

摘 要

随着中国科技的进步、经济的发展，越来越多商业者想要走出国门，对外合作。这时，商务函电就解决了一部分交流难题。论文主要分析的是：语用失误的表现、出现失误的原因以及如何避免出现语用失误。首先通过案例分析语用失误的表现：用词角度分别有赘述、模糊语、词语搭配不当的问题；句法角度有时态误区、主谓语不一致、否定位置不当、句子结构认识不清等问题；社交角度有称呼语的表达、语气不当等问题。其次对出现这些失误的原因进行分析，包括自身专业知识掌握不足、文化差异导致的文化负迁移、语境认知能力的局限等因素。最后，尝试总结减少失误的办法：了解英汉文化差异，从根源入手；充分考虑上下文、掌握商务函电的使用原则，进而提高自己的语用能力，有效减少语用失误问题。

关键词：商务函电；语用失误；语言特征

ABSTRACT

With the progress of China's technology and economic development, more and more businessmen want to go abroad and cooperate with foreign countries. At this point, business correspondence has solved some of the communication difficulties. What paper aims to analyze are: the manifestations of pragmatic failures, the reasons for their occurrence, and how to avoid them. First of all, it analyzes the performance of pragmatic failure through cases: from the perspective of word use, there are respectively redundant, vague language, and improper collocation of words; from the perspective of syntax, there are tense errors, inconsistent subject predicate, improper negative position, unclear understanding of sentence structure, etc; from a social perspective, there are issues with the expression of address forms and inappropriate tone. Secondly, it analyzes the reasons for these errors, including insufficient mastery of professional knowledge, negative cultural transfer caused by cultural differences, and limitations in contextual cognitive abilities. Finally, I try to summarize the ways to reduce mistakes: understanding the cultural differences between English and Chinese, and start from the root; fully considering the context and master the principles of using business correspondence, in order to improve one's pragmatic ability and effectively reducing pragmatic errors.

Key words: business correspondence; pragmatic failure; language features.

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Chapter One Introduction

1.1 Research Objective

With the further globalization of China's economy and the implementation of the "the Belt and Road" initiative, more and more Chinese enterprises are seeking cooperation with foreign investors. Based on the status of business correspondence in the world, this paper aims to study the pragmatic failure in business correspondence and systematically explain the pragmatic knowledge of business correspondence. First of all, we should have a simple understanding of the overview of pragmatic failure and make a classification of pragmatic failure. Secondly, it focuses on the performance of pragmatic failure, which includes lexical, syntactic and social aspects. The purpose of analyzing each level is to make everyone clear about their misunderstandings, summarize the reasons for these misunderstandings, and apply the right medicine to the case. Finally, the author puts forward some suggestions to avoid pragmatic failure in business correspondence, effectively reducing pragmatic failure, improving pragmatic competence and promoting foreign trade cooperation. Enable business English learners to use their professional skills to the maximum extent possible, striving for the flourishing development of foreign trade and moving the world towards the forefront of foreign trade.

1.2 Research Significance

With the continuous promotion of the process of global economic and trade integration and the continuous increase of China's foreign business activities, business letters become particularly important as an important means of information transmission. Due to the huge differences and negative effects between Chinese and Western cultures, the transfer of pragmatic rules, and the frequent occurrence of pragmatic failures in business letters, this will not only lead to the invalidity, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of information exchange. Business letters and telegrams are often used in international business exchanges, so their wording should be accurate, appropriate and formal, and the original information should be accurately expressed in the editing process; The tone of the original text is appropriately copied so that the translation conforms to the style of the official letter. Therefore, the study of pragmatic failure in business correspondence is very important for foreign trade. The correct use of business correspondence not only expresses respect for partners, but also ensures the smooth progress of transactions. Maximize the interests of both parties. This is also constantly pursued in the field of foreign trade.

Chapter Two Overview of Pragmatic Failure

Since studying a series of issues related to pragmatic failure, the first step is to understand what pragmatic failure is. The following shows the definition of pragmatic failure and what types of pragmatic failure can be classified.

2.1 Definition of Pragmatic Failure

Language itself belongs to social behavior and is restricted by social norms. For example, people's social behavior must conform to social norms. People's speech acts must follow the rules of language use shared by their society or groups, that is, social language rules. Due to the differences in social norms between different cultures, there must also be differences in social linguistic rules. We usually only pay attention to the differences in language abilities (pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar) between different cultures or language communities, while ignoring the differences in language use or social language rules between different language communities. People from different cultures often make mistakes or fail to achieve their expected goals in communication. This kind of cross-cultural communication failure caused by lack of understanding of social linguistic rules that are different based on cultural background, value orientation and social norms is called pragmatic failure by linguists.

2.2 Classification of Pragmatic Failure

Jenny Tomas(1983) not only clearly defines what "pragmatic failure" is, but also uses leech's two branch frameworks of general pragmatics, including linguistic pragmatics and social pragmatics, to divide "pragmatic failure" into two categories, namely "pragmatic failure" and "social pragmatic failure". In 2017, Deng Nan's article "A Study of Wording Skills in Business Correspondence Translation" described pragmatic failures at the lexical level of business correspondence, including polysemy, repetition of words, and conversion of parts of speech. Besides lexical pragmatic failure, there are also syntactic and social pragmatic failures. "Pragmatic language failure" mainly refers to the failure caused by pragmatic language transfer. For example, foreign language learners use a language structure that is not used by native speakers or different from native languages to express a certain pragmatic function, which is related to language. Pragmatic language failure is mainly manifested in the aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar that do not conform to the habits of the target language.

