



ENGLISH  
FOR  
BUSINESS

周邦友 主编

商务英语

東華大學出版社

ENGLISH  
FOR  
BUSINESS

商务英语

商务英语

王健 主编

# English for Business

## 商务英语

主 编 周邦友

副主编 刘道影 徐 托

東華大學出版社

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

商务英语/周邦友主编. —上海: 东华大学出版社, 2011. 8

ISBN 978-7-81111-835-3

I. ①商... II. ①周... III. ①商务—英语  
IV. ①H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2011)第 007064 号

策 划: 鲁 可

责任编辑: 曹晓虹

封面设计: 刘 洋

## English for Business

### 商务英语

周邦友 主编

东华大学出版社 出版

(上海市延安西路 1882 号 邮政编码: 200051)

电话: 021-62193056 62373056

新华书店上海发行所发行 江苏省南通印刷总厂有限公司印刷

开本: 710×1000 1/16 印张: 15.75 字数: 329 千字

2011 年 8 月第 1 版 2011 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-81111-835-3/H·323

定价: 27.90 元

# Preface

There is no denying that English is the international language of commerce. “In the four centuries since the time of Shakespeare, English has changed from a relatively unimportant European language with perhaps four million speakers into an international language used in every continent by approximately eight hundred million people.” (Loreto Todd & Ian Hancock, *International English Usage*, 1986) The success of English in its function as an international auxiliary language has often been viewed as a measure of its adequacy for international business.

As the register of English appropriate to commerce and industry, Business English, or English for Business, has started from the self — study course in business English for intermediate level business people wanting to use English at work. Nowadays, some observers regard international business English as a neutral and pragmatic means of communication among non — native users of the language. For instance, in a European context, English for Business is the sort of English a Norwegian would use when trying to communicate with an Italian in Belgium. In other words, it is a lingua franca used between those for whom English is not their native language, but the only common language in which any sort of communication possible. Traditionally, much business English teaching concentrates on communication skills: meetings, presentation, telephoning, and social skills in a business context. This book, however, attempts to achieve a certain breakthrough in this sort of writing.

Such breakthrough is embodied in the organization of this book. It consists of altogether eight parts, which, we think, are all related to communication in business contexts. The first part offers some remarks on English for Business, dealing with the features of business English and the significance of business communication. The next five parts respectively relate to business letters,

business plans, contracts, advertising, and trademarks with examples and illustrations. Part Seven presents commonly — used documents in international business on sample basis. In the last part, the authors point out that it is important for people doing international business to raise their cross—cultural awareness.

The idea for this book emerged from a series of business — related courses offered to English majors by Zhou formerly at Anhui University and by all the authors currently at Nantong University. The book has been almost six years in the writing. Sections of it have once been destroyed by computer virus and by thunder the other time and have been rewritten. Certainly enough, the intention of the writing is definite, and it is intended to give users of English a general understanding of what English for Business is and to direct them to communicate efficiently and effectively when doing business internationally.

Actually, no book is completely exhaustive, and the same is true of this book. English for Business, as stated above, involves some other communication skills, like minutes, agenda, presentation, proposal, report, etc. For all these subject matters, we hope that students or readers refer to *Practical English Writing* (3rd edition, 2010) by Bangyou Zhou, published by Donghua University Press.

Many people — friends, colleagues, former students — have helped us in our work on this book. Among them are Ye Yuan, Mingsheng Zhu, Xiaoyong Zhao, Lingli Zeng, Beili Zhang, Zongping Hu, Qingjing Zhu, Xuan Shi, Yahua Guan, Ping Lu, and Fang Yang. In particular, we owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Edward Golden for providing many of the reference materials. We are also indebted to all the publishers and authors listed in the bibliography for their generosity and courtesy. Above all, special thanks should be given to Ms. Xiaohong Cao, the editor of this book, for her constant encouragement and continuous support, which makes this book possible to come out.

Honestly, this book is not written by scholars, and this means that any blame for its shortcomings can be placed firmly on the shoulders of the authors alone. Suggestions and comments are cordially welcome.

