

# Writing Skills and Application Strategies of Business English Correspondence in Chinese and Foreign Trade under the New Situation

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**Abstract:** Under the new circumstances, the "one belt and one road" initiative has been deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, and the opening to the outside world has become more and more thorough. China's ties with other countries have become more and more closely linked, and international trade has become increasingly frequent. Business English correspondence, as an important medium of communication between foreign trade parties, plays an irreplaceable role in foreign trade practice. How to improve the level and effect of business English correspondence writing and translation has become a prominent problem in foreign trade practice. On the basis of defining the connotation of business English correspondence, this paper elaborates on the methods and techniques of business English correspondence writing and translation and the application strategies in foreign trade practice.

**Key words:** foreign trade business English correspondence skills

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## I. Introduction

On November 5 - 10, 2018, the first China International Import Exposition was held in Shanghai. At this trade event, Chinese President Xi Jinping reiterated: "China's economy is a sea, not a small pond." "China's open door will not be closed, it will only open wider and wider!"<sup>1</sup>

This means that with the progress of global economic integration and the in-depth implementation of the "one belt and one way" initiative, trade between China and other economies and other countries will become more frequent and frequent. In this context, how to find a convenient and effective means to communicate and communicate between the two sides is particularly necessary. As far as most international trade activities are concerned, business correspondence has emerged as a special style of business foreign language, and English, as the international common language, has become the preferred language for business correspondence and telecommunications, because both sides of the trade are located in different regions or even time zones and their business activities are mainly carried out by means of letters and e-mails. In fact, business English correspondence has become one of the most effective means of international economic and trade exchanges in the world, and the most conventional carrier of business exchanges between different countries. Business between the two sides of the trade English correspondence carries on the exchange and the communication, finally completes the commercial cooperation. It can be said that in a sense, the quality of business English correspondence has become an important factor determining the success of trade activities, and it is an indispensable and important component of today's international trade.

## II. Connotation of Business English Correspondence

English is an international language, and most information transfer in international trade is done in English. As an important branch of English (ESP, English for Specific Purpose), business English is the general term for the English language varieties adopted by the members of the business community in business activities. Business English is different from common English, but it is not a special language, but a specific application of English in business context. It is characterized by high professionalism, obvious cultural factors, concise and clear language and strong formality.

Business English correspondence is an important way of foreign trade communication. Its meaning is based on foreign trade knowledge, business English as the carrier, modern means of communication as the medium, with the aid of foreign trade language to express e-mail, that is, relying on business English to transmit

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<sup>1</sup> Xi Jinping: Building an Innovative and Inclusive Open World Economy Together - Speech at the First China International Import Expo, November 5, 2018.

relevant trade information. Business English letters and telecommunications have many carriers, such as paper letters, faxes, e-mails, etc. The main contents are professional international trade terms and abbreviations, including inquiry, payment, claims, claims settlement, Trade Arbitration and so on. According to the specific functions, business English correspondence includes letter processing, contact letter, invitation letter, reply letter, congratulations letter, consolation letter and so on. As we all know, international trade activities are manifested in the exchange and transmission of goods and information across countries, cultures and languages. In this context, business English correspondence involves business negotiation, cooperation intention, contract content, contract disputes, and cooperation between the two sides of the trade. It runs through foreign trade. Practice has always been one of the key factors that affect the successful completion of trade activities.

### **III. Main Features of Business English Correspondence**

#### **3.1 Involving a large number of professional vocabulary**

Business English is widely used in many industries and fields. Therefore, in the process of use, a large number of professional vocabulary will be involved, but these vocabulary are not covered in ordinary English. Under the development and promotion of the economy, Business English Correspondence is widely used in foreign trade. Its professional English vocabulary has not been reduced, but has been applied in a growing state. The most significant feature of professional English vocabulary in business English correspondence is that it brings certain difficulties to learners and users in the process of business negotiation and communication.

