe yourself in terms of your scope, strengths and weaknesses when it comes to writing and translating commercial correspondence?"* The responses are given in Tables 1 to 3 below.

Table 1. Self-described scope of the selected AI-driven tools concerning commercial correspondence translation and production.

ChatGPT	• writes and translates commercial correspondence, including business inquiries, quotations, orders, contracts, invoices, and complaint letters, • ensures clarity, professionalism, and adherence to international business standards, • human editing advisable to refine business communication.
Claude 3.5 Sonnet	• can assist with virtually all forms of written business communication, including formal business letters, emails, memoranda, reports, proposals, meeting minutes, and basic contractual documents, • can work across multiple languages for translation purposes, • can adapt content for different regions and cultural contexts, • can handle both internal and external communications, from entry-level to executive correspondence.
Gemini 2.0 Flash	• well-trained on formal language and professional communication styles, • can adapt to different levels of formality as needed, • training data includes a substantial amount of business-related vocabulary – to generate text with appropriate terminology, • can produce various types of commercial correspondence, including letters, emails, memos, proposals, reports, and more, • can adhere to standard formatting conventions, • can translate commercial correspondence between multiple languages, facilitating international business communication.

(OpenAI n.d..; Claude.ai n.d..; Gemini 2024)

Table 1 shows that these AI-driven tools claim to be very good at creating formal and professional business communication. They can use extensive business vocabulary and are able to create different correspondence formats even in a multilingual setting, which makes

Table 2. Self-described strengths of the selected AI-driven tools concerning commercial correspondence translation and production.

ChatGPT	• leverages AI tools to speed up translation while maintaining human oversight for final accuracy, • ensures that commercial correspondence is precise, avoiding ambiguity that could lead to misinterpretation or disputes, • follows standard structures for different types of business communication, e.g., formal salutations, closing remarks, and polite requests, • uses appropriate business and trade-related terminology, ensuring that terms related to payment, delivery, and warranties are correctly translated and applied, • can adjust tone and phrasing to match English and Slovenian business etiquette, ensuring politeness and professionalism.
Claude 3.5 Sonnet	• is effective at restructuring complex information into clear, readable formats, • can also provide detailed explanations for suggested improvements, helping users understand the reasoning behind specific writing choices • can write clear, professional business communications in multiple languages, • can maintain consistent tone and formality levels, • can follow standard business letter formats and conventions, • can adapt style for different business contexts and cultures, • can translate while preserving meaning and intent, • ensures proper terminology in specialized fields (e.g, financial or legal).
Gemini 2.0 Flash	• can quickly draft and translate correspondence, saving time and resources, • can generally produce grammatically correct and error-free text, essential for maintaining professionalism in business communication, • can maintain a consistent tone and style throughout a series of communications, which is important for branding and building relationships, • can generate neutral and unbiased language, avoiding emotional or subjective language that might be inappropriate in a business context, • can easily adapt to different formats and templates for various types of correspondence.

(OpenAI n.d..; Claude.ai n.d..; Gemini 2024)

them useful in a business context. Specifically, the responses provided by Gemini 2.0 Flash focused on formal and professional tone, business vocabulary, common correspondence formats and the ability to translate between several languages. ChatGPT's focus was on specialized writing and translating various forms of commercial correspondence; additionally, it claimed a focus on clarity and professional tone in its output. However, it also highlighted the need to combine the AI-driven tool with human editing. Lastly, Claude 3.5 Sonnet claimed the ability to write and translate a wide range of commercial correspondence at different company hierarchy levels across various regional and cultural contexts.

Table 3. Self-described weaknesses of AI-driven tools concerning commercial correspondence translation and production.

ChatGPT	• can handle standard business agreements, but highly complex legal clauses may require additional review by a legal expert • points out that AI-generated commercial correspondence often requires human refinement – to ensure appropriate tone and phrasing, particularly in sensitive negotiations • points out that some expressions do not translate directly between Slovenian and English –careful human adaptation is required to maintain professionalism
Claude 3.5 Sonnet	• cannot maintain ongoing correspondence beyond single sessions, • points out the need for human review of any legally binding documents, • cannot independently verify company-specific protocols or requirements, • points out that translations, while accurate for general business purposes, should be professionally reviewed for critical documents, • cannot access real-time business information or company-specific information, • cannot sign documents or provide legally binding translations.
Gemini 2.0 Flash	• can sometimes miss subtle cultural nuances in business communication, which can vary significantly across countries and industries, • might not be familiar with highly specialized jargon used in specific industries (this can affect both writing and translation accuracy), • does not have a deep understanding of complex business situations or strategies (limits its ability to craft truly effective and persuasive correspondence in nuanced situations), • cannot fully grasp the context of a long-term business relationship or the history of previous interactions, • industry-specific idioms or colloquialisms might not always be accurate or appropriate.

