

外贸英语函电时间表达方法

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资本主义商人有句口头禅：“Time means money.”且不说这句话是否确切，但却生动地说明了加强时间观念在外贸业务中的重要性。我们不是资本主义商人，但并不意味着我们可以不加强时间观念。恰恰相反，我们在与外商交往的过程中更要准时、守时，以体现我社会主义外贸企业职工严谨的科学态度和一丝不苟的工作作风。

在我对外业务活动中，无论是面洽，还是函电洽商，明确的时间概念都是十分重要的。因此，在洽谈、成交、签约和一切函电往来的过程中，我们必须用确切的语言准确地表达各种时间概念。如果措词不当，不但不能正确地表达自己的思想，有时还会弄出笑话，产生误解，甚至造成经济损失。本文试就外贸英语函电中常用而又容易混淆的几种表达时间的方法，举例说明，以供读者参考。

I. in time 和 on time

in time 是“及时”，而 on time 为“准时”。

例 句：

a. We hope that you will have the goods shipped in time.

我们希望，你将及时发货。

b. As expected, the plane loaded with your order took off on time this morning.

如所预料，今天上午装有你方定货的飞机准时起飞了。

第一句中的行为是发生在所规定的时间之内，而第二句中的行为则是不早不晚，刚好在规定的某一时刻。

II. 介词 upon 与介词 after 所组成的短语

前者表示一个行为发生后，另一个行为立即发生；后者则表示一种行为发生在另一种行为之后，但并不是必须立即发生。

例 句：

a. Please see to it that shipping advice will be sent to us by cable upon delivery.

一俟装船后，请务必立即打电报通知我方。

b. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that your shipping advice reached us two days after delivery.

谨请你们注意，装船两天后我们才收到你方的电报通知。

第一句中的行为是在装船后立即发生的，而第二句中的行为则是发生在装船后的某一时刻。

III. 介词 in 和介词 within 所组成的短语

虽然这两个短语都表示某一段时间内，但它们所表达的含义是有所区别的。当介词 in 分

别和 year, month 组合在一起时,表示在某年、某月,如 in 1981, in March;当它和 future 组成 in future 短语时,则表示“在将来”。介词 within 具有明显的限制性,表示在某个时间以内,如 within 60 days, within two months,但后面必须跟有相应的介词短语,加以限制。

例句:

a. We took up this line of business in 1975.

我们於一九七五年着手经营这方面的业务。

b. A trading group from our head office visited your country in November 1979.

我总公司的一个贸易小组于1979年11月份曾访问过贵国。

c. Thanks to the effort made by our manufacturers, we shall be able to offer many new patterns and designs in future.

由于我厂方的努力,我们将可提供许多新花色、新品种。

d. As usual, shipment will be effected within 60 days after arrival of your L/C.

象往常一样,收到信用证后60天内交货。

e. It is essential that your L/C should be opened within the time limit specified in the contract.

重要的一点是你方务必在合同规定的限期内开出信用证。

IV. 介词 by, at, before 分别所组成的短语

介词 by 所组成的短语表示到某个时候,如 by the end of this year 为“到今年年底”;介词 at 所组成的短语表示在某个时候,如 at the end of this year 为“在今年年底”;介词 before 所组成的短语表示在某个时候以前,如 before the end of this year 为“今年年底以前”。

例句:

a. We wish to remind you that the agency agreement will expire by the end of this year.

我们想提醒你注意,代理协议到今年年底就将期满。

b. Please rest assured that the commission due to you will be remitted to you at the end of this year.

请放心,你的佣金将于今年年底汇达。

c. We would stress for your attention that all the contracts you have so far signed with us must be completed before the end of this year.

我们想强调一下,你方至今与我签定的所有合约必须在今年年底之前履行完毕。

V. 介词 till 所组成的短语与 up to 所组成的短语

它们都表示到某一时刻为止,但前者往往用在形意相反的句子中,而后者则多用在否定句中。

例句:

a. It was not till yesterday that we received your cable confirmation.

我们只是到昨天才收到你方的电报确认。(先否定,尔后又肯定。)

b. We shall keep the stock for you till the end of this month.

这批货我们将为你保留到本月底为止。(先肯定,尔后又否定。)

c. Up to now, we have not yet received your specific instructions with regard to the mode of packing.

有关包装式样问题,我们至今尚未收到你方的具体指示。

VI. as soon as ... 和 as early as ...

as soon as 后接形容词 possible 为“尽快”;如后接一子句,则为“一俟...,就...”as early as 后接形容词 possible 为“尽早”;如后接具体日期,多用在过去时,为“早在...”。

例 句:

a. As there is not much time left before my departure for home, we must finish the discussion as soon as possible.

我回国前所剩时间不多了,我们必须尽快结束讨论。

b. As the selling season is approaching, you are requested to ship the goods to us as early as possible.

因销售季节迫近,请尽早发货。

c. We shall contact with our manufacturers as soon as we have your specific orders. 一俟收到你方的具体定单,我们将立即与厂方联系。

d. With regard to your commission on Order No. 3216, we wish to advise that a bank cheque for the amount of US \$. 500.00 was sent to you as early as December 6 last year.

关于你 3216 号定单项下的佣金,早在去年十二月六日,我已寄给你 500 美元的银行支票一张。

VII. 介词 during 和 from 所组成的短语

介词 during 所组成的短语与 from 所组成的短语均表示在某一期间内,但后者所表示的时间比前者更确切,更具体。此外, during 一般不与具体年、月组合在一起,而与其他名词组合在一起,表示“在...期间”,如 during the fair, during the exhibition, during the selling season

例 句:

a. Unless otherwise there are unexpected events in the world market, prices of these products will remain stable during the fair.

除非世界市场发生意想不到的变化,这些产品的价格在交易会期间仍将保持稳定。

b. In compliance with your request, shipment will be effected from August to September this year.

根据你方的要求,货物將於今年八月到九月间发运。

以上只不过是外贸英语函电中几种表达时间的方法。此外,还有其他 (下转第28页)