

A Research on the Empowerment That Artificial Intelligence Brings to Business Letter Writing - A Case Study of Writing a Payment Reminder Letter

Chen Wei, Zhang Wei *

School of Humanity and Law, Fuzhou Technology and Business University, Fuzhou, Fujian, China

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: In the situation where artificial intelligence is being integrated more deeply into business communication, this paper assesses the business letters that are generated by the AI tools and humans, trying to find the pros and cons. And this paper intends to figure out some optimized strategies to enhance the AI writing.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Business Letter Writing; The 7C Principles; Interpersonal Meaning; Cultural Adaptability; Optimized Strategies

1. Introduction to Business Letter Writing

The 7C principles, which are regarded as the golden standard for international business letters^[1], consist of clarity, being concise, concreteness, correctness, courtesy, completeness, as well as consideration. It is essential to examine whether the AI is capable of fulfilling these requirements.

1.1 The 7C Principles

Clarity: the information is clear, no ambiguity, enabling accurate and efficient understanding (e.g., avoiding vague terms).

Conciseness: it mainly emphasizes brevity, eliminates redundancy, conveys core information to improve efficiency (e.g., avoiding duplication).

Correctness: it focuses on grammatical accuracy, standardized format, precise terms or facts (e.g., industry-standard languages and templates).

Courtesy: it advocates polite and respectful tone, avoids harsh language, and expresses concern (e.g., “please” or “thank you”).

Completeness: it primarily includes all necessary information, allowing informed decisions (e.g., claim letters detail loss and basis).

Consideration: it considers audience needs,

and uses empathy to enhance persuasion (e.g., tailoring sales letters to customer pain points).

1.2 The Construction of Interpersonal Meaning within Business Letters

Business letters use some expressions to build an interpersonal relationships to facilitate cooperation. Using Cambridge BEC Higher complaint letters^[2], based on systemic functional linguistics, this study finds high-quality texts use objective high-value modal metaphors (e.g., “absolutely”) for objectivity and soften tone with others (e.g., “I do hope”), balancing seriousness and negotiation space. The modality system shifts between stances, creating a relationship with both dominance and negotiation willingness. And low-quality texts have modal disorder: excessive subjective modality (e.g., “customers say”) weakens credibility; tough commands cause resistance; low-value predictions (e.g., “may go bankrupt”) reduce deterrence, leading to unstable stances and strained relationships.

1.3 The Cultural Adaptability in the Context of Business Letter Writing

In the context of globalization, business letters hold a central position in international trade. The quality of these letters has an impact on the efficiency of trade operations. They possess set formats, adhere to strict wording requirements, and feature concise structures. Cultural differences between the East and the West pose obstacles to the writing of business letters^[3]. For instance, political backgrounds can influence the way of expression. The thinking styles, whether linear or spiral, bring about structural differences. The understanding of materials can result in misunderstandings. And social-cultural differences lead to deviations in the semantics of vocabulary. To deal with these issues, the AI is required to have cross-cultural awareness

and accurately comprehend terms as well as polysemous words, with an emphasis on adapting to the context.

2. Research Design and Process

By summarizing articles and recording materials, a pie chart shows payment reminder letters are the most frequent in the past decade, so they are the main research focus. A letter from “Business English Writing”^[4] (Hu Yingkun, Che Lijuan) is input into the AIGC tools like Deepseek and Doubao without prompts. The generated letter is compared with the human-written one in the textbook to explore the three elements.

A questionnaire surveyed Business English students on their views of the AI-assisted business letter writing. Most agreed the AI letters follow the three elements, prompting a comparison based on typical letters to verify.

Chart1: Five typical types of business letters



Chart2: Do Payment reminder letters written by AI comply with the 7C principle?

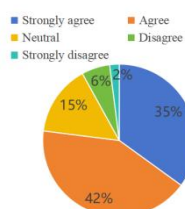


Chart3: Will Payment reminder letters written by AI lead to business relationship breakdown due to the destruction of cultural adaptability?

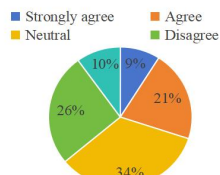


Fig1. Questionnaire Questions & Results

2.1 The Instance of Payment Reminder Letter

Write an initial collection letter that employs polite language, clearly outlines transaction details, sets out payment requirements, indicates overdue status, maintains a friendly attitude, and takes into account the characteristics of cross-border business, like cultural differences, interpersonal implications, and the 7C principles.

