Intercultural Business Communication: The Importance of its Efficiency

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Abstract

Intercultural Communication is currently a crucial part of the global economy and world commerce. Once separated by vast oceans, the world's population is now more connected than ever in its history. A plethora of global changes have been occurring in the recent past. Despite these waves of global change, world events demonstrate that we can still fail to understand and be understood in intercultural communication. This paper would deal with the importance of efficiency of intercultural business communication. It also involves the study of the inevitable link between culture and communication as culture impacts both the communicator and receiver of the message or information. Moreover, Intercultural communication in Global Business presents foundational concepts for communicating between cultures and a framework for understanding any culture, including your own.

Keywords: Intercultural business communication, Polyactive culture, globalisation.

Introduction

Global business exchange has been in trend in the current scenario. Various researchers, politicians, civil servants, businessmen have been dealing with their fellow professionals across the world. Internationalisation of the economy of various countries has led to globalisation. The introduction of electronic means of communication has resulted in a distinct expansion of international contacts leading to business between different countries and continents. It is universally established that even a good knowledge of a foreign language is not enough for effective communication with its native speakers. Each country is characterized by its own culture. It is through the influence of culture that people learn to communicate. Representatives of different cultures act in accordance with their cultural norms and principles in a business rendezvous. They belong to a particular nation, ethnic group, class, social group and professional community. These factors act as barrier in communication leading to misunderstandings and sociocultural differences.

People having similar social characteristics and, therefore, social experience (belonging to one state, one race, one gender, one age, and one profession) have more effective communication. This facilitates their mutual understanding in the process of interaction. On the other hand, if interacting people have different social characteristics and social experiences (belonging to different families, states, races, genders, ages, professions), their mutual understanding can be crucially jeopardised.

The analysis of the literature on the topic of the research allows identifying the contradictions that prove the necessity to form the approaches to the improvement of the efficiency of intercultural business.

Methods

A study was done to determine the level of using intercultural business communication techniques. The theoretical and methodological analysis of the research included induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis and the abstract-logical method as well.

The aim of the research are as follows:

1. Improvement of approaches to the complex use of intercultural business communication.

2. Development of measures to co-ordinate activities between the main intercultural business communication participants.

3. Justification of the situation on the formation of an environment \hat ensures increased efficiency of intercultural business communication.

Results

The study shows that a particular message can be misinterpreted when culture acts as a barrier. The accuracy of a text is determined by cultural

stereotypes. Simultaneously, cultural errors are usually conceived as more erroneous than linguistic, although cultural ones are much more excusable. It is vivid that native speakers usually meet mistakes in foreign languages with kindness. Cultural errors are not so vaguely ignored and result in the worst misinterpretation.

For example, in India, communicative intrusion is considered fine, be it into the sphere of any personality or any conditions. It sees no obstacles to speak with any person, i.e. it is possible to make comments to strangers, give them advice, and intervene in the conversation of people talking to ask one of them a question, burden others with one's problems, make requests to strangers, and express one's opinion on what strangers are discussing nearby. These activities are unacceptable among representatives of other business groups and cultures. It undoubtedly results in a negative impression which severely affects the entire process of communication.

An empirical research of business people and entrepreneurs was conducted. The results are quite interesting. 800 respondents were included in the survey and it was observed that there are quite stable ideas about the typical features of business people from different countries. However, the set of these qualities or the hierarchy of their significance vary quite widely in different business cultures. Having a clear understanding of the ethnocultural features of business communication participants is a pre-requisite for systemization of intercultural organizational communication. Moreover, cultural values cannot be good or bad, logical or irrational. One's cultural identity is specific to his/her country. Therefore, a comparison of national cultures should be started by identifying differences in social behaviour.

