



# **Vocabulary Acquisition in Foreign Trade Correspondence and Recessive Cultural Connotation**

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**Abstract:** Based on the characteristics of vocabulary in foreign trade correspondence, this paper discusses the relationship between vocabulary acquisition and recessive cultural connotation. Then the author puts forward to the reform and measures in correspondence teaching. It aims at cultivating the inter-cultural communication competence of international trade professionals.

**Keywords:** Foreign Trade Correspondence, Vocabulary Acquisition, Recessive Culture

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## **1. Introduction**

It is generally believed that recessive culture is the most difficult cultural obstacle to overcome in the process of cultivating the inter-cultural communication competence of international trade professionals. Language and culture are inseparable, and vocabulary is the basic element of language. The connotation of recessive culture must be reflected in vocabulary.

Some words which are literally equivalent have different recessive cultural connotations in different cultures due to their values, ways of thinking, social psychology and other aspects, which are reflected in their additional meanings and emotional meanings.

## **2. Features of Vocabulary in Foreign Trade Correspondence**

Foreign trade correspondence is characterized by professional preciseness, fixed structure, standardized format, numerous trade terms, concise and comprehensive. The acquisition of correspondence vocabulary depends largely on the understanding and cognition of trade background and culture.

### **2.1 Polysemy**

There are a lot of polysemous words in correspondence, and the theoretical basis of polysemy is the prototype theory. Cognitive linguistics holds that polysemy is a process in which the original or basic meaning of a word, which is extended to other meanings through human cognitive means. By ways of cognitive models, such as metaphor and metonymy as well as professional terms and experiences, new meanings can be obtained. The polysemy in correspondence uses the extended meaning, which is related with the trade process and the terms. For example, the word “reference” often means “to refer to” in general English. In the correspondence letter, the meaning of this word is widely . Example 1) In regard to references you may write to the Bank of England, London. “reference” here form

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an association map with “Bank of England”, it refers to “the credit of the bank”. 2) Thank you for your letter reference GT756, of 24th, June. As well as we known, a combination of letters and numbers is usually the number of a document. “reference” here means number.

## **2.2 Polysemy**

Some interesting phenomenons in correspondence are that many words in one meaning, and the same Chinese meaning can be represented by different words. Such as: merchandise, commodity, goods, product, article, cargo, shipment, etc. There are still slight differences in these seven words, the four can be used in the meaning of products and the last three are used in shipping and transportation insurance. The linguistic phenomenon of polysemous words reflects the flexibility of vocabulary. When the same word is repeated, different expressions can be used to avoid the duplication and repetition.

## **2.3 Slang**

Although writing must be formal and standard, correspondence vocabulary is the accumulation of long-term expression habits, and combined with the characteristics of different regional languages, so there are some informal slang. Going back to the origins of slang, it refers to new or less polite words or phrases that are used by different special groups. These are not used in serious speech or writing. Some slang even come from special idioms used by prisoners or vagabonds to disguise their identity. But in modern English, especially in spoken English, slang is a sign of native. In business, “rock-bottom offer” means the offer at the lowest price, “to table a discussion” means to postpone discussion, “to position a production” means to open a market for products, and “cash cow” has a meaning of make money.

## **2.4 The old American**

Correspondence language can sometimes give the impression of being awkward because old words are often used in some contracts and documents. These old words are no longer used in modern English and have no special meaning in correspondence. They are even functional words or modal particle.

For examples: 3) We hereby engage with the drawers... “hereby” means “for this reason”, which is a more formal tone. 4) Amounts of drafts negotiated under this L/C must be endorsed on the back hereof. “hereof” means “in the document”, it’s especially the letter of credit.

# **3. Vocabulary Acquisition and Recessive Culture**

## **3.1 The Source of Recessive Culture**

The recessive cultural should not be imitated and used mechanically, understanding of its root should help learners integrate into the culture effectively.

The sources of recessive culture mainly include: Ancient Greek and Roman Mythology, Religious Belief, Aesop’s Fables, Experiences in Daily life... The recessive culture is rooted in the history of international trade, the revision of trade regulations, and the customary expressions of businessmen.

## **3.2 Methods and Measures for Vocabulary Acquisition in Foreign Trade Correspondence**

### **3.2.1 Attach importance to western cultural knowledge**

In the study of international trade, western cultural knowledge is an important part. The category of culture is too large to master. It is difficult for learners to have a thorough understanding. We could infiltrate culture to different social practical scenarios.

First of all, in class teaching, the teacher should add the cultural content to different types of correspondence writing topics. For example: When we are about to write a counteroffer letter. The teacher would guide students to think of following questions: What should be paid attention to? What should not be done? How people are used to consider payment in counter-offer? Are there any euphemisms and idioms in correspondence? When students have an in-depth understanding of the questions, the teacher would give the format and samples.

Second, after class teaching, we may adopt the on-line autonomous learning or the second classroom learning. Students would study the western politics, economy, humanities. The teacher regularly releases micro-class videos, MOOC videos or short plays reflecting trade scenes, to make students imitate them as the habit, and acquire them in the imitation.

### **3.2.2 Innovate the teaching methods of correspondence**

The traditional teaching method of foreign trade correspondence is monotonous and boring. From the analysis of trade process, to determine the trade documents, then draft the writing, and finally confirm with the customer. Under the coordinated development of informationization and higher education, the aim of reform is to improve teaching efficiency and implement personalized education. At present, the combination of online and offline teaching is advocated, the way of result-oriented can actively organize class activities for students. Through short films, videos, other forms, students can understand the recessive culture, intuitively observe the process of inter-cultural communication, the real business activities. Secondly, the teacher could use the situation creation, role playing, business simulation and other activities to help students learn the expression, posture in practical, so as to deepen the understanding of the recessive culture.

### **3.2.3 Innovate the assessment method of correspondence**

As a compulsory course for international trade majors, correspondence has always taken the examination as main methods of assessment. Therefore, knowledge can only be memorized mechanically in terms of vocabulary and sentence patterns, which cannot improve students' ability to respond to trade scenes and deal with emergencies. Reform is necessary. Finding problems and solving problems are testing points, native and reasonable expressing are the plus points, students' performance in discussion and group activities are the observation points. The final exam will be changed into "Correspondence Writing Contest", We can invite foreign teachers, international trade professionals give a mark. It truly makes the students learn necessary skills in practical work, rather than a mere formality.

## **4. Conclusion**

The vocabulary learning is not only the input of isolated vocabulary. Incorporating recessive cultural knowledge can be intuitively presented to students, so that students can take the initiative to discover differences of words, continuously surmount the recessive cultural barriers over a long period of time. In the future, students can choose appropriate words to express and finally they will become high-quality talents with cross-cultural communication ability.

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