(OpenAI n.d..; Claude.ai n.d..; Gemini 2024)

According to the information provided by the three AI-driven tools, they are efficient, adaptable and fast in translating and drafting commercial correspondence. For example, both Gemini 2.0 Flash and ChatGPT highlighted their speed and efficiency as well as their overall accuracy in translating and drafting commercial correspondence. All three AI-driven tools claimed to be able to adhere to genre conventions (i.e., observing standard structures and formats of different types of texts), which includes the appropriate levels of formality and tone. Gemini 2.0 Flash specifically highlighted its grammatical accuracy.

The outputs by the three AI-driven tools show similarities regarding their weaknesses in translating commercial correspondence, i.e. the inability to spot the nuances of business culture, or their lack of knowledge of highly specific jargon, business-related colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions. Also, they may struggle with maintaining contextual awareness over a long stretch of time. Some AI-driven tools also admitted their lack of actual experience with the business world and emotional intelligence. ChatGPT specifically pointed out its shortcomings and the need for human editing when it comes to the legal complexity of texts.

Based on this framework, we formulated the following research questions:

> **Research question 1:** *How effectively do selected AI-driven tools translate commercial correspondence from Slovenian into English in terms of commercial correspondence as a text genre?*
>
> **Research question 2:** *How effectively do selected AI-driven tools generate commercial correspondence in English based on prompts in Slovenian in terms of commercial correspondence as a text genre?*

3 Method

To answer our research questions, we designed a small-scale pilot study. We selected three freely available AI-driven tools: ChatGPT 4, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash. We performed our analysis for the two research questions separately. Being open-ended, our study approach enabled us to test the accuracy of adherence to the conventions of commercial correspondence as a text type and text genre.

Concerning the first research question, we selected 15 commercial correspondence letters in Slovenian (enquires, replies to enquiries, offers, quotations, and complaints). These were model letters we currently use to teach commercial correspondence in our Business English classes and were based on typical letters found in English-language commercial correspondence textbooks or guidebooks. We entered these letters into the AI-driven tools ChatGPT 4, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash and prompted them to translate the texts. We used the same prompt with all three tools: *"Translate the following letters into English*." We deliberately kept the prompt as simple as possible. After we obtained the outputs, we analysed them based on the predetermined criteria. Regarding commercial correspondence genre conventions, we limited our study to politeness, nominalization, the use of passive voice, and the 'ease-of-read' (as related to the use of English as a lingua franca in business) in line with the observations on commercial correspondence and the strengths and weaknesses of AI-driven tools.

For the second research question, we selected 10 prompts (i.e., instructions) for drafting commercial correspondence in Slovenian (enquiries, replies to enquires, offers, and complaints). As in the case of the letters used for the first research question, these instructions are model samples we use in our classes to teach commercial correspondence writing in English. We entered them into ChatGPT 4, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash to get the letters in English. We used the same prompt with all three tools: "*Draft the letter in English based on the prompt in Slovenian.*" After we obtained the outputs (the drafted letters), we analysed them based on the guidelines for commercial correspondence in English commercial correspondence textbooks and handbooks and on the strengths and weaknesses of AI-driven tools to identify linguistic and contextual differences.