*Zhou, Bangyou*



目 录  
CONTENTS

**Part 1 General Remarks on English for Business**

<b>1.1</b>	<b>Definition of English for Business</b>	/1
<b>1.2</b>	<b>A Briefing on English for Business</b>	/2
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Specialist Vocabulary</b>	/5
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Syntax and Figure of Speech</b>	/7
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Principles of Business Writings</b>	/7
1.5.1	Clearness	/8
1.5.2	Conciseness	/9
1.5.3	Correctness	/9
1.5.4	Courtesy	/10
1.5.5	Concreteness	/11
1.5.6	Consideration	/12
1.5.7	Completeness	/13
<b>1.6</b>	<b>Choice of English Varieties</b>	/14
<b>1.7</b>	<b>Tips for Business Writings</b>	/16

**Part 2 Business Letters**

<b>2.1</b>	<b>Planning a Business Letter</b>	/18
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Business Letter Format</b>	/19
<b>2.3</b>	<b>Lay-out of a Business Letter</b>	/20
2.3.1	Letterhead	/20
2.3.2	Lay-out	/21
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Language of Business Letters</b>	/32
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Different Types of Business Letters</b>	/33
2.5.1	Establishing Business Relations	/33
2.5.2	Inquiries and Replies	/36

2. 5. 3 Quotations, Offers and Counter Offers	/43
2. 5. 4 Orders	/47
2. 5. 5 Payment	/49
2. 5. 6 Packing	/51
2. 5. 7 Insurance	/53
2. 5. 8 Shipment	/54
2. 5. 9 Acknowledgements	/56
2. 5. 10 Complaint and Reply	/57

### **Part 3 Business Plan**

<b>3. 1 The Language Features</b>	/60
<b>3. 2 The Elements of a Business Plan</b>	/61
<b>3. 3 How to Write</b>	/63
<b>3. 4 Samples</b>	/63

### **Part 4 Contract**

<b>4. 1 The Language Features</b>	/107
<b>4. 2 The Elements of a Contract</b>	/108
<b>4. 3 How to Write</b>	/109
<b>4. 4 Samples</b>	/110

### **Part 5 Advertising**

<b>5. 1 Lexical Features</b>	/142
5. 1. 1 Simple and Informal	/142
5. 1. 2 Misspelling and Coinage	/142
5. 1. 3 Loanwords	/143
5. 1. 4 Contraction	/144
5. 1. 5 Use of Verbs	/144
5. 1. 6 Use of Adjectives	/145
5. 1. 7 Compound Words	/146
5. 1. 8 Pronouns	/147
<b>5. 2 Figures of Speech</b>	/148
5. 2. 1 Personification	/148
5. 2. 2 Puns	/149



5. 2. 3 Alliteration	/150
5. 2. 4 Repetition	/151
5. 2. 5 Analogy	/152
5. 2. 6 Rhyme	/152
5. 2. 7 Hyperbole	/153
5. 2. 8 Parallelism	/154
5. 2. 9 Paradox	/155
5. 2. 10 Omission	/155
<b>5. 3 Fuzziness</b>	<b>/155</b>
<b>5. 4 Weasel Words</b>	<b>/156</b>
<b>5. 5 Syntactical Features</b>	<b>/158</b>
5. 5. 1 Simple Sentences	/158
5. 5. 2 Narrative Sentences	/159
5. 5. 3 Imperative Sentences	/160
5. 5. 4 Interrogative Sentences	/160
5. 5. 5 Elliptical Sentences	/161
5. 5. 6 Disjunctive Clauses	/163
5. 5. 7 Use of the Active Voice	/163
5. 5. 8 Negative Sentences	/164
5. 5. 9 Use of the Present Tense	/165
<b>5. 6 Discourse Features</b>	<b>/165</b>
<b>5. 7 Visual Effects of Body Copies</b>	<b>/168</b>

## **Part 6 Trademark Creation**

<b>6. 1 Definitions of Trademark</b>	<b>/174</b>
<b>6. 2 Attributes of Trademark</b>	<b>/176</b>
<b>6. 3 Categories of Trademark</b>	<b>/177</b>
6. 3. 1 Fanciful Trademark — Strong	/177
6. 3. 2 Arbitrary Trademark — Strong	/178
6. 3. 3 Suggestive Trademark — Fairly Strong	/178
6. 3. 4 Descriptive Trademark — Not Strong	/179
6. 3. 5 Generic Trademark — Weak and Not Protectable	/179
<b>6. 4 Strategies for Trademark Creation</b>	<b>/180</b>
6. 4. 1 Choose a Connotative Term	/180

