

# BUSINESS COMMUNICATION (BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN COMMERCIAL LETTERS)

SILVIA MADINCEA PAȘCU  
TIBISCUS UNIVERSITY OF TIMIȘOARA  
silvia\_madincea76@yahoo.com

## **Abstract:**

*Among the six levels of communication (intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, public, mass, and intercultural), our paper has aimed to describe the organizational communication and to make students aware of the main lexical, morphological, and syntactic features of the Italian commercial letters. Being aware of such features will improve the relationships between different clients and companies, and will create useful and correct texts for various means of communication.*

*Our morphological, lexical and syntactic analysis is based on a number of 30 letters. The main purpose of our work is to emphasize the use of different grammatical categories (mode, tense, form, impersonal expressions, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, numerals), of elliptical sentences, of the verbal forms stereotypes etc.*

**Keywords:** *business, communication, commercial letters*

## **1. Introduction**

Economic language is commonly used in the columns and articles dedicated to economy by different journals and magazines and in the economic television and radio programmes. This is the result of the spread of economic terms and of neologisms (*fiscalizzazione, capital gains*).

Economic language has become the linguistic tool not only for economists, but also for non-specialists, especially because of the continuous attention given to economy by the press and TV.

On the other hand, economic language is also present in different commercial letters used by companies in order to communicate with each other, as well as with their clients. The latter use of economic language, that is in commercial correspondence, represents the main interest of our paper. After a brief presentation of the main characteristics of the language of economics, identified by different researchers such as Sobrero (2002), Serianni (2003), Săndulescu (2007), our paper has aimed to make a morphological, syntactic and lexical analysis of a number of 30 commercial letters.

Among the main characteristics of the specialized language of economics, there have been mentioned: lack of ambiguity, specialised vocabulary, the use of acronyms, nominal style, and a rigid textual structure. (see Săndulescu, 2007: 59)

For the economic vocabulary, the same authors identify: numerous neologisms, English borrowings, Latin terms, metaphors and euphemisms, various terms taken from juridical, political, and fiscal language.

As far as morphological and syntactic features are concerned, Săndulescu mentions: the nominalisation of verbal structures, the preference for nominal style, a reduced number of verbal tenses (present and past indicative), a reduced number of subordinate sentences, the use of passives and impersonal forms.

Being aware of such features will improve the relationships between different clients and companies, and will create useful and correct texts for various means of

communication. Commercial letters are documents used in the communication among the companies, which not only give information for the development of their activity, but also show their image. While writing a commercial letter it is necessary to be precise, direct, and concise, avoiding complicated expressions, useless compliments and repetitions. The language must be correct, simple, accurate, and polite.

## 2. Commercial letters analysis

Based on a number of 30 commercial letters, mainly taken from *Guida alla corrispondenza commerciale e non. Consigli e modelli di lettere commerciali e non, in italiano, inglese e francese* (Dondina Adelami, Laura; D'Angelo Bechi, Anna, 1999), our work has tried to make a morphological, syntactical and lexical analysis in order to emphasize the use of different grammatical categories in such letters. As far as morphology is concerned, we have been interested in the tense, forms and phrasal verbs used, in the most common types of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and adverbs, while for the syntax, we have paid special attention to elliptical sentences. Lexical aspects, such as verbal stereotypes and changes of the grammatical value, have also been taken into consideration.

### 2.1. Morphological analysis

#### 2.1.1. Verbs

Our analysis has shown that the majority of the verbs are used in the Indicative mood, in the present, past and future simple. Used to describe products, services and companies, the present tense has most of the occurrences: *possiamo, sono, preghiamo auguriamo, prevediamo, restiamo, siamo, abbiamo* etc. Past activities developed by companies and past relationships between companies are indicated by the simple past: *hanno consentito, ha dato (origine), abbiamo cercato, ha aperto, abbiamo avuto (modo), abbiamo apprezzato, ha contattato, ha concordato, abbiamo ricevuto, abbiamo cercato, abbiamo emesso*, etc. The expectations of a commercial society are expressed generally by the future simple: *dovrà, saranno, vorrà, troverà, permetterà, sarà, potrete, vorrete, verrà, consentirà, deriveranno, permetterà, nascerà, vorrà, gradiremo, saprà, verranno, verrà, procederemo, si stabilizzerà, non mancheremo*, etc.

Another verbal mode that registers a high occurrence in the thirty commercial letters is the present and past infinitive: *porgerVi, fornirLe, poterlo, fare, conoscerLa, esaminare, contattarLa, concordare, dedicare, prendere, aprire, soddisfare, inserire, segnalare aver interpellato, aver mantenuto*, etc. As we can see in the above mentioned examples, many infinitives are followed by a pronoun.

As far as voice is concerned, the passive voice is preferred in the commercial letters: *è pregato, è stata realizzata, era stato inviato, è gradito, è costretta, sono stati aumentati, sono stati acquisiti, sono stati venduti, dovrebbero essere sottoposte, viene controllato, potrà essere inviato, sono stati causati, è stato curato*, etc.

Very often, we can identify modal verbs such as *dovere, potere, volere*, with an infinitive: *dovrà comunicare, voler segnalare, può scollegare, poter raggiungere, poterLa annoverare, vorrà esprimere, potrete constatare, vorrete dare atto, verrà concesso, poterlo fare, devo conoscerLa*.

As a final observation, there are many periphrastic constructions, such as *stiamo selezionando (stare + gerund), far controllare (fare + infinitive), resta inteso (restare + past participle)* and impersonal expressions: *si fa presente, sarà necessario procedere, si prega, si raccomanda, si rimuove, non è possibile, è ovvio*.

