ADVANCED LANGUAGE TECHNIQUES IN BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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У статті розглядаються методи добору та вживання слів у діловому середовищі. Предметом пильної уваги стали способи вживання слів, які обираються людьми для передачі змісту повідомлення. Аналізуються відмінності стилю передачі повідомлення, яке має первинно незмінний зміст. Здійснюється спроба встановлення взаємозв'язку між способами передачі повідомлення і типом особистості особи, яка говорить.

Ключові слова: мовні техніки, слововживання, повідомлення, офіційні ситуації, ділове середовище.

В статье рассматриваются методы подбора и употребления слов в деловой среде. Предметом пристального внимания стали способы словоупотребления, которые избираются людьми для передачи содержания сообщения. Анализируются различия стиля передачи сообщения, имеющего изначально неизменное содержание. Совершается попытка установления взаимосвязи между способами передачи сообщения и типом личности говорящего.

Ключевые слова: языковые техники, словоупотребление, сообщение, официальные ситуации, деловая среда.

This article explores the methods of word usage in business environment rather than language per se. Close attention is paid to word usage and word combining chosen by people to convey the content of a message. The object of interest is also the difference in style of message transfer in connection with its content. The attempt to establish correlations between the manner of message transfer and the speaker's personality is made.

Keywords: language techniques, word usage, message, official occasions, business environment.

This research addresses the advanced language techniques in business environment aiming to arrange a scientific base of applying language constituent in corporate communication. The investigation aims at empirically exploring the methods of word usage in business environment and the practical results they cause. In this perspective, a special attention is given to the role played by language means both in one-on-one meetings and corporate communication.

The relevance of the subject is proven by the number of developments and project aimed to investigate the word usage and word combinations chosen by people to convey the content of a message. It is a broad-banded research demanding laboratory testing and operation on vast area of business world that is not available for immediate experiment and expertise.

The hypothesis is stated that selected language techniques can predetermine the result of a business meeting, raising the efficiency of communication and mutual understanding.

The practical significance of the work is in providing people with practical skills, which are ultimately necessary in the business and communication world. Special language patterns are constructed of words being the most significant tools in language technology. The words people use in business activities reveal the unique level in information exchange between individuals and systems. Speech and written text analysis allows researchers to reliably and quickly assess features of what people say as well as subtleties in their linguistic styles.

Business activity is deeply involved in linguistic interaction. Most of business time is spent in conversations or meeting with others. In actual decision making, much information comes as well from live linguistic interaction [17, p. 7]. More radically, since the early seventies, empirical studies have suggested that business activity is essentially oriented towards creating and maintaining a flow of interactions (mostly language-mediated) within a network of personal ties [17, p. 7]. Decisions

are made within these interaction flows, and are in a way a by-product of its maintenance and growth. Despite such evidence of the relevance of language means in business activities, people's language is still to a large extent an under-explored issue, both as a research object and as a source of data. The nature and content of business language are still terra incognita, with the exception of a few works, of a scarce empirical content, on "organizational codes", organizational metaphors, the role of analogies in the innovation process, and cognitive maps that has used written as well as oral sources to extract information on representation models (mostly of a causal type) employed by decision makers. In addition to these early works, more recent research on politeness and verbal immediacy mark word shifts as a function of setting.

Later research attempted to define which dimensions within business environment are most likely to be associated with language and, eventually, word usage. D. Hymes [13, p. 12], an anthropologist and a founder of sociolinguistics, argued that any speech act must be considered within eight dimensions ranging from the setting of the utterances, who the participants were, the goals of the interaction, etc. Other researchers such as P. Brown and C. Fraser [3, p.21] and J. Forgas [10, p.17] expanded on the idea of developing taxonomic structures of situations to help identify when and how language shifted. Psychological dimensions of situations related to language and communication included the situation's formality, cooperativeness, and involvement. Note that these approaches focused more on the nature of the interactions than on the word usage [10, p.19].

Inherent in business settings are disparities in power among interactants and an adherence to culturally proscribed norms of behavior. E. Goffman [12, p.73] suggested that within such status-discrepant situations, individuals engage in "dramaturgic" work to sustain and enhance their public face. Brown & Levinson's [5, p.58] politeness theory takes into account an individual's efforts to preserve the "face(s)" of others with whom one communicates. Whereas politeness theory is comprised of specific linguistic strategies to minimize threat to another's face, most studies are concerned with these tactics at the phrase level. Typically, the corpus of language is independently coded by human judges noting the frequency of each tactic. However, in many of Brown & Levinson's [5] tactics word-level markers of politeness can be parsed out. For example, they propose impersonalizing the speaker and hearer by avoiding the pronouns I and you, using past tense to create distance and time, diminishing the force of speech by using hedge words such as perhaps, using slang to convey in-group membership, and using inclusive forms (we and let's) to include speaker and hearer.