6. 4. 2	Use an Acronym	/180
6. 4. 3	Invent a Term	/181
6. 4. 4	Borrow a Foreign Term	/181
6. 4. 5	Select a Term from Related Areas	/182
<b>6. 5</b>	<b>Guidelines for Trademark Creation</b>	<b>/182</b>
6. 5. 1	Avoid Trademarks That Cannot Be Registered	/183
6. 5. 2	Use Fabricated Words	/183
6. 5. 3	Try Animal or Plant Names	/184
6. 5. 4	Make the First Trademark Word Distinctive	/184
<b>6. 6</b>	<b>Methods of Creating a Trademark</b>	<b>/184</b>
6. 6. 1	Clipping	/184
6. 6. 2	Blending	/185
6. 6. 3	Initialism	/185
6. 6. 4	Acronym	/185
6. 6. 5	Compounding	/186
6. 6. 6	Affixing	/186
6. 6. 7	Homophones	/186
6. 6. 8	Echoism	/186
6. 6. 9	Reversal	/187
<b>6. 7</b>	<b>Value of Trademark</b>	<b>/187</b>
<b>6. 8</b>	<b>Protection of Trademarks</b>	<b>/188</b>
6. 8. 1	Use Trademarks as Adjectives	/188
6. 8. 2	Consider Using Distinctive Type	/189
6. 8. 3	Use Trademark Notice	/190
6. 8. 4	Don't Change a Trademark	/190
6. 8. 5	Don't Use Trademarks in the Possessive Case	/190
6. 8. 6	Don't Use Trademarks in the Plural Form	/190
<b>6. 9</b>	<b>Comparison between English and Chinese Trademarks</b>	<b>/191</b>
6. 9. 1	Similarities Between English and Chinese Trademarks	/191
6. 9. 2	Differences Between English and Chinese Trademarks	/195

## Part 7 International Trade Documentation

<b>7. 1</b>	<b>Quotation Sheet</b>	<b>/200</b>
<b>7. 2</b>	<b>Letter of Credit</b>	<b>/201</b>



<b>7.3</b>	<b>Bill of Exchange</b>	/203
<b>7.4</b>	<b>Proforma Invoice</b>	/204
<b>7.5</b>	<b>Commercial Invoice</b>	/205
<b>7.6</b>	<b>Packing List</b>	/207
<b>7.7</b>	<b>Bill of Lading</b>	/208
<b>7.8</b>	<b>Certificate of Origin</b>	/210
<b>7.9</b>	<b>Weight Memo</b>	/211
<b>7.10</b>	<b>Inspection Certificate</b>	/212
<b>7.11</b>	<b>Shipping Advice</b>	/215
<b>7.12</b>	<b>Insurance Policy</b>	/216
<b>7.13</b>	<b>Relevant Certificates</b>	/218

## **Part 8 Cross-Cultural Awareness**

<b>8.1</b>	<b>Cultural Contrast</b>	/223
	8.1.1 Individual vs. Group	/223
	8.1.2 Low Power-Distance vs. High Power-Distance	/225
	8.1.3 High Uncertainty-Avoidance vs. Low Uncertainty-Avoidance	/225
	8.1.4 Masculinity vs. Femininity	/226
	8.1.5 Low-Context vs. High-Context	/227
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Cultural Differences</b>	/228
	8.2.1 Time	/229
	8.2.2 Space	/231
	8.2.3 Religion	/232
	8.2.4 Feature	/233
	8.2.5 Color	/234
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Culture Shock</b>	/234
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Cultural Confluence</b>	/236
<b>8.5</b>	<b>Tips for Cross-Cultural Communication</b>	/238
	Bibliography	/241

## **Part 1**

# **General Remarks on English for Business**

In foreign language teaching, there developed a number of courses referred to as English for specific purposes. For adult students, many courses have been designed to teach the language of a specific subject area. For example, engineers might take a course in English for engineering. Doctors might study the English needed to talk with patients and write prescriptions. This approach appeals to groups interested in specialized fields of study because the classes are directly tied to their area of interest.

