



Incorporating Authentic Models into Business Letter Writing within the ESP course at Kazakhstani Universities

Kazakistan Üniversiteleri ESP Derslerinde İş Mektupları Yazmada Özgün Modelleri Birleştirme

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ABSTRACT: Today English serves as a lingua franca in international business communication between local and foreign professionals in Kazakhstan. Many Kazakhstani business people write business documents in English. However, non-native speakers may continue to use the rhetorical patterns of their native languages. At the same time English native speaker may expect writers using a second language to have a similar fluency in culture and customs. Therefore, this paper explores the rhetorical and pragmalinguistic peculiarities of business letters written in English by Kazakhstani students taking the English for Business Purposes course. The findings of the present study demonstrate that the written texts of sales letters not only reflect specific linguistic characteristics that differentiate them from other types of business texts, but also contain a number of unique national and cultural features which make them valuable “indicators” of the communicative traditions of the people. Based on the results and discussions, recommendations are offered for preparing students well for the business workplace through incorporating more authentic models and contexts into pedagogical strategies.

Keywords: business letters, intercultural business communication, rhetorical analysis, pragmalinguistic analysis, English for Business Purposes.

ÖZ: Günümüzde, İngilizce Kazakistan'da yerli ve yabancı profesyonellerin arasında uluslararası iş iletişimi için kullanılan bir lingua franca olarak hizmet vermektedir. Kazak iş adamlarının birçoğu iş yazılarını İngilizce olarak düzenlemektedir. Ancak, İngiliz dilini yabancı dil olarak kullananlar kendi dillerine özgü retorik konuşma tarzlarını kullanmaya devam edebilmektedirler. Aynı zamanda, İngilizce anadili konumunda olan okuyucular ikinci dil olarak kullanan yazarlardan dilde akıcılıkla birlikte kültür ve gelenekte benzer akıcılığın olmasını bekleyebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, araştırmanın amacı iş mektuplarını iş İngilizcesi kurslarında yazan Kazak öğrencilerin retorik ve pragmalinguistik özelliklerini inceleme olmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları satış amaçlı yazılmış metinlerin sadece başka iş metin türlerinden ayırt edici belirli lingustik karakteristiklerden değil onunla birlikte belirli dil özelliklerini yansıtan birkaç özel ulusal ve kültürel özelliklerin olduğunu göstermektedir. Araştırma bulgularına ve yer alan tartışmalara dayanarak öğrencileri çalışma ortamına hazırlamada otantik modeller ve unsurların kullanılması yönünde pedagojik stratejiler sunar.

Anahtar sözcükler: iş mektupları, kültürler arası iş iletişimi, retorik analiz, pragmalinguistik analiz, İş İngilizcesi.

1. INTRODUCTION

In search of new markets, business communication in English-speaking countries is focused on contacts with the recently formed states in which English is used as a means of international communication. In this respect, Kazakhstan is of a great interest as one of the countries with rich natural resources, agrarian and industrial potential, a strategic location, internal political stability and an actively developing market. Economic factors such as the stabilization of inflationary processes, the improvement of enterprises' financial position and an improved legislatively-legal base make Kazakhstan an attractive country for foreign investors.

Increasing international communication is also caused by the entry of Kazakhstan into international organizations such as the United Nations, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and by the increasing number of international, national and foreign

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companies within the territory of Kazakhstan (according to the latest data of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 06.12.12. at present there are more than 60 embassies and 20 international organizations, 26,415 foreign enterprises and 3, 411 branches of foreign companies, which require business communication in the English language).

The establishment of productive mutual business relations with foreign partners assumes, first of all, the training of highly skilled experts for the Kazakhstani enterprises (Smith 2012). Consequently, from year to year there is an increasing necessity for English-speaking professionals. According to our analysis of one of the popular Kazakhstani employment websites - JobKZ (<http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/JobKZ> - free mailing of vacancies in Kazakhstan - JobKZ) in more than 90% of announcements about various posts, one of the obligatory criteria for employment was good language skills in English. Also, it should be mentioned that an increasing number of similar announcements is now issued exclusively in English. For example, the results of a research conducted by Kazakhstani scholars showed that English language skills had become the requirement in 98 announcements out of 101 for the posts of manager, engineer, operator, secretary, bookkeeper and manager. 40 % of the announcements placed in the newspapers in 2003 were also published in English (Sarybai 2005).

A sociolinguistic survey conducted in 2010-2012 showed that the people of Kazakhstan consider learning the English language as providing an opportunity to become integrated into the world community and as a perspective on their further progress up the career ladder. The vast majority of Kazakhstani people expressed their positive attitude towards the spread of English in Kazakhstani sociolinguistic space, supporting the current policy of trinity of languages in Kazakhstan; so they have expressed their desire for further study of English for specific purposes, which is necessary, first of all, for their professional growth (Zharkynbekova 2012; Aimoldina et al 2012).

One of the most widespread spheres of English language use is business correspondence. The abovementioned conditions have led to the increasing popularity of sales letters and also to the use of sales promotional strategies. In the course of their use, business partners face a variety of challenges associated with the following:

- The presence of intercultural differences, the overcoming of which demands the knowledge of various ways of writing business correspondence which take into account the national-cultural traditions of communicants (Bell et al. 1995; Cheng 2003; Kaplan 1966; Sarangi 2011);
- The existing distinctions in style and strategy among different languages (Akar 2002; Hewings 1999; Scollon and Scollon 2001);
- The necessity of having a good awareness of culture and traditions of business writing in different languages (Du-Babcock 2013; dos Sanos et al. 2002; Li et al. 2001).

Thus, the primary use of English in international business communication makes the study of texts of business documents and correspondence topical. On the one hand, there is the presence of cultural differences, and the desire to maximize the effectiveness of business communication, and on the other hand, the drafters of the English business documents try to diversify their ways of writing business documents, taking into account the national-cultural traditions of the communicants.

