



When Egos Collide: The Linguistics of Aggressiveness in English, German, and Hungarian Business Letters – A Contrastive Approach

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Abstract. The subject of verbal aggressiveness seems to be marginalized in the context of business correspondence. Our paper sets out to fill in this niche, as it exposes the linguistic patterns of this phenomenon within business letters. The study commences with a conceptual framework within which the most relevant theoretical findings applicable to business correspondence in general and to verbal aggressiveness in particular are foregrounded. Next, through a descriptive approach, it presents a series of linguistic markers to identify the morphological, syntactic, and semantic constructions for the expression of aggressiveness. For this purpose, the article scrutinizes authentic business letters in English, German, and Hungarian, and then it juxtaposes data contrastively to conclude that offensive emotions materialize in relatively similar linguistic structures in these languages, i.e. through verbs and modal verbs of obligation, necessity, and impossibility, verbs in the first-person singular, conditional and result clauses, and time adverbials. Furthermore, given the linguistic characteristics of the aforementioned languages, business letters also exploit specific tools, such as inversion, fronting, and the emphatic “do”, to communicate hostile and threatening messages. Due to the large variety of linguistic resources provided, we deem that verbal aggressiveness alters, reshapes, and enriches the business discourse. It therefore deserves a proper place in the rhetoric of business correspondence.

Keywords: verbal aggressiveness, business letters, descriptive analysis, contrastive analysis

1. Introduction

Pervasive and omnipresent, aggressiveness seems to take over everyday life, as it penetrates work, school, traffic, and personal relationships. It is a multifaceted phenomenon, which detonates forcefully and often unexpectedly or which sneaks in subtly and undisguised. Otherwise, it simply abides in passivity and wordlessness.

In a very rudimentary perception, business correspondence involves communication, human interaction, and implicitly a wide range of emotions. It is the reverberation of people's inner selves and, apparently, cannot be devoid of anger, frustration, annoyance, or hostility. Our paper expounds the linguistic dimensions of verbal aggressiveness in the context of business letters. It tracks the linguistic manifestations of this phenomenon, takes an inventory of them with the aim to postulate observations that can complement the hiatus of this field.

The article analyses English, German, and Hungarian business writings in a descriptive way. First, it provides a theoretical overview of the most pertinent studies related to business correspondence in general and of the very few linguistic aspects linked to aggressiveness in particular. Later, in the practical section, it compiles a list of indicators both to pinpoint and to gauge the linguistic nuances of aggressiveness within business letters. Eventually, within the confines of a contrastive study, it sheds light on the prevailing characteristics and construes the underlying analogies among the observed trends.

2. Literature review

We seek to grasp business letters from numerous perspectives, i.e. discourse analysis, pragmatics, communication with emphasis on emotional content, verbal aggressiveness and style as well as impoliteness associated with negativity. Our approach rests on the results that prior investigations have proffered in this field. With the substantiation of the most relevant facts, we prepare the rich ground of business correspondence in an effort to determine an array of morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures based on which verbal aggressiveness will be captured in the ensuing practical part of the paper. In this respect, we view aggressiveness in accordance with Dominic Infante's definition:

An interpersonal behavior may be considered aggressive if it applies force physically or symbolically in order, minimally, to dominate and perhaps damage or, maximally, to defeat and perhaps destroy the locus of attack. The locus of attack in interpersonal communication can be a person's body, material possessions, self-concept, position on topics of communication or behavior. (Infante 1987: 158)

As a consistent explanation of the concept, it encompasses the different nuances of aggressiveness, covering hidden, subtle forms and open, direct, and forceful ones.

2.1. English business letters

A review of the literature regarding English business letters offers many-sided viewpoints, as the analysis of such letters often reveals multidimensional approaches. Therefore, the literature abounds in examples of linguistic surveys ranging from structure and form to language content.

Pilegaard (1997) is one of the first authors to make a linguistic introspection in the pragmatics of business letters, pointing out the way requests are formulated. In Hollinger (2005), the stress is on persuasion intended as a strategy, while in Ren and Liu (2020) the concept of politeness is taken into account. This is considered to be a basic principle in a business letter, embodied by “different transmitting ways of positive information and negative information” (Ren–Liu 2020: 64).

