

O. A. Baranova, Lugansk Taras Shevchenko National University

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE AS INSTRUMENT OF ENHANCING WRITING SKILLS

Баранова О. О.

Ділова переписка як інструмент покращення письмових навичок

У статті розглядаються особливості ділового листування як інструмента покращення навичок писемного мовлення підчас навчання англійської мови. Студенти, які не є носіями мови, відчують труднощі, пов'язані з придбанням автентичних мовних зразків, що використовуються в офіційних документах. У статті зазначаються основні правила побудови коректних документів. Особлива увага приділяється вибору характерних шаблонів, словника і стилю, які відіграють важливу роль у написанні ділового листа. Автор висвітлює основні сучасні концепції, пов'язані з навчанням офіційно-ділового листування, визначає обов'язкові блоки ділового листа, їхні особливості.

Ключові слова: метод, стиль ділового листа, офіційний лист, письмові навички, шаблони.

Баранова О. А.

Деловая переписка как инструмент улучшения навыков письма

В статье рассматриваются особенности деловой переписки как инструмента улучшения навыков письменной речи при изучении английского языка. Студенты, не являющиеся носителями языка, испытывают трудности, связанные с приобретением аутентичных языковых образцов, используемых в официальных документах. В статье отмечаются основные правила построения корректных документов. Особое внимание уделяется выбору характерных шаблонов, словаря и стиля, которые играют важную роль в написании делового письма. Автор выделяет основные современные концепции, связанные с обучением официально-деловой переписке, определяет обязательные блоки делового письма, их особенности.

Ключевые слова: метод, стиль делового письма, официальное письмо, навыки письма, шаблоны.

The questions of improving writing skills have always been a matter of concern for all teachers. It has been proved that a student in a non-native environment experiences numerous problems related to the acquisition of authentic language

patterns, especially those ones used in formal writing. Therefore, business correspondence skills development should be paid especial attention in language classrooms of all levels, as these are the skills that will bring sustainable benefits to the owners in their working future.

Participating effectively in a business English environment not only requires a solid grasp of English grammar, but also an understanding of key communication factors. This feature focuses on key points to take into consideration each time you are using English. There exists a variety of lexical, stylistic and content peculiarities of business correspondence.

Letter writing is an essential part of communication, a part of personal experience. Each letter-writer has a characteristic way of writing, his style of writing, his way of expressing thoughts, facts etc., but it must be emphasised that the routine of the official or semi-official business letters requires certain accepted idioms, phrases, patterns, and grammar which are found in general use today. Therefore certain skills must be acquired by practice, and details of writing must be carefully and thoroughly learnt.

The issues concerning the correct choice of patterns, vocabulary and style of business correspondence have been studied by many scientists, such as Mary A. De Vries, Richard Alexander, Karen Hulene Bartell, Andrea B. Geffner, Andrea Holberg, Carl O. Trautmann and others.

Taking into consideration the difficulties one may face when preparing a correctly structured and outlined business writing we would like to focus on the main peculiarities that may influence the general impression produced by the document.

The **objective** of the article is to reveal the peculiarities of business correspondence as one of the main tools of enhancing students' writing skills. In our article we pay specific attention to the content and style of business letters. These peculiarities of business English are especially important, as the choice of appropriate style, length and literary devices plays the major role in constructing the writing correctly.

As for the length of a paper it is necessary to state that all correspondence should be long enough to explain exactly what the sender needs to say and the receiver needs to know. You must decide how much information you put in the letter: you may give too much, in which case your letter will be too long, or too little, in which case it will be too short. Your style and the kind of language you use can also affect the length. [1; 2]

The next issues under concern are order and sequence As well as containing the right amount of information, a letter should also make all the necessary points in a logical sequence, with each idea or piece of information linking up with the previous one in a pattern that can be followed. Having made a statement, one should not switch to other subjects, then refer back to the point he made a few sentences or paragraphs before.