The purpose of the paper, therefore, is to explore the rhetorical and pragmalinguistic features and the linguistic realizations and strategies used by Kazakhstani communicants in the writing of business letters in English and to compare them to the samples of business letters of native speakers of English. Based on the results and discussions, recommendations are offered for preparing students well for the business workplace through incorporating more authentic models

and contexts into pedagogical strategies. For the realization of the purpose in the paper the following questions need to be answered:

- What are the rhetorical and pragmalinguistic features of business correspondence written by Kazakhstani students and native speakers of English?

- How can those distinctions in business letters written by native and non-native speakers be explained?

- What authentic strategies should be incorporated in the course of English for Specific Purposes at Kazakhstani universities to be well-prepared for the business workplace?

This paper is structured as follows: firstly, the methodology of the research is described, and then an analysis of the findings of the research and the main conclusions are presented, followed by an examination of the relevant limitations and suggestions for further research and study.

2. METHOD

In this study, the sales promotional letters, which are under analysis, are written by students of English Department taking the English for business purposes course at L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University (Astana, Kazakhstan), and compared with authentic sales letters of native speakers of English based in the USA and the UK, who are international business partners of Kazakhstani companies. The cross-cultural variation is investigated both quantitatively and qualitatively from contrastive text linguistic and pragmalinguistic perspectives. According to Connor (1996), contrastive rhetoric involves contrastive text linguistic studies that examine, compare and contrast how texts are formed and interpreted in different languages and cultures using methods of written discourse analysis. The contrastive text linguistics in this study involves the analysis of rhetorical structures (e.g. moves, structural representation) and their linguistic realizations (e.g. linguistic features) (Bhatia 1991, Swales 1990). The pragmatic perspectives include persuasion, and politeness strategies (e. g. the delayed in introduction of purpose in requests, indirectness, formality and excessive politeness, you- and we-orientation) and some culture-bound discourse patterns. The linguistic realisation includes lexical, syntactic and semantic features which we will discuss in relation to moves with authentic examples of our corpus. In this study, moves and steps form the units of analysis. Upton and Connor (2001) describe moves as semantic or functional units of texts, which can be identified through their communicative purposes and through the linguistic boundaries typical of the moves. Bhatia (2001: 84) defines moves as 'rhetorical instruments that realize a sub-set of specific communicative purposes associated with a genre'; recurrence of particular moves and typicality of their appearance in genre-specific texts enable viewers to recognize these texts as exemplars of the same genre (Swales 1990).

2.1. Data Collection

In general, between December 2011 and March 2013, 115 sales letters were collected, including 75 sales letters written by the Kazakhstani university students (See Table 1) and 40 authentic sales promotional letters written by native speakers of English, which were collected from national, international and foreign companies in Kazakhstan.

Table 1. University Students' Background

Age	18-22	
Gender	Female	51 (68%)
	Male	24 (32%)
Course	3rd-4th year	
Department	Foreign Philology	15
	Theory and Practice of Foreign Language	35
	General linguistics and translation theory department	25
Ethnicity	Kazakh	52 (68.75%)
	Russian	23 (35.25%)

Regarding the students' language proficiency in writing, almost 70% reported that they could write fluently most of the time, but occasionally need help, whilst 20% of the students indicated that they could write without any difficulty (See Figure 1).

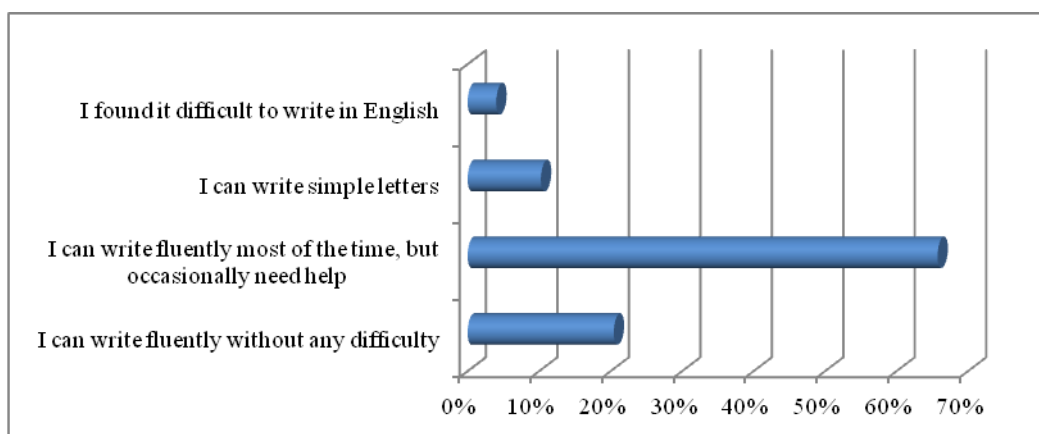


Figure 1. Students' Language Level Proficiency in Writing

Data were collected through the use of a scenario, which is described a business situation for students. The participants wrote down what they would mention in their sales letter in order to promote the service of their company.

Scenario:

Imagine you work in one of the grain companies (in the Republican Product Corporation) in Kazakhstan. Write down a sales letter to promote your company in Astana for your potential customers, who are based in Britain, so that they may use your service in the future. In your sales letter, you may want to consider the following points:

- *How you will address your perspective customers*
- *What the main advantages and benefits of the service of your agencies are*
- *How you will persuade your customers*

As a final step, general questions at the end of the scenario provided additional information and insight. The students had to indicate what problems/challenges they had had in writing the sales letters in English, how they would cope with the abovementioned problems, and what strategies they would use to make their letter more effective and clearer for the potential customers.

The collected sales letters by native speakers of English turned out to be written in 3 financial, 3 manufacturing, and 4 service companies. 6 of which were located in Astana, 1 in Almaty, 2 in Atyrau and 1 in Aktau (See Table 2). A detailed description of each company is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Description of the Companies

Company	Type	Domestic/ Foreign	Location	No. of Letters
Company 1	Manufacturing	Foreign	Aktau	5
Company 2	Manufacturing	Domestic	Atyrau	7
Company 3	Manufacturing	Domestic	Astana	16
Company 4	Financial	Domestic	Astana	17
Company 5	Financial	Foreign	Astana	10
Company 6	Financial	Domestic	Astana	11
Company 7	Service	Domestic	Almaty	9
Company 8	Service	Foreign	Astana	15
Company 9	Service	Domestic	Astana	13
Company 10	Service	Domestic	Atyrau	12

In collecting our data, some participating companies required us to make contact at the company level instead of contacting individuals in order to get access to the business correspondence of the company. In this connection, access has been allowed only to the limited types of letters, and all names of persons and organizations were deleted or changed prior to the delivery of data in order to preserve confidentiality. These experiences confirm St. John's (1996) observation that many companies consider their business correspondence confidential, hesitate to give researchers access to it, and prefer not to explain the business contexts.

