

# 商貿英文函電研究

*Study on English Business Correspondence*

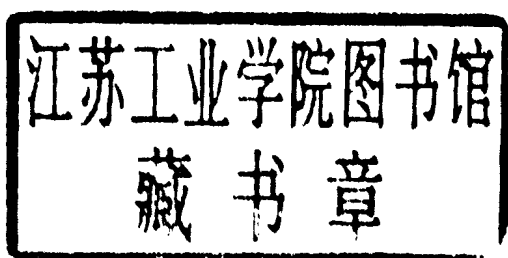
孙帮俊 李 妍 杨 阳 编著

東北林業大學出版社

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## 前 言

自从中国加入世贸组织,融入全球经济以来,中国与世界各国的对外交往日益频繁,对外贸易突飞猛进,取得了令人瞩目的伟大成就。作为国际商贸活动沟通的重要方式,英文信函发挥着越来越重要的作用。商贸英文函电是指在国际贸易和商务交往中应用的信函、传真和电子邮件,是国际贸易买卖双方用于联系业务、沟通商情、咨询答复的主要途径和联系手段。它代表了贸易双方各自的利益和 Company 形象,反映出双方所处的不同的社会、经济和文化背景。商贸英文函电不同于私人信函,具有更正式的格式特点和结构要求,其写作质量直接影响到发信人给收信人留下的第一印象,甚至影响到交易是否会取得成功。

本书将英文函电内容作为一种语言现象,运用大量实例,从文体学、语用学、词汇学等层面对其进行了比较深入系统的研究。分析了商务函电在国际商贸环境中的实际应用情况,揭示出商贸英文函电的结构特征和语言特色,探讨了其在建立业务关系、询盘及答复、报盘还盘、订单及其执行、支付、包装、保险、装运、申诉和索赔以及业务代理等国际商贸各个具体业务流程中应采取的写作方法和策略,对于保证国际商贸活动的顺利开展具有积极的现实意义。

本书共十七章。孙帮俊编写第一、二、四、八、九、十、十一章约 10 万字。李妍编写第五、六、十二、十三、十四章约 9 万字。杨阳编写第三、七、十五、十六、十七章约 9 万字。由孙帮俊通读定稿。

本书编著者具有多年的海外贸易工作经验,且一直从事外贸函电、语言学、词汇学等课程的教学工作,对英文函电有切身的体验。书中的样信均来自于实际业务,大多采用齐头式的格式,并严格按照国际上通行的书信撰写规范,保留了信头、签名、附件标记等部分,以使读者能一览全貌,对信函的结构、要件有更深入的认识。

本书内容丰富,语言规范,可供英文函电的研究者以及高校外贸英语专业、国际贸易专业的本科生、研究生等广大读者参考使用。

在本书的写作过程中,作者得到黑龙江科技学院外语系领导孙永强教授

和麻秀丽教授的大力支持和帮助，吕鑫、莎娜、韩杰华、梁玲玲为本书提供了大量资料，在此表示深深的谢意。

在本书的编写过程中，编者参考了国内外大量的书籍和资料，在此向各位作者致敬并一并表示衷心的感谢。

由于时间仓促和编者水平有限等原因，书中难免存在不妥之处，敬请广大读者批评指正。

编者  
2009年2月

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# Chapter 1    Layout and Styles of Business Letters

Business correspondence serves as an important factor in making the world of business run smoothly and efficiently. The correspondence may take many forms. The business letter is the most common form and it is the most frequently used business communication. To make it effective and productive as possible, one must know and follow the conventional, established forms for it.

## 1. 1    The Placement of Different Parts in a Business Letter

Basically, a business letter is made up of 7 parts :

(1) The heading, which includes the sender's name and postal address. Most companies may use writing paper with printed letterheads, together with their logos and contacts such as telephone number, fax number, telex number, e-mail address and web site.

(2) Date. The date is an independent element, although sometimes it is regarded as a part of the letterhead. It is usually added several lines below the bottom of the heading. The date is vital because it functions as the evidence of an agreement or contract in case of any disputes. It is written in the order of day/month/year, with no abbreviation, such as 10 September, 2008, in the British style or in the order of month/day/year, such as September 10, 2008, following the American style.

(3) Inside name and address. This includes the name, title, and complete address of the person to whom the letter is sent. It usually consists of 3-5 lines and begins one line below the date.

(4) The salutation, which is a greeting to the recipient. The family name is needed only, with a courtesy title before it, e. g. Dear Mr. Smith. If a letter is not addressed to a specific person, "Dear Sirs" is commonly used, while now in the

United States, "Ladies and Gentlemen" is widely used.

(5) The body of the letter, which is the central part, sometimes with a subject line. The message is separated into paragraphs with one line space between them. If the letter is too long to fit into one page, the message can be continued onto a second page, which should carry at least two lines. On the second page, the name of the addressee, the page number and the date should be typed

(6) The complimentary close, which indicates the end of a letter in a polite way. It should be suitable for the occasion and reflect the writer's relationship with the addressee. "Yours faithfully" is used in letters beginning with "Dear Sirs" and "Yours sincerely" is used if the addressee is a specific person.

