

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION

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Abstract: Language is a system of signs and symbols that enables individuals to communicate. Communication implies verbal or written messages that basically pass from emitters to receivers with a view to transmit information. Business communication, too, is governed by a series of rules, which are representative for communication in general. At its turn, business negotiation relies on communication, implying an emitted message that determines different thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the receiver. Its success or failure appears to be largely determined by communication and closely relies on a series of techniques that allow the finding out of mutually convenient solutions.

Keywords: language, message, communication, negotiation, business

Language has been broadly defined as a system of signs and symbols, which, in accordance with certain codes, allows individuals to communicate. Communication, in general, represents a process owing to which emitters pass information to receivers; business communication or organizational communication appears to obey the same rules that govern communication in a broad sense, being the “most important mechanism of coordination” (Ceausu, 2005, p.507) organizations own. Meanwhile, business negotiation settles a relation between message emitting and message receiving, which involves stimuli sending and responses gathering and which turns the message into a shared item that equally belongs to the emitter and the receiver.

In the opinion of a series of authors, successful negotiations appear to be the result of a successful verbal or written transmission of information dependent, at its turn, on a series of influencing factors.

As the whole process of organizational communication and negotiation involves the use of language, it is perhaps useful to set forth some considerations about the manner it affects communication. There are theories which assert the fact that experience and knowledge both depend on language, while, there are others which perceive language as a reflection of social and economic relations. As far as linguistic relativism has concluded, the individuals’ interpretation of primary reality is possible owing to language. In fact, primary reality can be grasped and decoded by individuals through the linguistic code they possess. Individuals’ different experiences appear to be subordinated to the linguistic patterns of the community they live within, which generate specific interpretative choices. The process of communication enables the linguistic code to issue a means of ranging individual experience so that objects belonging to the external milieu may be described in accordance with preceding experience and language. Such an assertion seems to lead to the conclusion that “environment is organized and mentally divided according to resemblance and mainly explains the restrictive capacity of language as well as the impossibility of a complete use of language.” (Hulea, 2006, p. 40)

Meanwhile, both the emitter and the receiver of a communicational process are part of a certain environment encompassing the social, cultural, linguistic, ethnical, economic, etc. factors that together leave their mark on the emitter’s/ receiver’s progression and evolution. Although the

influence of environment might be underestimated, nonetheless, it has been noticed that it usually decides the emitter's and receiver's conduct targeting a specific objective.

Environment is also supposed to generate a process of continual learning, which triggers the change of human behaviour based on experience and, ultimately, a formal system is appropriated by individuals, usually grounded on a series of beliefs and convictions; a system like this determines both specific behaviours and certain social limits. Frequently, human beings may be in contradiction with their milieu, as a result of such social limits, which rely on beliefs and convictions displaying resistance to change and which restrain free expression.

Individual experience is closely connected with communication as, with a view to get receivers' highest response, emitters should be able to handle language effortlessly, under specific circumstances. This capacity of controlling language, generally called communication competence, incorporates a series of standards that concern recognition and the usage of the most suitable words under certain circumstances, while communicating a message that would not have as a result conflicting reactions of the receivers. Communication competence, which changes continually in accordance with individual experience, exploits individuals' ability of emitting and understanding infinite verbal messages.

Communication, in general, as well as business communication is determined by motivation, which represents the groundwork of message enunciation and comes out before messages are emitted, under the influence of exogenous stimuli. Individuals are characterized by intricate cognitive designing that determine, under the influence of learning processes, the forging of abstract specific motivations that evolve beside the physiological ones.

Message motivation determining the process of communication represents the foundation of the message objective set forth at the moment a message is initiated, by emitters, with a view to produce a specific effect on receivers. A message determines a powerful influence upon the ideas, opinions and behaviour of the receiver, in accordance with the emitter's communication objective. Although the enunciation of the message represents the final objective of emitters, it, nonetheless, coexists accompanied by a series of expected or non-expected side effects.

With a view to reaching the highest possible impact upon the receiver, messages have to be synchronic with the communication channel that facilitates its transmission. Accordingly, the choice of the communication channel, which might be tangible or not and whose target is receivers' sensitivity, inevitably notices the needs, aspirations, desires and expectations of receivers. As far as the impact of the message upon the receiver is concerned, it largely grows in the case when integrity, concision, directness and a positive tone are used. The success of a process of communication is evident whenever the signification given to the message by the emitter matches the signification attached to the message by the receiver. Nonetheless, such a desirable situation is often threatened in practice by the malfunctioning of the communication channels determined by interferences (frequently "spoken about as noises" and including audible, tactile and odorous interferences), which are identified as insignificant information. Due to interferences, all messages are unique, even under the circumstances of transmitting the same items of information.