In an interesting application of the language of politeness in business studies, D. A. Morand [18] had participants engaged in laboratory role-plays in which they were required to address a hypothetical other of a given high or low status. D. A. Morand then independently coded the transcripts for the presence of politeness tactics. At the word level participants used more hedge words, past tense, subjunctive, formal words, honorifics (sir, Mr.), and apologies. Similar word-level findings are embedded in the phrases detected in the majority of politeness studies [4; 5].

A separate group of studies has found support for the centrality of the business dimension based on inductive analyses of language use. Wiener & Mehrabian [23, p.37] and A. Mehrabian [16, p.49] posited that a basic dimension to language was verbal immediacy. Individuals who were verbally immediate tend to use the present tense, are more personal in their interaction, and draw on the speaker and audience's shared realities. Markers of verbal immediacy were found to be more common in informal settings than in formal ones. Interestingly, parallel and independent findings have been reported by two other labs. D. Biber [2, p.32] in his factor analysis of words, considered his first factor to be a marker of formality. Words that loaded on the factor included first person singular and present tense verbs. Indeed, speech samples high on the informality factor tended to be personal conversations or informal writing samples. Using a much larger and homogeneous sample of students' writings, Pennebaker & King [21] also found that the first and most robust factor was immediacy, which included first person singular, present tense verbs, short words, discrepancy words (would, should, could), and the non-use of articles.

P. Freeth [11, p. 234] (2008) states, that individuals' choice of words signals their age, sex, position in the company, status in the group of immediate interlocutors, motives of conversation, hidden targets, subliminal mechanisms of corporation behavior. On the other hand, a state of a person at a certain time and on a certain place is represented by its own vocabulary [11, p.137]. Recipients sense if the speaker or writer is emotionally close or distant, thoughtful or shallow, extraverted or introverted, balanced or neurotic, traditional or open to new experience.

A number of researchers tend to prove that the premeditated, purposeful, controllable use of language means and techniques is a meaningful marker, constant mediator and powerful facilitator of business processes (McLauchlin L. [15]; Camp L. [6]; Sant T. [22]; Mortensen K. [19]; Dilts R. [8]; Mulholland J. [20]). Furthermore the necessity of mastery of ones language is emphasized in numerous practical manuals based on research in psychology, linguistics, communication theory (Fiske E. [9]; Alder H. [1]; Knight S. [14]; Freeth P. [11]). Their studies mainly taper to the notion of *effective communication*, which is defined as a process of assigning and conveying a meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding. Effective communication is also the articulation of sending a message, through different media whether it be verbal or nonverbal so long as a being transmits a thought provoking idea, gesture, action, etc. The other definition of it is the act of passing information and the process by which meanings are exchanged so as to produce understanding. Effective communication occurs if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intends to transmit. Effective communication is not just only words one to transfer factual information to others, but also to other "messages" that are sent and received.

The common sense point here is simple: for effective communicate – in conversation, in writing, and in presentations – the words should be chosen carefully. Precision in language facilitates effective communication. It is conducive to effective business, being a vital factor determining work success. Communication is used to convey ideas, get work done and to recognize for the effort made. Verbal communication includes face to face conversations, meetings, email and voice chats, memos, letters and reports. Business communications vary with purpose, audience, information, organization, style, document design and visuals. Internal audience includes people in the same organization like subordinates, superiors and peers. External audiences are people outside the organizations which include customers, suppliers and government. When it comes to business communication, informal listening, speaking and working in groups are as important as formal documents and presentations. Communication in an organization serves the purpose to inform, to request and to build goodwill.

There are 2 main streams of language information transfer and processing: *matching information* (when brain perceives the language message, consisting in sentence-fragments, formally expressed as a sequence of tokens, decodes the entering model of reality with the rules of his inner system) and *indexing information* (when human transmits it outside, encoding his model of reality into tokens, combined into flow of information). From the point of view of using the language system and the peculiarities of language perceiving by people in business settings, it is relevant to turn to analysis of *indexing information* deeper, because such research provides a person with practical skills, which are ultimately necessary in the business and communication world.