As the final step in our analysis, we performed the Flesch-Kincaid and the Gunning Fog tests to see which of the AI-driven tools produced the texts (translations and drafted letters) that were the easiest to read and would be closest to the recommended clear, simple style for writing commercial correspondence (especially in the international context). The latter was designed to reduce unnecessary complexity in business writing ("Readability Checker - Reading Level Calculator" 2024; Miller 2024). The 0–100 scale for the Flesch-Kincaid test is as follows: 0–50 Very difficult ('CEFRL C2 level'), 50–60 Fairly difficult ('CEFRL C1 level"), 60–70 Plain English ('CEFRL B2 level'), 70–80 Fairly easy ('CEFRL B1 level'), 80–90 (CEFRL A2 level'), 90–100 ('CEFRL A1 level') (Linguapress.com n.d.). The 0–20 scale for the Gunning Fog test is as follows: 1–5 ('very easy to read'); 5–8 ('a text considered ideal for average readers'), 8–11 ('fairly difficult to read'), 11–20 ('hard to read for most readers'). This scale was designed with the United States education system in mind and for its corresponding levels of education, i.e., primary school to graduate levels (Clickhelp.com n.d.). The average results of these tests are given separately for the translations and for the drafted letters.

4 Results and Discussion

In this section of the paper, we present and discuss our findings.

4.1 Using AI-Driven Tools to Translate Commercial Correspondence from Slovenian into English

The first research question addressed the ability of ChatGPT, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash to translate commercial correspondence into English. Since we provided the three tools with whole letters, we did not focus on the structure of the letters per se but on the differences and similarities in line with the selected criteria. At the outset, we should state that ChatGPT's outputs included the advice that human editing might be relevant. Although we did not specifically state in our prompts that the sentences were part of commercial correspondence, Claude 3.5 Sonnet's response to our prompt began with the information that it "will translate the letters while maintaining the formal business style and structure of the original" (Claude.ai n.d.) (N.B.: the tone for these translations was set to 'formal'). This showed us that the tool recognised the letters as business-related.

We present and discuss our findings in three areas: formality levels, including the notion of politeness, nominalisation, and the use of passive voice. The examples illustrating our

findings are taken from different sections of the letters: the opening, the main body, the concluding part and the complimentary close. We give Slovenian sentences and their English equivalents as translated by the three selected AI-driven tools.

Concerning the notion of politeness, we found that, overall, the translations were similar. However, they displayed slight differences in the adverbs used to soften or highlight the politeness of a statement or action. The following examples in Tables 4-7 taken from different types of letters illustrate this point.

Table 4. Translating polite expressions – expressing interest.

V najnovejši številki revije Sports&Health smo videli vaš oglas za športna oblačila in se zanimamo za vaše izdelke, še posebej za oblačila za zimske športe.		
ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	Gemini 2.0 Flash
We saw your advertisement for sportswear in the latest issue of Sports & Health magazine and are very interested in your products, particularly clothing for winter sports.	We saw your advertisement for sportswear in the latest issue of Sports&Health magazine and are interested in your products, particularly in clothing for winter sports.	In the latest issue of Sports&Health magazine, we saw your advertisement for sportswear and are interested in your products, especially clothing for winter sports.

Table 5. Translating polite expressions – expressing gratitude.

Iskrena hvala za vaš dopis z dne 20. junija 20__, v katerem povprašujete po asortimanu naši izdelkov, ki smo jih predstavljali na sejmu Apimell v Italiji prejšnji teden.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
Thank you very much for your letter dated June 20, 20__, in which you inquire about the range of our products that we showcased at the 'Apimell' fair in Italy last week.	Thank you for your letter dated June 20th, 20__, inquiring about our product range presented at the 'Apimell' trade fair in Italy last week	Thank you very much for your letter of June 20, 2024, in which you inquire about the range of our products that we presented at the 'Apimell' fair in Italy last week

Table 6. Translating polite expressions – request for action.

Ker bi želeli naročene izdelke ponuditi našim kupcem že v začetku septembra, vas prosimo, da potrdite naročilo v teku 8 delovnih dni.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
As we would like to offer these products to our customers at the beginning of September, we kindly ask you to confirm the order within 8 working days.	As we would like to offer these products to our customers at the beginning of September, please confirm the order within 8 working days.	As we would like to offer the ordered products to our customers at the start of September, please confirm the order within 8 working days.

Table 7. Translating polite expressions – request for action.

Prav tako vas prosimo, da pri izstavitvi fakture upoštevate 3% popust, ki ga zagotavljate za naročila, dana do 15. junija 20__.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
We also kindly ask that you apply the 3% discount you offer for orders placed before June 15, 20__, when issuing the invoice.	We also request that you apply the 3% discount guaranteed for orders placed before June 15th, 20__, when issuing the invoice.	We also kindly ask you to take into account the 3% discount you provide for orders placed by June 15th, 20__, when issuing the invoice.