A plethora of studies outlines the politeness strategies used in business letters by native and non-native English speakers. This subject is developed by Goudarzi, Ghonsooly, and Taghipour (2015) based on Brown and Levinson’s theory of negative and positive politeness. Maier (1992: 189) argues that there are “striking differences” in the strategies employed by native and non-native speakers despite a general awareness of the existence of politeness strategies in business letter writing. Sims and Guice (1992) conduct similar research deriving from the “assumption that cultural factors beyond language greatly affect communication, factors such as the knowledge of the business communication practices and of the cultural expectations of other countries” (Sims–Guice 1992: 23).

The relationship between cultural influences and persuasion in English business letters is also investigated by Zheng (2015). Elsewhere, persuasion and its linguistic patterns are evaluated by Zamanian (2014). The cultural aspect in this type of letters is explored by Aimoldina and Zharkynbekova (2014). Other elements, such as euphemism and empathy, are assessed by several researchers. More precisely, euphemism in business letters is sketched by Wang (2016) and Wang (2018), whereas pragmatic empathy is featured by Zhanghong and Qian (2018).

Aggressiveness in English business letters is presented by Kovács (2021). The paper stems from Friedemann Schulz von Thun’s theories and discloses the aggressive-devaluing communication style in letters of complaint. It also determines several facets of aggressiveness, namely criticizing, reproach, accusation, interpretation, lecturing, cursing, swearing, irony, threatening, mistrust, attack, directness, insistence, impatience, and harsh honesty. Nonetheless, the examples enumerated here are the reflections of the teaching-learning process and list functions and phrases for the expression of verbal aggressiveness.

The topic of interpersonal function through mood and modality is portrayed by Xu (2012). Different aspects of referring to mood and modality in business letters and their role in expressing politeness are discussed by Vergaro (2004) and Qian and Pan (2017). Moreover, Someya (2010) is concerned with the use of modal verbs and their semantic functions in a business letter corpus.

A genre analysis on inquiry letters across cultures is carried out by Jalilifar and Beitsayyah (2011). Besides, the business letter is examined through the lenses of critical discourse analysis (Iqbal and Anwar 2013).

2.2. German business letters

German business letters are widely discussed in the academic community, their structure and discourse being subject to meticulous evaluations. Various studies offer insights into the style and the content (Reiners 2001) or into the typology, the layout, and the structure of these letters (Wurm 2002). Alternative bibliographic sources provide practical examples of linguistic tools meant to declutter written business communication (Sauer 2008).

German business letters are also viewed from intercultural angles, with emphasis on how they can bypass cultural difficulties and dispel stereotypes in order to facilitate effective business communication (Slawek 2009). Similarly, intercultural approaches to their discourse have garnered much attention. Kegyes's contrastive analysis (2018) on German and Hungarian business letters delves into the linguistic structures of offers and enquiries. Zorica (2011) dissects a corpus of business letters on the basis of power distance, the relation I–you and we–you, politeness and persuasion strategies as well as mitigation techniques.

Concerning the emotional content, it is highly recommended for letter writers to be friendly and positive. On the other hand, it is implied that emotions and intricate issues should not be given place in business letters (Birgelen 2013). Positive and negative feelings coupled with their potential effects are brought into discussion in the case of advertisements (Lutzer 2010) and sales letters (Brückner and Reinert 2007).

Verbal aggressiveness *per se* is, however, scarcely or insufficiently depicted in the context of business correspondence. In fact, the little research conducted in this field uncovers only the contours of this phenomenon. As for the rules of business letter writing in general and the use of the singular and plural forms of nouns in particular, it has been found that the singular number should be avoided since it may add an aggressive connotation. Instead, one should resort to the so-called “diplomatic plural”, which can alleviate negativity (Mielow-Weidmann and Weidmann 1998). Again, the capitalization of salient ideas in the body of the business letter can incorporate an offensive effect (Goldmann 2007).

2.3. Hungarian business letters

Studies on Hungarian business letters delineate some of the conventions of letter writing in terms of layout, structure, and content (Langer–Raátz 2003) or pertaining to their style and typology (Borgulya–Somogyvári 2009). In addition, Honffy (2000), Borgulya and Somogyvári (2009) devise a rich repertoire of samples for the different types of business writings.

Szabó (2002) advances that business letters with a negative content should have a positive or a neutral opening. Elsewhere, Hofmeister-Tóth and Mitev (2007) underline the importance of style, content, and positive tone since these leave their imprint on both the sender and the company.