The simplest level of language influence in business environment is provided by words themselves as already accomplished signs. Sets of special words allow achieving impact, empathy, enthusiasm, inspiration, and infusion. The other sets of words are applicable to achieve different effects, such as affirmance of authority, power.

It is relevant to use very assumptive and assertive language. For example, instead of saying, "If you get the report done by Friday, we'll leave early and go out to dinner", one would say, "When you get the report done by Friday, we'll leave early and go out to dinner". It is also worth to speak positively when accepting responsibility. Instead of saying, "That's not my problem. You'll have to talk to someone else" they would say, "I'll have the person responsible give you a call".

As the speaker designs his persuasive message, he must consider the emotional impact of each word and phrase. When he wants to create emotion, he chooses the words that will trigger feelings. If he wants to downplay the event or situation, he uses an unemotional word. For instance, the following words generally have the same definition but carry different emotional weight: "thrifty" versus "cheap", "traditional" versus "old-fashioned", "extroverted" versus "loud", "careful" versus "cowardly", and "eccentric" versus "strange".

There are many words that are emotionally loaded and represent different values to different people. These words can get people to pay attention and alert them to know what significance the message has for them. It is hard to find a neutral word. Ones word choice will paint different pictures for different people because the way people define words is based on their belief systems, their past experiences, and their social roles. The beliefs they hold about a word will dictate their actions and how they respond.

Sometimes, if used improperly, positive words can still lead to a negative response. For this reason, it is relevant to avoid certain words, although generally positive, and instead use words that may still bear positive associations, but are more ambiguous. For example, in the world of politics we hear phrases like "freedom of choice", "fiscal responsibility" or "responsible taxation". When politicians use such generalities, people of differing viewpoints can actually both be appeased. They will fill in the blanks and provide their own definitions. Words can convey emotional color by how long or short they are. Generally, shorter words are more blunt, direct, harsh, or sharp. Consider words like "kick", "hit", "force", "stop" or "no".

Effective communication in meetings is partly a matter of knowing certain special expressions. Some of the ways we change the basic message are, however, generalisable, for instance:

- 1. Using would, could or might to make what you say more tentative.
- 2. Presenting your view as a *question* not a statement.
- 3. Using a grammatical *negative* (adding *not*) to make a suggestion more open and therefore more negotiable.
 - 4. Using an *introductory phrase* to prepare the listener for your message.
 - 5. Adding *I'm afraid* to make clear that you recognize the unhelpfulness of your response.
- 6. Using words which qualify or restrict what you say to make your position more flexible (a bit difficult, a slight problem).
- 7. Using *not* with a *positive word* instead of the obvious negative word (*not very convenient, I don't agree*).
 - 8. Using a comparative (better, more convenient) to soften your message.
- 9. Using a *continuous form* (I was wondering) instead of a simple form (I wondered) to make a suggestion more flexible.
 - 10. Using stress as an important way of making the message more effective (It is important).

All of these features are common in the specific language needed for effective communication at business meetings.

Certain word choices can influence people to act against their own self-interests. There is an example of different language techniques the manager in tested company would tell to his subordinates during their meeting:

- 1. "Listen to me, we have 3 problems to solve, it will make our week-end working period. May we do so?"
- 2. "Listen to me, we have 3 problems to solve, it will make our week-end working period. Who can come to the office?"
- 3. "Listen to me, we have 3 problems to solve, it will make our week-end working period. Because then we will have our problems solved!"
- 4. "Listen to me, we have 3 problems to solve, it will make our week-end working period. We should do this!"

5. "Listen to me, we have 3 problems to solve, it will make our week-end working period. Because we are solving our problems!"

Every time the manager just tried different word choices to see how the subordinates would respond to each request.

One of valuable words in business environment is "you". When the word "you" is used instead of a more general word like, for example, "people", there is a stronger sense of identity. The listener will be more tuned in to a message. On the other hand, the one word that will impede any ability to communicate properly is "but". "But" negates everything one said before it. It is strongly recommended to use the word "and" in business communication instead of "but". Another simple change is to use the word "can" instead of "could", it is better to use "will" than "would", "try" than "do".