#### **3.2 Abbreviations are used frequently**

Business English, as a language tool with a working nature in foreign trade, will greatly improve work efficiency in the process of information communication and transmission. However, in this process, one of the most characteristic features of work efficiency is the frequent use of abbreviations. Abbreviations are in the work of foreign trade, often appear in fixed sentence patterns or abbreviate their phrases. In this way, not only can there be significant advantages in writing and verbal expression, but also English language business. The characteristics of the economy are fully reflected and meet the English environment in foreign trade.

#### **3.3 Rich cultural connotation**

Business English correspondence is used in foreign trade by people from different countries, different nationalities and different cultural backgrounds, which makes business English rich in cultural characteristics. For example, in some countries, the application of business English mainly relies on advertising, which has certain simplicity; some countries use the official document, which is a very formal and rigorous form. However, the emergence of these forms can, to a large extent, reflect the cultural features behind them. In the process of applying business English, business English is applied in combination with different developments and cultural development backgrounds. In this process, not only to achieve good business cooperation, but also to establish friendly exchanges, to meet the needs of each other to the maximum extent, and to properly use business English and business English correspondence, in order to play business English correspondence in foreign trade The real value.

### **IV. The Role of Business English Correspondence in Foreign Trade**

#### **4.1 Effectively reduce input costs**

In the past foreign trade, the input cost occupied a high proportion, which led to many enterprises in China suffering tremendous pressure and had to transfer international trade to the country. According to the relevant information, business English correspondence can not only effectively save the time spent in the process of foreign trade, but also reduce the input cost to the maximum extent. Business English correspondence plays an important role in the cost of the enterprise. The use of business English correspondence enables the two parties to clarify the content they want to express in the shortest time, promote communication, and increase opportunities for cooperation. With the help of business English correspondence, both parties can negotiate and express the price of the product.

#### **4.2 Increase work efficiency**

Based on the business English correspondence, the two parties use the relatively standard electronic files and bills to receive and transmit the content to be transmitted in the form of electronic files. This will not only improve the effectiveness of the work in foreign trade activities, but also reasonably grasp the business opportunities. Ensure the accuracy of the contract and related documents. This makes the two parties more convenient in the review process and improves the quality of cooperation and work efficiency. Based on the past foreign trade methods, before the two sides started cooperation and discussion, it is necessary to send professional talents to conduct face-to-face communication. In the long run, not only will it cost a lot of manpower and material resources, but also waste a lot of time and seriously restrict the quality of cooperation.

However, the emergence of business English correspondence, the two sides can cooperate directly with the Internet, and realize communication on the Internet, and communicate under a relatively free platform, which not only saves manpower and material resources, but also ensures work efficiency, and then according to the real-time dynamics of the market. Make reasonable adjustments so that the interests of both partners can be fully reflected.

## **V. Writing Skills of Business English Correspondence in Foreign Trade Practice**

Business English correspondence is quite different from ordinary correspondence. Correspondence writing must be closely related to the theme of trade and the psychology of the other party, at the same time, use polite language, concise and clear writing style and clear and precise transaction content and direction to complete the content of the whole correspondence.

### **5.1 Word Skills**

#### **5.1.1 Polite and considerate context**

Business English correspondence shoulders the important functions of communication and communication between trade parties in foreign trade practice. In the process of writing, polite expressions and considerate greetings can reflect the good qualities of the practitioners on the one hand, and on the other hand, make the other party feel that they have been respected, thus forming a kind of greeting. Equality and cordiality will help to close the gap between the two sides and lay a good foundation for foreign trade cooperation. Therefore, in business English correspondence, writers are required to fully consider the interests of the partners, to be good at expressing their wishes and intentions from the standpoint and interests of the partners, to focus on the situation of the partners, and to understand the difficulties of the other party, so as to promote the achievement of cooperative purposes. Specifically speaking, we should try our best to use the second personal pronouns such as you and your, and less use the first personal pronouns such as I, we, my, our, which is often called your attitude in public relations. Take the following two sentences for example: Your active participation in this conference will be highly appreciated. We will highly appreciate your active participation in this conference. ” This kind of sentence pattern, to a certain extent, is centered on self-standard, which makes the partners feel that we have not proceeded from the position and interests of the other side, and it is difficult to reflect the importance and respect of the trade partners; the latter one is centered on the partners, standing on the other side's point of view, fully affirming their role participation, which is obvious. It has created a good trade atmosphere of equality, friendship and consultation.

