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Communicative Competence in Global Business Communication

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1. Introduction

Communicative competence, defined by Trenholm and Jensen (2004:10) as "the ability to communicate in a personally effective and socially appropriate manner," is a skill that is top-ranked by employers. It includes all the behaviours and feelings that exist within the participants of the communication process and which govern interactions. Communicative competence is essential for establishing appropriate interpersonal and professional relationships that allow building trust and lead to successful workplace communication. Steadily increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence affect workplace relations, which have to be adapted to the new reality. Global workers need to know how to operate in new, often challenging environment, how to understand cultural diversity and ethical issues. The Towers Watson 2009/10 Communication ROI Study (www.globalenglish.com.) show that companies that are highly effective communicators generate higher total return to shareholders over a five-year period than companies paying less attention to communication issues.

Developing communicative competence that enables global workers to improve the quality of interpersonal workplace relationships requires acquiring verbal, non-verbal and relational competence to a similar degree. Right choice of lexical items and making use of specific language features can contribute to the effectiveness of workplace communication as much as the use of non-linguistic elements or cross-cultural knowledge. Not less important are personal communication skills of business language users.

Growing evidence that English has become the primary language for international business dealings made governments rethink language educational policies. The requirements of the new reality have a significant impact on teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) or English as Lingua Franca (ELF). In the current approach, more emphasis is recommended to be put on sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence.

The focus of interest shifts to intercultural training, which allows learners to communicate effectively with speakers representing different cultural backgrounds. Lack of interpersonal skills or lack of confidence in using such skills may hinder the effective use of the language chosen for communication.

> (…) The business educator's challenge becomes that of devising strategies to help align millennials' skills with the needs of today's global marketplace and its culturally diverse organizations. As business educators, we must teach millennials to communicate more effectively by helping them learn how to process information in a variety of ways to accommodate the extensive diversity (i.e., age, gender, cultural) that exists in the workplace today, together with the global nature of business (Hartman and Mc Cambridge, 2011: 26).

2. The language of global communication

Communication skills are considered to be top-ranked criterion for professional success, yet they most lack in business schools graduates. There is a gap between where graduates are and where they need to be in terms of communication skills required by the new economy. As Bovee and Thill (2013: 8) notice „ in addition to having the proper skills, you need to learn how to apply those skills in the

business environment, which can be quite different from the social and scholastic environments you are accustomed to". This is particularly true in times of international labour market.

Emphasizing the importance of linguistic skills allowing fluent and effective communication in a foreign language is not new in the history of business communication. However, with ever-spreading globalization and hunt for talent, it gained a new dimension. „Generally speaking, the situation between Moscow and Lisbon is that individuals usually have one first language (sometimes more), and are often exposed to other languages spoken locally, but most of them also have some minimal or extensive contact with English – in public life and popular culture, at school, at work" (Seidlhofer, Breitender, Pitzl 2006: 3).

There is growing evidence that English is no longer regarded as one of foreign languages individuals may want to learn, but as a key to a professional career. GlobalEnglish, one of the global providers of services to companies wishing to improve their employees' communication skills in English, surveyed 26,000 of its users to get their perspectives on the globalization of English, trends in business communication, and the needs of global enterprises. According to the results of the Globalization of English 2010 survey," it remains clear that the "flattening" of global business increasingly mandates English competency as a crucial skill for the workplace. An increasing number of workers worldwide must communicate in English—both within and outside their company—on a regular basis. 92% of global employees say English is required or important for their job, and this is true at all levels of the organization all over the world. As a result, an ever-growing number of people learn English to use it for specific purposes. It has become the primary language for international business dealings. In fact "it has come to lead a life of its own as an ergolect, or work language" (Rogers, 1998).

Being commonly chosen as an international medium of communication English is sometimes called a „global language" (Crystal 2003) or „international language"- EIL- (Jenkins 2003). Seidlhofer (2004: 211), however, suggests, it should not lead to the conclusion that „ there is one clearly distinguishable, codified, and unitary variety called International English, which is certainly not the case." EIL covers communication acts in which both native speakers and non-native speakers are involved. Nowadays, though, in more and more international workplace interactions English is used as a lingua franca. According to Berns (2008: 192) „the choice of this particular term is problematic because, as a construct, „lingua franca" generally refers to an overarching function of a language, not to any specific set of idiosyncratic forms themselves. ELF researchers, however, do not make this distinction."