Advanced language techniques at business meetings provide a large set of synonyms to be used in business context. Especially it is actual for a long genre of business communication forms – speech, presentation, report, persuasion, etc. The sets of semantically coloured words are represented as a readymade material for creating necessary effects in business communication:

1) Presuppositions of permanence and stability:

nouns: permanence, stability, durability, firmness, steadiness, fixity, constance, constancy etc.

adjectives: *lasting, remaining, stable, secure, staying, endless, continuing, eternal, ceaseless, constant, enduring, persistent etc.*

verbs: to guarantee, to secure, to avouch, to assure, to safeguard, to ensure, to make sure, to warrant, to insure etc.

adverbs: permanently, constantly, continuously, continually, always, incessantly, invariably, steadily, year after year, day after day, uninterruptedly etc.

phrases: long term commitment, long lasting service, dedication and stability in service, continuous improving and updating, durable care and attention, stability and guarantees in interaction etc.

2) Presuppositions of power and strength:

nouns: power, might, strength, authority, vigour, energy, vitality, depth, force etc.

adjectives: powerful, strong, mighty, intense, firm, solid, vigorous, massive, high-end, stiff, sturdy, substantial etc.

verbs: to strengthen, to reinforce, to fortify, to backup, to shore up, to intensify, to consolidate, to augment, to advance, to steady, to increase, to bulwark etc.

adverbs: fast, strong, firmly, solidly, vitally, massively, intensely, vigorously etc.

phrases: powerful input to the field, strength in productions capacities, authority among competitors, strengthening your benefits, solid perspectives to success, consolidating efforts to make breakthrough in the field etc.

3) Presuppositions of profit and use:

nouns: profit, benefit, income, revenue, margin, return, vantage, earnings, gain, interest, growth, increase, extension, expansion, adding, raise, increment, augmentation, drawings up, advantage, avail, behalf etc.

adjectives: profitable, gainful, beneficial, remunerative, advantageous, easy, expedient, efficient, useful, wholesome etc.

verbs: to profit, to gain, to earn, to collect revenue, to have interests, to use, to utilize, to make use of, to take advantage of; to turn to account, to exploit, to practise on etc.

adverbs: beneficially, usefully, gainfully, increasingly etc.

phrases: to have a large profit with us, to raise your income many times, to have a good return under this commitment etc.

4) Presuppositions of creativeness and innovations:

nouns: creativity, creation, creativeness, innovation, introduction, novelty, newness, originality, authenticity, genuineness, trueness, exactness, precision, accuracy etc.

adjectives: creative, constructive, original, originative, brand-new, imaginative, ingenious, inventive, resourceful, innovative, innovating, foremost, headmost, forward, leading, advanced, up-to-date, cutting-edge, progressive, breakthrough etc.

verbs: to create, to design, to innovate, to amend, to enrich, to enhance, to perfect, to invent, to develop, to originate, to generate, to refine, to improve, to compose, to found, to produce, to evolve, to establish, to set up, to build up, to expand, to streamline, to rationalize, to grade up etc.

adverbs: creatively, constructively, originally, truly, rightly, correctly, initially, primarily, innovatively, inventively, ingeniously, resourcefully etc.

phrases: creative approach, original method, brand-new technical solution, cutting-edge information technology etc.

5) Presuppositions of success and prosperity:

nouns: success, prosperity, fortune, achievement, fulfillment, advance, advancement, career, promotion, encouragement, reward, stride, destiny, feat, exploit etc.

adjectives: successful, prosperous, fortunate, achieving, advanced, felicitous, happy, lucky, satisfied, content, pleasant, pleased, growing, awarding etc.

verbs: to succeed, to prosper, to flourish, to thrive, to achieve, to fulfill, to advance, to move, to promote, to reward etc.

adverbs: successfully, prosperously, fortunately, happily, lucky, pleasantly etc.

phrases: steady success, consequent prosperity, bright achievements, encouraging assessments, satisfied customer etc.

These semantic primitives are entering the bigger structures in contexts of business environment. The most subtle way of managing people is to bridge to employees' cognitive resources and to build the common field of mental structures.

For example, perfect language strategies are used in the airline industry, which has ultimately mastered the power of words. Flight attendant's announcements are good examples of transmitting crucial information in the system "an individual to a group" and "a manager to customers". The word choice is critical in getting the point across and in reducing panic aboard. It is announces, for instance, that in the event of a water landing you should use a life vest. 'Your individual lift vest is located in a pouch beneath your seat. Should its use become necessary, remove it from the plastic packet, slip it over your head and pull downward on the front panel... Each vest has a rescue light on the shoulder for night use which is water activated by removing the Pull to Light tab located on the battery' [24].