(7) The signature, which usually includes the job title of the writer and 4-5 line space should be left for signature. The writer's name should be signed by hand first, and then typed by typewriter again to make it legible. If the company name is added, it should be in capital letters and placed immediately below the signature. If signed on behalf of the sender, "p. p." is used before the name, which means "per procuracionem".

Besides, some special notations may appear on a letter, providing references to any relevant information: the names of any persons who are to receive copies of the letter, an enclosure notation if additional material is sent with the letter, the initials of the secretary who typed the letter, and so on.

Reference initials are included on almost all business letters, although they are not required. These reference initials can identify the writer of the letter and the person who typed it. If the writer and the typist are the same person, the initials are usually omitted. The reference initials are applied mainly for the benefit of the writer and are used for administrative purposes in the office. The most commonly used style looks like this: SBJ/wxl. The initials of the signer come first, in all capital letters, followed by the initials of the typist, in lowercase letters. These reference initials are typed exactly along the level of the left margin.

Enclosure notations simply indicate that material other than the letter itself is enclosed. Such additional material may be catalogues, a sample-cutting booklet or copies of contract. The notation is not used unless such additional material is actually mailed in the same envelope as the letter. The enclosure notation is helpful to both the writer and the recipient of the letter. The writer is reminded to check if the necessary enclosures are mailed with the letter; the recipient is altered to refer

to this material the enclosure notation indicates.

Carbon copy notations will be used if a copy of a letter is sent to people other than the recipient. This notation indicates the name of each person to whom a duplicate of the letter is being sent. A carbon copy notation is shown by using the initials "cc", either in capital letters or in lower case followed with a colon. It is typed under the enclosure notation. If there is no enclosure notation, the carbon copy notation follows the reference initials. Only the names of the people who are to receive copies are listed without their job titles.

## 1.2 Styles for Business Letters

There are several different typing styles used in business letters. The typing style for a business letter deals with the placement of the various components of the letter. No one typing style for a business letter is considered "right" or "wrong". A business company may adopt one of the styles to make all of the company's correspondence take on a standard look. Three basic styles for commercial correspondence are commonly used. They are the full block style, the block style and the semi-block style.

(1) The *Full Block Style*. With this style, every component of the business letter begins at the left margin. Because no tab stops are needed to type a letter in this style, it can be typed more quickly. Obviously, it can raise working efficiency in the office to a large extent. However, many people do not like this style, because they think it cold and off-balanced with all parts of the letter on the left.

(2) The *Block Style*. It is the typing arrangement chosen by most businesses for their letters. With this style, the inside name and address, the salutation, all paragraphs and any special notations begin at the left margin. Only the date line and the complimentary close start at the center of the paper, along with the signature. It provides balance to the page and makes the letter look very nice.

(3) The *Semi-block Style*. This style differs in only one respect from the block style—all paragraphs are indented either five or six spaces. So it is also called the indented style. When subject lines are used with this style, they are also indented to be in conformity with the paragraph indentation.

The specimen letters of different styles are shown as follows:

(1) Full Block Style for a Business Letter

***Harbin Tianyi Import & Export Co. , Ltd.***

108 Xi Da Zhi Avenue, Harbin 150001, China  
Tel: (0451) 53669011 Fax: (0451) 53669012

20 March, 2007

Messrs. J. Brown & Co. , Ltd.  
2345 Eastcheap  
London, E. C. 3  
U. K.

Dear Sirs ,

Re: Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Your firm has been recommended to us by Messrs John Morris & Co. , with whom we have done business for many years.

We have learnt that you specialize in the export of Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, which fall within the business scope of our company. We are pleased to establish direct business relations with you.

To give you a general idea of the various goods available for export, we are enclosing a brochure and our latest catalogue for your reference and hope that you would contact us if you find any item is interesting to you.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

***Wang Lin***

Wang Lin, Manager  
Import & Export Department

WL/wxl

Encl. (2):

1. a brochure
2. a catalogue

2. Block Style for a Business Letter

***Harbin Tianyi Import & Export Co., Ltd.***

108 Xi Da Zhi Avenue, Harbin 150001, China  
Tel: (0451) 53669011 Fax: (0451) 53669012

20 March, 2007

Messrs. J. Brown & Co., Ltd.  
2345 Eastcheap  
London, E. C. 3  
U. K.

Dear Sirs,

Re: Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Your firm has been recommended to us by Messrs John Morris & Co., with whom we have done business for many years.

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To give you a general idea of the various goods available for export, we are enclosing a brochure and our latest catalogue for your reference and hope that you would contact us if you find any item is interesting to you.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

***Wang Lin***

Wang Lin, Manager  
Import & Export Department

WL/wxl

Encl. (2):

1. a brochure
2. a catalogue

3. Semi-block Style for a Business Letter

***Harbin Tianyi Import & Export Co. , Ltd.***

108 Xi Da Zhi Avenue, Harbin 150001, China  
Tel: (0451) 53669011 Fax: (0451) 53669012

20 March , 2008

Messrs. J. Brown & Co. , Ltd.  
2345 Eastcheap  
London, E. C. 3  
U. K.