Radó (2009) broaches the subject of our interest and views diplomacy and tactfulness as fundamental principles along which business letters should be guided. He hints that if a letter is to convey unfriendly messages, the personal pronouns in the second person singular or plural (“Ön”, “Önök”)¹ should be put aside, and passive verbal structures should be applied with the aim to soften the intensity of negative feelings.

In summary, English, German, and Hungarian business letters have been unravelled mostly based on their style, discourse as well as aspects linked to interculturality, politeness, and negativity. Nevertheless, current studies fall short of addressing them from the perspective of verbal aggressiveness. This has prompted our research into how aggressiveness can be channelled into business texts and what linguistic patterns it can take shape in.

3. Descriptive analysis

In this section, we devise the linguistic structures of aggressiveness separately in English, German, and in Hungarian business letters. This descriptive part is followed by a discussion where we draw a parallel between the data and subsequently interpret the common traits permeating the studied texts.

The corpus of the research is made up of twenty-four business letters in English, eighteen letters in German, and eighteen in Hungarian. Our samples are authentic texts that have been put at our disposal by several companies. We have chosen original writings in the belief that these can better describe today’s rhetoric of business letters. Given the partially confidential information processed in the article, the organizations have requested anonymity. On this ground, our article pins down solely the morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of the phenomenon.

1 “Ön” (singular form) and “Önök” (plural form) are the polite equivalents of the personal pronoun “you” in Hungarian.

From the point of view of the genre, the collected texts comprise predominantly complaints but also apologies, enquiries, offers, answers to offers, decisions, and requests. Hence, they have been used for both internal and external communication.

3.1. The aggressive tone in English business letters

The following markers of verbal aggressiveness can be observed in the corpus of English business letters:

- direct, unequivocal requests and explicit formulations without prior introductions or explanations, asking for a cooperative and obedient behaviour on the part of the reader, e.g. “I wanted to get your view on”, “I wanted to understand [...] if you see any issues”, “[u]pon his departure, J.’s team will report directly to me”, “I wanted to alert you”, “will therefore not be changed”, “we will work directly with all B2B customers”, “[i]f you look at brand distribution in the world, it works in this way”, “for 2021 I want the full [...] territory”, “[f]or your information, we opened”. Even if, apparently, from a semantic or linguistic point of view, the traits of aggressiveness in these examples may not be particularly discernible, as long as they lack an introductory or preparatory message to indicate the larger context or the circumstances, they can be interpreted as impolite, urging, and aggressive from a pragmatic perspective;

- the expression of impossibility, obligation, and necessity, communicating various degrees of constraint and leaving no other choice for the addressee, e.g. “it is impossible”, “have to be checked”, “they will need to continue working”, “that needs to happen”, “we need to be more professional”, “we cannot have a second or a third company for the distribution”, “you need to be strong and have one distribution company”, “I cannot say”, “we will not be able to propose”, “our turnover will not be able to be”;

- first conditionals suggesting restrictions, e.g. “[i]f we distribute your brand with exclusivity, we will not work with”, “[i]f you really want to keep the other distributors, we will not be able to propose”;

- the fronting of *wh*-clauses to insist on essential points, e.g. “[w]hat I will be looking for is”;

- the passive voice instead of a polite request, e.g. “[p]lease be informed that”;

- elements of orality, including the use of the emphatic “do”, to increase the persuasive power of emotions, to sensitize the reader, and to confirm messages more resolutely, e.g. “[p]ut yourself in our position”, “what would you do when receiving these goods?”, “[w]hat would differentiate grade A from grade B?”, “[w]e did bring this up”, “[o]ne example?”, “I am discussing with you”, “I did not say”;

- the display of emotions, such as bewilderment, anger and irony, e.g. “I am really confused about this picture”, “[t]his is outrageous”, “as our Google champion”;

– clauses of reason to reinforce hostility, explain situations on the basis of some existing evidence or justify measures more clearly and firmly, e.g. “as you can see in the attached picture”, “as you can see in the attached photos”, “companies which import [...] ask for [...] because it will not appear in their products”, “[a]s we have already discussed”, “as you would have experience in the frequency of the problem”, “as we will have our sales people on the road”, “[b]ecause we had a long-term collaboration with this company”;

– expressions of defensive-aggressive response to threatening or intrusive behaviour, represented by facts and documents provided as proof, e.g. “to investigate with workers”, “to check cameras in your facility”, “it shows that [...] are clean”, “is difficult to be among the goods”, “please revert to the second page of the sent specifications”, “that I have sent [...] with quotation and pictures”, “it is normal that”, “we usually document pictures for marketing”, “kindly find the attached pictures for your goods [...] to check yourself the quality”, “this is the legal and non-conflicting way to solve the problem”, “it is a normal way to work on the B2B market”.

