

Cross-cultural Pragmatic Peculiarities of Business Documentation

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The era of globalization and development of the international relations is characterized by the dynamic increase of the business relations the main aim of which is to achieve mutual understanding through ensuring the proper communication between the parties involved. In order to enhance the effectiveness of the business texts the adequacy in terms of content formulation is the key point to be considered and ensured by the text creator whose competence should go beyond the knowledge of the language within its grammatical structures and lexical means and requires a good command of the specific language characterizing business documents. In other words the correct choice of the vocabulary should serve the realization of the meaning the sender of the information intends to transfer to the addressee and receive the desired response. Consequently the successful implementation of the business relations requires the knowledge of the language on the pragmatic level that is particularly true for the business relations in cross-cultural contexts.

The main aim of the communication in business context is to achieve the desired, for all parties involved, response and ensure, at the end, the process of buying or selling the things implemented in the way it is beneficial for them. In order to be successful one has to have a very good command of the specific language and the skills of the correct application of it that means being able to choose the relevant vocabulary in accordance to the situation.

In order to enhance the effectiveness of the communication in business contexts the person involved and willing to benefit from has to have the decent knowledge not only on the conceptual meaning of the specific vocabulary, but the possible pragmatic shapes the words can get while being communicated and used in the business relations. Moreover, the communicator of the business context has to be able to identify pragmatic value of the message in order to realize the response he/she he gets correctly and reply in compliance with the need so that neither of the sides of the communication get disadvantage from the relation

or experience failure. Therefore it is obvious that socio-cultural, linguistic and pragmatic knowledge is necessary for the person involved in business communication.

As it is mentioned above the development of the business relations has gone beyond the borders and become an international phenomenon what made the process of the business communication even more complex to realize. This is conditioned not only by the different languages that communicators' bear, but the different social and cultural background knowledge as well.

Communication between the people with different cultural and social knowledge might go wrong more often rather than the communication between the people having one and the same cultural values and social environment. One of the reasons of experiencing the failure could be the approach towards expressing the intention of the speaker implicitly that tends to be the main characterizing feature of the business communications. It is noteworthy to underline that the implicit information is much more difficult to understand and ensure the relevant response in the written communication than in the oral one where the speakers can support their ideas with gestures, mimes, tone, intonation etc.; Communicators have more chance to achieve the goals in the oral contexts since non-verbal language contributes to the correct perception of the implied idea a lot. Therefore, if the addressee fails to understand the uttered meaning he/she will easily compensate this failure by observing the non-verbal language the sender of the information uses in the process of the communication.

As it is mentioned above misinterpretations of the message can be experienced in the process of the communication within the one language and cultural circumstances when the message of the sender does not directly reveal the intention of the speaker yet it contains the implicit information only. The idea behind the usage of such an implicit way of delivering the message is the belief the sender of the information has towards the addressee. In other words the sender of the information is sure that the recipient will understand him/her in any case and does not fully demonstrate the content through application of the sentence or a structure that explicitly reveals the intention of the speaker. For instance,

A: Were you recording the data while working on site?!

B: No Sir, we do not need to record anything since we remember everything!

B: No Sir, we apologize for not fulfilling the task thoroughly (the expected answer) or

B: No Sir, we were not able to do it because.....

In the above given dialogue speaker B did not get the message from speaker A. Speaker A wanted speaker B to explain the reason of ignoring the recording of the data when

doing some particular task which was directly related to or required obtaining and recording data. Therefore, the message of speaker A with a function of a request on explanation or apology for not performing thoroughly was misinterpreted by the addressee causing irritation of speaker A (in this case the employer).

The main reason of the misinterpretation of the message from the employer could be explained from two aspects: one was the fact that speaker A did not use the structure, tone, intonation etc.; which could explicitly reveal his/her intention, but applied the way of expressing the idea implicitly. The second reason could be the lack of the background information on the way of giving instructions on the task to be implemented. The fact is that the recipients of the information in the above given dialogue might have not been informed explicitly on the specifics of the task. In other words they did not know that they it was required to make notes when doing the work on the field since nobody instructed them explicitly on it. Consequently the task was not implemented properly that means that business communication failed.

The risk of the business communication failure is even doubled when the communication takes place in bilingual environment when the process of the business relation takes place among the parties with different languages and social-cultural background. Implementing communication with foreigners involves not only the different languages, but different ways of interacting, different tones and paces, gesturing, etc., that could be misunderstood by the communicators and become the cause of some tension between them. The above observed experience is particularly true for the business communication implemented in a written way since no body language, relevantly chosen pace and tone can not contribute to the correct understanding of the message if there is some vagueness in the application of the verbal language. Due to the dominated formal language and the lack of the explicit demonstration of the intention the message in business documents is often misunderstood or even missed in many cases.

The fact that the business communication gained international character developed the variety of business documents and made it even more sophisticated to deal with the types of documents in the cross-cultural environment so that complete mutual understanding is ensured. In this context it is obvious how difficult the translator's task is as nowadays they have to deal with the translation of various kinds of business documentations where translators have to play a huge role to ensure proper intercultural communication in the world of business.