“Social pragmatic failure” refers to “students’ understanding and expression of speech activities in the target language in the same context as their mother tongue using the politeness principles in their mother tongue (such as the concept of profit and loss, social distance, corresponding rights and responsibilities, etc.), which is culture-specific”. People from different cultural backgrounds often acquire corresponding pragmatic rules unconsciously in childhood, and they often follow these rules unconsciously. In the process of intercultural communication, pragmatic transfer occurs unconsciously due to the lack of understanding of language and cultural differences.

Chapter Three The Performances of Pragmatic Failure in Business Correspondence

The performance of pragmatic errors in business letters can be divided into three levels, namely vocabulary, syntax, and social aspects. These aspects cover almost all trading scenarios. To avoid mistakes, one must first fully understand the misconceptions they are in.

3.1 Pragmatic Failure at The Lexical Level

Vocabulary, as the name suggests, every word spoken represents an English word. If there is a mistake in the vocabulary, it is equivalent to saying nothing and not expressing the meaning.

3.1.1 Unnecessary Details

Business letters do not need a lot of fancy words. Business letters and telegrams require accurate, simple and clear words in operation. Don't use any empty and redundant words. If you can use one word instead, don't use phrases. Do everything possible to make it concise. Frequent use of redundant words will lead to structural confusion, semantic wordiness, and reduce the accuracy of the article.

(1) 我认为最好的服务是专门为这种情况设计的。

(Improper version):“I think the best service is specially designed for this situation like this.”

(Proper version):“ The best service is specially designed for this situation.”

Analysis:The words “I think”and“like this” in this sentence are redundant words and should be deleted.This makes the sentence concise and clear.

(2)偏远地区的消费水平比城市地区的消费水平低。

(Improper version): “The consumption level for the people in remote areas is not as high as that in urban areas.”

(Proper version):“The consumption level in remote areas is not as high as that in urban areas.”

Analysis:Consumption level itself refers to people's consumption level.“for the people”should be deleted.

(3)我期待着你方的早日回复。

(Improper version):“I am looking forward to your early profitable reply.”

(Proper version):“I am looking forward to your profitable reply”

Analysis:“early”“profitable” Use one of them.

In addition, Chinese expressions like“and, but, however ,I think, in my opinion, as far as I know” all give people a sense of burden.

3.1.2 Fuzzy Semantic Expressions

Fuzziness is one of the basic attributes of language. Scholars have studied fuzzy language from different levels. In 1983, Leach published his book *Principles of Pragmatics*, which focused on the development of pragmatic models in the overall functional model of language. In this regard, the book is based on Austin and Searle’s speech act theory and Grice’s conversational implicature theory. It also expands pragmatics, including the social principles of politeness, irony, language communication and other language acts. Vague language violates the principle of integrity, clarity and correctness of business letters.

(1)惠请贵公司报上大约 500 令优质白报纸价格，此等白报纸适合海报纸张之用。

(Improper version):“ Please kindly requested to quote a price of about 500 ringgit of high-quality white newspaper, which is suitable for poster paper.” White itself is a color word with ambiguity. Whether it is pure white, milky white or gray is uncertain.

(Proper version):“Please kindly requested to quote a price of about 500 ringgit of high-quality milky white newspaper, which is suitable for poster paper.”

Analysis:White is a vague color word. It is gray and milky white, which is not clearly stated.

(2)我方已经确认订单，直到本地时间星期日前收到贵公司的回复为止。

(Improper version):“We have confirmed the order until we receive your reply by Sunday our time.”

(Proper version):“We have confirmed the order until we receive your reply before 8:00 a.m. local time on Sunday.”

Analysis:Sunday is a continuous object of time. It is impossible to determine what time it is, resulting in ambiguity and inaccurate information transmitted by correspondence.

(3)从北京到华盛顿的轮船，我们有两个月一次的直达服务。

(Improper version):“As for the steamer from Beijing to Washington, we have bimonthly direct service.”

(Proper version):“As for the steamer from Beijing to Washington, we have a direct service every two months.”

Analysis:Bimonthly is ambiguous, which means that it is not clear whether it is twice a month or once a month.

(4)我们确定是前天发出的函电。

(Improper version):“We confirm that it was sent the day before yesterday.”

(Proper version):“We confirm our telex of Feb.1st,2023.”

Analysis:Like“today”,“tomorrow” and“yesterday” are fuzzy concepts and are not suitable for business correspondence. The date should be clearly written.

(5)我方已收到贵方货款，此款已记于你方账户。

(Improper version):“We have received your payment for the goods and have recorded it in your account.”

(Proper version):“We have received your total payment of 20000 US dollars, which has been credited to your account.”

Analysis:When it comes to capital transactions, the amount should be clearly indicated, leaving a specific and clear impression on both parties.

3.1.3 Improper Collocation of Words

Business English is different from ordinary English. Business English has a unique context. It has the characteristics and style of useful words, and requires standardized and rigorous use of words.

(1)经过我们的市场调查，我们了解到您是为建筑和装修市场服务的。

(Improper version):“From our market research, we know that you are for the market of construction and decoration .”

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