

NEW REQUIREMENTS IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

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ABSTRACT: *A key role in the development of economic affairs is the extension of intercultural communication skills. Intercultural communication favors a better understanding between heterogenous groups of subjects involved, on the one side, and the quality of economic activities, on the other side. The aims of this research are to highlight the place and the role of cultural features within the framework of the new paradigm of the era of globalization - integrated communication, and to define the requirements imposed by the digital revolution in creating and using the IA (Artificial Intelligence) databases in modern languages in relation to business negotiations.*

The results of the research maintain that the formation of the EU integrated economic market does not lead to alteration or disappearance of the cultural features of business partners. On the contrary, the economic actors making efforts to know, respect and use cultural features of the future business partners enhance their competitiveness and may conquer new segments of their organization market and access new markets.

Keywords: *interculturality, plurilingualism, artificial intelligence, linguistic technology platforms.*

JEL Classification: O33, Z13.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, development of digital technologies as well as intense extension of both mass-media and informational and cultural systems have led to a new social communication map. All these changes have rendered the gap between regions, groups, individuals and cultures more widely accepted and quicker. At present, the business environment needs experts in intercultural communication able to understand and interpret the potential causes of the misunderstandings between partners, on the one side, and ensure accurate transfer of knowledge, on the other side.

This paper shows the results of a lengthy theoretical research aiming at the interference between intercultural communication and business communication in relation to globally spread dialogue. The new interactionist communicational paradigm, which also functions in the field of business communication, integrates the facilities of the IA technologies so that a new cultural convergence emerges, a convergence enabling all parties involved in negotiation to identify similar interests and efficient ways to meet the requirements of the consumers on the target markets.

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The IA technologies allow complex economic analyses conducted while negotiating. Such analyses support understanding the customers' buying and consumption particularities, fairly and completely presented in all cultures, in all written and spoken languages present on the market which has turned into a market without frontiers. Nevertheless, a market which has segments, areas, regions of cultural specificity. Virtues integrating intercultural communication into the new paradigm of complex communication relying on IA are therefore analyzed, the viewpoint being that one should avoid a mechanistic alienation of the communication mix in the sector of business environment. The issues relating to identification and treatment of objections inherent in communication should not be settled using equally proportional arguments. We support the supreme value of interhuman business contacts integrating everything that the science provides towards accurate and updated data. Nonetheless, we count on preservation of conviviality, expression and valorization of emotional communication between present and future business partners.

The paper is theoretical and comes along other scientific initiatives which support the primordial role of communication abilities. This is different from communicational competence, yet they both form a functional whole conferring efficiency in conducting business negotiations and conclusion of some contracts so as to ensure satisfying market demands and, following this successful process, enhancing the capacity of the Romanian specialists acting in economic affairs to communicate in an interpersonal manner.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW: CULTURE, A VARIABLE FOR SUCCESS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Culture, business and communication are in a relation of synergy (Sasu, 2009). One cannot speak of negotiation or doing business and disregard culture (unlike corporate culture), formation and training negotiators. Intercultural business practices are permanently updated, similarly to integrated intercultural communication models. It is difficult yet necessary to understand the behavior of negotiation partners and to establish a strategy allowing all parties to work in harmony in a business context. Cultural profiles of Americans, Chinese, Saudis, Mexicans, etc. have been outlined and some general tendencies such as distancing oneself from power and group orientation have been mentioned. However, negotiators belonging to a certain group have a different behavior from the ones who are part of other groups even though they share the same culture. Americans, for instance, have different formality levels, mimicry, body language, tonality, and language depending on whom they negotiate: employees of their own company, negotiators from other American companies or negotiators in foreign companies.