2.2. Data Analysis Procedure

The review of linguistic literature devoted to the analysis of business correspondence showed that the researchers often use Bhatia's move analysis (1993). This method allows for revealing rhetorical features in business correspondence, for example, in English and Chinese business correspondence (Zhu 2005), English and Thai (Ora-Ong 2000), etc.), English and Taiwan (Hsiao-I Hou and Min-Yu Li 2011). This analysis implies there are seven moves in each sales promotion letter including three obligatory moves and four optional moves, as follows (See Table 2):

Table 2: Bhatia's Move Analysis of Sales Letters

Move 1	Establishing credentials	obligatory
Move 2	Introducing the offer	obligatory
(i)	Offering the product or service	
(ii)	Essential detailing of the offer	
(iii)	Indicating value of the offer	
Move 3	Offering incentives	optional
Move 4	Enclosing documents	optional
Move 5	Soliciting response	obligatory
Move 6	Using pressure tactics	optional
Move 7	Ending politely	optional

(Bhatia 1993:49)

From our point of view, Bhatia's move analysis is the most suitable, reliable and optimal research method, capable of demonstrating peculiarities in the business correspondence written by native and non-native speakers. Therefore, followed by Bhatia the texts were analysed by the authors using this method of analysing rhetorical structures (e.g. moves, structural

representation). In general, two raters hand-coded the rhetorical moves in all 115 letters in the corpus. An interrater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency and agreements between coders. Thus, the interrater reliability testing between coders was found to be Kappa = 0.68 ($p < 0.001$), 89% CI (0.504, 0.848) (Biber et al. 2007: 35; Hayes et al. 2007). As noted, individual moves often reappeared throughout a letter, and each appearance was counted as a distinct occurrence; as a result a single move type could occur multiple times. Interrater reliability was calculated at 89%. The vast majority of discrepancies that occurred between the two raters resulted from initial disagreement as to where one move ended and the next started, not as to the presence of a particular move. This interrater reliability is quite good, since, as Bhatia notes, there are sometimes ‘cases which will pose problems and escape identification or clear discrimination, how-ever fine a net one may use. After all, we are dealing with the rationale underlying linguistic behaviour rather than its surface form’ (Bhatia, 1993a: 93).

2.3. Limitations

As for the experimental research, the analysis has its own peculiarities. The limited availability of the given materials has led to rather small volume of samples. Such factors can interfere with how we generalize our results to all international sales promotional letters for all native speakers and non-native speakers.

However, in spite of the fact that our research investigated only sales letters, we believe that similar research are also possible to be conducted in case of other categories of business communications. The necessity and importance of the further research in this sphere are undisputed. This research could also be carried out in the occupational environment to define whether there are similar cultural distinctions at the given letters.

3. FINDINGS

In this section, an analysis of sales letters by native and non-native speakers from Kazakhstan is presented. Rhetorical moves and their linguistic realization are investigated. In accordance with Bhatia’s move analysis, cross-cultural variations are investigated from contrastive rhetorical perspectives with the aim of identifying cross-cultural differences that distinguish between the promotional writing styles of Kazakh (Russian) and native English speakers in the Kazakhstani business context.

As examples, out of all the collected and analyzed corpus of sales letters, we selected two sample letters, which are the most typical for native and non-native speakers respectively. What follows is a sample of a sales letter written by a business partner who is a native speaker (See Sample 1).

Sample 1: Sales Letter by a Native Speaker of English

From the desk of Emily Lacewell
March 5, 2001

Ms. Aiman Zholdybayeva
18 Maylina Str., apt. 1514
Astana 010000, Kazakhstan

Dear Ms Zholdybayeva,

Achieving the highest standards of security has always been top priority for Citibank we are among the first Banks in

MOVE 1 - Establishing credentials

Hungary to introduce chip debit cards very soon.

Following the launch of MasterCard Chip cards, Citibank will cease issuing new and renewing existing traditional Cirrus, CirrusMaestro and MasterCard bank cards.

Also, renewed cards will be issued as MasterCard Chip cards, except if the Customer notifies Citibank in writing at least two months prior to the expiry of the existing bank card that they no longer need it, in which case the card service of the Bank will no longer be used together with additional services such as our CitiPhone Banking telephone customer service and the Citibank Online internet banking service that are available exclusively to card holder Customers.

With the launch of MasterCard Chip cards, the visual design of the debit cards of Citibank will be modified to replace the current appearance of them.

Please also note that in case of a Chip card, in addition to the magnetic stripe, the chip integrated into the front of the card also contains the data of the card and the card holder, which is a much safer method of storage of these data than the magnetic stripe, hence also makes it safer to use the card.

We are pleased to inform you that if your company sponsors 6 or more staff for the MasterCard Chip cards, we will offer you a discount of US\$100 per person.

For your convenience, I enclose a reservation form which should be completed and returned directly to me.

If you have any questions concerning the use of smart cards, please visit our website at www.citibank.hu or call the CitiPhone Banking phone customer service on 06-40-24-84-24.

Your response is required by 3/30/01: To qualify for no fee balance transfers at a rate as low as 0% - plus the benefits shown on the reverse side – mail your Acceptance Form today.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Lacewell

Managing Director

As shown in the sample, in this letter all seven moves occur (1. Establishing credentials, 2. Introducing the offer, 3. Offering incentives, 4. Enclosing documents, 5. Soliciting responses, 6. Using pressure tactics, 7. Ending politely). According to Bhatia (1993), this is typical for sales letters written by native speakers of English. This letter simply shows the writing style of a native speaker of English.

