

英语商务信函写作

Communicative Letter Writing for Exporters

常玉田摇著

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使摇用摇说摇明

本书的教学对象是高等院校英语专业和经贸类各专业本科高年级、MBA 课程、双学位等学生,以及报考国际商务专业人员职业资格考试、外销员从业资格考试的人士;本书可以作为教科书,也可作为参考书使用。

本书着眼于英语语言应用能力的提高阶段,致力于提高国际商务活动中使用英语文字进行沟通的效率和交际效果。具体道理和操作细节请见各章各节。

本书的例句采用了三种处理方式。第一种予以详细解释,放在各章各节理论阐述后面,用以说明要点,便于作者与读者沟通。第二种排在上述内容之后,每个例句之前标记了 poor,改进的版本标记为 better 等,但是没有解释,留待教师课堂上讲解或者师生共同就章节主题展开讨论。部分例句提供了两种或两种以上的修改版本,一般而言是后一种比前一种好。有时候仅仅比较不同的行文,即可发现问题所在。第三种布置在各节后面的 Classroom Workouts 小标题之下作为练习,供读者学习各章节之后学以致用。

本书对例句的使用还需要说明的一点是:绝大多数的例句,除了改正错别字、数词用法、标点符号等之外,均保持了搜集时的“原生态”。这种编排有利于读者对号入座,发现自己在相关主题方面的问题。希望这样的处理方式能够鼓励师生讨论,有助于调动读者参与的积极性,训练读者及时识别每个例句的所有问题。

本书对课文和例信的语法和词法问题没有提供解释及注释,而把使用课文和例信的主动权交还给教师,同时鼓励学生多用印刷版词典。这个查阅和预习的过程正是学习的过程,既学翻译也学英语,乃真正掌握、学以致用之必由之路。

本书的练习的比例极低,目的是为教师留出使用自有材料的余地;提供练习的功利用途是为了调节各章的长度,所以各章练习数量不等;全部练习都没有提供参考答案。

这两种编排方式,即省略词汇解释和压缩练习比例,可以在篇幅不变的条件下增大本书的信息容量,同时便于教师灵活掌握。

常玉田

2005 年 11 月

于对外经济贸易大学

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

Preface

Business letters are a powerful tool of communication by any standards. According to Sheryl Lindsell Roberts, — author of *Business Letter Writing, A Handbook for Office Professionals*, business letters account for about 90 percent of all written correspondence. A well written letter can mean advancement for your career, profit for your company and satisfaction for your clients or customers. (See more on this proposition in the first chapter.)

The target readers of this textbook are people planning to work for or are already working at export operations in Chinese companies and Sino-foreign joint ventures. These people can be tertiary students or employees wishing to whet their hands on English application to what they practice.

Course orientation

Looking ahead from my mental framework I had while writing this textbook, China might in a decade or two have plenty of bilingual professionals making it successfully in the global market. If you want to join them, “effective communication” should be the “comparative advantage” that you have to acquire.

This textbook is a one-man’s effort to innovate, at least in an attempt to do so, and to update, domestic instruction on how to communicate in English to an international audience on messages initiated in Chinese. But it is not Chinese-English translation; it is writing in English based on Chinese sources, which is an art of efficiency and proficiency that requires slow acquisition and deliberate application.

That academic orientation requires a careful merger of communication theories and business practice. Partly as a result of a private nurture for such a balanced combination, this textbook is, at least in an attempt to be, technique-based, language-based, and content-based, all in one.

Language is a tool that works for content, and content must work for a purpose, which is often what efficiency is meant. Language only helps deliver corporate decisions and

operational messages. That's why this book dedicates so much space to what the boss is saying when considering how to revise example sentences or messages. That's why even the discussions in chapters devoted to language issues are interwoven with semantic focuses in each mini-case. The right policy is to incorporate language with content.

Meanwhile, the author believes that a writing course for business should focus on the writing and use of the language. Such a course should not, and cannot, usurp business courses that are instructed either in English or in Chinese. Nor can it substitute first-hand experience in a real-time business, which involves more variables and irregularities than a classroom standee can expectantly imagine.

Course positioning

This course, "Advanced Business Writing in English", is one of the fundamental modules in the Business Communication in English 400 series (course code 407 at the University of International Business and Economics for English majors and 422 for others). However, in view of student performances as they are, and coordinated in an international framework, a code serial of 350 Business Writing in English should methinks have been more appropriate in the curricula positioning.

Business people have to produce many different types of English writing at the workplace with an international lineup, such as booklet, brochure, catalogue, fact sheet, flyer, folder, letter, mail, manual, memo, note, package, pamphlet, poster, profiles, proposal, report, sales letters or promotional and publicity material, and other literature. Of all these and more types of writing, this course covers only correspondence, namely letters, including emails, mostly.

And they are the letters expected by an international player — this book excludes transnational and multinational companies, who write the letters of the to-be-defined nature and utility far less frequently.