Firth (1996: 240) understands lingua franca as „ a 'contact language' between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication." Seidlhofer (2011: 7) describes English as Lingua Franca (ELF) as "any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option." On the website of VOICE (the Vienna-Oxford International Corpus of English), the author adds „ ELF is currently the most common use of English world-wide. Millions of speakers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds use ELF on a daily basis, routinely and successfully, in their professional, academic and personal lives" (www. univie.ac.at/voice).

In her article " *A stateless language that Europe must embrace*", House (2001) argues

> English is particularly suitable as Europe's lingua franca because of its functional flexibility and spread across the world, and because English is already "de-nativised" to a large extent: the global number of non-native speakers is now substantially larger than its native speakers (about 4:1). English is no longer "owned" by its native speakers because acculturation and nativisation processes have produced a remarkable diversification of the English language into many non-native varieties.

With all its popularity, the use of ELF in business contexts needs particular attention. Louhiala-Salminen et al. (2005: 403) coined a definition of Business English as a lingua franca (BELF)

according to which „ BELF refers to English used as a 'neutral' and shared communication code. BELF is neutral in the sense that none of the speakers can claim it as his/her mother tongue; it is shared in the sense that it is used for conducting business within the global business discourse community, whose members are BELF users and communicators in their own right- not 'non-native speakers or 'learners' " .

Being a relatively new area of enquiry, BELF requires more research to define its role in global business communication. For some time there was an opinion that „English used for international trade, politics and science is a 'language for communication' – it is an instrument for accomplishing transactional goals, and not for expressing a full range of communicative functions, including emotional and relational ones" (Hullen 1992). Seidlhofer (2001: 141) claimed „the central concerns for this domain are efficiency, relevance and economy." Recent studies, however, show that BELF is used to perform relational goals to a greater extent it was originally thought. Commenting on BELF, Gerritsen and Nickerson (2009: 182) hold „the literature on lingua franca communication would suggest that BELF communication may fail for one of three reasons, which can occur singly or in combination: lack of comprehensibility, cultural differences and stereotyped associations."

To be able to minimize the risk of being not understood or misunderstood it is necessary to develop a range of different competencies that allow appropriate and effective communication.

3. Communicative Competence Components in Professional Communication

In business, communication is understood as „the sharing of information between people within an enterprise that is performed for the commercial benefit of the organization. In addition, business communication can also refer to how a company shares information to promote its product or services to potential consumers" (businessdictionary.com). Because of a big number of communication participants, whose needs and preferences should be taken into consideration, business communication acts are more demanding than purely social ones.

Business communication is always goal oriented and regulated by a set of rules and norms that do not commonly apply in non-professional communication encounters. The lexical and grammatical choice often depends on the institutional context and constraints on what is allowable to be said or written. The characteristics of professional discourse - goal orientation, special constraints, inferential frameworks and procedures (Drew and Heritage,1992: 22) - serve professional communication priority, which is effectiveness. Speakers need to be competent to be effective.

Competence understood as „the knowledge that enables one to produce and comprehend a language" (www. the freedictionary.com) has been discussed for decades, and there have been many attempts to define language competence since N. Chomsky (1965: 3) held

> Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance.

D. Hymes was one of the first sociolinguists who questioned Chomsky's idea of an ideal speaker-hearer. He emphasized the relevance of sociocultural factors such as, e.g., the need to produce texts that are appropriate to the context in which they are made. As he argued (Hymes 1972: 277) "…a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others." Hymes' understanding of communicative competence stresses the importance of appropriateness and acceptability of the communication.

The need for meaningful interactions was noticed by Canal and Swain (1980: 29) who understand communication as

> [...] communication to be based in sociocultural, interpersonal interaction, to involve unpredictability and creativity, to take place in a discourse and sociocultural context, to be purposive behavior, to be carried out under performance constraints, to involve the use of the authentic (as opposed to text-book contrived) language. And being judged as successful or not on the basis of behavioral outcomes. We assume with Candlin (1978) that the relationship between a proposition (or the literal meaning of an utterance) and its social meanings is variable across different sociocultural and discourse contexts and that communication involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of social meaning on the part of participants.