MOVE 2 - Introducing the offer

(i) Offering product or service

(ii) Essential detailing of the offer

(iii) Indicating the value of the offer

MOVE 3 - Offering incentives

MOVE 4 - Enclosing documents

MOVE 5 - Soliciting response

MOVE 6 - Using pressure tactics

MOVE 7 - Ending politely

The letter below is written by one of the students, who is non-native speaker of English (Sample 2).

Sample 2: Sales Letter by a Non-native Speaker of English.

The Republican Product Corporation

Jumabaev 14/1

Tel: +7-7051198807

November 7, 2012

Dear, Customers!

Our company is engaged in processing grain on the most modern mill equipment, we have a large number of the most modern agricultural machinery: “John Deere”, “Amazone”, “Catros” etc.

We give special attention to quality of grown-up wheat and barley. We professionally are engaged in seed farming, and our seeds of several grades of wheat buy many companies for improvement of own crops.

For more details you may call us today for a Free Quote on +7-7051198807. Additionally you can view our quality furnishings on our website at www.astyk.com. Our website also lists our current specials – there are even greater savings to be made!

As a Free Gift to you we have enclosed the Republican Product Corporation pen containing our website address and contact information along with our complete catalogue for 2012. If you have any further questions, please contact me directly on +77758268792.

Mrs. Arai.

MOVE 2 Introducing the offer

(i) Offering the product or service

(ii) Essential detailing of the offer

MOVE 5 Soliciting response

MOVE 3 – Offering incentives

MOVE 4 - Enclosing documents MOVE 5 Soliciting response

In this example, some differences may be noticed. There is no obligatory Move 1. Establishing credentials, Move 6. Using pressure and Move 7. Ending politely. The writer ends with Move 4 and Move 5 which are found in the same passage instead of a polite ending. The student extensively uses “we” orientation.

We analyzed the remaining letters by focusing on each move in Bhatia’s (1993) seven-move pattern. The frequency of occurrence of each move or step was therefore counted out of the total number of analyzed units, and presented as percentages for the two corpora. For example, Figure 1 below presents the results of move analysis of the two corpora. The total number of analyzed units of the Kazakhstani corpus is 406 and that of the English corpus is 336. For example, Move 5. Soliciting response of the Kazakhstani corpus has a frequency of occurrence of 229, which contributes to 49.57% of the total number of analyzed units in that corpus. An interpretation of the results will follow, with each move being dealt with individually, and discussed, where necessary, with examples extracted from the data examined in this study.

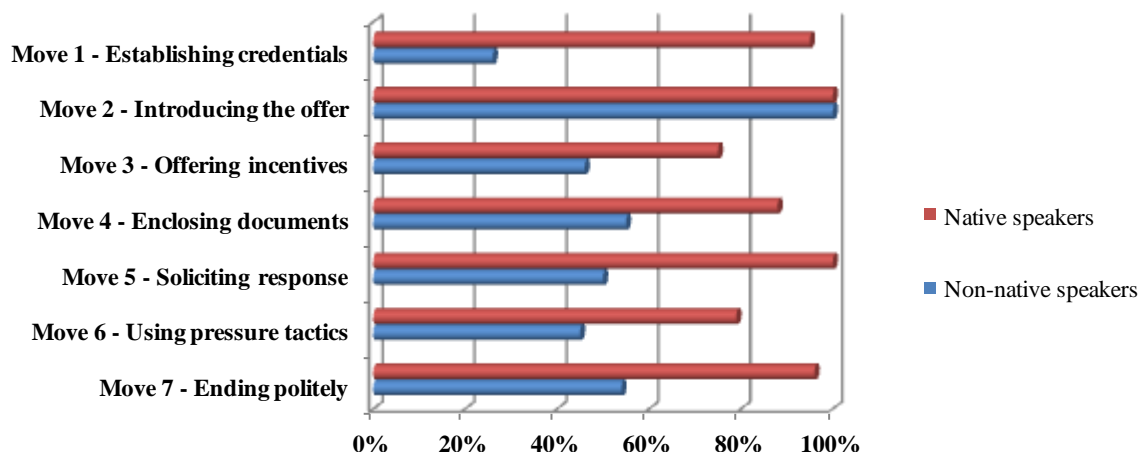


Figure 1. Analysis of rhetorical moves in the sales letters by native and non-native speakers.

It is interesting to see that Move 2 appears in every letter. Move 4 and Move 6 occasionally occur. It should be noted that Move 3 and Move 5 are absent in almost 50% of the letters. In accordance with Bhatia's findings (1993) in his data from Singapore, Offering Incentives is regarded as culturally-specific in Southeast Asia. Such an obligatory pattern as Move 5 (Bhatia 1993) in 60% of Kazakhstani university students' letters was absent. It is possible to explain this by the fact that in business texts of native speakers of English, considerable attention is given to "feedback", that is the aspiration of the sender to underline the importance of the addressee's reaction and, thereby to induce him/her to respond, having increased the probability of repeated contact. It is known that in comparison with the representatives of another cultural background in the English business culture, addressees and senders are usually individuals (e.g. parents, tenants, house owners, owners of credit cards). The given addressees make up a considerable share of the recipients of information letters, sales letters and requests. In the practice of Kazakhstani business communication, the addressees are more often enterprises and the organizations or those who speak on behalf of them. The most important parts of business texts include cases of repeated contacts between communicants, and the sender, as a rule, does not use additional means for "feedback" expression. At the same time, 45% of the letters contained Move 6, which is mostly relevant to European cultures (Swales 1990).

4. DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS

The results of comparison of the business texts written by representatives of English and Kazakhstani communicative cultures testify that the texts of the collected sales letters show both similarities and differences in all the aspects and text levels being analyzed.

The revealed distinctions are indicators of a national-cultural specificity of business texts of the sales letter. The possible national-cultural features of English and Kazakhstani business texts are inherent differences in terms of their graphical organization and orthography-punctuation formatting. These differences are important, as they are, as a "visiting card" of the text, giving the recipient information both of a genre-stylistic and national-cultural character.