#### **5.1.2 The Use of Professional Trade Terms**

In business English correspondence writing and translation practice, the use of professional trade terms is an unavoidable problem. In international trade activities, trade terms cover insurance, finance, import and export, transportation and many other fields, and different fields have their own specialized and professional terms. In the process of writing and translating business English correspondence, translators can not translate the related terms literally. For example, the word name, in business English correspondence, should be translated into nameplate, offer should be translated into offer (active quotation), despatch chnote moder T should be translated into customs transshipment declaration, and so on. Business English correspondence often appears, practitioners should pay special attention to the characteristics of words. In addition, many English abbreviations have their specific meanings, such as FOB, MR, profit margin and MC, which are also commonly used in the writing and translation of foreign trade correspondence.

#### **5.1.3 Extension and Conversion of Common Vocabulary**

The meaning of English vocabulary will change with the change of linguistic environment. Therefore, in the writing and translation of business English correspondence, practitioners need to focus on the extension and conversion of common vocabulary, master the unique connotation of vocabulary extension and conversion in correspondence, and then translate and write in combination with specific contexts and professional terms. 。 For example, dull is a commonly used word in everyday English. Its meaning is dull and dull. However, in business English correspondence, it should be understood and translated as "consolidation". The way of writing and translating ordinary English is far from the same as that of business English correspondence.

#### **5.1.4 Accurate Communication of Quantitative Elements**

Business English correspondence often contains many elements related to quantity, which are crucial to the smooth progress and achievement of foreign trade activities. In the practice of international trade, both sides of the trade have extra concerns about price, specification, quantity, amount, time and other factors. It can be said that the quantitative factors will be involved in the whole process of foreign trade development. Therefore, in the use of words in business English correspondence, we must clearly and accurately express the quantitative

elements. For a simple example, in business English correspondence, we usually do not say "We wish to confirm our telex dispatched yesterday", but explicitly express "We confirm our telex of July 2 nd, 2000."

## **5.2 Text Grasp**

As the most common special style in foreign trade practice, business English correspondence has obvious features because it occurs and serves various business and trade activities.

### **5.2.1 Clear, concise, precise and precise**

Generally speaking, based on the control of time cost, the text of business correspondence must be simple and clear, in the most refined space possible, so that partners can accurately and effectively obtain the information we want to convey. Therefore, in business English correspondence writing and translation practice, we need to pay attention to and master the use of simple sentences, ellipsis sentences and simple coincidence sentences. We should pay attention to overcoming the characteristics of traditional letters, such as lengthy, protracted and stereotyped writing, paying attention to professionalism in writing format, making the use of words accurate and even accurate, and the content specific, and avoiding or minimizing the use of vague, ambiguous or easily ambiguous words, so as to ensure that both sides of international trade understand each other's intentions accurately. Improve communication efficiency and time efficiency. For example, in business English correspondence, prior to or previous to is often used to express before a business activity, instead of before; supplement is used to express supplement and supplement, instead of adding to.