The example in Table 8 illustrates how the selected AI-driven tools translated two consecutive sentences containing a request. A variety of formulaic expressions were used by the three tools, and they did not repeat the same expression in the second sentence.

Table 8. Translating polite expressions – request for action.

Prosimo za vaš prodajni katalog ter cenik z navedenimi cenami CIP Maribor. Prav tako prosimo, da nam posredujete vaše prodajne pogoje, vključujoč količinske popuste ter dobavne roke.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
Please provide us with your sales catalog and price list, including CIP Maribor prices. We would also appreciate information on your sales conditions, including bulk discounts and delivery times.	Please send us your sales catalog and price list with prices quoted CIP Maribor. Additionally, please provide your sales terms, including volume discounts and delivery times.	Please send us your sales catalog and price list with CIP Maribor prices listed. We also ask that you provide us with your sales terms, including volume discounts and delivery times.

Apart from the politeness, we can also observe differences in the levels of formality, ranging from more formal, "apply" vs "take into account" (Table 7) and "provide us with" to "send us" (Table 8).

Focusing on instances of nominalisation, we admit that the small sample in our study did not include many such cases. The first example in Table 9 shows that two AI-driven tools translated Slovenian verbal structure as a nominal structure, and only one tool kept the verbal structure (i.e. Gemini 2.0 Flash). The second example, on the other hand, shows only one case of nominalisation among the translated sentences.

Table 9. Examples of nominalisation in translations.

Veseli nas, da ste se tako hitro odzvali na naše naročilo.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
We appreciate your prompt response to our order.	We appreciate your prompt response to our order.	We are pleased that you responded so quickly to our order.
Upam, da bomo tudi v prihodnje lahko sodelovali enako dobro kot doslej.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
We hope that our future collaboration will be just as successful as in the past.	I hope we can continue to collaborate as successfully as we have done so far.	I hope that we will be able to cooperate as well in the future as we have done so far.

Another instance of nominalisation can be observed in the next example. This time, nominalisation was present in the Slovenian sentence, and it was retained in the translations of two AI-driven tools.

Table 10. Example of nominalisation in English translations from Slovenian nominal structure (buyer's complaint – body of the letter).

Po natančnem pregledu prispelega blaga smo ugotovili, da ste poslali drugačno število izdelkov, kot je bilo dogovorjeno.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
However, after carefully inspecting the delivered goods, we have noticed discrepancies in the quantity of items sent compared to what was agreed upon.	After a careful inspection of the received goods, we have discovered that you sent different quantities than agreed upon.	After a careful inspection of the received goods, we found that you sent a different number of products than agreed.

Although English sentences containing verbal structures and not nominalisations may be easier to read than those with nominalisation, they read as less formal: "prompt response" vs "you responded so quickly"; "our future collaboration" vs "we can continue to collaborate" and "we will be able to cooperate". Concerning the example in Table 10, we argue that both translations of Slovenian nominal structure "po natančnem pregledu" are written in a formal tone, i.e. "after carefully inspecting" and "after a careful inspection." (However, it needs to be pointed out that ChatGPT's output should be in a different tense to be grammatically correct, i.e., "…after carefully inspecting the delivered goods, we noticed discrepancies…").

Passive voice is the third typical feature of professional texts. First, our pilot study showed that the passive voice constructions in Slovenian were, as a rule, translated into English as passive voice. On the other hand, we found instances of translation from active voice in Slovenian to passive voice in English, as illustrated with the examples in Table 11.

Table 11. Examples of active and passive voice in Slovenian-to-English translations.

Naročeno blago lahko dobavimo najkasneje v 30 dneh od prejema vašega naročila.		
ChatGPT	**Claude 3.5 Sonnet**	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
Ordered goods can be delivered no later than 30 days from receipt of your order.	We can deliver ordered goods within 30 days of receiving your order.	We can deliver the ordered goods no later than 30 days from receiving your order.
Naše izdelke lahko pošljemo v lični darilni embalaži (cena posameznega pakiranja je dodatnih EUR 3,50 za posamezni izdelek).		
ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	Gemini 2.0 Flash
Our products can be packaged in elegant gift wrapping (at an additional cost of EUR 3.50 per item).	We can ship our products in elegant gift packaging (additional cost of EUR 3.50 per item for individual packaging).	Our products can be sent in attractive gift packaging (the price of each individual packaging is an additional EUR 3.50 per item).

