

A Study on Pragmatic Failures and Countermeasures in Cross-Cultural Business Communication

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Abstract: Cross-Cultural business communication is a comprehensive interdisciplinary subject, involving linguistics and psychology, cross-cultural communication and other disciplines. In order to avoid pragmatic failures caused by differences in body movements, context and time concepts in cross-cultural business communication, it is necessary to cultivate cross-cultural awareness, understand the culture of other countries or regions, and identify communicative context, so as to ensure the success of cross-cultural business communication activities. This paper mainly expounds the pragmatic failures and countermeasures in cross-cultural business communication, hoping to play a reference role in the success of foreign trade business.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural; Business Communication; Pragmatic Failure; Countermeasures

1. Introduction

Under the background of economic globalization, cross-cultural business communication activities are more and more frequent, and misunderstandings in international business communication are also increasing due to cultural differences. Foreign trade business participants have different cultural backgrounds. If they do not understand the culture of the country or region where the other party is located and do not master cross-cultural business communication skills, various pragmatic failures or conflicts and differences may occur. In order to eliminate pragmatic failures in cross-cultural business communication, it is necessary to improve the sensitivity and respect for cultural differences, so as to promote negotiation and cooperation.

2. Causes of Pragmatic Failures in

Intercultural Business Communication

2.1 Pragmatic Failure Caused by Body Movements

The cultural conflicts caused by body movements are reflected in the following aspects: first, head movements: nodding and shaking head express different meanings in different countries. Nodding means affirmation and agreement in China, but not understanding or dissatisfaction in other countries. In India, for example, shaking head means agreement, and nodding head means disagreement. Second, gesture: thumbs up means 'good' in China, which is used to praise the other party for doing well, marvelous, brilliant, etc. In Germany, thumbs up means the number '1'. In South Korea, it means 'leader', 'own father', 'minister', 'Captain' and so on. Third, facial expressions: through the changes of facial expressions such as eyebrows, eyes, nose and mouth, it can perfectly realize information exchange. French writer Roman Roland once said, 'facial expression is a language that has been successfully cultivated for many centuries, and it is a language that is hundreds of times more complex than spoken in the mouth.' but people in different countries believe that staring at a person or touching his nose for a long time will make the other party feel oppressive, suspicious of the other party's speech, or impatient. If Maori stick out their tongue to someone, it is a sign of respect. Fourth, physical contact: in China, if you tap someone on the shoulder to show friendship or love and encouragement, but in other countries, touching someone without permission may be regarded as an infringement. Fifth, posture: for example, the posture of straddling legs is unsightly. It also shows resistance in other countries, which is contempt for the other party.

2.2 Cultural Conflict in the Context

For Chinese or Korean people in high context culture, they are more sensitive to the content of the dialogue and more inclined to think over and over again. Intercultural business communication pays more attention to the application of greetings and polite language. Identity, status or surrounding environment, and the behavior of communicators may be the focus of its capture of information. It also cares more about indirect nonverbal communication, that is, everything is in silence, and often the unspoken information is more valuable than the clearly expressed information. For people from North America or European countries in low context culture, they are mainly straight-line thinking and action oriented, pay more attention to personalized expression and the display of personality characteristics, usually express information clearly, and pay more attention to the key points in the exchange and action. It is more self-centered, more independent and more autonomous. It only focuses on the noumenon of communication and transmits foreign trade information in a direct way. Inquiring about the other party's family background or other background information will be regarded as an infringement. For example, when negotiating prices between China and the United States, the Chinese focus on a variety of factors affecting prices, while the Americans are more concerned with the lowest real price. The latter directly expresses their views, believing that this can save time for guessing the meaning of the sentence and is more conducive to improving the efficiency of negotiations.

2.3 Cultural Conflict under the Concept

There are obvious differences in the historical background, cultural traditions, social systems and other aspects of different countries, which make them different in concept. For example, in the concept of time, the Chinese pay attention to early to late, reflecting the respect for others, while people in western countries pay more attention to special time or multi-purpose; In terms of the concept of space, the Chinese pay attention to collective discussion, while the Westerners pay attention to the self thinking and unique opinions of being alone in space. For example, in terms of values, the Chinese emphasize dedication and collectivism, while the Westerners focus on personal

struggle and personal interests. For example, in terms of business etiquette, the Chinese pay attention to modesty in return when expressing thanks, while the Westerners pay attention to magnifying their personal glory and affirming their own value. Without understanding each other's conceptual differences, it is inevitable that they will not understand each other's mode of thinking and behavior in business communication, resulting in various cultural conflicts and interactive misunderstandings.