Background: China Huacai Textile Co., Ltd. furnished \$800,000 worth of silk fabrics to U.S. Sunshine Fashion Group on October 15, 2024. The contract specified that the payment should be made within 60 days after receipt, which was due by December 14, 2024. Up until January 10, 2025, the payment has

remained unpaid.

The AI-written Version:

Dear Accounts Payable Manager,

We trust that this message reaches you in good condition. We hold our business connection in high regard and are grateful for your cooperation as our partner.

As of January 10, 2025, the payment for invoice numbered HC20241015 (which was issued on October 15, 2024) regarding the \$800,000 worth of silk fabrics remains unpaid. According to the contract, the payment was supposed to be made by December 14, 2024, and currently, it is already 27 days past the due date.

Please carefully review the records and make the settlement right away. Should any issues come up, promptly notify our finance team so as to have a discussion.

In order to sustain our relationship, make this payment a top priority. If there is no confirmation or communication by January 17, 2025, we retain the right to take actions such as applying interest, commencing collections, or initiating legal action as stipulated in the contract and in accordance with the laws.

Our intention is to settle this in an amicable manner. In case of any questions or for confirmation, get in touch with Ms. Li Wei at +86-571-1234-5678 or via the email li.wei@huacai-textile.com.

Thank you for your prompt and focused attention.

The human-written Version:

Dear Sir,

We sincerely hope that you are in good condition. We express our gratitude for the trust that Sunshine Fashion Group has placed in China Huacai Textile. With a firm footing in China's textile heritage, we take pride in being your top-notch silk supplier.

We would like to bring to your attention the transaction that took place on October 15, 2024. It involved silk fabrics worth \$800,000, and the payment was supposed to be made within 60 days of receiving the goods, that is, by December 14, 2024. However, as of January 10, 2025, the payment remains unpaid. We are aware that unforeseen delays might take place. Due to the cultural distinctions between China and the United States, business practices differ. In China, the timely fulfillment of contracts holds great significance for maintaining long-term

relationships. On a global scale, keeping one's promises is of importance as well- American companies attach great value to having good credit for the sake of sustainability.

In order to uphold our partnership, it is necessary to make arrangements for the payment. Here are the details:

The company in question is China Huacai Textile Co., Ltd.

The bank in question is the Bank of China, specifically the [Branch Name].

Account: 6543 2109 8765 4321

SWIFT: BKCHCNBJXXX

Reach out to our team by dialing +86-0571-98765432 or sending an email to huacai_textiles@china.com in case there are any issues.

We aim to resolve this matter promptly so as to continue our partnership. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Jack

The chief executive officer of Huacai Textile Co., Ltd in China

2.2 The Adherence to the 7C Principles

The AI letters have high clarity, correctness, and completeness, but have redundant phrases harming conciseness and limited cultural consideration. However, formulaic phrases hurt conciseness, and culturally tone-deaf demands violate consideration, straining relationships. Humans balance conciseness and consideration, fostering resonance, but adaptability risks ambiguity in cross-cultural contexts.

2.2.1 The Building of Interpersonal Meaning

In payment reminders, interpersonal meaning balances firmness and rapport. The AI uses formal politeness (“kindly request”) and precise details (e.g., “27 days overdue”) but has rigid tone with abrupt legal threats, lacking cultural awareness. Human letters engage emotionally with gratitude (“thank you for your trust”) and shared values (“keeping promises matters globally”), bridge cultures by noting Sino-U.S. priorities, and encourage dialogue (“contact us with difficulties”). However, “we regret to note” is overly subjective, and “textile traditions” dilutes urgency. The AI ensures clarity but risks alienation; humans build relationships but may sacrifice precision.

2.2.2 Cultural Adaptability

The AI uses standard polite phrases and clear

contract details, fitting western directness, but lacks cultural touches: ignores U.S. norms of gradual warnings, sudden legal threats may seem harsh. Human letters address Sino-U.S. differences, link payment to mutual values (China's long-term ties, U.S. credit), stress partnership, and offer help, fitting Eastern harmony. But “textile tradition” is irrelevant to U.S. readers, and “we regret to note” is indirect for western preference. The AI suits western directness but lacks cross-border harmony; humans blend cultures but sometimes lack western brevity/directness.

2.3 Key Findings

The AI excels in clarity, correctness, completeness with structured data but struggles with conciseness (redundancies) and cultural tone. Humans customize but add irrelevant preambles.

