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THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STRATEGIC LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT TO COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS

LA CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LA GESTIÓN ESTRATÉGICA DEL LENGUAJE COMO VENTAJA COMPETITIVA

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Abstract

The choice of language in a company's business affects all aspects of business communication. What matters is the extent to which the management of a foreign company can use the primary language for the workforce. Using the host country's language builds respect and confidence in the hosts who would never become fully competitive business people if they can not speak the language of the partner. The aim of the present study is to try to answer the question: *To what extent is language management needed, its application in the work of the companies with international participation in order to compete in the market.*

Keywords

Language skills – Business advantage – Foreign company – Language management
Language training

Resumen

La elección del idioma en el negocio de una empresa afecta todos los aspectos de la comunicación empresarial. ¿Cuál es el grado en que la administración de una empresa extranjera puede usar el idioma principal para la fuerza laboral? Usar el idioma del país anfitrión crea respeto y confianza en los anfitriones que nunca se convertirían en empresarios completamente competitivos si no pueden hablar el idioma del socio. El objetivo del presente estudio es responder a la pregunta: *en qué medida es necesaria la gestión del lenguaje, su aplicación en el trabajo de las empresas con participación internacional para competir en el mercado.*

Palabras Claves

Habilidades lingüísticas – Ventaja comercial – Empresa extranjera – Gestión del idioma
Formación lingüística

Business contacts are a key means of achieving a goal, and this goal is the successful business. In order to achieve a successful business, the language plays a key role as knowledge, from a linguistic point of view, along with the knowledge of the writing and punctuation of the language of the partner, but also the language of the contacts and the behavior. This language must meet certain requirements such as: accuracy, clarity, laconicity, business, order and good education.

The choice of a language in a company's business affects all the aspects of the business communication. What matters, this is the extent to which the management of a foreign company can use the primary language for the workforce. The efficiency in learning motivates this workforce and can raise the competitive. According to Victor¹, the use of the host country's language builds respect and confidence in the hosts who would never become fully competitive businessmen if they can not speak the language of the partner.

In 2004, on the order of the British Chamber of Commerce, studies have been conducted to prove that the lack of language skills leads to significant economic losses for MNCs. The research describes different attitudes and patterns of export behavior in foreign trade. In a four-scaled typology ranging from potential or "opportunists" (at a reactive end to the scale of foreign language use) to "facilitators" (good language practitioners), the study found that sales involving opportunists, decreased by an average of £ 90,000 per year of exports, while participating facilitators increased exports by an average of £ 250,000 per year. The survey also shows that there is a direct link between business success and the price paid by the company for perfecting the language skills (BCC, 2004).

According to the European Commission, the linguistic diversity is a determining characteristic of the Member States of the European Union. A consultation process was carried out in 2006 with the agreement of the Member States, the European institutions and stakeholders on the subject of the scope of the policy on the *multilingualism*²:

- The linguistic and the cultural diversity is perceived as a key feature of the European society: most people appreciate it, recognizing that it needs to be skillfully and cautiously managed. For the majority, included in the enquiry, the privilege of a single language is not an option.
- The language policy that only encourages only the study of the official languages of the EU, is too restrictive for today's society in which the citizens and residents speak in their everyday lives in many different languages.
- Learning languages should be put in the perspective of a life-long process.
- Multilingualism is a matter of a very sectoral scope that affects the competitiveness and the European citizenship and should be integrated into a range of policies, other than the field of education.
- The promotion of the multilingualism must not seek to preserve the languages as an aim in itself. On the contrary, emphasis should be placed on dialogue between languages and communities.
- Every citizen needs language skills, which depends on one's personal interests and the place where he / she lives, from the family and the professional environment.

¹ Viktor in the SNF Report No. 21 / 09SNF Report Nr. 21/09. 1992.

² The formulation of the problem is based on data and opinions resulting from actions following the two previous communications on multilingualism (2007) and during the 9-month consultation process in 2007-2008.

In the light of the comments made so far, given the limited scope for direct action by the European Commission and, depending on the determination with which the Member States and the stakeholders will implement the recommended European strategy on the linguistic diversity, it will certainly have an economic and social impact:

- **Economic impact:** through the impact of the language skills on job opportunities and competitiveness, the new strategy set out in the Communication is likely to have a positive impact on the international trade and the cross-border investment, the technological development and innovation, the quantity and quality of jobs, as well as on the International Relations.

- **Social impact:** It is likely that the strategy will have a positive impact on social inclusion as well as on the social management and the citizens participation, as the availability of language skills is a prerequisite for an intercultural dialogue.

Choosing a working language in a company affects all the aspects of business communication. To the extent that the management of a foreign subsidiary can use the primary language of the workforce, its effectiveness in training and motivating this workforce can raise a competitive edge. According to Victor, using the language of the host state establishes respect and confidence that is never fully available to businessmen who can not speak the language³.