Negotiators in a multinational company are each bearers of the culture in their home country. Nevertheless, in the process of a business meeting, they fall under the cultural traits of their corporation despite using the same ethnic language. They actually form a new culture, a new model and not an amount of cultural behaviors (Sasu, 2009). The employees in charge of negotiation and conclusion of economic contracts permanently study cultural communication in business and use interaction with their peers in other cultures, facilitated by Artificial Intelligence which saves time allocated to internet use and removes connection problems. What we witness is a pluralisation of values inside modern societies (Tantau, 2002) as well as a dynamization of such values. Furthermore, we see a differentiation of economic behavior, innovations, new organization and management technologies and a tremendous wave of changes in the field of communication and business promotion. Contemporary requirements impose that negotiators should have intercultural communication expertise and be prepared to practice environmental responsibility and social justice. Corporate culture, their knowledge and communication abilities are components of an intangible asset – reputation, i.e. stakeholders' perception of the organization, perception which is measurable in value (for example, using the

NPS - Net Promoter Score Method). A good reputation is a source of competitive advantage (Doorlay et al., 2017). Integrated communication has significant difference compared to classical communication (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Major differences between classical communication and integrated communication

Classical communication		Integrated communication
To be acquired	← PRODUCT →	To be kept (relationship management)
Mass communication	← TYPE →	Selective communication
Monologue	← FORM →	Dialogue
- Information are conveyed - Providing information - Transmitter takes initiative	← MODALITY →	- Information are requested - Information available on all channels - Receptor has initiative
Persuasive/manipulative	← MESSAGE →	Informative/honest
By repetition	← EFFECT →	By relevance
Offensive	← APPROACH →	Defensive
Hard to sell	← SALE →	Easy to sell
Brand prominence	← BRAND →	Trusted brand
Transaction-oriented	← FOCUS →	Relationship-oriented
Change of attitude	← TARGET →	Satisfaction
Modern, linear, massive	← CHANNEL →	Postmodern: cyclical, fragmented

Source: Adaptation by Yamada, H., 2017, cited in Florea, N.V., Tanasescu A.D. [4:53]

The dynamics and the complexity of the external factors influencing the activity of the organizations have imposed a fundamental review of the communication process. The consumer is assaulted by a huge volume of information which they are unable to process in an efficient manner so most of the information was screened and removed. Increase of the importance of brand, internationalization of business, unprecedented atomization of the demand as well as the evolution and spread of new technologies have been key factors leading to development of integrated communication.

This management concept requires that all aspects of communication – publicity, promotions, public relations, brand image, should cooperate in a single voice towards conveying a unitary coherent message coordinated on various channels aiming at the customer whose behavior should be influenced in the decision-making process and turn them into loyal customers as quickly as possible. The loyal customer is loyal to the brand while the trust they gain facilitates their orientation so that the time allocated to purchase-related decision is significantly reduced.

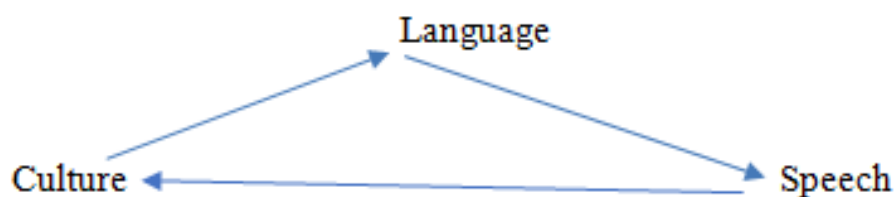
Integrated communication is cyclical in the sense that the bidders create systems intended to collect consumers' feedback in order to permanently improve the quality of the products and services, ensure a quality-price ratio in line with the level and the structure of the

demand, and diversify distribution channels according to the customers' requirements and the context on the market.

2. LANGUAGE – CULTURE BINOM

The French linguist Emile Benveniste makes a distinction between language and speech taking the logical roadmap from linguistics to language (Lesenciuc, 2017). As early as 1966, Benveniste defines language as “a system of structures simultaneously belonging to community and collective”. The determining connection between them is achieved through language which for the transmitter expresses a reality and for the receptor a recreation of such reality in a proper, particular decoding manner“ Speech coagulates culture” (Lesenciuc,1966) (Figure 2) .