The AI uses rigid modals like “must” and transactional language, weakening engagement; humans use empathy and openness.

The AI's Western linear structure fits procedural clarity but lacks nuance (sudden legal threats); humans bridge gaps but may seem indirect to Westerners.

Strong in compliance but weak in relational/cultural intelligence, the AI worries over half of survey respondents. A hybrid model is needed: the AI handles structure, humans refine tone, culture, relationships.

3. The Optimized Strategies for Business Letters

From the findings, this part puts forward strategies to make the AI's efficiency get along well with human empathy and cultural nuance, taking payment reminder case studies as examples.

3.1 Case Analysis

In payment reminders, the AI uses rigid phrases like “urgently prioritize” and “reserve legal action”, lacking courtesy, empathy, and cultural awareness. Human letters balance firmness and diplomacy, with empathy (“we understand unforeseen circumstances”) and cultural sensitivity (“timely performance aids long-term ties”), fitting Eastern norms.

3.2 Strategies for Targeted Optimization Algorithms for Tone Modulation

Substitute the inflexible modals with language

that promotes collaboration. For example, say “To keep our partnership going, we recommend settling by January 17” rather than using the forceful “You must settle”.

Integration of Cultural Context

In the eastern markets, it puts an emphasis on long-term connections. For instance, one might say, “As a partner of great value, we look for solutions that are in line with the heritage of your brand”.

In the western markets, it makes use of direct and unambiguous deadlines. For instance, one could state “Please dispatch the samples on or before June 15 (Order #B2024)”.

It incorporates the cultural database so as to steer clear of taboos. For instance, refrain from using “4” when dealing with Chinese clients; also, avoid the color red when it comes to matters of Western urgency.

Vocabulary in Cross-Cultural Contexts

It substitutes “high-class” with “premium”; employ “prestigious venue” (in the East) in contrast to “high-end space” (in the West).

Framing Centered on the Relationship

It reframes the demands in this way: “As a reliable partner, we would surely appreciate samples that are customized to meet our specific needs” rather than simply stating “We need samples”. Also, add prompts like “Could the designs possibly incorporate traditional patterns when it comes to Eastern clients?”

Hybrid Human-AI Workflow

The AI puts stress on the structure, such as invoice details and deadlines. Humans, on the other hand, work on refining the tone.

In the eastern markets: it incorporates relationship phrases such as “To maintain our harmony, we propose...”.

The the western markets, it focuses on strengthening the deadlines. Specifically, it's required that the payment should be made by July 15 so as to uphold our agreement.

Dynamic Modality System

Use graded modals:

Initial reminders were sent stating: 'We suggest settling the matter by July 5 so as to avert any disruptions' rather than using the phrasing “You are required to pay within 3 days”.

Queries: “Would you be so kind as to share your catalog when it's convenient for you?” (as opposed to “Send catalog right away”).

Cultural Symbol Checker

Chinese clients tend to utilize “8” in place of

“4” when it comes to pricing.

Western clients are advised to utilize blue or gray to signify urgency.

Feedback-Driven Learning

It corporates that the revisions made by humans, for example, give preference to “kindly request” rather than “demand”. Also, it updates the regional data as well, such as banning references to alcohol in the Middle East and enhancing the use of honorifics in Japan.

The Core Strategies in the Context of the AI-Enhanced Writing

Allocate the roles in such a way that the AI takes charge of ensuring clarity, correctness, and completeness, while humans are responsible for handling courtesy and consideration.

Train the AI using cultural data sets such as the BEC letters related to “guanxi” and “face culture”.

Set up feedback loops: the AI creates something which then gets revised by humans and in turn the data enhances its cross-cultural accuracy.

4. Conclusion

This study examined the use of artificial intelligence in business letters, focusing on payment reminders. The AI presents dual characteristics. It improves work efficiency by complying with the 7C principles, but it lacks interpersonal warmth due to its blunt tone, and has western cultural bias. This reflects the tension between the “instrumental rationality” of artificial intelligence and the “relational wisdom” of global business. The “culture-emotion-function” strategy transforms artificial intelligence into a strategic partner by integrating cross-cultural databases, dynamic tone algorithms, and human-computer collaboration. Combining the standardization of artificial intelligence with human cultural and relationship expertise can maintain depth for sustainable partnerships. A hybrid model matters: the AI handles procedures; humans manage culture and empathy, enabling rigorous, culturally resonant communication in digital commerce.

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