### **5.2.2 Simple and easy, streamlined format**

Business correspondence not only carries the task of conveying trade information, but also plays a unique role in promoting good recognition and trust between the two sides, promoting the effective development of trade activities, and promoting the smooth realization of cooperation intentions between the two sides. Therefore, for the writing and translation of business English correspondence, it is necessary to use plain and plain language and plain writing, not only to ensure the accuracy of the language, but also to pay attention to keeping pace with the times, streamlined format, so that letters and telegrams are efficient and easy to understand. Specific can follow the following two points: First, streamlined typesetting. Traditional typesetting methods can be divided into three types, namely, uniform, indentation and synthesis. This is not absolutely necessary, but also objectively increases the workload of business English correspondence and telecommunications practitioners. Therefore, in foreign trade practice, we should gradually abandon the single and outdated letter format and use more concise, clear, convenient and efficient letter format to save time and cost and improve the rate of trade information transmission; second, simplify the steps. With the development of the times and the change of the form of international trade, in order to highlight the formality of business correspondence and show respect for the recipients of correspondence, those complicated steps and formats that are not compatible with the development of the times and are not related to the content should be gradually eliminated. On the basis of retaining the necessary contents such as address, theme, text and ending, we should gradually change the old formats which are unnecessary or not suited to the development of the times. For example, the traditional business English correspondence often has an attention line at the beginning of the text. Under the new situation, it should be removed, and its content should be incorporated into the theme part, so as to change the complex structure of the letter as a whole.

## **VI. Correctly Understanding and Grasping the New Changes of Business English Correspondence and Telecommunications under the New Situation**

With the deepening of China's opening up and the further integration of international trade culture, new changes have taken place in the writing and translation of business English correspondence.

### **6.1 Increasing Legal Effectiveness**

As a key element of foreign trade exchanges and communication, the business information and content that occur in the exchange and negotiation between the two sides are all legal basis in business English correspondence. Therefore, in the practice of business English correspondence, first, we should pay attention to learning and abiding by relevant international law and international trade system, strictly abide by international practices, rather than confining ourselves to our laws and regulations and related regulations; second, we should strictly grasp the relevant wording, adhere to problem-oriented, improve the awareness of practitioners, and not easily involve business. Information other than goods and trade shall effectively protect the legitimate rights and interests of our enterprises.

## **6.2 Greater Attention to Cultural Differences**

The world is pluralistic. Different countries and nationalities have different cultures in the course of their civilization's occurrence and development due to the differences of regions and development paths. The diversity of cultures determines that people in different cultural backgrounds have many differences in language expression and information transmission, and these differences correspond to each other. At present, business foreign language correspondence is a tool of foreign trade communication. In writing letters and telecommunications and in practice, one should pay attention to the different understandings of some lexical meanings between the two parties in foreign trade activities. For example, yellow stands for yellow in English, and yellow in Chinese is often extended to mean obscene and low-level fun, but in English, this kind of Chinese expression often uses another completely different word blue, such as "blue joke"; for example, when introducing commodity prices in trade practice, we tend to consider using it. The word cheap is used to describe its low price, but in Westerners' understanding, cheap contains the connotation of "low price but low quality". Therefore, in the practice of business English correspondence writing and translation, it is particularly necessary to pay attention to the grasp and application of cultural differences. Second, we should pay special attention to the differences in sentence expression habits. In business English correspondence with the main content of communication and communication of business information, there are often expressions such as how to ask the other party to do and how to respond. At this time, influenced by the negative transfer of mother tongue in linguistics, writers of correspondence often naturally use the sentence "please". However, this expression is in the form of "please". In the view of most Westerners, the implied meaning of giving orders may lead to misunderstanding or even misunderstanding in communication. If we use the sentence pattern of "Can you please", the tone will be more euphemistic and polite, consistent with the cultural background of the other party, and more acceptable.

## **VII. Conclusion**

Today, China is already the world's largest trading power and the second largest economy in the world. The "one belt and one way" initiative that is developing in depth has injected a steady stream of vitality into the development of China's foreign trade. Chairman Xi Jinping has repeatedly stressed that China adheres to opening its doors to construction and remains open to the outside world. Thanks to the favorable policies at the national level and the development of the global integration process, China-foreign trade has ushered in unprecedented opportunities for development. Business English correspondence runs through all aspects of foreign trade activities and becomes an indispensable part of foreign trade practice. In the practice of English business correspondence in the future, while continuing to do well in the existing work, it is also necessary to urge the practitioners to improve their professional accomplishment, enhance the skills and Strategies of doing a good job, take correspondence and Telecommunications as the carrier, ensure the smooth flow of foreign trade information, and ensure that foreign trade practice can be carried out and completed smoothly.

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