

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.21.1.30>**СИНТАКСИС ДЕЛОВОГО ПИСЬМА В АНГЛИЙСКОМ И ФРАНЦУЗСКОМ ЯЗЫКАХ**

Научная статья

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Аннотация

Научная статья посвящена синтаксическим особенностям делового письма в английском и французском языках.

Несмотря на большое количество деловой документации, она мало изучена с лингвистической точки зрения. Принадлежность английского и французского языков к разным языковым группам также создаёт обширную базу для сравнительного лингвистического анализа деловой документации на обоих языках.

Задача данного исследования - выявить и описать особенности синтаксиса делового письма.

Объектом исследования являются деловые письма, представляющие собой особый тип текста с определенными структурными и стилистическими особенностями.

Практическая значимость данного исследования заключается в том, что материал исследования может быть использован не только в научных целях, но и учебных, например, в разработке учебных пособий или преподавании делового языка.

В публикации проведён тщательный анализ реальных деловых писем на английском и французском языках, выявлены ключевые черты делового письма, такие как однородные члены предложения, использование безличной формы глагола, синтаксические средства расширения предложения, его насыщенность клише и другие, и обоснована теоретическая база данного исследования.

Ключевые слова: английский язык, французский язык, деловое письмо, синтаксис.

SYNTAX OF ENGLISH AND FRENCH BUSINESS LETTERS

Research article

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Abstract

The scientific article is devoted to the syntactic features of business letters in English and French.

Despite the large amount of business documentation, it has been little studied from a linguistic point of view. The fact that English and French belong to different language groups also creates a huge base for comparative linguistic analysis of business documents in both languages.

The objective of this study is to identify and describe the features of the syntax of a business letter.

The object of the study is business letters, which are a special type of text with certain structural and stylistic features.

To conduct this study, we have chosen a descriptive method and a method of a comparative analysis. The descriptive method helped to reveal those linguistic phenomena that are inherent in the syntax of a business letter and distinguish it from letters of other styles, as well as describe them in terms of their structure and functioning. The comparative analysis method helped to determine the similarities and differences in the syntax of English and French letters due to the fact that these languages belong to different language groups.

In the publication we carried out a thorough analysis of real business letters in English and French, identified key features of a business letter, such as homogeneous sentence members, the use of an impersonal verb form, syntactic means of sentence expansion, its saturation by clichés and others, and substantiated the theoretical basis of this study.

Keywords: English, French, business letter, syntax.

Introduction

The role of business documentation in the life of modern society is constantly increasing. First of all, this applies to the economic sphere. For example, since the end of the 1990s, Russian market economy has been developing economic relations with foreign countries and increasing workflow of business documentation began to play a huge role in society. [Zhelamskaya 2017, 3] Despite the great diversity of economic and business texts, they have been little studied from a linguistic point of view, since they have rarely been subjected to scientific linguistic analysis.

All of the above mentioned leads to the thought of the necessity and importance of drawing the attention of linguistics to business texts and determines the relevance of the proposed topic. We have decided to concentrate our attention on such an important stylistic aspect of each document as syntax.

Research Methods and Principles

The theoretical and methodological basis was the work of the following foreign linguists: S. Taylor, S. Lindsel-Roberts, J. Penforinis, A. Gollwitzer and others, as well as Russian linguists I.M. Ovchinnikova, V.I. Ivanova, V.A. Zhelamskaya and others. These linguists described the functionality of business English or French writing, as well as its structural features.

In order to understand the features of business writing that distinguish them from other types of letters, we used a descriptive method: we identified specific linguistic phenomena inherent in the syntax of a business letter and consistently

described them in terms of their structure and functioning. In addition to this study, we have chosen a comparative analysis method. The basis for a comparative analysis was the fact that the English and French languages belong to different language groups. And this means that in addition to similar features based on the principals of the official style, they may have also different syntactic features.

Discussions

The syntax of any business writing is distinguished by the integrity, consistency of syntactic constructions and the use of certain language structures inherent to business writing.

We have identified the following main features of the syntax of business letters:

1. The use of syntactic tools for sentences expansion and compression;
2. Saturation of business letters with syntactic cliches;
3. The tendency to depersonalization of presentation;
4. The use of impersonal sentences and passive voice;
5. Frequent complex sentences. [Zhelamskaya 2017, 62]

Syntactic means of sentences expansion and compression

Using syntactic means of sentences expansion and compression allows to enlarge the sentence and describe the situation in detail or to avoid complexity and information overload. These syntactic means include:

1. Homogeneous sentence members;
2. Syntactic cliches;
3. Impersonal forms of the verb.

Homogeneous sentence members

One of the most common syntactic means for sentence expansion is homogeneous sentence members.

«The report is the result of several meetings with **Jamie Anson**, Manager of Plant Operations, and **her staff** and an extensive survey of all our employees.»