The same is true for at-school students. Here in China, we can find that some courses as English for specific purposes are offered to students at universities and colleges, such as English for Science and Technology, English for Chemistry, English for Tourism, and English for Business. There are many courses of this sort, but we can just name a few.

### **1.1 Definition of English for Business**

As its name suggests, English for Business is the register of English appropriate to commerce and industry, and as well the name for training courses in business usages, especially when it is offered to the learners who learn it as a foreign language. For example, BBC Business English is a self-study course in business English for intermediate level business people wanting to use English at work.

“English for Business, according to the textbook *International Business English* (Leo Jones and Richard Alexander; 1994), is not a special language — it is simply English used in business situations.” It is so called because English is the universal language used among business people in different countries for communication. As we know, improving communication skills is the first step toward success in one’s education, career and life.

Some linguists regard international business English as a neutral, pragmatic means of communication among non-native users of the language. For instance, Andrew Fenner has labeled it IBL (international business language): “In a European context, IBL is the sort of English a Norwegian would use when trying to communicate with an Italian in Belgium.” In other words, English for Business is a lingua franca used between those for whom English is not their native language, but the only common language in which any sort of communication is possible.

Then, questions about Business English arise. Is business language normal? Does business language sometimes break the rules of normal language? These questions relate to the place of business language in the context of the readers’ general knowledge of language. And both the writers and readers will presume that the language is English. In order to answer them, we must have some conception of what is meant by “normal language.” The English language has evolved to have many different kinds of functionality, each of which corresponds to different situations and styles of use. From an analytic point of view, it seems to make most sense to understand “normal language” to include the variety of styles of English that mature writers and readers control. This will form the backdrop of everyday language in its many functions, against which we can view business language.



## 1.2 A Briefing on English for Business

As far as English for Business is concerned, it involves many subject areas which are related to business situations; business letters, advertisements,



trademarks, contracts, business plans, documentation, and even cross-cultural communications.

Let's take advertising language for example.

If one looks around in literature on advertising, or searches on the Internet, it is not uncommon to find claims to the effect that advertising breaks the rules of normal language and language use. However, from the perspective of a professional linguist, few of these claims really seem to be supportable. Now, with the exception of linguists, few people have any reason to pay close attention to the way that language is actually used in its speech community, for a wide range of communicative functions. Like many aspects of human beings and human behavior, our unconscious knowledge of language is much greater than our conscious knowledge of it, so the facts about language that are immediately accessible to the average person only cover part of what the language is and how it is used.

Collect some text from advertisements that you have found. Can you find any examples of words, phrases or constructions that are truly different from the various varieties that you encounter on a regular basis? These varieties may include informal spoken language between close friends to technical and scientific descriptions (more likely to be written), and everything in between. Doubtless, not all of the text you find will be standard English, but is any of it not English at all? In doing this exercise, it may be that you will learn more about what creative possibilities your language allows, rather than how much advertising goes beyond the boundaries of that language.

In an interesting coincidence which illustrates the point very clearly, the Dreamweaver® program used to construct the website has the command "Indent" to indent a paragraph. In the command menu, the command after this one is "Outdent", which makes a paragraph wider. Neither of us has seen this word before, yet we can understand the meaning of the word "Outdent" in the context, and certainly does not reject it as "non-English."

This is not to say that any random new word can be generated for the author's purposes in any context. The "Outdent" example above is presented

in a very clear context, which makes apprehending its usage and meaning quite clear. We generally find that novel words presented in an advertisement have the same supporting context; they may be new, but they are not “out of the blue.”

In English for Business, therefore, non-English words and expressions are acceptable, for its meaning is clear based on the context. Here are more examples:

The *orangemostest* drink in the world.

The *refreshes* cigarettes.

Re-tuned. Re-conditioned. Heck, it's been *re-everything-ed*.

Another example is trademark word.

Needless to say, a powerful aspect of product marketing is the product name itself. Consequently, choosing a name for a product is very important, and companies which specialize in naming products find their services in high demand.

