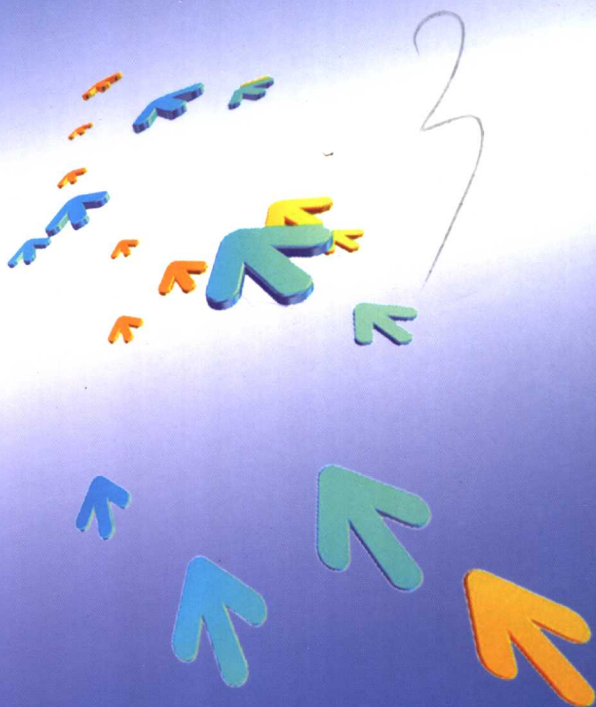


Practical
English
for
Foreign
Trade
Communication

实用外贸英语函电

廖瑛
主编

(第二版)



华中科技大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

《实用外贸英语函电》一书共分 18 个单元,前 3 个单元分别介绍商业书信的写作,电报、电传、传真和电子邮件文稿的草拟和翻译。从第四单元到十八单元,按外贸业务进展的不同环节和内容进行编排,从建立业务关系、询价、报盘、还盘、订货、接受、签约、包装、装运、支付、结算、保险、商检、索赔、代理到几项特殊贸易形式和国际技术经济合作,各单元包括业务介绍、信函示例、常用句型、生词、词语及注释、练习等 5 个部分。

本书融英语语言知识和外贸业务知识为一体,内容新颖、表达流畅、重点突出、实用性强,可作高等学校外贸、外经、国际会计、国际金融、酒店与宾馆管理、国际旅游和企业管理等专业的教材,对从事外经、外贸、外事及合资企业工作的业务人员、翻译人员和公关文秘人员有很强的实用价值。

Preface of Revised Edition

修订版前言

《实用外贸英语函电》一书自 1995 年 8 月出版以来,深受读者青睐,全国许多高等院校长期用作国际贸易、国际金融、国际会计、国际经济技术合作、国际旅游、国际商务英语、经贸英语、外企管理、酒店与宾馆管理等专业的教材。外经贸行业的业务人员、翻译工作者、公关文秘人员视其为帮助自己提高商贸英语信函和电报、电传文稿写作能力的良师益友。

但是,时间已跨进了一个崭新的世纪,中国加入了 WTO。为了培养“语言 + 专业”的复合型人才,以适应全球经济一体化和我国对外贸易发展的需要,我们应出版社的邀请,在很大范围内对本书进行了修订:

一、我们认为本书不仅要传授国际贸易知识,而且更应致力于传授外贸信函的写作知识,指导读者如何进行外贸信函、买卖合同、传真和 E-mail 文稿的写作。因此,修订版增编了“商务英语信函的语言特点和写作方法”作为第一单元,第二单元为商务英语书信格式,并在第九单元(接受与签约)补充了商务合同的结构和写作方法。

二、随着科学的发展与进步,信息传递方式由原来的电报、电传发展到传真和电子邮件(E-mail),因此修订本删除了原版各单元中的电报、电传样例。但由于电报、电传文稿中长期使用的缩写词、复合词在外贸信函、合同、单证和文件中,形成了使用频繁的国际贸易术语,因此,我们将原版中的第二单元(电报)、第三单元(电传)的语言文字部分和新增补的传真及电子邮件合并编为第三单元(商务英语电报、电传、传真和电子邮件文稿的写作)。

三、对原版中各单元中的“概述”作了相应的修改和补充,去掉了原版中陈旧过时的部分,增加了新内容使其更加准确、规范,

与现行外贸实务相符合,并且增加了数十封新信函样例和商务文件。

四、根据《2000年国际贸易术语解释通则》,修正了各单元中的概述与信函中出现的某些贸易术语和组织名称,使之符合现行国际贸易的要求。

五、我们对本书的姊妹篇《实用外贸英语函电——译文、练习答案及常见错误辨析》一书也同样进行了相应的修订,使之能与本书配套发行。

此次修订工作仍由原主编湖南大学外国语学院国际商务英语系研究生导师廖瑛教授主笔,参加修订工作的还有湖南衡阳师范学院的陈楚君老师和国防科大的禹金林副教授。

本书在组编、出版和修订过程中,得到了华中科技大学出版社和湖南大学教材科的大力支持与协助,并受到了全国广大读者的关爱和青睐,我们在此深表谢意!