The authors (1980) defined communicative competence as consisting of three components: grammatical (words and rules), sociolinguistic (appropriateness), strategic (appropriate use of communication strategies). In 1983, Canale extended the definition by adding discourse competence. The role of appropriateness was also emphasized by Bachman (1990) who divided communicative competence into organizational competence and pragmatic competence.

One of the most recent, and widely used, definition of communicative competence was worked out by a group of international experts involved in Language Learning for European Citizenship project. Included in the document known as Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (2003:110-123), it defines communicative competence as encompassing:

1. Linguistic competence including:
   • Lexical competence – the knowledge of, and ability to use, the vocabulary of a language that consists of lexical elements and grammatical elements;
   • Grammatical competence - the ability to understand and express meaning by producing and recognizing well-formed phrases and sentences in accordance with these principles (as opposed to memorizing and reproducing them as fixed formulae);
   • Semantic competence - the learner's awareness and control of the organization of meaning.
   • Phonological competence – the knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of the sound-units, the phonetic features which distinguish phonemes, the phonetic composition of words, sentence phonetics, sentence stress and rhythm, intonation;
   • Orthographic competence – the knowledge of and skill in the perception and production of the symbols of which written texts are composed.
   • Orthoepic competence – the knowledge of spelling conventions, ability to consult a dictionary and knowledge of the conventions used there for the representation of pronunciation, knowledge of the implications of written forms, particularly punctuation marks, for phrasing and intonation, ability to resolve ambiguity (homonyms, syntactic ambiguities, etc.) in the light of the context.

2. Sociolinguistic competence - the knowledge and skills required to deal with the social dimension of language use.

3. Pragmatic competence – the knowledge of the principles according to which messages are:
   • organized, structured and arranged ('discourse competence');
   • used to perform communicative functions ('functional competence');
   • sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata ('design competence ').

Literature on the subject is rich, as it took linguists some time to understand and describe the complexity of communicative competence and to emphasize the role of different circumstances and social contexts. An average language user, though, may still not realize that to know the language system is not enough to communicate freely. That "a lot more is involved: there are rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless; what is needed is not so much a better understanding of how language is structured, but a better understanding how language is used." (Dakowska 2005:92).

> Language is almost always identified as an important element of intercultural communication. It is taken as the medium through which a culture expresses its world view. Language is learned and conveys values, beliefs, attitude, perceptions, norms, etc. The importance of language to intercultural communication is most obvious when cultures speak different languages. Differences in meaning can

occur even when different cultures use the 'same' language. It is particularly common in use of lingua franca. (House, 2003:573)

The socio-pragmatic component of communicative competence is important in communication. In global workplace related encounters, it may be of primary importance.

When professionals get engaged in professional discourse, they require more than fluency in general language they use for communication. Bargiela-Chiappini et al., (2007:3) explain that 'business discourse is all about how people communicate using talk or writing in commercial organizations in order to get their work done.' Getting the work done *well* requires an effort from all the communication process participants. „The essence of communication is sharing –providing data, information, insights, and inspiration in an exchange that benefits both you and the people with whom you are communicating" (Thill & Bovee, 2013: 3).

In a business environment, competence means "a cluster of related abilities, commitments, knowledge, and skills that enable a person (or an organization) to act effectively in a job or job-related situation. Competence indicates the sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, the need for competence can occur in any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career " (http://www.businessdictionary.com).

Modern communication dynamics requires much more from communicators engaging in professional discourse than it was necessary before, resulting to a great extent from progress in communication technology, the need for speed and specificity, the unprecedented workplace diversity. As Du-Babcock noticed (2006: 256) "advances in technology in general will create the need to accurately and precisely transfer complex technical information that is coded in distinctive professional genres that are increasingly differentiated from general language."

Being understood by business partners is possible not only because of language correctness but also being able to match the content of the message with the standards of business communication that the recipient expects. "Discourse is not a list of sentences, but an organic whole, an integral part of a communicative situation from which it emerges. This means that discourse follows communicative conventions accepted for the given situation" (Dakowska,2005: 96). Specialized discourse requires economy, precision and appropriateness. In typical situations, it can be achieved, among others, by the right selection of content, the choice of lexical elements, proper organization of the content material, the style and tone a speaker uses and on the situation, and cultural sensitivity. The conventions relate to all components of communicative competence.