Planning the writing is meaningful as well. The way to make sure you include the right amount of information, and in the right order, is by planning. Ask yourself what the purpose of the letter is, and what response you would like to receive. Note down everything you want to include before you start writing, then read your notes to check that you have included all the necessary information, that it is relevant, and that you have put it in the right order.

Writing the first paragraph is considered to be the key to a successful letter. The opening sentence or paragraph is important as it sets the tone of the letter and creates the first impression [3]. Generally speaking, you would thank your correspondent for their letter (if replying to an enquiry), if necessary introduce yourself and your company, state the subject of the letter, and set out its purpose.

Here are two examples of opening paragraphs.

– Thank you for your enquiry dated 8 July in which you asked us about our range of cosmetics. As you probably know from our advertising, we appeal to a wide age group from the teenage market through to more mature women, and our products are retailed in leadings to rest throughout the world.

– Thank you for your letter of 19 August, which I received today. We can certainly supply you with the industrial floor coverings you asked about. Enclosed

you will find a catalogue illustrating our wide range of products currently used in factories and offices throughout the world.

The middle paragraph needs thorough consideration and planning. The main part of your letter will concern the points that need to be made, answers you wish to give, or questions you want to ask. In the middle paragraph planning is most important to make sure your points are made clearly, fully, and in a logical sequence.

At the end of a business letter, if it is a reply and that has not been done so at the beginning, one should thank his correspondent for writing. If appropriate, encourage further enquiries or correspondence, mentioning that you look forward to hearing from him or her soon. You may want to restate, briefly, one or two of the most important points you made in the main part of your letter. Here are some examples of final paragraphs.

– Once again thank you for writing to us. Please contact us if you would like any further information. To summarize: All prices are quoted Yokohama, delivery would be six weeks from receipt of order, and payment should be made by bank draft I look forward to hearing from you soon.

– I hope I have covered all the questions you asked, but please contact me if there are any other details you require. If you would like to place an order, may I suggest that you do so before the end of this month so that it can be met in good time for the start of the summer season? I hope to hear from you in the near future.

– We are confident that you have made the right choice as this line is a leading seller. If there is any advice or further information you need, we would be happy to supply it, and look forward to hearing from you.

The style of business correspondence presupposes simplicity [4]. Commercial correspondence often suffers from an old-fashioned, pompous style of English which complicates the message and gives readers the feeling that they are reading something written in an unfamiliar language . The style should not, however, be so simple that it becomes rude.

Using idioms and colloquial language is traditionally avoided in business English. It is important to try to get the right 'tone' in the letter. It means that you

should aim for a neutral tone, avoiding pompous language on the one hand and language which is too informal or colloquial on the other. [4]

You may set the wrong tone by using the wrong vocabulary or idioms, or using short forms inappropriately. Here are a few examples together with a preferred alternative.

INAPPROPRIATE FORM	PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE
you've probably guessed	you are probably aware
you'll get your money back	the loan will be repaid
prices are at rock bottom	prices are very low
prices have gone through the roof	prices have increased rapidly

On the whole, it is better to avoid using colloquial language or slang. Apart from the danger of being misunderstood if your correspondent's first language is not English, he or she may think you are being too familiar.

Accuracy and spelling should be controlled by the writer very thoroughly. Careless mistakes in a letter can give readers a bad impression. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar should all be checked carefully. Many people rely on the spellchecker in their computers to ensure that there are no spelling mistakes. But incorrectly spelt word may form a completely different word, e.g. Please give it some though (the writer means thought); I saw it their (the writer means there). A spell checker would miss these mistakes. There is no substitute for carefully reading, or proofreading a letter that you have written.

When writing a letter you should use the correct title in the address and salutation. Spell your correspondent's name correctly (nothing creates a worse impression than a misspelled name), and write their address accurately.

If you do not know your correspondent, do not assume that they are one sex or the other, i.e. use Dear Sir / Madam rather than Dear Sir or Dear Madam. If you know a correspondent's name but not their sex, use Mr. / Ms, e.g. Dear Mr. / Ms Barron.