3. Countermeasures to Eliminate Pragmatic Failure in Cross-Cultural business Communication

3.1 Consolidate the Theoretical Basis of Cross-Cultural Communication

Take the initiative to learn the theoretical knowledge related to cross-cultural business communication, such as communication, British and American profiles, language and culture, and improve the perception of cultural differences and sensitivity to cross-cultural communication conflicts. By consolidating the theoretical basis, we should constantly improve our cross-cultural awareness. Get more cases of pragmatic failure in cultural and business communication from the Internet, analyze the causes of cultural conflict and pragmatic failure, and master more cross-cultural business communication skills and precautions. Be willing to understand the customs and business practices of different countries, and pay attention to cultural differences and characteristics. For example, Asian cultural characteristics are reflected in respect for elders, collectivism, indirect communication, etc; European culture is characterized by individualism, direct communication, and the spirit of contract; American culture is characterized by innovative consciousness, direct communication and individualism; European culture is characterized by community spirit, multiple beliefs and respect for the elderly.

3.2 Training before Cross-Cultural Business Communication

In the training activities, it is necessary not only to be familiar with foreign trade business, but also to understand the cultural customs of the other country and region, so as to avoid the failure of business communication caused by

not understanding cultural differences. Understand the other country's or region's concerns about body movements, context, concepts and other aspects. For example, in terms of language expression, Americans are taboo for others to ask about privacy such as their family and age or salary, as well as to talk about their country, politics and religion. Simulate cross-cultural business communication activities to avoid communication barriers as much as possible. It is suggested to invite professional trainers from the other country or region to intervene and guide them, so that they can be exposed to a more comprehensive and authentic local culture, pay attention to the details of cross-cultural business communication, and avoid cultural conflicts and differences. Integrating local traditional culture and customs into cross-cultural business communication is more conducive to improving the goodwill of the other party.

3.3 Respect Each Other's Culture

There are obvious differences in cultural environment and social system in different countries or regions, especially in Western countries. In order to achieve the success of foreign trade business, it is necessary for international business communication subjects not only to understand the culture of the other country, but also to show a respectful attitude, not to publicize scientific ideas, not to try to correct them. If you meet the special festivals of the other country in terms of dressing, it is recommended to make reasonable choices according to the requirements of different local cultures for clothing to show respect for the local culture. In terms of etiquette terms, respect and politeness should be reflected as much as possible. For example, Japan usually uses more formal honorifics and politeness terms in business contacts. In the United States and other countries, business contacts pay more attention to direct and concise language, reduce language misunderstanding and conflict. In terms of etiquette and customs, China will pay more attention to traditional etiquette such as tea ceremony and business card exchange in business communication ; in European countries, they may pay more attention to dining etiquette and social etiquette. To understand and respect the etiquette of different cultures is not only to promote

cooperation, but also to better show their international image and enhance the effect and quality of international business exchanges.

3.4 Comply with the Boundaries of Various Modes of Communication

Cross cultural business communication occurs in a specific business context, and pragmatic failures also occur in a specific business context. In order to ensure smooth cross-cultural business communication, both parties need to accurately identify the business communication context, accurately understand the pragmatic meaning conveyed by the other party with the help of this context, and accurately and appropriately express their intentions. For example, in terms of high context culture and low context culture, in terms of expression, the former is implicit and unclear, while the latter is open and clear; In terms of expressing information, the former is internalized information, while the latter is plainly coded information; In terms of language, the former is non-verbal code, while the latter is detailed language; In terms of interpersonal relationship, the former is a strong interpersonal relationship, while the latter is relatively fragile; In terms of commitment, the former has high commitment, while the latter has low commitment; In terms of time, the former is relatively open and flexible, while the latter is highly organized. It can be seen that the language characteristics used in different contexts and cultures are also different, and there are similarities and differences in the taboos of negotiation when people in different national cultural backgrounds communicate in business. It is necessary to compare the similarities and differences between the target language and the mother tongue culture, understand the similarities and differences in the cultural elements of both sides of communication, better adapt to each other's culture, and achieve mutual understanding and trust, so as to achieve the expected effect of business communication. For example, in the Sino US negotiations, Americans taboo silence, believing that silence is a manifestation of lack of insight and assertiveness. Silence will also make them feel uneasy or embarrassed, indicating that concealment, trouble and rejection may occur. Influenced by Confucianism, the Chinese belong to a high

context culture. They advocate thinking twice, listening more and speaking less. They believe that speaking more is easy to cause conflict and disaster. They are also willing to use silence as one of the negotiation means of persuasion.

More importantly, we should master the cultural characteristics of multinational companies, state-owned enterprises and private enterprises, and understand the differences in the professional background and personal behavior of communicators, including behavior, lifestyle, values, etiquette, time concept and communication style. Don't interrupt the other party's speech during the conversation, listen carefully, avoid adding, correcting and questioning at will, and master the conversation etiquette; Respect personal privacy, do not laugh at each other's privacy, but ask about their private life, do not pry into their privacy, and master the basic boundaries of human communication; Sit upright, have proper eye contact and body movement, and listen carefully; Choose the language reasonably, avoid saying words that will bring adverse effects to yourself, reduce unnecessary disputes, and better maintain business relations and improve the success rate of cooperation by

reflecting your professional and sensitive attitude.

4. Conclusion

There are many reasons for pragmatic failure in cross-cultural business communication, which is a direct reflection of the sensitivity and respect of cultural differences and the lack of cross-cultural business communication ability. It is also an important starting point to eliminate cultural conflicts and differences, which is worthy of in-depth study.

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