3.2. The aggressive tone in German business letters

The morphological, syntactic, and semantic constructions below render the aggressive tone in German business letters:

– passive constructions to maintain distance and objectivity, e.g. “Nachbarn dürften aber nicht gestört werden” (‘neighbours should not be disturbed’),² “in einen angemessenen Ausgleich gebracht werden müssen” (‘an appropriate balance must be struck’), „[na]chdem nun bestätigt ist” (‘after it is confirmed’), “[d]er Vorgang wurde [...] gemeldet” (‘the process [...] was reported’), “werden berechnete Ansprüche bezahlt” (‘rightful claims will be paid’);

– modal verbs expressing obligation, necessity, and impossibility, e.g. “Herr X. kann [...] den Mangel nicht abstellen” (‘Mr X. cannot [...] rectify the fault’), “[d]amit sollte der [...] Schaden ausreichend entschädigt sein” (‘with this, the [...] damage should be sufficiently compensated for’), “[e]s kann nicht sein” (‘it cannot be’), “ich kann nicht beurteilen” (‘I cannot assess’);

– infinitive constructions with a passive meaning for a detached and impersonal style, e.g. “sei zu bestimmen” (‘it is to be defined’), “[d]em [...] sind Zeiträume freizuhalten” (‘one has to keep time intervals free’), “[d]ie [...] Folgeschäden sind somit von Ihnen zu tragen” (‘one is held liable for consequential losses’), “ist mit dem [...] direkt abzustimmen” (‘has to be directly agreed on with’);

– reference to law and other regulations, e.g. “Mieter haben [...] das Recht” (‘tenants have the right’), “[d]as muss man dann entweder akzeptieren oder im Zweifel ausziehen” (‘one must either accept it or, if in doubt, move out’), “[l]aut

² The translation of the German examples is our own throughout the article.

den [...] Informationen” (‘in accordance with the information’), “Zeugenaussagen sind dazu jederzeit verfügbar” (‘testimonies are available at any time’), “[m]einer Kontrolle nach” (‘according to my inspection’), “[d]iese Regeln sind ab sofort [...] für alle gültig” (‘these rules are from now on in force for everybody’);

- the present tense in assumptions and expectations, in a categorical and indisputable sense, urging the recipient to take action, e.g. “[w]ir gehen davon aus” (‘we expect’), “[f]olglich sehen wir uns dazu gezwungen” (‘consequently, we will feel obliged to’);

- the subjunctive mood to express negligence, e.g. “Sie sollten sich vielleicht [...] orientieren” (‘you should probably [...] turn to’), “einmal sollte man sich rühren” (‘one should once move to’);

- marks of oral communication, e.g. “Sie haben vielleicht Nerven!” (‘you’ve got some nerves’), “[u]nglaublich” (‘unbelievable’), “hören Sie Ihr Versteckenspiel jetzt auf” (‘stop your game of hide-and-seek’), “[s]eien Sie bitte vernünftig” (‘please be reasonable’);

- inversion and/or fronting to add emphasis, e.g. “[g]ängig ist in solchen Fällen” (‘it is usual in such cases’), “[s]icher finden Sie zeitnah einen Weg” (‘surely you will soon find a way’), “[n]ichts davon hätte ich tun müssen” (‘there was nothing I could have done’);

- fronting and inverted complex sentences to point out core information, e.g. “[d]ass [...] Kosten produziert, von denen wir nichts wissen” (‘that it [...] produces costs, about which we know nothing’), “[s]ollten Sie die Kautions einbehalten, werde ich” (‘should you retain the deposit, I will’);

- conjunctions and adverbs implying subtle threat, e.g. “ansonsten” (‘otherwise’), “letztmalig” (‘for the last time’), “nicht länger” (‘no longer’), “spätestens” (‘not later than’);

- personal pronouns used in the singular to intensify the offensive tone, e.g. “mit dieser Vorgehensweise bin ich nicht einverstanden” (‘I do not agree with this procedure’), “[h]iermit möchte ich Sie letztmalig bitten” (‘I am asking you for the last time’), “[i]ch werde nicht länger auf eine Nachricht [...] warten” (‘I will no longer wait for an answer’).

