Grammar & Culture

Level of Formality

As can be seen from the roleplaying exercise, a certain level of formality should still be maintained, even among acquaintances and friends, when in business settings. When the acquaintance you are visiting is of higher status professionally, it would be even better if you also consider buying a simple and inexpensive souvenir appropriate for the visit.

**稀客**

稀客 is a formal, set expression that you can use almost every time that you have an acquaintance or friend visiting you whom you have not seen in a long time. In doing so, you are implying that you will cherish the friend’s visit by acknowledging the friend’s appearance in your life as important to you. Thus, it is polite manners to express how special the occasion is that you can have a rare guest that you do not get to see very often.

**拜訪/拜访**

拜訪/拜访 is an honorific word that means to visit someone. Typically, this is used when you are visiting someone of higher status, but sometimes people may opt to use this as a generally polite way to saying that they are visiting someone. You can use this to the person whom you are visiting to indicate that you have come for a visit, or you can also use it to a third person describing your visit to someone not present during the moment the speech is uttered. This versatile word may also be used respectfully in everyday life when someone visits an elderly relative or someone from an older generation.

*拜訪拜訪/拜访拜访*

*Example: 我來拜訪拜訪您!/我来拜访拜访您!*

Depending on the situation and the level of friendship you have with the person, you may not want to make the other person feel as if you went to great lengths to specifically visit. When repeated in a pattern as above, the speaker is trying to lighten up the tone of voice a little bit so as to make the other speaker more at ease while still being polite. Some other action verbs can also be used in this manner.

**展銷會/展销会**

Depending on the field of business you are working in, you may have to attend a variety of different business-related events. One of the most common events is a 展銷會/展销会, which is an expo or trade fair in which you are not only presenting a product or service from your company, but you are also trying to market and promote it on the spot to other expo attendees. There are many other events that are similar in nature and therefore have similar names, including the ones listed below:

貿易展覽會/贸易展览会 màoyì zhǎnlǎn huì – trade fair

博覽會/博览会 bólǎnhuì – exhibition or fair in which the main purpose is to showcase, such as works from the arts, horticulture, engineering, etc.

展覽交流會/展览交流会 zhǎnlǎn jiāoliú huì – expo in which representatives from businesses not only showcase their own products or services, but also interact with others in the expo, with the intention of seeking potential collaborations

交易會/交易会 jiāoyì huì – a trade fair focusing on business exchanges, sometimes with businesses from other countries

廣交會/广交会 Guǎngjiāohuì – short way of saying *廣州交易會/广州交易会 Guǎngzhōu Jiāoyì Huì*, a trade fair in which the official title is *中國進出口商品交易會/中国进出口商品交易会 Zhōngguó Jìn Chūkǒu Shāngpǐn Jiāoyì Huì*. This trade fair in Guangzhou, China is often mentioned in Chinese business circles, as it is the oldest, largest, and the most representative trade fair in China to date. Its main focus, as suggested in the official title, is on export and import trade.

世界博覽會/世界博览会shìjiè bólǎnhuì – World’s Fair

世博會/世博会shìbóhuì – short for World’s Fair

The Concept of 感恩gǎn'ēn (expressing gratitude)

The character 恩 has a very deep meaning in Mandarin-speaking culture. More than simply saying thanks to someone who has helped you or benefited you in some way, it is a constant remembrance of the good that has been done to you by others. By remembering, you also naturally have this obligatory feeling and commitment that when you are able, you will also do good to the person in return, even if it means very far out in the future. Sometimes the person may not have done more than saying some comforting words, or simply一番話/一番话, but if these words encouraged you or put you in the right direction in some way that then led to your success, even if just indirectly, you should remember it for life and express gratitude for it whenever you can.

In the roleplaying exercise, the younger person brings up how the older acquaintance has helped him in the past by using the word 提攜/提携. In this case, the younger person uses this word to respectfully imply to the older acquaintance he is speaking to that he regards her as a mentor who has helped him “rise up” in the profession. This is an important aspect of business culture in Mandarin-speaking countries and regions, where an older or more experienced person of higher status in the profession may help an inexperienced person in some way, whether through simple advice, networking, or training, and the younger person in return will always have the feeling of gratitude towards the person when he has “risen up” in the profession.

高就

In the roleplaying exercise, 高就 is used as a verb to formally indicate that the person you are speaking to has been promoted in his work, or has somehow moved up in life, such as starting his own company or getting a new job at a bigger company, etc. It is usually used in the same sentence where you would offer words of congratulations, praise, or expressions of the person’s great ability.

However, 高就 can also be used as a noun, as in the example below:

*不錯啊，你夫人跟你一樣也另有高就了！/不错啊，你夫人跟你一样也另有高就了！*

In this case, it means a promotion or a success of some kind. Therefore, this sentence is uttered in a congratulatory tone that the wife of the person referred to in the sentence has also been promoted or found success elsewhere, such as getting a better job at a company that is different from the one that she previously worked for.

Referring to Spouses

Use 先生 when referring to other people’s husbands, but 丈夫 when referring to your own. Similarly, use 夫人 or 太太 when referring to other people’s wives, but 妻子 when referring to your own. Sometimes people may also refer to their own husbands and wives as 先生 and 太太 in less formal occasions. However, using 夫人 when referring to other people’s wives sounds even more formal, respectful, and polite than 太太.