3.1.Linguistic competence component

"One of the distinguishing features of institutional talk is that it is often difficult at first for an outsider to understand what people are talking about. The topics and procedures discussed, as well as a great deal of vocabulary are unfamiliar and specific to the work of the organization or branch of business" (Koester 2006: 11). Professionals use their specialist language self-consciously, to exchange particular specialist knowledge or information. Its distinctive style allows to differentiate it from other, non-professional styles. Special rules that govern professional discourse, and which usually do not apply in general language, are to facilitate mutual understanding within the community boundary. Particular lexico-grammatical features associated with particular genres are used to serve transitional and relational goals of communication acts.

Due to the complexity of the notion, resulting in a plethora of definitions varying in range and scope, it is not the intention of the author of this paper to discuss in detail the nature of a professional language, but to focus on the elements that allow to build knowledge-rich professional discourse.

3.1.1.   Technical words

> This professional and/or academic knowledge is by nature international and crosses the boundary between native speakers and non-native speakers. As Widdowson (1997, 143) refers to, these communities consist of professionals and academics who have become members through special education and professional development and are different from local ones which we belong to by upbringing and the shared socio-cultural experience of everyday life (Yano, 2003: 81).

The ability to express expert knowledge and information is very much affected by the ability to use technical words. (Grucza 2006). 'Technical word/ technical term' can be understood as „1. a word whose occurrence is limited to a particular field of domain and which has a specialized meaning. For example morpheme, phoneme, in linguistics. 2. a common word that has a specialized meaning in a particular field, such as significance in statistics" (Richards, Schmidt 2002: 544).

According to Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, "technical words or terms are units reflecting the system of notions in a given discipline." In other words, they are used by specific users in specific situations in relations to particular notions.; they do not occur spontaneously. Mamet (2002: 144) claims that knowing and using specialty related terminology can be perceived as a proof of having knowledge required for the engagement in professional communication act. It can sometimes be vital for user status enhancement within the community. On the other hand, failure to adjust the style to the expectations of the same or field-related interlocutors, may be regarded as non-professional.

The language used for communication among field specialists may represent various levels of technicality which depends on the type of terms (e.g., full terms or semi-terms) and their frequency. Usually, the greater the degree of specialization, the higher the terminological density. Knowing specialist terms and getting familiar with typological features of the discipline related discourse is vital for both native and non-native users of any specialist language. People with great knowledge but poor specialist lexical repertoire can be less efficient while performing their professional tasks and duties. In the case of non-natives, their professional knowledge has to be translated into a new language system, yet "the more restricted its number of users, the more international its units and rules be" (Cabre, 1998: 70).

3.1.2. Formulaic expressions

Developing discipline-related linguistic competence in a foreign language requires not only being familiar with technical words equivalents in this language, but also with an array of lexical items that are expected to be used in specific job-related settings. Standardized linguistic forms are seldom left out in specialist discourses. Different types of fixed sequences help to meet the need for precision and predictability of professional communication. They are considered as elements increasing informativeness and expediency of the text.

There are different terms used to describe those sequences, including 'prefabricated chunks,' 'multi-word units,' 'formulae.' Wray (2002: 9) talks about ' a formulaic sequence' which she defines as "a sequence, continuous or discontinuous, of words or other elements, which is, or appears to be, prefabricated: that is, stored and retrieved whole from memory at the time of use, rather than being subject to generation or analysis by the language grammar." Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992: 36) define formulaic language units as " lexico-grammatical units that occupy a position somewhere between the traditional poles of lexicon and syntax; they are similar to lexicon in being treated as units, yet most of them consist of more than one word, and many of them can, at the same time, be derived from the regular rules of syntax, just like other sentences".

The importance of knowing, and using, formulaic sequences was emphasized by Wood (2002: 1) who holds

> Formulaic language units, ready-made chunks and sequences of words, have been the subject of a large and growing body of research. Although formulaic language has been largely overlooked in favor of models of language that center around the rule-governed, systematic nature of language and its use,

there is increasing evidence that these multiword lexical units are integral to first- and second-language acquisition, as they are segmented from input and stored as wholes in long-term memory. They are king to controlled processing and the constraints of short-term memory capacity.