Language preparation is largely tied to the culture of the host and the host country or the country recipient. The poor culture, or the lack of such, as well as poor the language skills, lead to bad business. Culture is largely neglected as a process-influencing variable, as well as the start of intercultural negotiations. The significance and necessity of empirical study of culture in the context of the negotiations have been repeatedly underlined by Fraser.⁴

The cultural differences can lead to four different types of problems in international business negotiations; language, problem related to non-verbal behavior, values, problem of consideration and decision-making. The last mentioned, according to Graham, may have more serious problems.⁵ Any culture forces people to watch and evaluate differently the different social interactions, inherent in the models of agreement⁶, in the trade negotiations. What must be overcome, these are the cultural factors. It would be naïve to enter into international negotiations with the conviction that "after all people are quite alike, they all behave like we do." Even if they wear the same clothes as ours, they speak English like us or, well, it would be foolish to see a member of another culture as your brother in spirit. The style of the negotiations effectively used at home, may be ineffective and inappropriate when communicating with people from another cultural environment; in fact, its use can often hurt, rather than being profitable⁷.

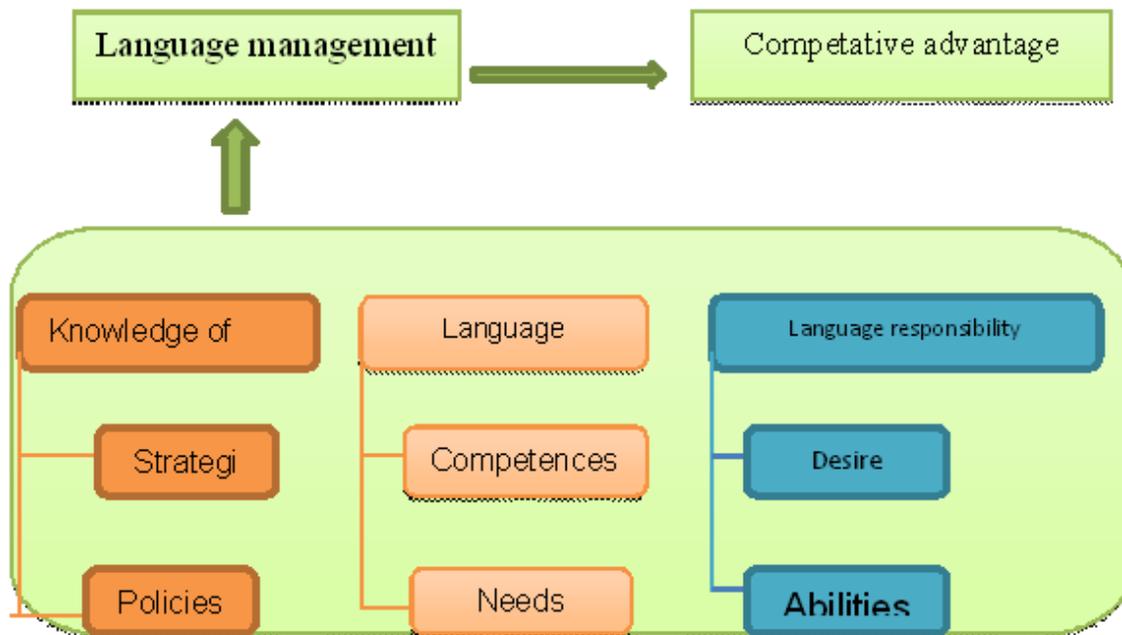
³ Viktor in the SNF Report No. 21 / 09SNF Report Nr. 21/09...

⁴ Fraser & Zarkanda-Fraser, Organizational Dimensions that Influence Organizational Mindset in International Business Context, Conference Paper · January 2013, DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4379.3362 Conference: 14th International Academy of Management and Business. 2002.

⁵ Susan Graham, Learner strategies and advanced level listening comprehension, P.64-69 Published online: 06 Aug 2007.

⁶ Herbig & Gulbro, Face-to-Face Kommunikation im Vertrieb von Industriegütern. 1997. <https://books.google.bg/>

⁷ Herbig & Gulbro, Face-to-Face Kommunikation im Vertrieb...



Source: Viktor (1992), in the SNF Report No. 21 / 09SNF Report Nr. 21/09

Fig 1

Enlarged model of the language

The different cultural systems can produce negotiating styles with different focus. The styles are shaped by the culture of each nation, its geography, history and political system. If you do not see the world through the eyes of the other, then you can not see or hear the same. Two working and negotiating people differ from one another, not only in their physical features, in a completely different language and business etiquette, but also in their different way of perceiving the world, setting business goals, the ways of expressing thoughts, and feelings, show or hide motivation and interests⁸.

When, for example, communicating with Spanishspeaking people, it is important that the contractor to be aware of the details of the direct communication in the Spanish environment, the instructions for conducting a telephone conversation, the mastering of example phrases for making an official letter, etc. In general, the partner must be familiar with some basic rules and patterns in the trade correspondence. It would be good if the contractor does not have the required level in the language, to provide preliminary a vocabulary with commercial terminology and other useful information about the Spanish people's psychology. Each contractor must be aware of the spirit and the content of the Spanish phrase, as well as the speech label.