Thus, it was interesting to notice that in some collected sales, promotional letters (in 15 out of 65) Kazakhstani university students addressed their potential customers using exclamation marks, for instance, "Dear Customer!", "Respectful Customer!", "Dear Mr White!", which is not usual in the native speakers' way of writing. That phenomenon can be explained by the influence of culture and the L1 writing style, in accordance with which in Kazakh (or in Russian), the salutations are usually accompanied with the exclamations marks ("Құрметті Данияр

Асқарбекұлы!” (in Kazakh), “Уважаемый Петр Николаевич!” (in Russian)), instead of a colon that is inherent in more Americans, or a comma that is peculiar in a greater degree to British style. The greetings of non-native speakers are more formal. Typical forms of a greeting in the sales letters were as follows: Dear Mr. Beksoltan, Respectful (followed by title).

In our corpus, there are no letters by non-native speakers which address the customer by their first name. It is also possible to explain that in official Kazakhstani business correspondence, such salutations can be found extremely rarely, even if the writer and the addressee are very familiar with each other. This shows that foreign business partners wishing to progress to a more friendly level can face some misunderstandings. However, Kazakhstani business professionals can appear to be interested in neither mutual cooperation nor use of a basic official style and a cold and unfriendly tone.

For English business texts, the presence of salutation is obligatory, the forms of which vary depending on a degree of acquaintance of addressees, the frequency of contacts between them, low or high social distance and their socially-professional status. Thus, it is obligatory to meet the requirements of selected greetings with a form of ending the letter. In the rules of etiquette of an English business letter, the salutation *Dear Mr. Lindell* requires the form *Yours sincerely* at the end, and a greeting to the addressee, the name of whom is unknown or to the group: *Dear Madam* or *Dear Sirs* require *Yours faithfully*. One more etiquette rule connected with the form of the address is an address to the woman - to the business partner without exact instructions on her marital status and a preferable choice of the form as *Ms Hartford*.

Also, in the texts of the Kazakhstani business sales letters, the reference can be absent. Sometimes when there is a lack of an address, details of the company, addressee and his/her surname perform the function of establishing contact. For example:

*To: Vist ltd
Advertising department
Chief specialist
Ms Smirnova A.I.*

Regarding Move 7 (Ending politely), the American and English professionals suggest paying special attention to this move in business correspondence. As Bhatia (1993) points out, this is one of the widely used rhetorical patterns (Move 7) in a sales letter. If in the native speakers' letters this rhetorical pattern was found in almost each letter, it was not obligatory for the Kazakhstani professionals' business correspondence. The analysis of business letters, written in Kazakh (Russian) showed that Kazakhstani citizens can simply finish a business letter by pointing out only their details, or using such phrases as: “С уважением, генеральный директор Б. Ахмеров” [‘Yours faithfully, the Director General B. Ahmetov’]. Such a feature is also observed in the collected sales letters in English by university students, who missed the given pattern in the majority cases at all, simply writing their requisites, or finishing the sales letter in the following phrases:

*With respect, (followed by a name)
Regards, (followed by the title)*

The differences also become apparent in the use of the letter's mood types, formulaic expressions and lexical choice, which indicates different degrees of formality. In their research, Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris (1996) identify mood analysis of business letters. They (1996: 641) reported that the use of impersonal pronouns instead of personal pronouns signals the perception of social distance between the addresser (in this case, the managing director) and the addressee (internal staff). Kazakhstani university students use a more formal, official, cold style of communication, whereas native speakers quickly move on to a friendlier and partnership type of relationship, which is reflected in the choice of a particular language in business letters.

Kazakhstani business letters generally use the declarative mood type and their use of the imperative seems to be limited. The native speakers' letters use a more imperative mood, either with or without the politeness marker 'please'. They also use many more polar interrogatives and modal-initial interrogatives in the request sentences. Most sales letters written by Kazakhstani business professionals make an extensive use of formulaic or "stock" expressions especially those concerning gratitude, appreciation, and anticipation.

In the pragmatic aspect the distinctions are mostly found in the character and way of realization of influence on the addressee. The majority of English business texts show indirect or implicit character of influence, and also a combination of direct and indirect ways of influence, which in most cases take the form of indirect speech acts, for example:

It would be grateful if you could contact me on 001714568765 to arrange payment by MasterCard.

In business texts of Kazakhstani university students a prevailing way of realization of influence on the addressee is direct explicit language use of speech acts, for example:

We inform you that the payment of the TNP order #8 is paid at the day of the good's arrival to Astana.

The given distinctive feature of business texts written by the Kazakhstani university students originates from the traditions of the Kazakhstani official-business communications in the Kazakh and Russian languages: the direct categorical expression of will and laconic objective statement are traditionally inherent. The direct expression of will be shown in the language forms and ways of realization of influence are connected with the priority of a principle of authoritative pressure, hierarchical subordination between communicants. The given relations are also one of the modern Kazakhstani business letter's most prominent features.

The business texts also differed in the choice and use of lexical and idiomatic forms of language. The characteristic feature of the English business letter is a wide use of the emotionally-expressional lexicon, making an impression of the personal subjective relation of the sender to the information given or to the speech actions made by him, for example:

I am delighted to tell you...

I have pleasure in confirming...

I regret we are unable to make you a suitable offer...

The given national-cultural feature of English business texts is caused by having the aspiration to keep in touch in a positive tonality in conformity and the already mentioned principle of the politeness, underlined by desire to show a respectful attitude to the addressee. With regard to politeness, based on Goffman's (1967) notion of 'face', Brown and Levinson (1987) introduce the concept of face in their study of politeness in speech acts. They define "face" as the public self-image of every member of a society. They claim that everyone has face needs which involve maintenance of another person's face as well as his/her own during an interaction. They contend that any given speech act can potentially threaten the face of either the speaker or hearer, and that the use of politeness strategies is essential for reducing any face-threatening act (FTA).

Thus, those elements which are specific to the present expansion of international contacts make specific demands on the knowledge of the cultural traditions of the partners. This knowledge is especially important in studying foreign languages, since the use of foreign languages as a real means of communication is possible only under condition of extensive background knowledge of the involved cultures.