3.3. The aggressive tone in Hungarian business letters

The linguistic indicators of aggressiveness in Hungarian business letters are as follows:

- the expression of obligation, necessity, and constraint, e.g. “az adózó [...] köteles teljesíteni” (‘the taxpayer is held liable for’),³ “köteles megfizetni” (‘you are liable for’), “számlájára kell fizetni” (‘it has to be paid into [...] the account’), “összegeben kell fizetnie” (‘it has to be paid in a total of’), “ezt meg kell lépned”

3 The translation of the Hungarian examples is our own throughout the article.

(‘you have to take this step’), “kénytelen leszek felfüggeszteni a szállítást” (‘I will feel obliged to suspend the transport’);

– first conditionals and clauses of result imposing limitations to particular actions, e.g. “[h]a a tartozás [...] meghaladja, [...] kezdeményezheti” (‘if the dues exceed [...], you can initiate’), “[a]mennyiben a szülő [...] a [...] bizottság eljárásával nem ért egyet” (‘insofar as the parent does not agree with [...] the procedure of the board’), “[a]mennyiben a szülő [...] nem tesz nyilatkozatot” (‘insofar as the parent does not issue a statement’), “[h]a [...] e határozat nem válik véglegessé” (‘if the present resolution does not become definitive’);

– reference to laws, rules, and agreements, e.g. “gazdasági jelentések alapján” (‘in accordance with the economic reports’), “nyilvántartása szerint” (‘according to the [...] register’), “aki [...] szándékosan figyelmen kívül hagyja [...], szabálysértést követ el” (‘who deliberately disregards it [...], will be in contravention of the law’), “számú szerződésben” (‘in contract no.’);

– verbs and pronouns in the singular urging a person to do an action, e.g. “kötelezem” (‘I oblige you’), “összegű adót állapítok meg” (‘I levy a tax of’), “[k]érem Önt, hogy ezeket a lépéseket minél hamarabb tegye meg” (‘I am asking you to take these steps as soon as possible’), “kérem visszaigazolni” (‘please confirm’), “[b]ízom benne” (‘I trust’);

– verbs in the indicative mood but in their objective conjugation forms, prompting the addressee to act in a particular way, to comply with terms and recommendations, insinuating a certain degree of threat and without providing an alternative for action, e.g. “[t]ájékoztatjuk” (‘we inform you’), “felhívjuk figyelmét” (‘please note’), “[f]elszólítjuk” (‘we call on’), “kérjük” (‘we ask you’), “[n]yomatékosan kérem” (‘I solicit’), “kérem, javítsák ki” (‘please correct it’);

– adverbs of time and adverbial clauses setting a strict deadline, e.g. “mihamarabb” (‘as soon as possible’), “nyolc napon belül” (‘within eight days’), “amíg nem késő” (‘until it is late’), “még csütörtökön is” (‘even on Thursday’);

– emotional involvement, e.g. “[a]lgodalmam [...] az is fokozza” (‘it also worries me’), “mélységesen felháborított” (‘I feel outraged at’), “csak nekem okoznak gondot” (‘it is only for me a cause of concern’);

– characteristics of oral communication (in informal letters), e.g. “[e]legem van ebből az összevisszaságból” (‘I’m fed up with all this chaos’), “[n]ekem az egészségem mindennél többet ér” (‘my health is more important than anything else’), “itt emberek, nem robotok dolgoznak” (‘there are people working here, not robots’), “[p]ardon, hogy kiabálok” (‘sorry for shouting’).

4. Contrastive analysis and discussion

The section below hinges upon the key findings of the descriptive analysis and throws light on both the convergent and divergent facets of verbal aggressiveness within the analysed business letters.