Ready-made phrases appear in both oral and written modes of communication, particularly when more formal style is expected. In business, particular settings in which formulaic language is highly expected include, e.g., handling telephone calls, presenting facts and figures, running meetings and negotiations. A task of chairing an official business meeting involves many stages, each of which requires particular formulaic sequences, e.g.,
• Opening, welcoming and introducing
Good morning/afternoon, everyone.
If we are all here, let's get started / start the meeting / start.
Please join me in welcoming …
• Stating the objectives
We are here today to ...
Our main aim, today, is to ...
I've called this meeting in order to ...
• Introducing and following points on the agenda
Have you all received a copy of the agenda?
There are X items on the agenda. First, ... second, ... third, ... Lastly, ...
Shall we take the points in this order?
If you don't mind, I'd like to go in order today.
• Summarizing and closing the meeting
Before we close today's meeting, let me just summarize the main points.
Let me quickly go over today's main points.
To sum up, ..., .
The meeting is closed.
I declare the meeting closed.

Source: http://esl.about.com/od/businessspeakingskills/a/b_meetphrases_2.htm_truncated

Rich in formulaic expressions, oral communication allows speakers to refrain from using ready-made structures if they find it limiting or unnatural, more often than written communication. "Writing requires planning and organizational skills, as well as linking paragraphs and sentences together, skills in spelling, punctuation, word order, word choice and so on " (Frendo 2007: 81). A personal letter written on behalf of the company will vary significantly from a letter written in a private context in many aspects, e.g., the level of formality or the interactional involvement.

Even in times of much more modest means of communication, business writing was an important part of business activities. The need to know the rules was observed centuries ago. In medieval times, for instance, business communication skills were taught through the use of texts known as 'artes dictandi.' They provided readers provided readers with instructions how to structure a business letter. The content was to be organized into clearly defined sections: the salutation, the capturing of goodwill, the statement of facts, the petition of action, and the conclusion (Camargo, 1996). Richardson (1985: 28) distinguishes more but similar parts in medieval letter writing:

1. Address: formulaic and polite, e.g., "right worshipful sir," "well-beloved brother," "worthy and worshipful father."
2. Salutation: e.g., "I greet you well," "I recommend me unto you, „," etc.
3. Notification: e.g., "and let you know that... ,"
4. Exposition: further information about and explanation of the subject.
5. Disposition: e.g., "whereupon," "wherefore," "whereof"; a request or demand.
6. Valediction: e.g., "God have you in his keeping...,," etc.
7. Attestation and Date: "written at..." plus the date, often written as the year of the king's reign.

With years, the formula of art dictaminis became looser though some written formats remain highly structured and formulae loaded. The ones most requiring routine expressions and template structure are formal letters and business reports. Written communication does not allow for the immediate feedback and therefore is more prone to misinterpretation. Sticking to the conventions in style and structure of
documents may reduce the risk. It also makes the text more predictable as to the contents.

As an example, let us consider routine formulae and text structure in a business report. Although there are some ways of structuring writing, the document is expected to be divided into some conventional sections such as, e.g., introduction, discussion, conclusion(s), recommendation(s). Longer reports may start with a summary. Each section will often include commonly used phrases such as, e.g.,
- Introduction – The purpose of this report is….; As requested, this is a report concerning….; The data included in this report was obtained by means of………
- Findings/Discussion – The majority of those who responded….. A significant number of people surveyed……
- Conclusion(s)- To sum up…; The conclusion to be drawn from the facts is……
- Recommendation(s) – It would be advisable……; The best course of action would be…….

The use of formulaic language means higher probability that this choice is the correct one. "Formulaic sequences are ubiquitous in language use, and they make up a large proportion of any discourse." They can be used as "social interactions, topics, and discourse devices" (Wood 2002: 3). In professional discourse, such devices not only allow to avoid misunderstandings, but also make the sender of the message sound more competent. In some business situations non- compliance with accepted conventions, relating to the structure and the language used, is regarded as a lack of professionalism. This does not mean, however that formulaic units are static. As Wray (2002: 101) notices, "store of formulaic sequences is dynamic and is constantly changing to meet the needs of the speaker".