Reframed massage appeared in a number of articles in the Internet periodicals. 'Your life vest can be found under your seat, but please do not remove it now. In fact, do not bother to look for it at all. In the event of a landing on water, an unprecedented miracle will have occurred, because in the history of aviation the number of wide-bodied aircraft that have made successful landings on water is zero' [25]. The purpose of such posts is to show the power of language means transmitting the concept of "averting danger" [25].

As another example of subtle word choice in the system of labour relations the communication pattern at a dentist's office could be observed. Such visit is not a particularly pleasant situation in general and sometimes downright frightening. Dentists have mastered the art of verbal packaging to put patients into mild emotional state. The usage of extenuating synonyms is common: painful – uncomfortable, Does that hurt? – Does that bother you?, blade – '12, hatchet – big H, yank, pull – remove, cut – smooth, drill – prepare, hemorrhage – debris, needle – tip, spit – empty mouth, grind – prepare teeth, shot – injection, pain – a little pressure.

Less expressed, but still deliberate usage of synonyms can be observed in sales and services. These areas vastly apply the *repelling* words being the exact markers of the processes. However proficient managers use superior words, which appeal to the recipients. These substitutes bear neutral

or positive semantic colouring: contract – agreement/paperwork, sign here – OK the paperwork / autograph, sell – get involved, cancellation – right of rescission, salesperson – business consultant, commission – fee for one's services, cost – investment, credit card – form of payment, problem – challenge, objections – areas of concern, expensive – top of the line, cheaper - more economical, service charge – processing fee etc.

Effective communication requires following some rules correlating between semantics and style:

- 1. Preferring the familiar word to the far-fetched: buy to purchase or acquire, measure to quantify, every year to annually, understand to comprehend, help to assistance, grow to cultivate, did to accomplished, necessary to essential, use to utilize, continues to persists, first to primary, answer to respond, spread to disseminate;
- 2. Preferring the single word to the circumlocution: *act* to *take action on the issue*, *often* to *in several instances*;
 - 3. Preferring the short word to the long: *hope* to *expectations*; *kind* to *categories*;
- 4. Preferring the concrete word to the abstract: *lorries*, *cars* to *transportation facilities*, *door* to *entrance*:
- 5. Using the words, catching people's attention: benefit, money, easy, new, free, now, fun, proven, guarantee, results, health, safe, how to save, love;
 - 6. Using the words, creating positive patterns in peoples models of reality:

Attraction and Desire: attraction, inclination, aspiration (for), desire (for), endevour, pursuit, yearning (for), urge (towards), gravity, impulse, drive, tendency, disposition (to), bias, to wish, to long, to covet, to crave, to pray, to entreat, to hope, to want etc.

Cost and Value: bill, inputs, outlay, spending, expenses, expenditures, charges, disbursement, outgo, payment, pay, accounts, worth, utility, importance, merit, meaningfulness, significance, importance, relevance etc.

Want and Commitment: lack (of), shortage (of), deficiency, shortcoming, dearth, default, defect, disadvantage, drawback, fault, vice, blemish, obligation, burden, commitment, debt, engagement, liability, pledge, charge, covenant, tie, bill, binding etc.

Confidence and Certainty: faith, belief, credit, trust, credence, certainty (about), certitude (in), assurance, security, conviction, persuasion, firmness, definiteness, determinacy, accuracy, precision, preciseness, clearness, readability, legibility etc.

Pride and Glory: arrogance, insolence, presumption, haughtiness, repute, reputation, praise, honour, halo, fame, publicity, vogue, popularity, acknowledgement, recognition, acceptance etc.

Hope and Expectation: anticipate, trust, foresee, foreknow, rely on, credit, entrust, attorn, anticipation, expectation, waiting, prospect etc.

Happiness and Joy: beatitude, blessedness, bliss, felicity, gladness, luck, fortune, success, state of grace, gladness, delight, pleasure, rapture, ecstasy etc.

After initial stage of research the conclusion is made that the future directions of the investigation might be the following: to collect and present language means in written, oral and mediated forms, to draw up the language techniques, to set up a hypothesis on the degree and ways of influence of special language techniques on recipients in business communication, to verify the hypothesis during checking up the reactions of recipients perceiving certain language patterns, to consolidate observations into a set of databases, to present statistics and give final statements. The most relevant and needed methods at the next stage of investigation are empirical ones. There is a necessity of field observations and field experiments.

Future research must also more carefully consider and distinguish among different language sources. Is the data based on written or spoken language? Directed or spontaneous speech? Were samesex or opposite-sex interactions sampled? Was the language derived from personal or nonpersonal, emotional or neutral material?

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