Dear Sirs ,

Re: Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

Your firm has been recommended to us by Messrs John Morris & Co. , with whom we have done business for many years.

We have learnt that you specialize in the export of Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals, which fall within the business scope of our company. We are pleased to establish direct business relations with you.

To give you a general idea of the various goods available for export, we are enclosing a brochure and our latest catalogue for your reference and hope that you would contact us if you find any item is interesting to you.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

***Wang Lin***

Wang Lin, Manager  
Import & Export Department

WL/wxl

Encl. (2):

1. a brochure
2. a catalogue

## Chapter 2 The Linguistic Features of English Business Correspondence

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.1 The Structure of Business Correspondences

As illustrated in Chapter one, a business correspondence usually consists of seven basic parts. They are letterhead, dateline, inside name and address, salutation, body of the letter, complimentary close, and the writer's signature as well as the title. They are placed from the top of the letter paper to the bottom, and should remain in convention. All the writers have to follow this tradition and comply with the placement of these parts when drawing up a business correspondence, and no parts are allowed to omit. Besides these seven basic parts, there are still some extra parts of less significance, such as reference number, attention line, subject line, identification mark, enclosure and carbon copy (cc). These extra parts may not be included in each correspondence. They are optional and whether to adopt them depends on actual situations.

#### 2.1.2 The Styles of Business Correspondences

A sample business letter is shown here to illustrate the basic parts of a business letter and the layout. It is in full block style and each part is shown in brackets. As mentioned above, a business letter may not be necessarily composed of all of these parts.

**Harbin Tianyi Import & Export Co., Ltd.**

(1) 108 Xi Da Zhi Avenue, Harbin 150001, China Tel/ Fax: (0451) 53669011/2

(2) 20 March, 2007

(3) Messrs. J. Brown & Co. , Ltd.

2345 Eastcheap

London, E. C. 3

U. K.

(4) Dear Sirs ,

(5) Re: Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals

(6) Your firm has been recommended to us by Messrs John Morris & Co. , with whom we have done business for many years. We have learnt that you specialize in the export of Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals , which fall within the business scope of our company. We are pleased to establish direct business relations with you. To give you a general idea of the various goods available for export , we are enclosing

a brochure and our latest catalogue for your reference and hope that you would contact us if you find any item is interesting to you.

We are looking forward to your early reply.

(7) Yours faithfully ,

(8) Wang Lin

*Wang Lin , Manager*

Import & Export Department

(9) WL/sxl

(10) Encl. (2) :

1. a brochure

2. a catalogue

In this example, part (1) is the letterhead; part (2) is the dateline; part (3) is the inside name and address; part (4) is the salutation; part (5) is the caption; part (6) is the body of the letter; part (7) is the complimentary close; part (8) is the signature; part (9) is the identification mark; part (10) is the enclosure notation. In writing business correspondence, writers may select the style they think the most suitable for their use in the letters or faxes. There are several different styles that are acceptable in writing business correspondence. They are full block style, block style, simplified modified block. Americans prefer to take the full block style, because it saves time and trouble when typing. But this style looks a bit cold and stiff. Some people even criticize that it appears to be not balanced, while in e-mail writing, this style is very popular. Usually, most people



choose the modified style, because it looks nice and balanced. Now this style has become the main stream when people layout a business letter or fax.

## 2.2 An Overview of Business Correspondence

### 2.2.1 The Important Means of Communication in Business

Writing in business is always the day – to – day matter and the essential part of work that people have to deal with in daily business activities. English business correspondence is considered as a very effective carrier of communications and accounts for about 90 percent of all written correspondences according to statistics, because communications are needed to be made in written forms so as to make things clear and record the whole process of business definitely. A letter or a fax serves as the link between the two parties in a transaction. With the help of it, business relations will be established, products will be sold, complaints and claims will be settled, and the transaction will be concluded. Any correspondence concerning a transaction can be surrendered as the evidence in court. A business letter with a reference number and a date can also tell precisely what really took place at that time. This is why an oral agreement or contract made by two sides is usually confirmed in subsequent letters or faxes. Only with the confirmation by means of correspondence can the agreement or contract have the binding force on both sides in the transaction.

### 2.2.2 The Classification of Business Correspondences

Correspondence actually is the act of communication by means of letters, telexes, faxes and e – mails. Business correspondence refers to the correspondence used in business. It has become the most frequently used means of communication by incorporate organizations to have contact with their clients and customers.

Since business correspondence take on different forms, it can also be classified from various aspects. According to illocutionary functions categorized by Leech (1983), business letters are classified into four kinds: competitive letters, convivial letters, collaborative letters and conflictive letters. According to the contents, business letters can be categorized into the following ones: request letters, letters answering requests, claim and settlement letters, status enquiry and collection let-