Different strategies must be developed for different communication objectives, yet as Crow (1988: 92) holds " the central purpose of achieving understanding remains." In times of global communication, communicators value most the economy of expression and clarity. To eliminate communication in pompous commercial style, there have been attempts, e.g., Plain English Campaign, to simplify the language used in the business world. Some guidelines advocated by plain English proponents include using simple words, keeping the average length short, avoiding nominalizations and passive constructions, personalizing the message with first and second-person pronouns, and using examples and scenarios to explain concepts" (Campbell, 1999: 336). These recommendations are the foundations of the KISS principle (Keep It Short and Simple) that has gained widespread recognition. The principle can be seen as the continuation of trends observed at various stages of the history of business communication. Plain language and avoidance of routine are recommended as long as it does not adversely affect the accuracy.

3.1.3. Metadiscourse

The need for predictability and unification in business writing makes communicators in professional encounters carefully consider the arrangement of information, e.g., form and structure of the message, the style, tone and level of formality appropriate for business conversation.

"It is now recognized that written texts not only concern people, places and activities in the world, but also acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations. The ability of writers to use metadiscourse effectively, to control the level of personality in their texts by offering a credible representation of themselves and their ideas, is coming to be seen as a defining feature of successful writing" (Hyland, 2005: ix). The use of relational strategies in communication depends on the knowledge and use of the relevant discourse types and matching metadiscourse signals. As Hyland (2005:13) states

"metadiscourse is an important link between a text and its content as it points to the expectations readers have for certain forms of interactions and engagement."

The existing definitions of metadiscourse vary in formulation as there is a lack of agreement on how to define it. According to Hyland (2005:37): " Metadiscourse is the cover term for self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community." The author describes metadiscourse as an umbrella term for linguistic expressions used by a speaker or writer to "persuade, inform, entertain or perhaps just engage an audience, and this means conveying an attitude to what we say and to our readers." Hyland argues that the metadiscourse is "an important means of facilitating communication, supporting a position, increasing readability and building a relationship with an audience." Crismore et al. (1993:40) define metadiscourse as "linguistic material in texts, written or spoken, which does not add anything to the propositional content, but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information given." Metadiscourse shifts the focus of attention from ongoing communication, putting some stretch of discourse in a context or frame designed to influence the meaning and practical conduct of communication (Craig,1999). The key principles of metadiscourse according to Hyland and Tse (2004) are:
• metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse;
• metadiscourse refers to aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions;
• metadiscourse refers only to relations that are internal to the discourse.

There have been various classifications of metadiscourse as there are no clearly defined linguistic criteria how to identify metadiscourse. Some metadiscourse analysts use the classification system suggested by Vande Kopple (1985) or its improved version, Crismore et al.'s (1993:47) taxonomy. It includes the following metadiscourse categories:

1.Textual metadiscourse

One of the distinguishing features of professional discourse is conventional text structure, characterized by coherence and cohesion which can be obtained by means of:

1.1. Textual markers
• logical connectives – used to show connections between ideas, e.g., therefore, moreover;
• sequencers – used to order information, show sequence, e.g., firstly, next, finally;
• reminders- used to refer to earlier parts of the text, e.g., see Chapter 1;
• topicalizers – used to indicate a change in topic, e.g., now I shall discuss.

1.2. Interpretive markers
• code glosses- used to explain or clarify the text, give examples, e.g., in other words, i.e., which is to say;
• illocution markers- used to name the act performed, e.g., to sum up, let me rephrase;
• announcements- used to herald the upcoming information, e.g., I shall discuss it in the next chapter;

2. Interpersonal markers
Professional discourse is goal oriented. "Regardless of whether discourse participants are focusing on transactional goals (getting the job done) or transactional goals (building and maintaining a relationship with their interlocutor), some kind of interpersonal meaning is always expressed" (Koester 2006:63).The expression of the speaker's commitment or detachment, judgment, subjective views or attitude towards the content can be shown by words that have an interpersonal function:
• hedges – used to show uncertainty or detachment to information e.g. possible, likely;
• certainty markers- used to express commitment, e.g., certainly, clearly;
• attributors- used to indicate the source of information, e.g., according to X, as X argues;
• attitude markers- used to express affective values of the writer, e.g., hopefully, preferably, unexpectedly;
• commentary- used to establish a relationship with the reader e.g. as you know, you may agree.