Textbook objectives

Despite its official title of Advanced Business Writing in English, this course has long shifted its concentration from varied types on to the writing of business letters since the hours assigned to it were reduced first from six to four and then to two. "English Letter Writing" is therefore more exact.

Communicative Letter Writing for Exporters is different in that it has been designed to

offer students more than the course description states. It aims at helping Chinese students to acquire English writing capacities in a business environment with too many “international” dimensions and variables. At the same time it is intended to assist Chinese students to improve their English communication skills in the written channel in the export and import business sector working in a Chinese environment. Here again there is a built-in combination.

The textbook briefs on concepts in and guidelines for major types of business correspondence used in an export firm based in China, discusses appropriate organizations and formats of specific business letters written during different phases of the export and import process, and explains how would-be employees can present more effective messages on behalf of their bosses, colleagues whose English is inadequate, and partners reading and writing English as the medium.

Book organization

The textbook is presented in four modules with 24 chapters, each focusing on a core of the course statement that incorporates author orientation and textbook objectives.

The first module, from Chapter 1 to 6, is for reading out of class. Students are expected to finish reading these chapters two or three weeks into a semester. Evaluation of reading accomplishment will be based on workout performance on later modules. That said, it is really at the discretion of the instructor to decide on actual choice. Some teachers, for example, may find (some of) the chapters relevant and fundamental to effective writing.

The second module starts with Chapter 7 and rounds up with Chapter 16, each of which focuses on one of the eight C’s techniques for effective communication. Their accomplished (or not) learning will be reflected on student performance on and submissions of content subjects in coming weekly exercises.

The third includes Chapters 17 – 21, lecturing on composing strategies by dealing with routine, positive and negative messages used in such utilities as requests, inquiries, orders, and complaints and claims. Parts of the exposition are related to persuasion and goodwill letters.

The fourth module samples usual written messages in inquiries, orders, and complaints and claims, three of the major procedures in exporting business.

Echoing the “merger” or “combination” mission statements, we can say that about two thirds of the discussions in this textbook are about concepts, principles, techniques and

strategies, and the rest is about specific document productions in export.

In summing up from another viewpoint, the early chapters provide guidelines for achieving effective communication and train on practical skills, while the remaining chapters explain the sample letters that are intended for specific processes targeted on a definite overseas audience, with a purpose of driving at efficiency.

Some of the topics and exemplary sentences appear therefore repetitious, though few are actual repeats. This is inevitable for a book of the current organization.

Features outlined

The western communication notions are digested and developed, albeit to different extents in different sectors. I did not quote or copy; I read and digested and then combined with local content. The innovated ideas and innovative methodologies are discussed in detail and illustrated with examples.

A business letter has five elements: the message or content, organization, language, mechanics, and format or layouts. Centering on an integrated application of the five essentials, this textbook frequently refers to business communication practice in the real time communication.

It is easy to write a letter, but it is not to write a business letter with an effective message. The text author does not state so in every section or mini case, but adoptions and adaptations do represent an edge. The explanation passages and sentence cases will hopefully enable students to “experience” second-handedly “on-the-job” scenarios business people are exposed to every workday.

The author aims at a balanced combination of content and language by incorporating western communication ideas while shunning the parts that work for domestic selling in lands where English is spoken, and by adopting Chinese messages while shedding stuff that seems to dominate textbooks of this kind — stuff that has outlived the planned economy assuming the Chinese exporter always the winner in all simulated cases.

Summing up the trio positioning of the course, this textbook and the organization as it is, we may have a clear coordination of them all:

It is a professional book in a series;

Business in an international context;

Vocational tips and simulated cases.

此为试读, 需要完整, 请访问: www.ertongbook.com

To the teachers using this book

Lecturers might prepare their own notes before explaining difficult sentences both in the exposition and in the example paragraphs. You can explain key words and phrases, illustrating sentence structure and other usages of the language, as if in an intensive-reading course. This procedure covers both my own exposition passages and the examples cited.

For classroom use, you are advised to apply what is in the expository passages in the fronts of chapters and sections to the Classroom Workouts entries. You can organize discussion of assignments, soliciting student contributions to the workouts, and comparing and generating your own solutions to the problems. And you are welcome to design your own assignments as supplements to the exercises.

To the students using this book

In every phase or stage of life, we learn to get prepared for the next. We learn to qualify as a college admittee at high school. We learn what is expected of us as a postgraduate while reading to get admitted. We learn what is expected of us as a qualified professional while reading for a degree. At the end of every major phase we receive a certificate for qualification of that period, which is in the meanwhile a token for entering the next stage. You are not reading this textbook for a course; you'd read it for a successful start on your international communication.

Students are encouraged to use dictionaries in their preview of the texts. They are expected to consult big dictionaries for words and expressions related to the topics, fending off lexical obstacles in comprehending the textbook.

