

THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CROSS CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

*E.I. Narkevich, T.V. Vodchits, 2nd year of studies
Scientific supervisor – L.I. Kolesnikovich
Polesky State University*

Topicality: Cross cultural communication in business plays a vital role in successfully establishing the product or service in a different area of the globe. When the communication is effective, the product or service is appropriately tailored to the cultural norms and expectations resulting in the use or purchase of the product. Ineffective communication cross culturally can offend, confuse or send a misunderstood message which could lead to broken relations with investors or employees.

Goal: to analyze the importance of learning the English language as business language and to show the influence of culture to cross cultural communication in business.

Progress of work:

As the business world becomes increasingly global, the need for effective cross cultural communication is essential. Cross cultural communication in business plays a vital role in building international customers, employee relations and business partnerships. Cross cultural communication in business requires effort, technique and the addressing of different hurdles that commonly prevent communication from being effective [1, p.36].

Cross cultural communication is defined by Gotland University as “a process of exchanging, negotiating, and mediating one's cultural differences through language, non-verbal gestures, and space relationships.” Business communication is the exchange of messages related to companies through symbols, action and verbal words.

In today's business climate being able to speak English well is one of the soundest investments you can make.

English is the language of 'communication'. With reportedly 1.5 billion people already speaking English and another one billion learning, it seems fair to say that English is the most useful language to learn as a second language. Business today takes place in a competitive and global marketplace, so if you want to participate and succeed, there is no doubt that a reasonable level of Business English is an absolute necessity. The knowledge of English is a rather good accelerator because it's a Future Global Language. In this new world good cross cultural communication is a must.

Each culture has a different set of values, business ethics, languages, behavior, expected etiquette and expression. Not knowing the differences in the country that the company is doing business in can lead to communication barriers that prohibit the messages from being effective [2, p.97].

Examples of the positive and negative manifestations of cross cultural differences.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but when working with other people, or traveling abroad for work or pleasure, it may pay to ask some experts about the following communication styles of the area you plan to visit.

1. Opening and Closing Conversations: Different cultures may have different customs around who addresses whom when and how, and who has the right, or even the duty, to speak first, and what is the proper way to conclude a conversation.

2. Taking Turns During Conversations: In some cultures, it is more appropriate to take turns in an interactive way, and in others, it is more important to listen thoroughly and without comment, without immediate response, lest a response be taken as a challenge or a humiliation, particularly depending on the context of the conversation, the audience, and the levels of personal knowledge/relationship between the two people interacting.

3. Interrupting: The same issues arise over the issue of interrupting. In some cultures, interruption, vocal, emotional expression, etc. are considered to be the default conversational style, particularly among those considered to be equals, or among men. Many people of Northern European or American extract might mistake this kind of conversation for argument and hostility, but that would not be the case.

4. Use of Silence: In some forms of communication, silence is to be expected before a response, as a sign of thoughtfulness and deference to the original speaker, yet at other times, silence may be experienced as a sign of hostility. In the West, twenty seconds of silence during a meeting is an extraordinarily long time, and people will feel uncomfortable with that. Someone invariably will break in to end the uncomfortable silence. But the same customs around silence are not universal.

5. Appropriate Topics of Conversation: In some places, it is considered vulgar to speak openly about money, for example, let alone about the kinds of intimate family issues that commonly form the basis of afternoon television "talk" shows in the West. Travelers or business people should learn the customs that surround the making of deals, the transaction of commerce, and the degree to which details are specified in advance and enumerated in writing across cultures (not all places are as prone hire lawyers and create detailed contracts as we are in the West).

6. Use of Humor: In the West, we often try to build immediate rapport through humor, but of course, this is not universally seen to be appropriate in all contexts. The use of laughter can be experienced as a sign of disrespect by some, and so it is important to understand that this is another area where misunderstandings can be very likely to occur.

7. Knowing How Much to Say: In some places, less is definitely more, whereas in other places, it is more valued to wrap a rather small point up in a longer preamble, followed by an extended wrap-up. For Westerners, this can be maddening, as we tend to value speaking directly and to the point. Then again, there are clearly circumstances where Westerners say too much and lose their ability to communicate well, depending on the context [3].

So why do we have to learn culture and the English language?

So it is very important for a specialist in business matters to speak at least one foreign language. It should better be English as it is the most popular language of international business communication. Learning English is very useful because it helps us to communicate with people from other countries to understand another culture, to make a person educated and well rounded.

It plays an important role for a specialist in business (especially for us). Knowing English we can get in contact with business partners abroad. But except learning English it's also important to know cultural differences to make business more effective and profitable.

Literature references

1. Ian MacKenzie English for business studies: student's book / Ian MacKenzie; Cambridge University Press – United Kingdom, 2002. – 206 p.
2. Bill Mascull Business Vocabulary in Use: Cambridge University Press / Bill Mascull; Cambridge University Press – United Kingdom, 2002. – 173 p.
3. Schuler Solutions, Inc. [Electronic resource] / A.J. Schuler, Psy. D. – Mode of access: www.SchulerSolutions.com – Date of access: 18.02.2012.