### 2.1.2. Nouns, adjectives and pronouns

Besides proper nouns referring to cities, countries, companies (*Fabbriche Riunite Rossi s.r.l.*), events (*Fiera del Tessile*), brands (*Champagne Manet*), people (*Francesco Galli*), and common names, a special place is taken by nouns linked to the working environment, called "tecnicismi": *distribuzione, prodotti, incremento, deposito, servizio, riduzione, costi, spedizione, soci, offerte, dépliant, tasso, ordini, catalogo, produzione, sconto, assicurazioni, patrimonio, capi, società, clienti, condizioni di pagamento, acquisti, campionario, campione, azienda, garanzia, termine, vendita, fornitura, importazioni, clientela, ditte, addebito, bolla, fattura, ordinativi, nota di accredito, contrasegno, assegno circolare, bonifico bancario*, etc.

The majority of the adjectives identified in the 30 analysed commercial letters are used to describe a company, the relationships between companies, different products and services: *notevole incremento, migliore gestione, nuovo modello, nuovi listini prezzi, sconto straordinario, sconto speciale, campionario disponibile, condizioni vantaggiose, imballaggio difettoso, articoli rotti, articoli danneggiati*, etc.

Unstressed forms of the pronouns are generally attached to infinitives and gerunds forming the so called "verbi con clitici": *inviarVi, informarLa, farci, ringraziandoLa*, etc.

### 2.2. Syntactic analysis

The main characteristic of the analysed commercial letters is the unexpressed subject as in: *Abbiamo il piacere di...*, *In allegato, troverà il depliant...*, *Desidero fornirLe...*, *Abbiamo ricevuto il Vostro ordine...*, *Vi preghiamo di...*, *Porgiamo i nostri migliori saluti, Vogliate gradire i nostri cordiali saluti*, and the impersonal sentences such as: *Si raccomanda di stampare, Si fa presente che...*, *Si prega di voler segnalare*. Only a few sentences with unexpressed predicate have been identified in the 30 commercial letters such as: *Consumi ridotti del 5% rispetto ai modelli attualmente in circolazione e conseguente riduzione del tasso di inquinamento*.

### 2.3. Lexical analysis

All the commercial letters taken into consideration by our analysis are characterised by nominalisation of infinitive verbs. Some of these examples are the following: *l'apprendere* (from *apprendere*), *il carico* (from *caricare*), *l'andamento* (from *andare*), *la consegna* (from *consegnare*), *la stampa* (from *stampare*), *l'inserimento* (from *inserire*), *l'attesa* (from *attendere*), etc.

Adjectives of verbal origin (past participles) are also frequent: *domande mirate, successo riportato, prezzo elevato, prodotto adatto, prezzi esposti, merce inviataci, importo pagato, merce ricevuta, controllo effettuato, spese sostenute, fiducia accordataci*, etc.

Another lexical characteristic of the commercial letters is the presence of verbal stereotypes, such as inversions (*fermo restando, al piacere di presto incontrarLa*) and verbal structures (personal + impersonal verbs): *ci siamo resi conto*.

We can not end our analysis without mentioning the abbreviations used in all the commercial letters. There are abbreviations of professional titles (*Avv.* for *avvocato/avvocata*, *Dott./Dott.ssa* for *dottore/dottrici*, *Ing.* for *ingegner(e)*, *Prof./Prof.ssa* for *professore/professoressa*, etc.), as well as commercial abbreviations<sup>156</sup> (*all.* - allegato, *Ass./Assic-* Assicurazione, *B.M.* - Borsa merci, *B.V.* - Borsa Valori, *C.A.P.* - Codice di Avviamento Postale, *C.C.I.A.A.* - Camera di Commercio, Industria,

---

<sup>156</sup> For a detailed list of commercial abbreviation see Cochi (2002: 247-250) and Sălișteanu Cristea (2004: 197-202).

Artigianato e Agricoltura, *doc.* - documenti, *E.C.*- estratto conto, *fatt.* - fattura, *L.T.A.* - Lettera di Trasporto aereo, etc.).

### 3. Conclusions

Our brief analysis has revealed the preference of commercial letters for nominalisations and for verbal stereotypes. As far as the verbal tense and mood are concerned, we have noticed that most of the verbs are in the indicative mood, in the present simple, past simple or future simple tense, as well as in the infinitive mood. The passive voice and the impersonal forms are frequently used in order to make the discourse impersonal and formal.

On the other hand, from a syntactic point of view, commercial letters are characterised by elliptical sentences, with unexpressed subjects.

### REFERENCES

1. Astolfi, Eugenio; Bertoloni, Roberta; Gatti M., Luisa, *Economia aziendale per il biennio I*, Milano, Casa Editrice Tramontana, 2003.
2. Cherubini, Nicoletta, *L'italiano per gli affari*, Roma, Casa Editrice Bonacci Editore, 1992.
3. Cochi Christiane, *Italiana economică și comercială*, București, Editura Niculescu, 2002.
4. Dondina Adelami, Laura; D'Angelo Bechi, Anna, *Guida alla corrispondenza commerciale e non. Consigli e modelli di lettere commerciali e non, in italiano, inglese e francese*, Roma, Casa Editrice Buffetti Editore, 1996.
5. Sălișteanu Cristea, Oana, *Limba italiană. Corespondență comercială*, București, Editura Polirom, 2004.
6. Săndulescu, Mariana, *Linguaggio economico-finanziario di divulgazione scritta nell'italiano contemporaneo*, București, Editura ASE, 2007.
7. Serianni, Luca, *Italiani scritti*, Bologna, Casa Editrice Il Mulino, 2003.
8. Sosnowski, Roman, *Origini della lingua dell'economia in Italia*, Milano, Casa Editrice FrancoAngeli, 2006.
9. Sobrero, A. Alberto, *Introduzione all'italiano contemporaneo. La variazione e gli usi*, Roma, 2002.