By and large, the broad spectrum of linguistic examples detected in all three languages underscores the fact that verbal aggressiveness clearly seeps into the business discourse. It emerges in numerous linguistic formulations to stress an urgency, prompt an immediate action, place constraints and conditions on the recipient, invoke the law and other regulations, or call attention to terms and agreements. For these multiple purposes, the studied languages make use of relatively similar morphological and syntactic structures, namely modal verbs or verbs expressing obligation, necessity, and impossibility (“it is impossible”, “have to be checked”, “they will need to continue working”, “that needs to happen”, “Herr X. kann [...] den Mangel nicht abstellen” [‘Mr X. cannot [...] rectify the fault’], “[e]s kann nicht sein” [‘it cannot be’], “számlájára kell fizetni” [‘it has to be paid into [...] the account’]), time adverbials (“nicht länger” [‘no longer’], “spätestens” [‘not later than’], “mihamarabb” [‘as soon as possible’]), conditional and result clauses (“[i]f you really want to keep the other distributors, we will not be able to propose”, “[s]ollten Sie die Kauti on einbehalten, werde ich” [‘should you retain the deposit, I will’], “[h]a a tartozás[...] meghaladja, [...] kezdeményezheti” [‘if the dues exceed [...], you can initiate’], “[a]mennyiben a szülő [...] a [...] bizottság eljárásával nem ért egyet,” [‘insofar as the parent does not agree with [...] the procedure of the board’]).

Linguistically viewed, verbal aggressiveness plays on emotions mainly obliquely. On the one hand, as the case of the German business letters indicates, aggressive communicators resort to passive constructions for an impersonal and detached style. On the other hand, personal pronouns in the singular are used with the aim not only to reinforce views and arguments but also to give voice to more powerful messages. The same trend can be witnessed within the letters written in Hungarian, where the objective tone can shift to a more personal and thus stronger one, through more direct ways to address a problem or situation. These overlaps between tones are determined by the intentions of the sender, as gaining advantages and the focus on own interests are of paramount importance for the writer of the letters. Likewise, in all studied languages, the usage of the verbs in the first-person singular places a heavy emphasis on the core information to be transmitted to the recipient (e.g. “I am really confused”, “I did not say”, “I’d like to understand”, “[i]ch werde nicht länger auf eine Nachricht [...] warten” [‘I will no longer wait for an answer’], “összegű adót állapítok meg” [‘I levy a tax of’]).

Additionally, the appeal to emotions comes to the fore through oral elements of communication. In spite of being written documents, the surveyed texts reveal

more expressive outbursts of reactions in line with more personal remarks and comments (e.g. “[p]ut yourself in our position”, “Sie haben vielleicht Nerven!” [‘you’ve got some nerves’], “[e]legem van ebből az összevisszaságból” [‘I’m fed up with all this chaos’]).

In regard to the divergent aspects, it can be noted that our contrastive study on English, German, and Hungarian business letters does not yield any significant differences. In fact, the only dissimilar features are owed to the particular linguistic repertoire of each language, i.e. each of the three languages has some specific linguistic tools for the expression of aggressiveness. For instance, the English language employs fronting and the emphatic “do” as a means of emphasis. For the same effect, German letters rely on fronting and inversion. In Hungarian, the verbs in the objective conjugation forms impose reasons or further action.

5. Conclusions

As previous studies on business correspondence have failed to assess the linguistic manifestations of aggressiveness, our study proposes to unveil those morphological, syntactic, and semantic structures that express it. Consequently, in a descriptive and contrastive analysis, we have investigated authentic business letters in three languages, in English, German, and Hungarian, so as to draw up a list of linguistic markers meant to elucidate the particularities, indicate the correlations, and highlight the differences.

Based on the observed data, we can infer that verbal aggressiveness is externalized in an abundance of linguistic patterns. In all three languages, it becomes primarily visible through verbs and modal verbs of obligation, necessity, and impossibility, through verbs in the first-person singular, conditional and result clauses, through time adverbials. Next to it, hostility appears in other morphological, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic patterns such as fronting, inversion, and orality. More precisely, fronting and the emphatic “do” in English, fronting and inversion in German, and the objective conjugation form in Hungarian account for the linguistic expression of aggressiveness. Otherwise, as a strong negative feeling, aggressiveness can be strategically insinuated, so it remains unobserved beneath the surface.

All in all, our results underline the fact that special attention should be attached to the study of verbal aggressiveness in the context of business correspondence because of its great potential both to mould and to enrich the business discourse.

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