Therefore, in the context of current conditions of Kazakhstani university, first of all, along with good command in business English, students should be taught to compare social and cultural contexts of using promotional business correspondence, i.e. sales letters, and be aware of contemporary business practices between Kazakhstan and English-speaking countries. The English sales letter as widespread type of business correspondence has a long history, since the free market economy characterised by competition has been a dominant feature in the western economic structure. It also leads to the specific interpersonal context or one-to-one reader-writer relationships, in which the writer or the sales managers writes to an individual as a targeted reader (Guffey 2001, Zhu 2005: 72). As for Kazakhstan, the recent changes in different spheres of life, including competitive market economy, lead to the increasing popularity of sales letters and also to the use of sales promotional strategies. Moreover, English business texts affect the formation of genres of the Kazakhstan business texts. However, the business text in the sphere of official business Kazakhstani communications contains important features peculiar to that nation and shows sufficient “stability” with regard to such influence. Such background information offers an opportunity for students to mild further their world knowledge structures, which may help them understand the letters’ purposes and text structure.

Students should be encouraged to identify different purposes. English sales letters stress an independent positive image as a sales company. By teaching the communicative purposes of sales genres, which is the most important stage, will help students acquire a comprehensive and systematic understanding of a range of purposes. Characterized by overwhelming competition to sell similar products, the prevalent strategies employed in sales letters refers to the AIDA model, which involves a series of mental activities: attention, interest, desire, and action. Following this approach, the writer first attracts the prospective customer’s attention, then develops his/her interest in the advertisement, arouses the desire to own the product, and finally urges the reader to act upon the sales offer (Zhu 2006). In such cases when attracting *attention* is only limited with an etiquette polite form of addressing the client, and the *interest* consists of information about the sender’s company, product or service, and it is not specified what benefit will be received from this company, product or service recipient, followed by a call to action - the basic requirement to business communication is broken. The requirement states that a partner in business communication always appears as a person significant to the sender. Naturally, the more desirable scheme is a scheme for the letter “attention - interest - desire - action”, as it more adequately states the request. Otherwise, the so-called strategy of the controller is implemented –the desire to make your partner take a communications plan, to impose their own understanding of the situation.

Since sales promotional letters have recognizable text structures (Zhu 2005; Bhatia 1993), within ESP course for Kazakhstani university students it makes sense to teach and compare authentic sales letter format. Looking at two sales letters, written by native and non-native speakers, could help students to identify the similar and unique moves and steps in each letter. For instance, as Bhatia (1993) and Zhu (2005) assert the usage of headlines and postscripts in the letters are typically English, because English business culture mostly tends to achieve immediate commercial goals. Whilst in most cases Kazakh speakers begin to write their sales letters with specific introductory sections to emphasize relationship building, which do not directly relate to sales, but prepares the way for the subsequent sections:

Taking the opportunity, let us express our respect and wish prosperity to your business!

On behalf of “TNK Lubricants” company we express our respect and kindly asking you to consider cooperation...

In addition, the teaching point on the lessons could be focused on specific linguistic forms and strategies used in each letter. For example, in the English sales letter there is a tendency in using “you” approach to attract and maintain the reader’s attention. As a contrast, the Kazakhstani

university students' letters offer the product with the "we" approach common in Kazakhstani business letters:

We appreciate the extra effort it takes to ship our order intact and on time.

In this example, the writer speaks on behalf of the company and uses the pronoun "we" to give the letter a general nature as well as to bridge gaps between business partners. As a relevant teaching point, the teacher may introduce to the university students the appropriate use of pronouns in business writing, i.e. in individualistic cultures business partners quickly move on to a more friendly and partnership type of relationship, which is reflected in the choice of a particular language in business letters, whilst in collectivistic cultures "addressing the customer directly as "you" can be an indication of a conversational tone and may not fit in with the desired level of respect and formality" (Zhu 2005).

Thus, exploiting more authentic materials in teaching business writing within ESP course will allow Kazakhstani university students not only to get acquainted with the real language used in natural workplace but also to raise their cultural awareness in the context of global business and communications.

5. CONCLUSION

Our corpus of business letters confirms the increasing role of the English language in written business discourse in Kazakhstan. The analysis of illustrative matters shows the following: (a) the sales letters of Kazakhstani university students taking the course of English for Business Purposes, who are non-native speakers of English, differ from the letters of native speakers - in communicative, pragmatic, rhetorical, graphical and genre-stylistic aspects; (b) the letters of native speakers generally adhere strictly to the conventional writing style of the English-language business correspondence than the letters of non-native speakers; (c) the non-native speakers seem to misunderstand the expectations of their foreign partners and the cultural context in which their letters would be received.

These particular conclusions support the findings of several studies which show that non-native speakers need to understand the reader's culture in order to ensure that effective written communications occur (Varner 1988). Thus, at the heart of language structures there are sociocultural structures. Overcoming the language barrier is not enough to maintain the efficiency of business communications between representatives of different cultures. In such circumstances it is necessary to break a cultural barrier. The language personality and sign semantics are formed in a concrete socio-cultural space defining a principle of vision of the world, including using a verbal sign code.

During the analysis of the illustrative materials, several reasons for failures in communication through business letters have been identified: (a) the mixing of different national and cultural standards of the structural and linguistic realization of sales letters; (b) the mixing of features of different functional styles in one text with a combination of several tasks of communication; (c) the insufficient level of English of the authors of business letters (spelling, grammar, lexical errors). Generally, the first reason is basic: mixture of the national and cultural standards of the structural and linguistic execution of documents results in a misconception about the writer of a sale letter. In other words, the recipient does not evaluate such confusion as the sender's attempt to adapt to the traditions of the addressee's cultural destination. This has, of course, an important role in reducing the effectiveness of a business letter.

The results confirm the need for academic teaching business communication for non-native speakers in the context of Kazakhstani reality. The results made it necessary for the development of skills in writing business letters for English language learners in order to increase the efficiency of a professional business correspondence. It is necessary to demonstrate that the

realization of business communication must be achieved with an account of the national and cultural identity of a recipient.