«**Notre catalogue illustré ci-joint et le tarif correspondant** vous permettront d'apprécier la gamme entière de nos tissus ameublement." («**Our illustrated catalog attached and the corresponding price** will allow you to appreciate the whole range of our furnishing fabrics.»)

Saturation by syntactic cliches

Syntactic cliches are constructions that are repeatedly used in business texts, but each repetition contains a new element. Such constructions have become cliches because they are stable in certain situations.

«*After having received your letter ...* ».

«*Should you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us*».

«*Nous vous remercions de votre lettre...*». («*We thank you for your letter...*»)

«*Je vous prie d'agréer l'expression de mes sentiments distingués.*» («*Please accept the expression of my distinguished feelings.*»)

Complex sentences

The use of a complex sentence in a business letter is explained by the need to clearly express multidimensional information. [Taylor 2012, 376] Since with a large amount of information it is more reasonable to express thoughts in separate sentences, we can see the rare use of compound sentences. Most often, the presence of complex sentences prevails in order to clearly and consistently describe the idea. Moreover, one sentence may contain more than 1 or 2 subordinate clauses:

"I am seeking a position in your engineering department where I may use my training in computer sciences to solve Taylor's engineering problems."

"*Nous espérons que cette solution vous donnera entière satisfaction.*" ("We hope that this solution will give you the whole satisfaction.")

Non-personal forms of the verb

The use of non-personal forms of the verb such as infinitive, participle and gerund can be both a means of sentence expansion, as well as its compression. In the first case, such clauses detail information or are the basis for the formation of a syntactic cliché. In the case of compression, these structures allow to compress the sentence in order to avoid the formation of a compound sentence.

The most common non-personal form of the verb is the participle, which often forms the participle clause in a business letter:

"**Assessing** the results of the department, we note a high percentage of implemented developments."

"**Restant** a votre entière disposition pour tous renseignements complémentaires, nous vous prions d'agréer, Monsieur, l'expression de nos sentiments distingués." ("Remaining at your entire disposal for any further information, please accept, Sir, the expression of our distinguished feelings.")

Infinitive clauses are not rarely used in French business written speech, but we have not noticed their use in English business writing. The absence of infinitive clauses can be explained by the syntax of the language itself. For the French language, this construction is a common phenomenon, but in English it is replaced by other constructions, for example, the active voice.

"**Après avoir vainement tenté** d'attirer votre attention sur la dégradation de mes conditions de travail et ses conséquences préjudiciables pour ma santé, je déplore qu'aucune démarche n'ait été entreprise pour remédier a la situation." ("After trying in vain to draw your attention to the worsening of my conditions of work and its harmful consequences for my health, I regret that no approach was undertaken to remedy the situation")

Gerund clause is also commonly used in business letters of both languages.

"**En répondant** a votre question, nous serions éventuellement intéressés par les stagiaires pour la cuisine pour l'hiver 2017-18." ("Answering your question, we would be interested in trainees in kitchen for the winter 2017-18.")

“In addition to **having taken** a broad range of courses, I served as a computer consultant at the college’s computer centre where I helped train users to work with new systems.”

The tendency to depersonalization of presentation

Having analyzed many business letters in English and French created over the past few years, we can say that one of the syntactic features of modern business writing is the depersonalization of the presentation. [Lindsell-Roberts 2004, 115] However, impersonal sentences are less common in both languages compared to other syntactic features. Comparing their frequency between English and French, we can say that there are fewer of them in English. This is due to the syntax of the English language itself. In a business letter, most often a non-personal offer is replaced by the passive voice.

“**Il est expressément convenu** que ce matériel reste la propriété de l’entreprise.” (“It is expressly agreed that this material remains the property of the company.”)

The passive voice is found in a business letter as often as homogeneous members of a sentence. This phenomenon is characteristic of both English and French, and is a means of sentence expansion and compression. In sentence expansion the passive voice is an additional construction that helps clearly define the thought and stylistically color the business letter. As a means of compression, the passive voice prevents the formation of a compound sentence, which can complicate the understanding of the sentence idea.

“**I am pleased** to inform you that we have finalized our booking via the link you shared below.”

“Est-ce que le stagiaire **seront rémunérés?**” (“Will the trainees be paid?”)

Main results

Having studied the theoretical base and comparing many business letters, we would like to note that any business letter has certain syntactic features that distinguish it from other types of letters. In this study, we analyzed the main ones and compared their frequency in English and French.

Some syntactic features are much more common in one language, and may be absent in another. This is due to the fact that English and French belong to different language groups, and the means of expression in one language, even in one official style, is replaced by another, more characteristic of the syntax of the language.

Conclusion

This work has a big relevance, since the official language is widely spoken in the world, in particular English and French, and the accompanying business letters. The correct writing of a business letter should be guided by certain rules. This study has examined the syntactic features of a business letter.

Our work can be used for practical purposes. It will be useful not only in the correct writing of a business letter, but also in teaching of business language, in preparation of textbooks.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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