由于时间仓促,加之我们水平有限,书中不妥之处仍然在所难免,欢迎广大读者和同行专家不吝赐教。

廖 瑛

2003年7月于湖南大学外国语学院

Preface of Original Edition

原版前言

《实用外贸英语函电》是由湖南大学国际商学院组织编写,湖南财经学院、湖南商学院、长沙铁道学院、湘潭师范学院和吉首大学等参编的《商务英语系列教程》之一,是国际贸易交往中必不可少的手段和工具。全书共分 18 个单元。前 3 个单元分别介绍商业书信的撰写,电报、电传文稿的草拟和破译方法;第四单元到十八单元,按外贸业务的不同环节和内容进行编排,从建立业务关系、询价、报盘、还盘、订货、接受、签约、包装、装运、支付、结算、保险、商检、索赔、代理到几项特殊贸易形式和经济技术合作。各单元包括 Introduction (概述)、Specimen Letters、Telegrams and Telexes (信函、电报、电传样例)、Sentences Commonly Used (常用句型)、Words, Expressions & Notes(生词、词语和注释)和 Exercises (练习)5 个部分。信函、电报、电传样例、常用句型的译文和全书的练习答案均编排在本书的姊妹篇《实用外贸英语函电——译文、练习答案及常见错误辨析》一书中,以供读者参考。本书融英语语言知识和外贸业务知识为一体,内容新颖、表达流畅、重点突出、实用性强。可作高等学校外贸专业、外经专业、国际会计专业、国际金融专业、酒店与宾馆管理专业、国际旅游专业、企业管理等专业的教科书。同时,对从事外经、外贸、外事及合资企业工作的业务人员、翻译人员、公关人员等有较强的实用价值。

本书由湖南大学国际商学院廖瑛主编,湖南财经学院肖曼君任副主编。参加本书编写的有:廖瑛(第一单元的三分之一,第二单元,第三单元,第四单元,第八单元,第十单元的二分之一,第十六单元的二分之一,第十七单元的二分之一,第十八单元和各单元的电报、电传样例);肖曼君(第一单元的三分之一,第五单

元,第九单元的二分之一,第十一单元,第十二单元,第十三单元,第十四单元,第十五单元和第十七单元的二分之一);何高大(第四单元的练习,第十六单元的二分之一);余民顺(第十单元的二分之一);张跃军(第一单元的三分之一和第九单元的二分之一);全英(第六单元);周勤(第七单元);岳福新(第八单元的练习)。

华中理工大学出版社和湖南大学教材科对本书的组编与出版工作给予了大力支持,在此表示衷心的感谢。由于作者水平有限,书中缺点错误在所难免,欢迎同行专家和广大读者不吝赐教,批评指正。

廖 璞

于湖南大学国际商学院

1995年3月

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Unit One

Features in Language and Ways in Writings of Business English Letters 商务英语信函的语言特点和写作方法

1. Introduction (概述)

In today's highly developed and toughly competitive society, communication between individuals and groups is becoming increasingly frequent and important. It serves to pass on information, to express ideas or to exchange feelings.

Generally speaking, the function of a business letter is to get or to convey business information, to make or to accept an offer, to deal with various businesses.

2. Quality to the Writer (作者应具备的素质)

Practical English writing does not call for flowery language because it isn't literary works, but it is required to express your own views accurately in a plain language that is very clear and is readily understood, and catch the readers' attention and persuade the readers into believing what you said. If practical English writing is to achieve its purpose, the writer should have

- 1) a good command of standard modern English,
- 2) all kinds of social knowledge,
- 3) knowledge of technical terms,
- 4) knowledge of social psychology,
- 5) knowledge of various profession, such as secretary, management, business theory and practice, etc.

3. Preparation before Writing (写作前的准备工作)

As a writer, you should make preparations for your creative works before taking up the pen. Generally speaking, the following should be paid attention to:

1) Studying your reader's interest, that is, thinking of what your reader thinks.

To achieve this, you should "put yourself in your reader's shoes" and try to imagine how he will feel about what you write. Ask yourself constantly, "what are his needs, his wishes, his interests, his problems to be solved, and how can I meet his requirements."