Hyland (2005:49) presents an interpersonal model of metadiscourse that recognizes two dimensions of interaction:

1. the interactive dimension – covering the use of resources to organize the discourse and accommodate

   the message to the needs and expectations of the recipient. The interactive resources include:

• transition markers – e.g. additionally, thus, although;
• frame markers – in Section 1, to begin with, firstly;
• endophoric markers – see Chapter 1, in Tab. 2;
• evidential according to X, to quote X;
• code glosses – in other words, this is to say, which means;

2. the interactional dimension – covering the use of resources to present views explicitly, convey judgments, express solidarity, anticipate objections. The interactional resources include:

• hedges- might, perhaps, in my opinion;
• boosters – beyond doubt, in fact, evidently;
• attitude markers – amazing, hopefully, unexpectedly;
• self-mention – the author, we, mine;
• engagement markers – consider, note, imagine.

The frequency and use of metadiscourse may be different in various languages, e.g., in some languages it may be more common to use rhetorical questions or to be more tentative and cautious in making claims. It also varies depending on the discipline and genre (Hyland 2005: 144). According to Swales (1990: 58) " the rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choices of content and style."

3.2. Sociopragmatic competence component

The essential elements in global communication are not only clarity and brevity, but also awareness of the recipient. Communicative competence includes the behaviors and feelings that exist within the participants of the communication process and which govern the interactions. It is necessary for establishing appropriate interpersonal and professional relationships that allow building trust and lead to successful workplace communication. Modern concept of communicative competence must reflect the new reality in all its components.

Experienced communicators know the difference between texts addressed to particular readers and those for not explicitly specified audience. Lack of understanding the audience may result in different to intended reception of the message. In monocultural encounters, it is easier to anticipate the reaction of the recipient to a particular speaker's words. In multicultural ones the impressions, the message sender believes his words create, may not coincide with the impressions the interlocutors form of him. Gaining sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence is crucial for developing cultural awareness that, in turn, facilitates effective engagement in professional encounters. Although cultural awareness as a phenomenon was discussed in the US as early as in 1940s, in times of globalization it became a priority.

The process of communication begins when the sender of the message gets an idea. "The form of the idea, whether a simple greeting or a complex idea, is shaped by assumptions based on the sender's experiences. The ability to predict how a message will affect its recipient and skill in adapting this message to its receiver are key factors in successful communication" (Guffey and Loewy, 2008: 13). Effective communication means that the message makes the recipient take an appropriate action or think in a particular way. An effective communicator can choose the right content of the message and concentrate on essentials. Even more, he or she can organize the content according to the standards of business communication that meet the expectations of the communication partner.

Hyland (2005) holds that " acts of meaning-making, are never neutral but always engaged in that they realize the interests, the positions, the perspectives and the values of those who enact them." His point of view is shared by Bednarek and Caple (2010:7) who claim that "communication is the collaborative construction and negotiation of meaning between the self and others as it occurs within cultural contexts" and explain that the act of communication is not "just about the speaker but also

about those who may come in contact with her/his messages (including language, sounds, gestures, and other forms)". As the authors point out, the participants may have different backgrounds or values, what may have serious consequences for the understanding of the message. „The interaction of culture and communication is so pervasive that separating the two is virtually impossible. The way you communicate is deeply influenced by the culture in which you were raised. The meaning of words, the significance of gestures, the importance of time and space, the rules of human relationships – these and many other aspects of communication are defined by culture" (Thill & Bovee, 2013: 69).

Culture is not easy to define as, depending on what is taken into consideration, various definitions of culture may apply. From a sociological perspective, culture may be defined as "the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action" or "the attitudes, feelings, values, and behavior that characterize and inform society as a whole or any social group within it" (thefreedictionary.com). Businessdictionary.com offers a more extensive definition according to which culture is understood as:

> "social heritage of a group (organized community or society). It is a pattern of responses discovered, developed, or invented during the group's history of handling problems that arise from interactions among its members, and between them and their environment. These responses are considered the correct way to perceive, feel, think, and act, and are passed on to the new members through immersion and teaching. Culture determines what is acceptable or unacceptable, important or unimportant, right or wrong, workable or unworkable. It encompasses all learned and shared, explicit or tacit, assumptions, beliefs, knowledge, norms, and values, as well as attitudes, behavior, dress, and language." (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/culture.html_truncated)

It is almost impossible to separate values, norms and traditions from communication acts that take place between people representing different cultures. The role of the recipient and the context of communication have been recognized as vital for international business interactions. "Companies understand that their success in international business activities hinges on developing cross-cultural appreciation and strengthening fundamental communication skills among their employees for national as well as international business activities." (Casady and Wasson,1994: 36). The most important in cross-cultural interaction is to know the expectations of the recipient of the message and adjust to them.

