

Peculiarities of business correspondence in English among non-native English speakers

Статья посвящена анализу бизнес-корреспонденции на английском языке. Авторы рассматривают лингвистические и экстралингвистические особенности электронной деловой переписки, участники которой не являются носителями английского языка.

Ключевые слова: деловая коммуникация, деловая корреспонденция, структура делового письма, электронная переписка

The article is devoted to the analysis of business correspondence in English. The authors consider linguistic and extralinguistic peculiarities of electronic business communication among non-native English speakers.

Keywords: business communication, business correspondence, structure of business letter, e-correspondence

Advancement of information technologies and international collaboration among various organizations have made business correspondence a crucial aspect of contemporary business communication and allowed companies to find more and more business counterparts that represent different cultures. Nowadays English is the language of international communication, including business communication, and it is widely used by non-native English speakers as a tool for establishing business contacts and exchanging essential information between companies operating internationally.

Business correspondence includes all written correspondence in organizations such as personal documents, simple legal documents, personal letters, business contracts, marketing materials and official letters, both in electronic and in paper form [1]. The main features of a business letter are laconism, specifics, conciseness and objective character. These features are essential because the main purpose of any business letter is to convey information and avoid possible ambiguity [3], which could happen due to the fact that often the English language is not the first language for at least one side of the process of communication. From this point of view, precision and clarity, which are indispensable characteristics of any business communication, are becoming even more important because very often letters are translated into a native language.

When considering peculiarities of business correspondence, it is important to analyze it from the linguistic perspective, as well as in terms of its social and cultural characteristics, which are often essential for better understanding of the participants of communication process.

To get a clear idea of what business letters look like a few examples of business correspondence will be analyzed.

The first example is a Letter of Request and Notification, the addresser is a manufacturing company from Nizhniy Novgorod. We do not state the name of the company or any details of the letter in order not to reveal commercial secrecy.

To Whom It May Concern,

According to the contract dated (*date*) with contract no. 040/420, we will finish the production and arrange the delivery on (*date*). So your order will be ready for delivery latest (*date*). You can find the proforma invoices for these three orders attached.

We kindly request from you to arrange the payment. If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact with me.

Kindest regards,

Name Surname

This letter is written in the full block format (content is aligned to the left margin of the page). This is the most commonly used format of business letter [2]. The first part of the letter performs the function of notification letter. A notification letter is a document that individuals and entities can use when they want to inform the addressee about an event, an accident, or any other occasion that has taken place recently or is about to take place.

The addresser of the letter under consideration uses a formal tone and a clear structure with an introductory salutation followed by a brief explanation of the contract and delivery details. The contract number and the date to confirm the agreed date of delivery are given. The use of specific details helps to establish credibility and professionalism in communication. The addresser also attaches proforma invoices to facilitate the payment process and makes a polite request for payment. The second part of this business letter performs the function of request. The addresser requests their partner to arrange the payment. The use of the phrase "kindly request" indicates a desire to maintain a positive and respectful relationship with the recipient. Finally, the writer invites the recipient to reach out if they require any further information or assistance. Overall, this business letter demonstrates clear communication and a professional tone.

As we can see, this business letter is not too formal, but laconic and straight to the point. It is usually done to avoid ambiguity and make the letter absolutely clear to the addressee.

Let us move on to the next example.

To: Xu Yiwu.

URGENTLY.

Re.: amendment for pr. 19619/20, hull 2.

Dear Xu Yiwu,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the fruitful cooperation and congratulate you on the upcoming Chinese National Lantern Festival! 元宵节快乐!

Herewith I inform you that your goods for hull 1 already arrived at our shipyard. For delivery for hull 2, we are going to pay you by the bank remittance and I kindly request you to sign the amendment to the contract and send me by fax or e-mail the invoice for direct payment. Also please confirm the week of readiness of your goods for hull 2 for dispatch.

Thank you in advance.

Best regards,

Name Surname,

Equip. Purchasing Dept.

Direct phone:

Enclosed: 1 page.

This is a business letter addressed to Xu Yiwu, a Chinese counterpart, and it regards an amendment for hull 2. It is written in a semi-block format in order to separate the first part of the letter from the main information. Semi-block style is less formal than full block [2]. As it is seen from the example above, the beginning of every paragraph is indented and paragraphs are separated by double space.

The letter's salutation expresses appreciation for Xu Yiwu's cooperation and extends felicitations for the forthcoming Chinese National Lantern Festival. This exemplifies the application of extralinguistic information. While not obligatory, extending greetings on national holidays of business counterparts can facilitate transcending intercultural barriers and foster closer relationships with foreign partners. The recipient is of Chinese origin, and it is noteworthy that they represent a business culture that prioritizes interpersonal connections. Extralinguistic information in intercultural business communication is of paramount importance.

Overall, the tone of the letter is polite and professional. The sender acknowledges the recipient's contribution, adds a touch of cultural sensitivity, and provides a clear request for the necessary documentation. The addresser also provides contact information, making it easy for the recipient to follow up with any questions or concerns.

In conclusion, the analysis of the above given business letters reveals some common structural, lexical, and stylistic features that are essential for effective business communication. Business letters usually begin with a polite salutation addressing the recipient by name and using formal language. They contain a clear message and sometimes a specific request for the necessary documentation, followed by a polite expression of gratitude and a formal sign-off.

Additionally, both letters use appropriate language and a professional tone throughout, and the second letter exemplifies the importance of extralinguistic information in intercultural business communication. Overall, these letters demonstrate the importance of clear communication and a professional tone in business correspondence. The letters are formatted correctly, using appropriate spacing, margins, and font size.

In today's technological age, it is also important to consider the formatting of business letters for mobile devices. With more people accessing emails and documents on their mobile devices, it is essential to ensure that the business letter is formatted so that it is easily readable on smaller screens. This includes using a larger font size and avoiding long paragraphs, which can be challenging to read on a smaller screen. Additionally, the letter should be designed with a responsive layout, allowing it to adjust to different screen sizes and orientations.

Thus, creating an effective and well-formatted business letter is critical in establishing a positive professional relationship and ensuring successful business transactions.

References

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А. Н. Луханина (Белгород, Россия)

Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет

Лексико-грамматические особенности англоязычных заголовков и способы их перевода на русский язык (на примере публицистических текстов)

В статье на примере англоязычных газетных статей рассматриваются лексико-грамматические особенности заголовков, такие как опущение вспомогательного глагола *to be* и артикля, использование *the Present Indefinite Tense* при передаче событий в прошлом, а также анализируются сложности перевода заголовков на русский язык.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, заголовок, публицистические тексты, опущение, артикль, глагол *to be*