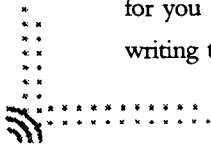
2) Planning what you will write and writing effectively.

In order to plan what you write better and to write effectively, you should draft an outline before writing.

Every language has its own features. For Chinese students, English is a foreign language. It is not easy for them to effectively and accurately use proper words and sentence structures in writing. Some of them tend to write in Chinese first, then translate what they wrote into English. But in this way the expression will appear to be stiff and awkward. So you'd better learn to think and write directly in English and draft an outline before writing. For example, if you are to write a letter claiming for the losses of your ordered computers occurred in transportation, firstly you should draft an outline like this:

- (1) Goods arrived
 - (2) Losses found on reinspection
 - (3) Reasons leading to the losses
 - (4) Claiming compensation
 - (5) Solution suggested
- 3) Deciding to adopt the proper layout, tone and style.

As stated before, there are many kinds of practical English writing. Different kind of practical English writing has different layout, tone and style, which will be discussed in relevant chapters and sections. If you are a writer, it is very important for you to well know and properly adopt the relevant layout, tone and style in your writing that you can express yourself appropriately.



4) Writing naturally and sincerely.

Writing naturally and sincerely is to reveal your true feelings between lines, make sure that what you write would sound sincere and natural and try to avoid the affected words and florid style with little content. Besides, as a writer, you should also learn to use polite language and be considerate to your readers.

4. Writing Principles and Language Features (应用文的写作原则和语言特点)

Practical English writing, especially, business English writing, is the model of practical language. Its main function is to inform or remind counterpart or public of a certain thing or public affairs and to ask the counterpart or public to act according to the rules stimulated in what is written. Such a practical writing has its specific language style, that is, the essential language features which are called the seven "Cs": completeness, concreteness, clearness, conciseness, courtesy, consideration and correctness.

1) Completeness(完整)

A practical English writing is very successful and highly effective well only when it contains all the necessary information to the readers (the counterpart or the public) and answers all the questions and requirements put forward by the readers. See to it that all the matters are stated or discussed, and all the questions are answered or explained. For example, when the buyers write a letter to accept an offer that the sellers made, the buyers must state his conditions of acceptance in detail or quote the evidences of the offer, such as quotation sheets, letters, advertisements etc., because such a letter is in fact of the function of a business contract and will be binding on both parties after receipt by the sellers. The following is a good example:



Gentlemen:

Re: Computers

With reference to your letter of May 8, we are pleased to accept your offer of 200 sets of ICM-4 computers as per your Quotation Sheet No.9/04/2000.

Please go ahead and apply for your Export Licence.

As soon as we are informed of the number of the Export Licence, we will open the L/C by fax.

Yours truly

...

Incompleteness of the practical writing, such as business letters, will lead to the counterpart's unfavorable impression toward your firm. He may give up the deal if other firms can provide him with all the information needed, or if he would not take the trouble inquiring once again. Sometimes, incompleteness will even cause unnecessary disputes and lawsuit.

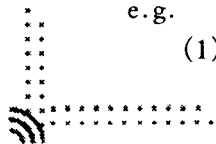
In order to verify the completeness of what you write, five "Ws" (who, what, where, when and why) and one "h" (how) should be used. For example, if what you write is a letter of order, you should make it clear that who wants to order, what he wants, when he needs the goods, where the goods to be sent and how payment will be made. If some special requirements should be put forward, you would explain why you would do so.

2) Concreteness(具体)

Any kind of practical English writing should be specific, definite and persuasive instead of being vague, general and abstract. In a general and vague message, everything seems to be mentioned but actually few are fully expounded. The readers only have a vague impression of what you try to achieve, so he or she is at a loss how to react upon reading your message. Especially for contracts, agreements, announcements, notices, found, poster, advertisements and business letters calling for specific reply, as offer, inquiring trade terms, etc., concreteness must be always stressed. Using specific facts, figures and time can help write concretely and vividly.

e.g.

(1) We wish to confirm our telex dispatched yesterday.



Like *today* and *tomorrow*, the word *yesterday* is a vague and general concept. It is not suitable to be used here. The sentence should be changed into:

We confirm our telex of July 2nd, 2000.

(2) The Universal Trading Company is *one of our big buyers*.

The phrase “*one of our big buyers*” is too general and vague, and it can't express degrees of “big”. If you want to give the readers a definite concept, the sentence should be changed into:

The Universal Trading Company placed over U. S. \$ 2,000,000 worth of business with us each year.