Coming out from what is discussed above it is clear that for the proper implementation of the business document translation the translators have to have socio-cultural, socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge to be able to understand the implied in any formulation, meaning in the business document. Moreover, they should have the skills to understand the message of the source text expressed explicitly as well as implicitly and finally be able to implement pragmatic adaptation through different techniques of translation to deliver the intention of the message sender.

The task of the translator when translating business document could be described as follows: at the first stage the translator has to guess the intention of the content author; at the second stage the translator has to know how the same idea could be represented for the recipient of the different culture and finally choose the correct way to express the meaning implied in the original document.

The presented article deals with the analysis of the pragmatic peculiarities of the business texts in the cross cultural contexts. Particularly it provides the comparative analysis of constructions of politeness and request expressions in English and Georgian business documentations. The article deals with the interpretation of key pragmatic factors influencing on the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication in business contexts and the correct choice of the adequate techniques of translation by the translator to maintain the meaning of the original text in the translation in order to ensure harmonized consequence in terms of ensuring the adequate message transfer and response.

One of the key important issues in business documents is the principle of expressing politeness. Sometimes the communicators might offend each other very easily without any intention to do so. Politeness principles are applied differently in different cultures. In other words there is the big difference between the frequency, degree and situational application of the politeness constructions. In some cultures the usage of politeness expressions is natural and even obligatory in various contexts whereas the people with other cultural background might not consider it necessary to apply the politeness structures so frequently and express the idea directly that could sound very straightforward and even rude to the recipients. In this case the task of the translator of business documents is very important since the translator can make the relevant changes to make the source message sound polite. Consequently, the addressee will perceive the message in a natural for him/her way and will never feel offended. The above mentioned issue can be observed in every kind of business document. The different approach in the context of expressing politeness is particularly noticeable when

interacting between the Georgian and English business environments. Georgian language, in this case, is more direct and does not apply the same frequency and level of expressing politeness as the English language does. It is not necessary that the intention of the information sender is to offend the recipient, but the construction applied can easily influence on the English language bearer and lead to the tension and misunderstanding between the communicators. For instance:

...nebismier SemTxvevaSi yvela es sakiTxi aris kontraqtis darRveva da saSualebas
aZlevs damqiravebels daasrulos kontraqti FIDIC-is 15.2 muxlis mixedviT.

The Georgian sentence is an extract from the minutes of meeting. The aim of the minutes of meeting is to summarise the activities carried out by the employee for a particular period of time and clarify the status of works and finally elaborate the set of activities to be implemented to ensue further development of works. The Georgian sentence above does not explicitly reflect the intention of the employer to ask the employee to rethink of the activities to be carried in order to ensure the proper implementation of works and warn the employee on the possible negative results the improper fulfilment of works can cause.

The Georgian sentence given above is very direct since there is no politeness expressiveness means applied and therefore can sound very rude and straightforward in English language when translating directly without application of the relevant pragmatic adaptations. The sentence sounds in English as follows:

In any case this means to breach the contract and provides the opportunity to the employer to cancel the contract based on the article 15.2 of FIDIC.

In case the sentence is translated in English without any pragmatic adaptation it could sound as an alarm on possible contract cancelation to the employee although this is not the intention of the communicator who drafted the original minutes. In order to deliver the clear message to the recipient the translator has to apply the relevant means of politeness and make other necessary translational adaptations to make the text sound natural for the recipient.

The possible alternative to make the sentence sound more polite could be the structural change in the sentence or addition of some words expressing politeness.

The second example that could serve to demonstrate the possible deviation from the original text style in the translated content is the following:

..... ...moviTxovT SewyvitoT samuSaoebi mTavar xazze...

The sentence in Georgian is also an extract from the same minutes of meeting. The sentence is very straightforward and asks the employee to stop works on the main line. The

background of the sentence is the fact that the employer had experienced some problems on the spot the employee was carrying the works out. In order to make some remedial works the employer had to ask the employee to stop the works and allow the other contractor to repair the damage. The sentence given above is the instruction given to the employer asking to stop works for some period. From the content point of view the sentence in Georgian sounds natural for the recipient with the Georgian cultural background, but could be unacceptable for the English language bearer recipient since there is no politeness expressive mean applied and therefore sound very demanding and may have a negative effect on the employee.

In order to make the sentence sound natural and acceptable for the employee the translator has to modify the Georgian sentence or make the relevant pragmatic modifications so that at the end of the day the message formulation is absolutely acceptable for the receiver of the information and the intention of the sender of the information is delivered and perceived correctly. The possible applicable politeness expressive structures that could be used by the translator are as follows: “Please, stop works...”, “Please make sure the works are stopped...”, etc.

In the sentences provided above the translator either has to make some pragmatic changes of the sentences or add some structural units to the original message to express politeness that is necessary for the English business documents to fit the standards of the requirements and achieve effective communication.

The comparative analysis of the original and target texts revealed the most critical points in the translator’s job when working on the business documents. Particular focus was given to the difficulties that can be experienced when interpreting request implied in the original text into the target text, when the message could be transferred in an unacceptable for the recipient way and could lead to the failure of the business relations or the tension between the parties involved. The aim of the article is to discuss possible techniques of the translation that could be applied by the translator of the business documents and contribute to the effective and acceptable structural changes that at the end result in desired and efficient communication between the sender and the receiver of the information.

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