In light of these results, the prospects for further research into the language of intercultural business communication can be reviewed. The research findings contribute to the theory of languages for specific purposes, and to the practice of teaching a language of business communication, as well as to raising awareness of the importance of intercultural competence for the development of business contacts in the world in order to develop joint efforts in the global cultural scale so as to avoid economic, political and humanitarian crises.

We also believe that our results may be useful not only for teachers but also for curriculum and syllabus designers in Kazakhstani universities. In conditions of forced industrial-innovative development of our republic syllabus designers and developers of educational materials should include courses in foreign language teaching topics related to how to teach students to write the appropriate sales letters to potential clients in order to avoid misunderstandings. It is necessary to train linguistic flexibility to Kazakhstani students to manage their language for writing business letters.

We consider it appropriate to draw attention to the teaching of English for Specific Purposes at Kazakhstani universities, namely:

- to select the specific hours to explore the writing of business letters in English;
- to pay attention to the cognitive knowledge in the field of intercultural business communication with the traditions and customs of the people;
- to consider in more details on the structure of writing a letter (genre and pragmatic aspects of business letters);
- to pay special attention to the appeal to potential customers and polite ending of the letter, which is very important for business correspondence;
- to consider in the course of language for specific purposes the importance of intercultural aspects in business communication.

In summary, we note that the national-cultural linguistic traditions of language and individual speech at the level of rhetorical schemes, the linguistic realization of communication strategies and tactics, as well as the pragmatic structure of the text, have a significant impact on the effectiveness of business communication.

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Uzun Özet

Günümüzde, İngiliz dili Kazakistan'da yerli ve yabancı uzmanlarla uluslararası iş iletişimi amacıyla kullanılan bir ortak iletişim dili hizmetindedir. Kazak iş adamlarının birçoğu iş yazılarını İngiliz dilinde düzenlemektedir. Ancak, İngiliz dilini yabancı dil olarak kullananlar kendi dillerine özgü sözbilim birikimlerini ve tarzlarını kullanmaya devam edebilmektedirler. Aynı zamanda, İngiliz dili anadili konumunda olan okuyucular, İngiliz dili özgün olmayan yazarlardan dil akıcılığıyla birlikte kültür ve gelenekte benzer akıcılığın olmasını bekleyebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, araştırmanın amacı iş İngilizcesi derslerinde Kazak öğrencilerinin iş mektuplarındaki sözbilim ve sözbilim edimi özelliklerini incelemek olmuştur. Çalışmanın bulguları satış amaçlı yazılmış metinlerinin sadece başka iş metin türlerinden ayırt edici belirli dilsel hususlarının değil belirli dil özelliklerindeki yansıyan birkaç özel ulusal ve kültürel özelliklerin bulunmasını göstermektedir. Araştırma bulgularına ve yer alan tartışmalara dayanarak, öğrencileri çalışma ortamına hazırlamada özgün modeller ve eğitimsel stratejiler sunar.

Çalışma Kazakistan'ın başkenti Astana şehrinde bulunan L.N.Gumilyov Avrasya Milli Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili bölümü öğrencilerinin İş İngilizcesi derslerindeki yazışmalarını analiz etmektedir. Kültürler arası değişim ayrımsal dilbilim ve sözbilim edimi açılarından nitel ve nicel metotlar kullanılarak araştırılmıştır. Connor'a (1996) göre, ayrımsal sözbilim karşıtsal dilbilim metin incelemelerini içermektedir ve çeşitli diller ve kültürlerde nasıl oluştuğunu ve yorumlandığını söylem çözümlemesiyle karşılaştırılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, karşıtsal dilbilim metin incelemesi, tümce yapımı incelemesi (Örn.dilsel eylemlere, yapısal tanımlama vb.) ve dilbilimsel oluşumunu (örn.dilbilgisi özellikler) içermektedir. Araştırma edimsel bakımından ikna ve nezaket stratejileri ve bazı kültüre-bağlı söylem biçimlerini içerir.

Genel olarak Kazak üniversitesi öğrencileri tarafından yazılmış 75 tane satış mektubu toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerin % 70 yazma yeterlilik düzeylerinin çoğu zaman akıcı olduğunu, ancak nadiren yardıma ihtiyaç duyduklarını belirtmişse, % 20 herhangi bir zorluk olmadan yazabildiklerini göstermiştir. Veriler belirli bir iş olayı senaryosu kullanarak toplanmıştır. Senaryoya göre katılımcılardan satış mektuplarında kendi şirketlerini pazarlamak amacıyla neyi bahsedecekleri konusunda sorulmuştur. Bizim bakış açımıza göre, Bhatia'nın eylem incelemesi İngiliz dili ana dili olan ve olmayanlar tarafından yazılan yazışmaların özelliklerini gösterebilmeye imkan verici, denemelerden geçmiş ve en uygun araştırma yöntemidir. Dolayısıyla Bhatia'na dayanarak tümce yapımı incelemesi uygulanacaktır (dilsel eylemler, yapısal tanımlama).

Araştırma bulguları İngiliz ve Kazak iletişim kültürleri temsilcilerinin satış yazışmalarını karşılaştırıldığında bazı benzerliklerle farklılıkların olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bizce iş mektuplarının satış metinlerindeki ayrıcalıklar ulusal kültürün özelliklerinin göstergesidir. Ayrıca, İngiliz ve Kazak iş metinlerin belirli ulusal-kültürel özellikleri, kendi grafik organizasyonu ve yazım, noktalama biçimlendirme açılarından doğal farklılıkları vardır. Bu farklılıklar mektubu okuyucuya yazan kişinin tür-üslup ve ulusal-kültürel içerik nitelikleri konusunda bilgi vererek, metnin bir "ziyaret kart" niteliğinde olduğundan önemlidir.