(3) **We have received with thanks your check, the amount has been placed to your credit.**

Here, you should point out the number and the amount of the check, even the use of the money, so as to make a specific and definite impression on the opposite party. The sentence should be rewritten as the following:

We have received with thanks your check No. 248 for US \$ 200,000, in payment of our commission, which has been placed to your credit.

(4) **These brakes stop a car within a short distance.**

This is from an advertisement introducing the property of the products. It is too general and vague. What type of the brakes? How long does “a short distance” mean? What car will be stopped with the brakes? All of these are not explained clearly. The sentence should be rewritten as the following:

These type SMO2 power brakes can stop a 4-ton car traveling 65 miles an hour within 300 feet.

However, not on all occasions do the practical English writing try to be concrete and specific. Sometimes vagueness is preferred. If accurate facts or figures are not available, you have to be general. Sometimes for “strategic” consideration, the writer should try to avoid being too definite. For example, if you are a greenhand in a certain line and want to purchase some commodities, naturally you want to compare the qualities, prices, etc. of the products from different manufactures. If you are a seller, you may open tentative offers to several products. The offers you deliver are without engagement. They should not be too concrete, but more flexible.



3) Clearness(清楚)

Clearness is one of the main language features of the practical English writing. The so-called “clearness” is to make sure that what you write is so clear that it can't be misunderstood. You should first have a concrete idea of what you are going to achieve in your mind. Only a clear mind can express clearly. At first, what is equally or more important is to get yourself understand it, so it is advisable to write on — not above or below — the level of the reader's understanding and to make the reader understand the main points without thinking deeply. To do these, as a writer, you should:

(1) Pay attention to choosing the concise and accessible expressions and trying to avoid using the words, and sentences equivocal in meaning. e. g.

① **As to the steamer sailing from Shanghai to Los Angeles, we have bimonthly direct services.**

The basic meaning of this sentence is “we have direct sailings from Shanghai to Los Angeles”, but the word “bimonthly” has two meanings, one of which is “twice a month” and the other of which is “once every two months”. You'd better not use the word like “bimonthly” of double meanings, but use the words that can express your idea clearly as the following:

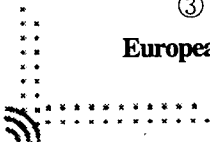
- a. We have a direct sailing from Shanghai to Los Angeles every two months.
- b. We have a direct sailing from Shanghai to Los Angeles semimonthly.
- c. We have two direct sailings every month form Shanghai to Los Angeles.

② **Fluctuation in the freight after the date of sale will be for the buyers account.**

“Fluctuation in the freight” means “the rise and fall of the freight”. It's impossible for the buyers to bear it. The buyer can only bear the increasing or decreasing part of the freight. So the above sentence should rewritten as the following:

- a. Any increase in freight after the date of sale will be for the buyer's account.
- b. Any increase or decrease in the freight after the date of sale will be for the buyer's account.

③ **Cotton and silk blouses made in China enjoy a good market in the European market.**



In this sentence, the same word “market” has two meanings — sale (销路) and marketplace (市场). In practical English writing, especially in business letters, contracts, agreements sales confirmation, etc., the writer should try to avoid repeating the use of the same word such as “market” which has two different meanings in a sentence. So the above sentence should be rewritten as the following:

Cotton and silk blouses made in China sell best in the European market.

(2) Pay attention to the position of the modifier. The same modifier will lead to different implication and function when it is put in different position of the sentence, e. g.

① **We can supply 50 tons of the item only.**

② **We can supply only 50 tons of the item.**

In the first sentence, “only” is used to qualify “the item”, meaning the supply is only this item, not other one. But in the second sentence, “only” is used to qualify “50 tons”, meaning the supply is only 50 tons.

Now, compare the following two pairs of sentences and pay attention to their difference:

③ The L/C must reach us not later than September 1st for arranging shipment.

④ The L/C must reach us for arranging shipment not later than September 1st.

⑤ Please let us know what you wish us to do about this matter as soon as possible.

⑥ Please let us know as soon as possible what you wish us to do about this matter.

(3) Pay attention to the object of the pronoun and the relations between the relative pronoun and the antecedent.

Whom or what the pronoun refers to and what is the relation between the relative pronoun and the antecedent? These must be paid attention to. Generally speaking the pronoun and relative pronoun are used to refer to the nearest noun from themselves and should be identical in person and number with the noun referred to or modified. e. g.

① **They informed Messrs Smith & Brown that they would receive a reply in a few days.**

In this sentence, what does the second “they” refer to, the subject “They” of the main clause or the “Messrs Smith & Brown”? This can't be explained clearly. It