When replying to a letter, fax, or email, quote all references accurately so that it is immediately clear to your reader what you are writing about.

It is important to check that you have actually enclosed all documents you have mentioned in your letter, or attached them to your email. Check, too, that you have enclosed or attached the right documents. When ordering, make sure you quote the order number correctly, especially in international trade where mistakes can be very expensive in both time and money.

Having conducted the research in the sphere of writing business letters we may draw the following conclusions.

Writing business letters is a highly complicated science which demands a complex of literary and business correspondence skills. It is not enough for a good business letter writer to know lexis and grammar. One should also comprehend the whole range of such things as occasions on which the particular letter is written, the style of letter, useful expressions, and acceptable idioms.

There are certain rules which should be studied since they have to be felt by correspondents. Letter writing requires long practice and experience. Those who write letters should always remember, that what makes the letter attractive and therefore promotes one's business is not always the message of the letter, but it is the manner and style in which the message is written.

The recommended standards of business correspondence such as opening and closing remarks, salutations, addressing, paragraph outlines etc. have been mentioned in our article.

Having finished the research we have come to the formulation of the „golden rule” that must be followed by every business correspondent. It says that the official letter should be formal, courteous, tactful, accurate, well-planned, concise, expressive, and relevant.

We have considered the necessity to develop students' skills of business correspondence as the basic ones that will enable them to participate effectively in business negotiations as well as to be prepared for distance verbal communication. We would like to pursue the investigation of the peculiarities of various types of business letters and the methods of training students to create typical pieces.

References

1. **Рогожин М. Ю.** Деловые документы в примерах и образцах : учеб. – практич. пособие. – М. : Проспект, 2009. – 432 с.
2. **Смирнов Г. Н.** Этика деловых отношений : учеб. – М. : Проспект, 2009. – 192 с.
3. **Тулембаева А. Н.** Банковский маркетинг. Завоевание рынка: учеб. Пос. Алматы : Триумф «Т», 2007
4. **Sharma S. D.** A Text Book of Professional Communication Skills and ESP for Engineers and Professionals / S. D. Shandma. – Mehra Offset Press, 2006. – 623 p.
5. **Vries M. A.** A Complete Guide with Model Formats for Every Business Writing Occasion / Mary A. De Vries. – Prentice Hall, 1992. – 494 p.
6. **Alexander R.** New International Business English: Student's Book / Richard Alexander. – Cambridge University Press, 1996. – 176 p.
7. **Bartell K. H.** American Business English / Karen Hulene Bartell. – University of Michigan Press, 1995. – 230 p. .
8. **Geffner A. B.** Business Letters the Easy Way / Andrea B. Geffner. – Barrons Educational Series Inc, 1991. – 182 p.
9. **Holberg A.** Forms of Address: A Guide for Business and Social Use / Andrea Holberg. – Rice University Press, 1994. – 216 p.
10. **Trautmann C. O.** Language of Small Business / Carl O. Trautmann. – Upstart Publishing Co Inc, 1994. – 224 p.

Baranova O. A.

Business correspondence as instrument of enhancing writing skills

This article is devoted to the peculiarities of business correspondence as an instrument of enhancing writing skills in the process of learning English. Due to the fact that non-native students experience difficulties, connected with the acquisition of authentic language patterns used in formal writing, our article reveals the main rules of constructing correct documents. We pay specific attention to the choice of right patterns, vocabulary and style of business letter which plays the major role in letter writing. The author defines the basic modern concepts related to teaching business

correspondence and isolates the obligatory units of a business letter as well as their peculiarities.

Key words: method, style of business letter, business letter, writing skills, patterns.

Відомості про автора

Баранова Олеся Олександрівна – студентка 5-го курсу факультету іноземних мов. Основні наукові інтереси зосереджено навколо методики викладання іноземних мов та навчанню офіційно-ділового листування на іноземній мові.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 13.01.2012 р.

Прийнято до друку 24.02.2012 р.