Lexicon puts names into one of five categories; constructed, real, invented, classical and compressed. The name *PowerBook* falls into the “constructed” category, for it is constructed from words that already exist; FedEx is similar, constructed from parts. Lexicon considers a name like *Apple*, a typical noun, to be “real”, along with slightly extended examples like *Wheaties*; a word that does not formerly exist, like *Pentium*, is “invented”, along with *Kodak* or *Lexus*. The last two categories are “classical”, such as *Merus* or *Athena*, and “compressed,” like *Optima* (optimal without the I).

Different name styles have clearly emerged over the years, exemplified in the evolution of high-tech brand names. In the 1980s, names were pseudo-scientific, full of *q*'s, *x*'s and *z*'s (think *Xerox*). In the 1990s, names went to the other extreme, exuding more personality but less description (think *Yahoo!*). In the later 1990s, names became more descriptive but less original with the use of what naming company NameLab calls “technoid nouns” — words with parts like *com*, *net*, *tech*, *power*, *data* and *web*.

The trademark — Youngor — of shirts made in Ningbo, China, when it is





used in business, has its meaning of the state of being younger. The same is true of other trademarks: Panasonic, Sony, Konka, OIC, AT&T, Royalstar, Uneda, Timex, Rolex, Marlboro, Avis, Freon, Teflon, etc. They are vividly and effectively used and widely accepted in business situations, though they are non-English words. Yet, it is for sure they are English for Business expressions, for they convey information on a communicative basis.

English for Business is the study of language fundamentals. These fundamentals include the basic knowledge of business writing, trademark creation, advertising language, and so on. Because business people must express their ideas clearly and correctly, such language basics are critical.

In terms of business documents, they carry two kinds of messages — verbal messages and nonverbal messages. Verbal messages are conveyed by the words chosen to express the writer's ideas. Nonverbal messages are conveyed largely by the appearance of a document. By making a comparison of an assortment of letters and memos from various organizations, one will notice immediately that some look more attractive and more professional than others. The nonverbal message of professional-looking documents suggests that such documents were sent by people who are careful, informed, intelligent, and successful. Understandably, people are more likely to take seriously documents that use attractive stationery and professional formatting techniques.

Obviously, English for Business is simply the language used in business contexts and a division of English for Specific Purposes. It possesses the unique background of society and language and connotation. Therefore, English for Business has its own features in application.

### 1.3 Specialist Vocabulary

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, specialist vocabulary was seen to be what distinguished Business English from General English, and there was a preoccupation with business-related words and terminology. (M. Ellis & C. Johnson, 1994: 3) It is a phenomenon which deserves attention that there are a



large number of specialist words and expressions in English for Business. Such words and expressions are chiefly used in business situations as *demurrage* (charge applied to shipping vehicles when they are held by the consignor or the consignee for an excessive amount of time), *indemnification* (compensation for loss or damage already suffered), *premium* (amount that an insured is charged, reflecting an expectation of loss or risk), *counteroffer* (rejection of an offer to buy or sell with a simultaneous substitute offer), *force majeure* (an unavoidable cause of delay or of failure to perform a contract obligation on time), *promissory note* (negotiable instrument wherein the maker agrees to pay a specific sum at a definite time).

Besides, specialist vocabulary in English for Business is characterized by its context-based abbreviations. Here are examples:

*CIF* (cost, insurance and freight)

*FOB* (free on board)

*WPA* (with particular average)

*a/c, A/C* (account)

*B/L* (bill of lading)

*B4* (before)

*There4* (therefore)

*BTW* (by the way)

Another characteristic of specialist words of English for Business is the frequent use of paired words. By paired words, we mean two synonyms are used together. Among these paired words are two adjectives used together, such as *null and void*, *sole and exclusive*, *effective and efficient*, *final and conclusive*, *true and correct*; two nouns used together, such as *force and effect*, *terms and conditions*, *type and kind*, *power and authority*; two verbs used together, such as *furnish and provide*, *accept and assume*, *request and demand*, *bind and obligate*, *relieve and discharge*, *finish and complete*; two prepositions used together, such as *by and between*, *by and under*, *on and after*, *from and after*, *on or before*, *under and subject to*; two conjunctions used together, such as *and/or*.