Most errors and mistakes found in student work could have been eliminated before submission if only a dictionary had been consulted. Few students today are slow or dumb, but most students in my experience at UIBE in the past years seemed lazy. By this ugly word the author refers to the absence of evidence in student work for using a dictionary. After all, we are foreigners to English. When we do not have an English-speaking wife or hubby or other partner(s) nearby to lend a hand, a dictionary will be the best lover we can resort to. By using a dictionary frequently, we learn English quicker and more efficiently.

Secondly, you are advised to do some careful reading of texts in a course, gaining some real input. And by that I mean real reading, finishing the act, and incorporating what he or she reads into their daily dealings in the workplace. A lack for many and an inadequacy for many more others is the ability to combine and streamline what they are supposed to have

picked up in their school and early-colleague courses.

Then, do your homework — do by yourself, one by one. It is most important to remember that the best way of learning is by doing. Make sure that you read the appropriate parts of the textbook before doing a specific drill. Make sure you attempt all of the Classroom Workouts exercises before asking for answers.

Seeing the same thing from another perspective, many a teacher would give you a decent grade when you hand in a piece of homework amounting to bulk — a full page or two or three, in dense texts of handwritten paragraphs. But your potential employers won't be comforted with sheer bulk. They tend to value efficiency, which we know comes from only more carefulness to details, substantive and substantial. Effective communication between you and the target reader of your letter spells a successful transaction or a failure of a deal. In this context, care with basics becomes essential and instrumental.

You can familiarize yourself in a few weeks with the major procedures in export business, but it takes years for most Chinese employees to shape up their English use. If you bear this modest advice in mind, you'd benefit by being "on alert" to language issues and problems, if any, in letters you receive or write.

It is possible to acquire this competence if you read carefully, fully understand and conscientiously apply the principles and tips contained in this textbook.

True, few of us can hope to change the world of Non-Professionalism overnight, or over years, for that matter. But it will be professionally sound when I extend this piece of advice: you'll benefit to get ready in the orientation of trying to gain a comparative advantage by becoming more effective in your communication for business purposes in an international setting.

It is time we all did it, now that the daily movements of market forces are pushing all of us to the frontline of the global market swarmed with genuine professionals.

It is time we all did it, if you want to become better bosses in a decade or two, seeing that most Chinese products sell at low prices partly as a result of low efficiency in writing English letters.

Chang Yutian

UIBE

March 2006

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Chapter 1

沟通方式 Media Selection

Objectives

After you have studied this chapter, you should be able to

- define “communication” and other essential terms,
- explain the nature of communication in business,
- be aware of the external communication use of letters,
- clarify on the objectives of business communication,
- know barriers to communication in international business, and
- know the strengths and weaknesses of different media.

This initial chapter briefs on a number of concepts commonly encountered in application cases as well as in discussions on English communication theories. Together with the next, this chapter tries to prepare a framework of coordinates for the exposition, justification, and illustration in later chapters.

Business communication today is a complex environment where operators have to meet the needs of partners and satisfy every consumer, and where economic globalization is expanding fast with enormous scale and far-reaching waves of effect. Partly as a result, a giant multinational may have invested billions of US dollars on its communication infrastructure. A middling corporation can be moderate if the figure runs to the millions. Even a small company shored up by only ten employees will not be able to continue to

survive without efficiency through better communication in its management, production, distribution, marketing, society, and other areas. Most organizations also spend generously on training employees in effective business communication skills, including those in the handling and application of communications equipment and devices.

But more important is the “soft” components in the corporate communication — the people initiating a communication process, those with whom we exchange opinions, those whom we hate to see but have to see every workday, and those who have to be told to fulfill a periodic service.

Next to the human factor there are the subtle issues of flexible approach and systematic methodology — we can afford to be flexible in doing something, but at the same time we have to do it by the rules. This involves creativity in expression while sticking to established formats, i. e. how we compose messages, how to dispatch information, and how to make it cost efficient. It is to these “soft” and therefore flexible phases in the process that this book is dedicated.

1. 商务沟通概述 **Business Communication**

Communication is the transmission of a message between at least two parties in a two-way process. As a process it involves the message itself, the form we arrange it in, and the way we adopt for its transmission. One of the parties sends a message and receives one or more responses to it from others.

The message being sent and received can be facts, ideas, emotions, and other information types. Communication can be either verbal or nonverbal. Through communication, people cover quickly distances at relatively small costs, saving the time that has to be spent traveling to the places where the other party is.

Business communication is a process through which the parties involved establish partnerships and or relationships, negotiate terms, strike deals, and complete transactions. Every company, big or small, communicates with many different firms and companies.

Meanwhile, as discussed in the next section, communication includes downward, upward, and horizontal flows. Since this book is designed to focus on the external horizontal flow of corporate communication, the topics we are going to discuss will be the writing skills for the letters sent to companies and individuals outside the company for business purposes.

A business letter is written communication you send on behalf of your company to