Certain authors consider that organizations may be seen as data processors as they gather the information existing in the environment, range the items of information in accordance to a series of criteria, extract relevant data, which they process and employ throughout their functional processes. As a consequence, in the case of organizations, communication not only represents the process of transmitting data from an emitter to a receiver, but it is the most important mechanism of coordination, enabling the exchange of meanings and signals, which are transmitted through messages, between initiators and recipients. Negotiation, as a functional process of an organization,

relies on communication and turns the transmitted and received message into a shared item, owing to the fact that such a message equally belongs to the emitter and the receiver. Communication in negotiation turns the interlocutor into an individual who expresses a manner of thinking, behaviour, and feelings in connection with the elements under negotiation.

It has been asserted that communication in negotiation does not end with message receiving owing to the fact that the data contained by the message are going to exert a specific influence upon the ideas and behaviour of the receiver.

Communication in negotiation should observe a series of characteristics that are able to provide its success: a clear assertion of the ideas, which facilitate an easy decoding by the receiver, the use of direct and plain sentences, the correct application of the grammar rules in structuring the message, the employment of a cultivated language expressing concepts and notions that could be easily perceived by the receiver and a honest discourse, which avoids the intimidation and obstruction of the receiver. It is important to stress the fact that mistrust, difficult verbal expression, the lack of required knowledge, and the authoritarian attitude of the emitter or the receiver jeopardizes the success of a negotiation and determine the failure of communication.

It is widely known that, in accordance with the opinion of a series of specialists, during business negotiations only one third of the issues under debate are appropriated by the partners. It has been asserted that individuals are able to express only about 125 words per minute, while their capacity to listen represents about 500 words per minute. In accordance, the time interval required for hearing a message is clearly higher than the one necessary for uttering it; nonetheless, listening implies the merging of two mental activities (hearing and understanding) into a single, all-inclusive mental activity (Ceausu, 2005, p. 757).

Under such circumstances, the success or failure of a business negotiation is determined, as in the case of business communication that was governed by certain rules, by the observation of a series of techniques, which are part of a negotiation strategy.

One of the most important negotiation techniques is the settling and observation of the subject that both negotiation partners have in view, which involves the analysis of the issues under debate, requiring data and information and maintaining financial, organizational, technological congruity. This technique should be accompanied by the use of reliable evidence that imply the strict assertion of the objectives, while appropriating the partner's experience and expectations in order to reach convergent opinions upon the means of attaining the objectives and the settling of proper actions to be undergone.

Owing to the fact that the above mentioned techniques rely on communication, it is necessary to make use of an organized and concise communication, which relies on the use of clear sentences that provide the easy access of the receiver to the content of the message and the use of supplemental explanatory means such as figures, tables, drawings, etc.

As a means of maintaining a credible communicational consistency, the technique of emitting itemized messages might be appropriate especially in the case of conflicting negotiations. This manner of dealing with concrete circumstances and partners may be enhanced by the technique of the straight expression of personal opinions, which requires the capacity of facing unpleasant communication or asserting one's own subjectivity in connection with the process of business negotiation.

While the manner of emitting a message is of tremendous importance in a business negotiation, both the technique of active listening and the technique of analytical listening of the receiver represent key steps towards success. Analytical listening usually implies receivers focused attention on the subject of negotiation, their avoiding of secondary issues, and vivid search for strong

argumentation. Nonetheless, analyses and associations during the process of negotiation should not leave aside active listening, which might be perceived owing to receivers' capacity to briefly summarize the message of the emitter or through straightforward questions and complementary questions able to focus upon the core issue of the negotiation.

Analytical listening as well as active listening also represents the premises of testing the manner the partners of negotiations manage to cope with each other with a view to reaching a mutual agreement. Accordingly, the technique of feedback provide the background required in order not to deal with negotiation misunderstandings and relies on focused argumentation and evaluation of the issued under debate, direct wording of opinions, and assertion of each partner's expectations.

The process of business communication is governed by a series of rules that are representative for communication in general. Business negotiation equally relies on communication and, ultimately the success or failure of a business negotiation is determined, as in the case of business communication that was governed by certain rules, by the observation of a series of techniques, which are part of a negotiation strategy.

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