The Spanish world is very much different. As it is known from the above-mentioned, there are differences in all Spanish-speaking countries, such as in Spanish, spoken in Spain and the one in Latin America. But this is not a barrier to communication. Cultural differences from Spain to Chile are based on rich cultural traditions, but these differences do not divide people, on the contrary, they unite them, because it is the culture that unites people. Knowing the culture of a future trading partner would not hamper commercial relations, on the contrary, it would unite them.

⁸ Herbig & Gulbro, Face-to-Face Kommunikation im Vertrieb...

Each language has its peculiarities. The different nationalities are distinguished by multitude or laconicity, habits and traditions. The German says: Why the things to be simple, while they may be complicated⁹. The Spanish says, "Why should I express my thoughts in two words, when it is possible in two hundred." In this case, the wealth of the Spanish is not due to the words. The extended expression implies the use of many adjectives, nouns, verbs, from a linguistic point of view, and courtesies, repetitions and stylistic figures from a lexical and stylistic point of view.

A main moment for the kindness, this is the courtesy to the business partner. It is not just an idea to start a conversation, it is a readiness for a dialogue, not a lack of determination and firmness when exposing ideas. Or, as the Spaniards say, courtesy does not mean weakness - "*Lo cortés no quita lo valiente*". If the American starts negotiating straight to the goal, then the Spaniards do not "shoot right" (*No ir directo al grano*). Anyone who speaks the language of Cervantes should be guided by the maxim: "Hay que dar tiempo al tiempo" or "let's give time to the time."

The rules for oral communication are not passed by the Spaniards in the negotiations, but as far as the trade agreements and the further business are concerned, what is important, this is the business correspondence. It matters not only for ongoing business relationships, but also for maintaining interpersonal contacts. It is expressed in the written relations between business people and companies. In order an official letter to be formed, the first and the essential condition is the initial and the ongoing communication and, of course, the language in which it is written. In our case, this is the Spanish language. The compiler of the letter should be aware of the problem that is the subject of the letter. The letter itself should be polite, clear and concise, to be stuck to the problem, to avoid unnecessary phrases, deviations and repetitions. **There is no place for personal questions and literary gossip in the business letter.**

Many companies have not been paying attention to the technical layout lately, but it is important. Apart from the fact that the letter should be written in a clear way, and that the knowledge of grammar and punctuation to be evident, there must be attached the logo of the company.

Outside the written correspondence, the oral communication remains a major element in the trade relations. For this purpose, each contracting party should be aware of the protocol rules.

When we have a conversation with a client or a foreign agent in the business world, we need to know something about his personality and character. Everyone is unique in their own. The behavior of each individual is inevitably reflected in the character of the nationality he is a representative of. There can also be followed the typical of the environment in which the person has been formed and the environment in which he works. Everyone who is to develop an international business is familiar with the phlegmatic actions of the English, the precision of the Germans, the quick vocabulary of the Italians and the Greeks. Spaniards are significantly different. When the word *mañana* is heard, the Spaniard does not mean just the next coming day, but it gives an idea of their sense of

⁹ Teodora Kiryakova-Dineva / Maya Kitkova, Intercultural dialogue: A prerequisite for successful tourist adaptation. In: Živković, Živan (Ed.) Book of proceedings. XII International May Conference on Strategic Management IMKSM 2016, May 28 – 30, 2016. Bor: Technical Faculty, Management Department, 593.

accuracy. They are not less garrulous than the Italians, which is also proved by the fact that it is enough to ask the Spanish to orientate you, and that already means the beginning of a friendship.

Lauring found that the language management in organizations has both instrumental and identity implications¹⁰. The benefits of using different language management tools and the use of a common organizational language can be related to easier access to documents and better communication in the organization. However, using a common language can also give a positive indication of inclusion in language minorities. In this way, language management can help us reduce our linguistic sense for us amongst the different linguistic communities. Some studies have found negative consequences of using a common language¹¹. For example, using a common language can distort the normal structure of the organization's authority¹². It is theoretically and practically proven that speaking a second language may be a necessary requirement for members of the organization to avoid causing tension on the individual¹³. As a last conclusion, it can be said that the language management works differently, especially when dealing with face-to-face negotiations as compared to negotiations conducted by the virtual teams¹⁴.

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¹² T. B. Neeley, Language matters: Status loss and achieved status distinctions in global organizations. *Organization Science*, 24(2) (2013) 476

¹³ S. Volk; T. Köhler & M. Pudelko, Brain drain: The cognitive neuroscience of foreign language processing in multinational corporations. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 45(7) (2014) 862-885.

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The contribution of the strategic language management to competitive advantage in international negotiations pag. 43

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