

Theoretical foundations of intercultural business communication and their practical consequences

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Abstract. Intercultural business communication is well researched regarding theoretical foundations; however, we still lack practical consequences of this theoretical enquiry. The aim of the paper is to bring crucial practical implications which could be efficiently used in everyday business activity (such as negotiations, advertising and meetings) in the current global business environment. The current reality of business communication is based purely on interaction with people from other cultures, backgrounds, nations and continents. To communicate successfully we make surface adaptation so that we are able to cross cultural boundaries and transcendent culture, and not only survive in today multicultural society but we manage to prosper, and even economically. When being aware of the differences in rhetoric style and conversational style in various cultures, we can become better communicators and negotiators and therefore be more successful in the global market.

1 Introduction: The theory of business communication

Intercultural business communication is a well-researched area of intercultural communication as a relatively new academic and practical discipline [1-4], however, we still lack practical consequences of this endeavor and we strongly believe that the pragmatic conclusions of the theoretical effort is more than necessary and will be welcomed by practitioners of intercultural communication, mostly in the business environment.

Culture of the given nation or country is the crucial phenomenon which influences the way we communicate, negotiate, deal with other people and socially interact. The awareness of the fact is still widely neglected in managers according to a lot of surveys and therefore causing misunderstanding and misinterpretation.

2 Practical business communication

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The way to achieve organizational goals is to increase employee involvement and that can be achieved by realizing specific linkages between organizational efficiency, communication and trust. When building the innovative organization, human capital is considered the greatest asset due to the fact that it is communication which enables the concepts like empowerment and team working come true. Extensive global business communication, both multinational and transcultural, has become a ubiquitous strategy and the requirement for any kind of global business. Modern innovativeness intercultural training enables participants to be more competent communicators in international business and global cross-cultural environment in which the business is done.

One of the new approaches to intercultural training is to move away from an approach where participants communicate on the basis of pre-taught cultural models/templates. On the contrary, it is vital to analyse our own cultural identities and to view ourselves as others might see us. The current reality of business communication is based purely on interaction with people from other cultures, backgrounds, nations and continents. To communicate successfully we make surface adaptation so that we are able to cross cultural boundaries and transcendent culture, and not only survive in today multicultural society but we manage to prosper, and even economically.

To sum it up, we claim that the only viable, modern, innovative and successful approach to intercultural management and intercultural business communication is to focus on modern ways of communication strategies in global intercultural environment, creating and maintaining communication on the basis of mutual understanding so that we create trust within the organization and between them when doing business globally and internationally. The development of trust and employees involvement is thus crucial for any successful entrepreneur activities to strengthen the company global presence by going beyond simplistic understanding of communication as mere transfer of isolated information.

Despite the fact that many companies have been trying hard to improve their intercultural communication standards (mostly by introducing English as a lingua franca), we must state that the situation is more than complicated. Hua [2] describes several issues arising from the fact that the company uses shared language, a lingua franca, and in this case it is English. These are the problems that can occur:

- “the difficulty of finding a common language where none seemed to exist,
- comprehension problems due to insufficient translation of documentation into subsidiary languages,
- difficulty in understanding the various accents in which English was spoken internationally,
- centralization of power into the hands of those who were able to obtain and disseminate information through knowing the official corporate language or the parent company language,
- feeling of isolation in those lacking or with inadequate skills in the corporate language” (55-56).

3 Conclusion

When being aware of the differences in rhetoric style and conversational style in various cultures, we can become better communicators and negotiators and therefore be more successful in the global market.

There are several recommendations regarding communication improvement in multinational corporations as summarized in Hua [2]:

- “conducting a linguistic audit to find out potential problem areas in communication and language use,
- making comprehension proficiency a priority as an interim measure,

- encouraging staff to understand and negotiate Global English, i.e. different varieties of English, and learn to use a variety communicative strategies and meta-communicative expressions,
- including native English speakers in communication training as they also have and cause communication problems,
- making language and communication training a corporate-level function” (57).

References

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