Ayrıca, uluslararası bağlantıların bugünkü günlerdeki genişlemesiyle iş ortaklarının kültürel gelenekleri konusunda bilgiye gereksinim duyulmaktadır. Bu konuyu incelemek yabancı dil öğrenim açısından önemlidir. Bu bilgiler yabancı dil eğitiminde de önemli çünkü yabancı dili iletişimde uygulama o dilin kültürünü bilerek mümkündür. Öğrencilerin yabancı dil eğitiminde sosyal ve kültürel içeriklerini kıyaslayabilme yeteneğine öğretmeye ihtiyaç duyulduğunu düşünmekteyiz. Çünkü bu tarz kıyaslamalar öğrencilerin, dünya ve İngilizce konuşan ülkelerle Kazakistan iş tecrübelerini kıyaslamalarına yardımcı

olacaktır. Bir satış mektubu tanınabilir bir yazı biçiminde olduğundan, metin yapılarını karşılaştırabilmeye öğretmek önemlidir. Yazarların metin yapılandırmasındaki özel eylem anlamak maksadında iki temsili mektubu incelemekte yarar vardır. Öğrencilerden her iki mektubun ilk olarak özel dilsel eylemlere ve sonra benzer eylemlerin belirlemeleri istenmektedir. Bazı eylemler birden fazla adım oluşturur ve metinler hareketlerinde birbirinden farklıdır. Öğrenciler ilk olarak hareketlerin nasıl farklılaştığını ve sonra onların benzerliğini belirlemeleri lazım. Satış mektuplarının başlıklarında, yazarlar okuyucunun dikkatini çekmek amacıyla bir kredi kartı teklif hakkındaki en çekici bilgileri vermeye çalışır.

Elimizdeki iş mektuplarının sayısı Kazakistan’da İngiliz dilinin yazı iletişim alanındaki artan önemini göstermektedir. Açıklayıcı konulardaki analiz aşağıdakileri gösterir: (a) İngiliz dili ana dili olmayan “İş İngilizcesi” dersini alan Kazak üniversite öğrencilerinin satış mektupları anadilinde konuşan kişilerden iletişim, edimsel, sözbilim, çizgesel ve tarz-ülup yönleri açısından farklıdır; (b) İngilizce anadil konuşuru, anadili olmayanlara göre genellikle iş yazışmalarında geleneksel yazma stilini kullanmaktadırlar; (c) İngilizce anadili olmayanlar, yabancı ortaklarının beklentilerini ve mektubun kültürel içeriğinin nasıl kabul edildiği konusunda yanlış algılamalarının var olduğu görülmektedir.

Araştırılmakta olan mektupların analizi sırasında, iş mektupları aracılığıyla iletişim kurulurken yapılan hataların çeşitli nedenleri tespit edilmiştir: (a) satış mektuplarının yapısal ve dilsel gerçekleştirilmelerinde farklı ulusal ve kültürel standartların karıştırılması; (b) bir metinde farklı işlevsel biçimlerin birkaç iletişim görevleriyle karıştırılması; (c) yazarların dil yeterlilik derecelerinin yetersiz olduğu (yazım, dilbilgisi, sözcük hataları) belirlenmiştir.

Genel olarak ilk neden basittir. Satış mektubundaki ulusal ve kültürel yapısal ve dilsel standartların karışımı satış mektubu yazarları hakkında yanlış anlaşmaların oluşmasına neden olmaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle, mektubu alıcı göndericinin kültürel yazı geleneği olarak değerlendirmez. Bu neden tabii ki de, satış mektubunun etkisini azaltır. Araştırmada alınan sonuçlar Kazakistan’ın gerçeklerini dikkate alarak, ana dili İngilizce olmayanlara iş iletişimi akademik eğitiminin gerekliliğini göstermektedir.

Araştırma sırasında toplanan iş yazışmalarının en yaygın türlerinden biri satış mektupları oldu. Satış mektuplarının yaygın olmasını ve profesyonel iş yazışmaların verimliliğini artırma ihtiyacı, İngilizce öğrenenler için yazma becerilerinin gelişmesini gerekli yaptı. Ayrıca iş iletişiminin gerçekleşmesinde alıcının ulusal ve kültürel kimliğinin dikkate alınması gereklidir.

Bu sonuçlar ışığında, kültürler arası iş iletişimi dili alanında daha fazla araştırma yapılması gerekliliği görülmektedir. Araştırma bulguları dil teorisine ve iş iletişimi dili eğitimi tecrübesine özel katkı yapmasıyla birlikte dünyada ekonomik, siyasi ve insani krizlerin ortak çabalarla önlemede etkili kültürler arası iletişimin iş anlaşmalarının gelişmesindeki önemini göstermektedir.

Ayrıca araştırma sonuçlarından öğretmenlerin yararlanmasıyla birlikte Kazak üniversitelerindeki ders içeriği ve izlencelerinin geliştirilmesinde yararlı olacağına inanıyoruz. Kazak devletinin endüstriyel ve yenilikçi gelişme programı ışığında, yabancı dil eğitimi izlence ve eğitim materyalleri yazıcıları ve geliştiricileri gelecekteki yazışmalarda yer alabilecek hataları ve yanlış algılamaları önlemek amacıyla, öğrencileri satış mektupları yazma kuralları konularına yer vermelidir. İş mektupları yazmada Kazakistanlı öğrencilere dilsel esneklik alanında da eğitim verilmelidir.

Bizim bakış açımıza göre Kazakistan üniversitelerindeki Özel maksattaki İngiliz dilini öğretmede dikkat edilecek bazı hususlar bulunmaktadır:

- İngilizce iş mektuplarını yazmayı öğrenmeye özel ders saatleri verilmeli;
- kültürler arası iş iletişiminde halkın gelenek ve alışkanlıkları konusundaki bilişsel bilime dikkat verilmeli;
- mektup yazma yapısında birçok detayı dikkate almak (tür ve iş mektuplarının edimsel yönleri);
- potansiyel müşterilerle olan iş yazışmalarında mektubun kibar bir şekilde bitirilmesine dikkat verilmeli;
- iş iletişiminde kültürler arası yönünün önemliliği özel amaçlı dil eğitimi derslerinde dikkate alınmalıdır.

Sonuç olarak, dilbilimindeki ulusal-kültürel gelenekleri ve söylem derin yapısı düzeyindeki bireysel konuşma, iletişim stratejilerinin dilsel gerçekleşmesi ve taktiği, metnin edimsel yapısı iş iletişiminin verimliliğinde önemli etkisi olduğunu söyleyebiliriz.

Citation Information

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