

# Pragmatics Of English Language And Linguistics In Teaching Business Communication

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## Abstract:

The right articulation of language has been a determinant factor in all forms of communication to ensure whether the purpose of communication has been met correctly. Linguistics is a branch of study which explores the language functionalism in interpersonal communication. Since business communication is an emerging form among mainstream communication, a study on the importance of the use of language in business discourse is highly recommendable. This paper tries to investigate the ways and approaches suitable for introducing language study in business communication.

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching, Language Learning, Business Communication, Pragmatics, Teaching

## 1. Introduction

Good communication has a pivotal role in building credibility and upholding standards of accountability in global business environment. Successful communication is never an accident and it can be built up only through meticulous learning and practicing of language fundamentals in communication which helps in structuring the information strategically. Linguistics is the scientific study of human language which helps in organizing, structuring and systematic articulation. In business context, business linguistics helps in the study of verbal and para-verbal features of business communication. Business linguistics is a blooming multidisciplinary synergic branch of study in the realm of business communication. Business Linguistics takes its origin from the concepts of Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics, Text linguistics and Functional styles, Pragmatics, Discourse studies, Cognitive and Communication Theory, Theory of organization (Organization Studies), Organizational psychology and Organizational Communication, Management Studies, as well as in applied research of

teaching and learning Language for Specific Purposes (LSP). Business Linguistics intersects and interacts with many related above-mentioned areas – with Media linguistics (in researching the language of business media), Judicial Linguistics (in exploring the language of corporate, contract and property law), and Political Linguistics (in investigating the language of socioeconomic relations). Besides, with growing geo-economic globalization, with the constant rise in the volume of international business contacts, Business Linguistics should deal with theories and practical methods of teaching and learning “foreign languages for business purposes”, primarily Business English as the lingua franca of international business.

## 2. Literature Review

Mable Chan in the book English for Business Communication identifies four types of competence that enable effective communication in a workplace. They are linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence. According to him,

“linguistic competence is always the focus in schools concerning the knowledge of the language covering the sound system of the language (i.e. Phonetics and phonology), the formation of words by means of words and phrases to structure sentences (i.e. syntax), and the way that meaning is conveyed through language( semantics)” (English for Business Communication, 10). It is understood from this description that effective communication demands not just competency in articulation of language but also the competency in articulating the same with appropriate linguistic qualities. Yulia V Daniushina in her essay “Business Linguistics and Business Discourse” argues that “Business Linguistics can benefit the communication competence of specialists and entrepreneurs, and contribute to their understanding the nature of communication processes in their professional activities and consequently increasing the communication efficiency of businesses. On the other hand, we all are consumers of goods and services (produced and provided by business), many people are also either stakeholders or investors; therefore, knowing the specifics of language and communication in business will help everyone to understand the deeper inner meaning implied in socio-economic, corporate and advertising discourse, to identify the manipulative mechanisms and techniques influencing public opinion (including those used by unfair businessmen” (Daniushina, 242). While both studies point out the necessity to introduce linguistic aspects in business communication, it is quite noticeable that none of the textbooks recommended for management students incorporate lessons on linguistic competence.

It is high time when more research should be carried out to recognize the vitality of optimising communication through improving the efficiency. As the first step, identifying the space of communication is an important goal to be set. Business aims at improving the effectiveness of communication, including the

following formats: the conversation between superiors and subordinates, the potential and received meaning, feedback, organizational climate and corporate culture, prevention and resolution of conflicts, consensus and disagreement, influence and persuasion, public speech of the leader, team communications, communication barriers, the interviewing, selecting and appraisal of the personnel, reporting, the workplace language, communication assessment and others. The communication of these sorts happens mainly through oral and written communication. The linguistics characteristics varies in both oral and written communication as the lexical and grammatical discourses work differently in oral and written. An introduction to phonetics is a useful discourse to be introduced in the paradigm of business communication to let the learners know the practical applications of stress, intonation and pronunciation elements in oral communication. Fundamentals of Business Communication discusses the basic linguistics elements of communication which pinpoints the topics like International Phonetic Alphabet, Stress and Intonation in Oral Communication. As the text explains:

“Most educated Indians understand and write English sufficiently well. But, they often face difficulty in speaking English fluently and in following British/American and other foreign speakers effortlessly and correctly. They tend to miss the intended meaning communicated by the speaker’s stress on words, phrases and sentences, and deliberate pauses in between the utterance of words and sentences” (Chaturvedi and Chaturvedi 31). This study in Indian Business Communication context could be taken as a reference to the theoretical knowledge of interpersonal business communication using linguistic elements.

### **3. Findings of Study**

- **International Phonetic Alphabet**

The discrepancy between letters and sounds in English language happens to be a barrier in

English communication. This barrier is applicable to all modes of communication including business communication. For example, the word “communication” is pronounced as “koh.myu. nah.kei.shn” though the word starts with letter ‘c’. This confusion often gets cleared through the introduction of International Phonetic Alphabet in Business Communication. The study of 20 vowels and 24 consonants in English IPA helps the learners to comprehend the idea of articulation with special emphasis to pronunciation.

- **Stress**

Oral communication primarily depends on the stressed and unstressed syllables. The practice to pronounce the words with right force in different parts of the words or sentences is significant. If the right word or right part is not stressed correctly, it may affect the clarity and effectiveness in communication. Among the parts of speech in English, articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are unstressed words and nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs are stressed. Following this pattern would help the learners to identify the weak words and strong words in communication and articulate accordingly.

- **Intonation**

Intonation helps in identifying the tone of the sentences in oral communication. The speaker’s tone kept falling and rising in a rhythmic pattern which are termed as falling tone and rising tone. Their appropriate use is crucial in business transactions. The falling tone expresses business like courtesy, gratitude, excitement, certainty and command. For example, ‘thank you ’with a falling tone expresses gratitude and a rising tone for acknowledgement. The classification of sentences based on variation in intonation also helps in effective communication. To say, all the questions, exclamations, commands will carry a falling tone. A rising tone will be attributed to requests, yes or no questions and question tags.

#### **4. Conclusion**

With all the findings stated above, it is cleared and substantiated that linguistic elements are inseparable from communication aspects and a systematic study of language elements in business communication has to be introduced in order to avoid confusions in stress based English language pattern. The language trainers and language learners must ensure and facilitate a space for the discussion of language patterns also in business communication curriculum.

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