Modern companies are less and less frequently homogeneous. Diversity is present in various aspects. Skills, professional experience, set of values, age, to mention just a few. All these factors may affect the communication process. It becomes apparent in professional encounters between representatives of different nationalities, whether inside or outside the company. To be able to meet the objectives of professional communication when operating on a global market, business people must understand that "the nuances of international business - defined as any business conducted across national borders - different from those of solely domestic business. The fundamental principles of domestic business apply abroad but with added complexities" (Victor, 1992: 245).

In most countries, there are commonly accepted standards and conventional patterns of business communication that reflect the cultural background of the speakers. Such tendencies may sometimes violate communication principles respected in different cultures. In 1989, T.S. Elliot argued "a common language needs a common way of thinking and feeling." As M. Kramer (2001:152) notices, however, "despite the prevalence of English in business, we should not assume that our business audience knows our variety of English or understands it well. Furthermore, we should not make the universalistic mistake of assuming that because someone speaks the same language we do, his or her thinking will also be much the same."

Cultural awareness, which is the primary element of the sociolinguistic component of competence, allows to develop cultural sensitivity that ultimately leads to intercultural communication competence. This competence is vital for success as it allows to establish and maintain proper relationships with both co-workers and business partners. The fundamental principle of effective intercultural communication is: „Treat others as they would like to be treated."

4. Conclusion

"Today we know that the importance of professional languages is much bigger than it was once believed to be. And that their role is not only to perform communicative function within certain groups or communities. Classifying them at the same level as dialects is a misunderstanding. On the other hand, they should not be regarded only as communication tools, either" (Grucza, 2008: 5). As Bargiela-Chapini (2003:81) notices, "business discourse is growing into a discipline with its own identity, possibly leading one day to its being an "interdiscipline." For the time being, yet, Business Communication is not considered as a separate field but as a hybrid drawing on other disciplines such as rhetoric, sociology and linguistics.

There has been a number of studies in some aspects of professional discourse, mainly medical (e.g., Heath 1992, Coupland et al. 1994, Atkinson 1999), legal (e.g., Kniffka 1996, Cotterill 2000, Coulthard 2000), public media (e.g., Hutchby 1996, Fairclough 1995, O'Keeffe 2006) or business (e.g., Fiarclough 1995, Cameron 2000, McCarthy 2000Bargiela-Chiappini and Harris 1997, Spencer-Oatey and Xing 1998, Ponccini 2002 and 2004). However, as Grucza (2008) points out the linguistic research on professional discourse is insufficient and, when undertaken, it seldom goes beyond professional terminology.

In times when the majority of global market participants use the same language and people's migrations became a part of life, "non-native speakers of English have created their own discourse norms and genres. And they do this out of their own free will, happily ignoring the "linguistic domination" ascribed to them" (House, 2001). Although professional discourse received attention in the literature, studies on the new nature of communication are required to incorporate the changes that are taking place.

New social technologies become a very powerful vehicle of communication enabling professionals to address an unknown audience. More light needs to be shed on which discourse features are used in professional texts to appeal to multiple audiences, and how effective they are in different cultural environments. Also, as Hyland notices (2005: 203) "metadiscourse is a relatively new field of investigation and is still growing. It is, however, a field which holds considerable potential for both description and explanation, promising to reveal the interactions which underlie all communication and help us see how discourses are community specific, historically situated cultural products." There is still scope to explore the relation- oriented nature of professional discourse. In the field of business, it is of particular importance.

There is a need to unify the knowledge and experience of scholars and practitioners representing all disciplines that may have an impact on the outcome of the communication process. Without joining the efforts, intercultural communicative competence, one of the critical soft skills in the 21st century, will remain a theoretical concept. Y. Danyushina (2013) has noticed the problem. Her initiative to establish a new sub-discipline Business and Governance Linguistics, combining the fields of Applied Linguistics and Communication Studies, for researching the use of language in business deserves special attention and support.

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