The various types of intercultural organizational culture are:

1. Oral and Written
2. Internal and External
3. Lateral and Diagonal
4. Horizontal and Vertical
5. Formal and Informal
6. Verbal and Non-verbal

In order to understand the types, we must also have an idea about the various cultures prevailing across the world. There are people who live a planned life, focusing on one thing at a time, slating a schedule and organize every activity of their lives. These people belong to the monoactive culture. They are generally Americans, Germans, Swiss, British, etc. They believe in the linear organization of activities.

1.Polyactive culture includes Italians, Latin Americans and Arabs. These people are used to multi-tasking, without finishing them most of the time. There is no chronological planning of events. Punctuality isn't crucial for polyactive people. They believe that reality is more important than the established schedule. Therefore, they easily reconstruct their schedule and often change the sequence of work.

2.Reactive culture is characterized by politeness and respect. Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea,Turkey,etc represent this culture. They are the best listeners who calmly listen to the interlocutors and respond to the proposals accordingly. These people are more adaptive to changes. They carry on their activities as per the situation demands. They practically never interrupt the speaker and after listening do not rush to answer, do not express a definite opinion, and try to clarify the intentions and expectations of the speaker.

National cultures differ in various other parameters like attitude of people to themselves, others, and the world around them; adherence to individualism or collectivism; orientation on a particular time dimension; understanding of social or personal space; attitude to male and female.

Observations

From the experiment conducted, six types of reactions were observed. These include:

1.People minimize the cultural differences. Here, they recognize the possibility of the existence of foreign culture and their norms, searching for common unifying features.

2.People accept the existence of cultural differences. People belonging to this group possess knowledge of another culture and are cordial towards this but do not imply active penetration into another environment.

3. People tend to protect their cultural superiority. It is based on the perception which recognizes other cultures but firmly believes that foreign way of life threatens the established way of life.

4. People adapt to a new culture. They have an optimistic attitude towards another culture but tend to maintain their own cultural identity.

5.Most of the times, people deny cultural differences. They believe that all the representatives of their culture share same values and must act similarly.

It is observed that intercultural differences take place in various ways at different stages of the creation and interpretation of a text. It is an establishment that speech situations in written business communication follows a pattern. Thus, a set of communication objectives and speech acts adhering to a certain type of business text is predictable. The set of language knowledge is largely international and allows the addresser to choose the appropriate type of text for the implementation of their intentions and the addressee — to correlate it with similar texts and correctly perceive the message, i.e. to act adequately to the situation. A study shows that there is an emerging trend to simplify the style of business documents and letters. Business letters often contain excerpts from works of psychologists and philosophers and quotations from famous literary works, which illustrate the eloquence of the authors. There is a parallel between business speech and public speech in terms of its function and means of expression. Therefore, the most important requirement for the efficiency of intercultural business communication is knowledge and understanding of the features of national culture, respect for the cultural values of other peoples with whose representatives' entrepreneurs interact, restraint in assessing their behavior, and balanced decision-making. Thus, cultural differences and diversity of habits, traditions, and attitude towards values suggest that speech patterns of foreign business partners can be used only considering their efficiency, rather than automatically transferring the style of intercultural business communication to another linguistic culture. Furthermore, in intercultural business communication, the success of the communication process depends on the parallel functioning of forms and genres of business communication, which are strictly conventional and are regulated, created and function within the context.

Conclusions

From the observation, it can be established that to improve the efficiency of intercultural business communication, emphasis must be placed on the speech characteristics that are intended to impress the participants involved in the communication process. Stylistics methods are adopted to enhance the expressive means of speech which attracts a good number of audiences. Language plays the most significant role in intercultural business communication because of the stereotypical nature of the communication situations, in which it is used. It represents, in this sense, an example of the formal use of language units. Different cultural systems contribute to the development of specific negotiating styles, such as the style of national culture, history, and politics, influenced by three main factors: national (different negotiating styles), organizational (certain cultures developed within international organizations), and professional culture (cultures developed among professionals). Understanding various cultures, accepting their norms and respecting their individuality will result in efficient intercultural business communication.

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