The final step in our analysis of AI-generated translations of commercial correspondence was to perform the ease-of-read tests: the Flesch-Kincaid test and the Gunning Fog Index. The results are given in Table 12 per each AI-powered tool.

Table 12. Ease-of-read results per AI-driven tool (translated letters).

Ease-of-read test	**AI-driven tool**		
	ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	**Gemini 2.0 Flash**
Flesch-Kincaid	49.51	52.42	56.80
Gunning Fog Index	15.65	14.83	14.44

The data in Table 12 show that ChatGPT-produced texts are overall the most difficult to read among the three translations, and Gemini 2.0 Flash-generated ones are the easiest to read. This was also evident from the translated sentences, as shown by the following examples (Table 13).

Table 13. Examples of sentences – ease-of-read.

Ker bi radi ohranili dobro sodelovanje z vašim podjetjem, vas prosimo, da sprejmete naše iskreno opravičilo.		
ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	Gemini 2.0 Flash
As we value our cooperation with your company, we sincerely hope you will accept our apology.	As we wish to maintain good business relations with your company, we ask that you accept our sincere apology.	As we would like to maintain good cooperation with your company, please accept our sincere apology.
Prosimo, da nam posredujete vaš aktualni izvozni cenik in pogoje dobave ter plačilne pogoje.		
ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	Gemini 2.0 Flash
We would appreciate it if you could provide us with your latest export price list, along with your delivery and payment terms.	Please provide us with your current export price list, delivery terms, and payment conditions.	Please send us your current export price list and delivery terms, as well as payment terms.

These examples show differences in the levels of formality, with ChatGPT-created translations being the most formal, i.e. "we sincerely hope you will accept our apology" and "we would appreciate it if you could provide us with" and the Gemini 2.0 Flash-created translations being the most colloquial, i.e. "please accept our sincere apology", and "please send us", although they still exhibit politeness and some level of formality.

4.2 Using AI-Driven Tools to Draft Commercial Correspondence in English Based on Prompts in Slovenian

The second research question addressed the ability of ChatGPT, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash to draft commercial correspondence in English based on instructions in Slovenian. The tools were not given highly structured instructions as with the letters for research question 1. Instead, they were given comprehensive guidelines including the main pieces of information to be included in the letters (this information did not precisely follow

the standard steps as prescribed by the advice on constructing commercial correspondence letters).

Structure-wise, we found no major differences between the outputs by the three AI tools. As a rule, they all followed the typical 'opening – body – conclusion' format. Also, all three AI tools put the content of the letters in separate paragraphs, which further contributed to the overall visual presentation. The only major difference regarding structure was the use of bullet points to make the letters easier to read.

Regarding the levels of formality, the use of passive voice and nominalisation, we concluded that the letters drafted by the AI-driven tools practically did not differ from those translated by the same tools. That is, the levels of formality that were evident in translation per each AI-driven tool were also reflected in the drafted letters. This leads us to conclude that, within the scope of this study, these three AI-driven tools are very consistent in their output. Given the limitations of this paper, we do not include specific translations in this section.

As with research question one, we also performed the ease-of-read tests on the AI-generated letters, the Flesch-Kincaid test and the Gunning Fog Index (see Table 14 for the results).

Table 14. Ease-of-read results per AI-driven tool (drafted letters).

Ease-of-read test	AI-driven tool		
	ChatGPT	Claude 3.5 Sonnet	Gemini 2.0 Flash
Flesch-Kincaid	38.33	30.10	45.59
Gunning Fog Index	16.62	19.39	14.63

The data in Table 14 above show that all three tools produced texts that are difficult to read based on the two ease-of-read tests, the most difficult texts being produced by Claude 3.5 Sonnet, followed by ChatGPT and Gemini 2.0 Flash. Compared to the results in Table 12, where the texts were translations, it shows that Claude 3.5 Sonnet produced the most complex text. Based on these scores, it might be assumed, within the scope of this pilot study, that Gemini 2.0 Flash and ChatGPT are more suitable for drafting commercial correspondence in line with the plain English guidelines and the trends regarding Business English as a *lingua franca*. This may also lead to the assumption that Gemini 2.0 Flash is the most suitable for the translation of commercial correspondence because it generates clear and easy-to-read texts in a rather neutral professional tone, avoiding excessive formality. That is, it seems to produce texts that prioritize readability, without compromising on accuracy or professionalism. All this, however, cannot be generalized beyond the scope of our pilot study.