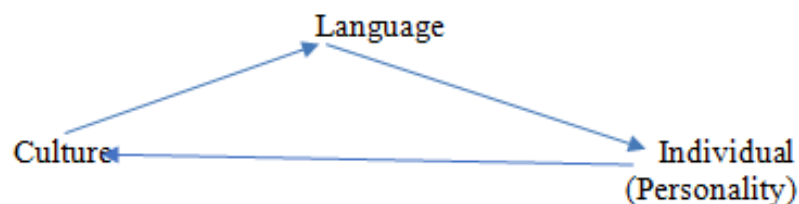
Figure 2. Culture-language-speech interdetermination



Source:Lesenciuc, A. ,2017, p.135.

Language is a revealing element of society “Speech is individual and represents a geometrical place of interaction between individual and society, between thinking and culture” (Figure 3).

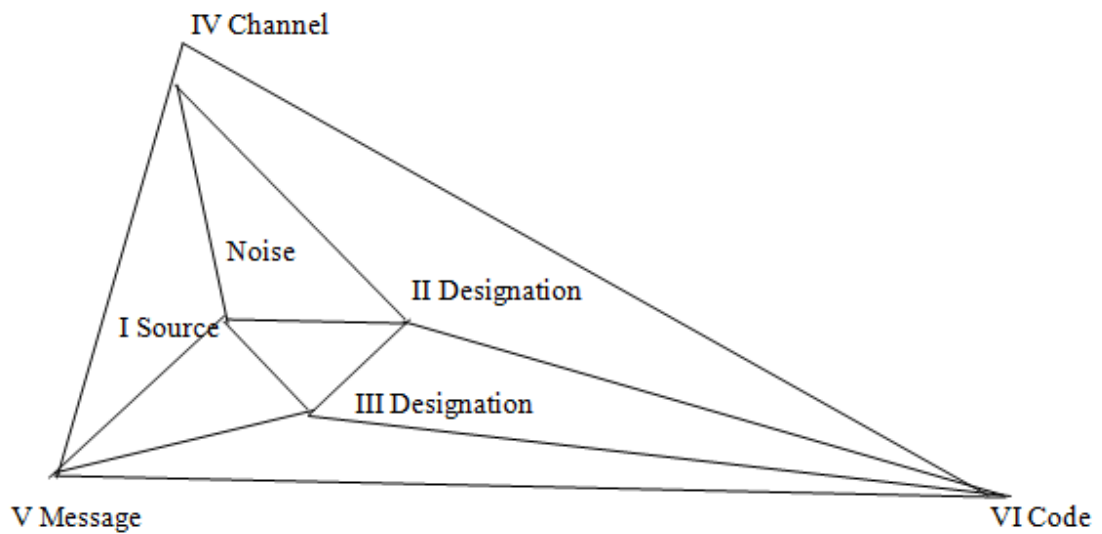
Figure 3. Culture-language-individual interdetermination



Source: Lesenciuc, A., 2017, p.136

The American linguist of Hungarian origin Sebeok studies and validates the functions of language as conceptualized by his predecessors Buhler and Jacobson, and starting from Shannon's model, he proposes a semiotic more detailed triangle (Figure 4) which highlights the complex structure of communication (Trandabat, 2002).

Figure 4. Sebeok's semiotic diagram

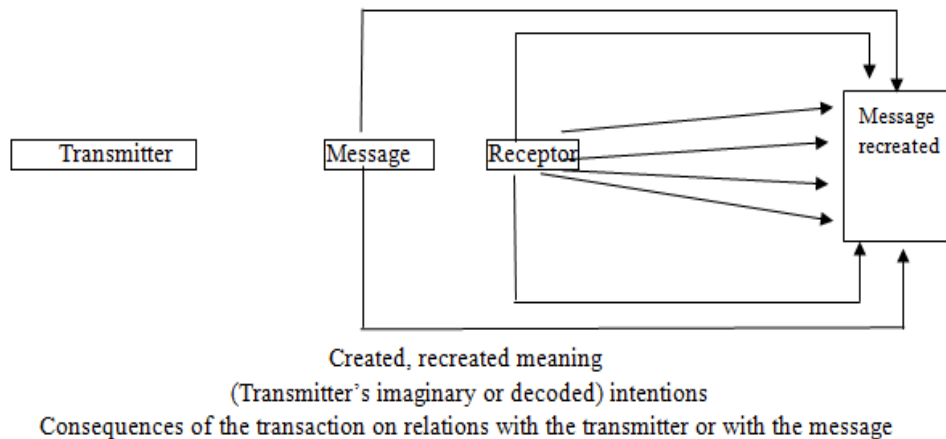


Source: Lesenciuc, A., 2017, p.142.