Based on the ease-of-read scores for translations and drafted letters alike, we conclude that ChatGPT's outputs are the most formal and may be more suited to some legal contexts. But for everyday commercial correspondence between buyers and sellers, especially since in the international business context most are not native speakers of English, the less formal outputs given by Gemini 2.0 Flash in particular would be the right balance between the formality of commercial correspondence and the need for clear and easily readable commercial correspondence letters in English. As for Claude 3.5 Sonnet, its main strength lies in the fact that it offers the option of selecting the style of its outputs, i.e., normal, concise, explanatory

and formal, thus enabling the user to adapt the message's level of formality depending on its receiver and its purpose. This, of course, can also be achieved with the other two AI-driven tools provided that the prompts include instructions on the level of formality. Linking our findings with the self-description by these AI-driven tools regarding their capabilities, our pilot study indicated that all three can translate and draft various forms of sentences and commercial correspondence letters from Slovenian into English, while maintaining a clear and professional tone and following standard formatting conventions.

5 Conclusion

This aim of our small-scale pilot study was to test how selected AI-powered tools can be used for translating and drafting commercial correspondence letters. To this end, we chose three freely available tools, ChatGPT, Claude 3.5 Sonnet and Gemini 2.0 Flash, and analysed the similarities and differences in their outputs.

Our findings have shown that all three AI tools performed their tasks in accordance with general guidelines and principles of writing commercial correspondence in English in international business contexts. They accurately translated or drafted the messages in the given letters or instructions in Slovenian since the tone in the outputs was largely appropriate and ranged from a more formal to a more neutral level of formality. As these tools are based on LLMs (large language models), their outputs are also grammatically accurate. In short, they are consistent in tone and style, and they follow the overall norms of commercial correspondence as a specific text genre. These AI-driven tools essentially have similar core capabilities when it comes to commercial correspondence in terms of professional communication styles in line with genre conventions as presented in English commercial correspondence textbooks and guidelines.

Among the limitations of our pilot study is its scope, since it was based on a limited number of texts. Furthermore, we focused on a few selected elements for analysis, we chose not to analyse the terminological accuracy of translated specialized terms, and the tools we used may not consider the reader's professional knowledge and background or familiarity with the topic of the message (readability test issue). Regarding the linguistic capabilities of AI-driven tools for commercial correspondence translation and drafting, this pilot study did not test them from the perspective of other cultural contexts. Also, we did not focus on specialized terminology, as this would require a different study design and focus. In addition, we included only basic prompts, which might need to be upgraded. Despite these limitations, our qualitative pilot study brings valuable insight into the potential of AI application in professional written communication. Our findings will be of interest to both linguists and professional users alike, as they provide a glimpse into the capabilities of AI-driven tools for translating or drafting professional texts. The findings could also have implications for teaching language and language for specific purposes to translation trainees (cf. Koletnik, Kirbiš, and Zupan 2023) and English language students (cf. Tica and Krsmanović 2024). Although a small-scale study, it adds to the knowledge of how AI, as a fast-evolving phenomenon, can facilitate written business communication, yet we need to bear in mind that despite its benefits, the outputs still need human oversight and potential revision – as was stated by the AI tools themselves when prompted to describe their abilities.

A natural progression beyond this study could stem from its very limitations. Since AI-driven tools are evolving rapidly, new and more extensive studies are encouraged and should be performed by including a larger body of texts in the analysis, comparing the outputs after refining the prompts (e.g., by using a more neutral tone, or adapting the output to British English or American English standards), testing the AI-driven tools' translation capabilities regarding other professional text types and text genres, or focusing on the accuracy of terminology translation, the correct use of modal verbs, or even the grammatical accuracy of AI-driven tools' outputs. Also, any specific aspect of genre conventions (the use of passive voice or other structures) could be analysed in greater detail.

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