The models presented, as many others that came in succession, are mechanistic models which grant the primordial role to the transmitter, the one who builds and launches the message.

In 2002, the American researcher Lee O. Thayer lays emphasis on the role of the receptor and, in a transactional manner, he elaborates a model revealing orientation towards destination and incorporation in the message of both primary data (content of the message) and contextual communication elements (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Thayer's Model



Source: Lesenciuc, A., 2017, p.155.

In Thayer's model, the receptor stands in the forefront. He practically creates the message, assigns meaning to it and turns communication into a relation. Thayer's model suggests that decoding messages and formation/influencing receptors' opinions depend on the cultural baggage of each individual, their own scale of values.

3. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – COMPONENT OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION IN ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

For complex and unified communications within business negotiations and to increase the reaction speed as well as the management of operation flows in conducting business, employees can use several AI technologies such as: i) programmed learning; ii) natural language processing (NLP); iii) robots or software applications for repetitive, simple activities; iv) speaking, text dictation, text conveyed into speaking; and v) robotics (Blair, 2019). AI may be defined as an ensemble of technological components collecting, processing and acting on data in ways which simulate artificial intelligence. Similar to humans, AI solutions may apply rules, may learn in time through acquisition of new data and information and may adapt to changes in their environment (Russel and Norvig, 2006). Artificial intelligence is perceived as a sector of the computer science which uses intelligent human-like thinking and acting machines. This includes recognition of speech, natural language processing, image recognition etc. (Bucea-Manea et al., 2022).

IA instruments carry out all and any time-consuming operation and provides highly accurate information in pre- and post- business negotiating periods as well as during business negotiations. Moreover, as the volume of the information becomes heavier, the AI instruments pinpoint other actors of B2B and B2C markets of which activities are correlated to those of the economic agents involved in negotiations, consolidating therefore the quality of the relations.

Marcin Franckiewicz (2023) has recently posted an article regarding the potential of GBT-4 natural language processing (Generative Pre-trained Transformer 4). This NLP generates a response to any request of information concerning workplaces, formation of digital abilities, entrepreneurship. GBT-4 practically reduces the digital gap and enables people to contain modern technology use skills. GBT-4 processes language, including for persons with various disabilities. GBT-4 may connect people from different communities and is able to create language models in various languages even though the participants do not know the language and come from completely different cultures. The linguistic gap between cultures is effectively reduced by GBT-4 which processes natural language and generates linguistically and semantically accurate texts, translations between languages, contextual conversations.

Effective April 2021, the European Commission proposed the first normative EU regulation on AI with a view to analyzing and classifying applications according to risk levels for consumers, with the observation that AI systems will be supervised by people and not through automated processes as there are different rules depending on the risk levels. This regulation is the first regulation of such kind around the world and follows extensive research (Eurobarometru, 2017.UE-28). The research revealed that 61% of the Europeans have a favorable opinion of AI and robots. On the contrary, 88% state that AI technologies have to benefit from a high-performance thoroughly-applied management.

The law sets the following risk AI systems: high risk, with two sub-systems components; generative AI, such as ChatGPT, and limited risk.

All risk categories are widely detailed, debated and negotiated with the final stated objective that the final form of the law should be adopted in the European Parliament by the end of 2023.

4. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS USE IN ROMANIA IN BUSINESS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Along with the evolution of digital technologies, there is an increasingly spread practice to use artificial intelligence in everyday life. Whether we speak of a Google research, or an e-order, an online payment or simply watching TV news, AI is capable of completing all these

activities. AI is present in our daily life through virtual assistants. AI supports not only us, human beings as physical persons, but it also represents a real benefit for companies. The organizations implementing such digital technologies can increase sales of their products and provide their customers with better services both leading to better indicators. In addition, AI ensures better operation of companies and generates lower costs (Loureire et al, 2021). Artificial intelligence transforms businesses, economy and society and consequently experiences and relations between the parties concerned and citizens. Throughout time, there have been many specialists who have shown a genuine interest in using AI in business and in getting to know their role. Therefore, Huang and Rust (2018) have studied the AI impact on the employees' tasks (Huang and Rust, 2018) while Flavián and Casalo have highlighted the benefits of AI use in the sector of services (Flavián and Casalo, 2021). AI is successfully used in several economic areas. In marketing, it is successful in automation of repetitive functions and marketing activities, in processing data to help the decision-making process, on the one side, and the strategic planning, on the other side (Huang and Rust, 2021). AI has the capacity to adapt to any environment and it is at present a source of innovation, in particular in the sector of services. Rapid development of technology and the AI impact on society represent a challenge for the decision-making factors. The necessity to regulate the artificial intelligence systems is widely recognized (Smuha, 2021).

Digital technologies have been used more and more frequently both worldwide and nationwide. Therefore, the Research Institute for Artificial Intelligence within the Romanian Academy (RACAI) has created language models starting from some large size corpora. The systems and the resources for language technology applications are beyond comparison when it comes to the degree of coverage and the quality of the ones already in place for English language. There are also discontinuities in financing research and development.

On May 16 2020, in Marseille, there was the first international workshop on linguistic technological platforms. The key subject was the European Linguistic Grid, a platform with thousands of sets of data and hundreds of linguistic technology services for all European languages and cultures, adapted to their social and economic needs. The grid is financed through the Research and Innovation Program of the European Union, ORIZONT 2020.

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) is of strategic importance for the economic development. In our country, only 6% of the companies use AI applications. We come last in Europe in relation to use of AI by Romanian-owned companies, despite the fact that, paradoxically, the Romanian economy takes the 19th place in a classification of complex and sophisticated economies worldwide. The Economic Complexity Index (ECI) of Harvard Kennedy School of Government, the number and the complexity of the products exported place our country some places below China (17), France (18) and above Poland (26), Bulgaria (39) (Toma, A., 2023).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Business globalization does not mean extinction of cultural particularities of producers, traders and consumers of goods and services. It only means knowing them best possible so as to create an intercultural offer which should satisfy the needs of a large group of customers. The changes in the structure and the volume of the demand of goods and services occur extremely rapidly against the background of a more and more intense people and business mobility and reduction in cross-border barriers.

Business negotiations rely on creation of some sound databases and direct contacts or contacts mediated by representatives of companies acting as bidders or beneficiaries. Linguistic technology platforms enable storage of databases and conduct of operations of negotiation and contracting in any language agreed upon by partners, in addition to English language (lingua

franca), which means an emotional communication harmonized with a proper atmosphere enhancing the quality of the negotiations. The new technologies slow down the already consistent process of extinction of some languages in the process of business communication with negative effects since there is a loss of cultural advantages incorporated in the vocabulary of each language in the economic area concerned by the business.

All economic actors mainly use English language which has become Lingua Franca. Nevertheless, the spectacular evolution of artificial intelligence (AI) leads to an already visible evolution towards high-performance databases in almost all business languages which have become competitive advantages. The consumers impose respect for their buying and consumption customs and traditions, whereas the bidders highlight the capacity of goods and services to create and satisfy emotions.

The field of intercultural communication in connection with study and creative application of AI technology become captivating not only for the specialists in production and sale of goods and services, but also for the general public from among who companies identify future customers and fight to gain them. Romania has demonstrated that it may be an active player on the European and global economic market, by assimilating new digital technologies and by practicing in economic affairs the respect for the partners' culture and the responsible management of cultural differences in the process of negotiation, conclusion and performance of economic contracts.

Finally, we express our conviction that the technological and scientific advance will generate improvement of all economic and cultural processes which contribute to the physical and mental wellbeing of the greatest being in the Univers – the human being.

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