

Language Skills in Business Negotiation from the Perspective of Adaptation

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ABSTRACT: Negotiations play a critical role in international business activities. Successful practitioners master certain diplomacy skills and coping strategies to avoid deadlock, conflict and contradiction in business negotiations. The application of Verschueren's adaptation theory can effectively solve some of the inherent complications of cross-cultural communication, improving the efficiency and efficacy of negotiations. Verschueren regards language usage as a process of dynamic selection for different communicative purposes and communicative objects. Adaptation theory includes contextual adaptation, structural adaptation, dynamic adaptation and the salience of adaptation. Taking contextual adaptation as the basic framework, this paper explores the application of behavioral language skills and cultural language skills in business negotiations, with a view to better facilitating satisfactory negotiation outcomes. Key results of the research is business negotiation plays a very important role in enterprise trade cooperation, and the language plays a very important role in the communication.

KEY WORDS: international business negotiation, language skills, contextual adaptation

I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of business negotiation and its importance Negotiation is a communication process in which the parties deal with conflicts to reach an agreement, solve problems, or make arrangements. Negotiation is a widespread social phenomenon involving a wide range of countries, institutions and individuals (Wu, 2014). Business negotiation is an important part of social and economic life and an important means of information exchange and business contacts between enterprises. Business negotiation is the means for enterprises to achieve economic goals, Obtain market information, and explore gain competitive intelligence and market information. Thus, business negotiation is indispensable either to the bargaining in daily life, the cooperation between enterprises and legal persons, and the economic and technological exchanges between countries. In the process of international business activities, sales peoples, managers of enterprise, lawyers and engineers all of them spend 50% of their working time in various business negotiations, most of which are negotiations with opponents with different cultural backgrounds or from different countries (Gong, 2014). International business negotiation is the general name for business activities discussed by the subjects of business activities between different countries to meet a particular need or achieve a certain goal (Wu, 2014). Due to the increasingly fierce competition in the international market economy, more and more attention has been paid to international business negotiations. As such, international business negotiation has become a main content area and core of international business theory. Under the condition of market economy, business negotiation is not only a bridge for international enterprises to conclude contracts, but also an important means to improve the economic benefits of enterprises.

Improve the success rate of international business negotiations: The main parties of international business negotiation come from two or more countries. Human culture shapes these business negotiations. People communicate with each other through dialogue, using words to exchange information and in turn, express their own views, opinions, and suggestions. In ancient times, even before the emergence of language, there was interpersonal communication. At that time, people exchanged information through gestures and facial expressions. Therefore, even today, business negotiation can be conducted through silent language as well as oral language. Cultural differences between countries are significant and can be a major obstacle when doing international negotiations. In the course of such conversations, due to uncertainly and misunderstanding, negotiations may also reach an impasse. If negotiators want to achieve their goals, they will have to overcome such obstacles and avoid deadlock. Pragmatic Adaptation Theory was proposed by Jef Verschueren, Secretary General of the

International Association of Pragmatics, based on Darwin's adaptation in biological evolution. From the perspective of adaptation theory, the use of language is the choice of language --- only the fittest survive (Darwin, 2009). Language is a social phenomenon, which is the most important tool for human communication, the tool for thinking and transmitting information, and the carrier for human beings to preserve their cognitive achievements (Xing, 2011). In 1875, Whitney pointed out that language gradually developed to deal with communication needs. In other words, the origin and development of language can be attributed to compliance processes. Like Darwin's biological evolution, language has evolved to meet the need for communication. Contextual adaptation means that in the process of language use, the choice of language adapts to the context. And language communication is essential for business negotiation; therefore, business negotiation must adapt to the context. The language skills in business negotiation can be divided into behavioral language skills and cultural language skills. Behavior language includes actions, dress and speech. Cultural language includes professional language, diplomatic language, legal language, literary language and military language (Wu, 2014). To bring about a satisfactory outcome of the negotiations, when conducting international business negotiations, when conducting international business negotiations, practitioners should follow the guidance of Verschueren's contextual adaptation theory and choose appropriate language according to different situations.

II. BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF ADAPTATION THEORY

The research situation of adaptation theory at home and abroad The theory of linguistic adaptation was first put forward by Verschueren, a Belgian Pragmatic scientist in Pragmatics as a Theory of Linguistic Adaptation in 1987. Since then, in 1995, he also discussed the theory of adaptation in detail and systematically in Handbook of Pragmatics. Published in 1999, the Understanding of Pragmatics is the Pragmatics research during the past 20 years and the summary of the thought of Pragmatics for him, and it also marks the maturation of the language adaptation theory. Qian (1991) was the first expert to introduce and study adaptation theory into China. Later, Qian (2000) explored the theoretical origin of adaptation theory. Besides Qian, many domestic pragmatics researchers have made researches on Verschueren's theory of adaptation. For example, New Developments in Pragmatics: Relevance, Adaptation, and Memetics wrote by He Ziran- (2007). The book is oriented by pragmatics research and development, and introduces the theoretical sources of adaptation theory and its application. Verschueren-(1995) regards the theory of linguistic adaptation as the process of language use, believing that effective language use conforms to context and communicative intention. The reason why language users can make appropriate choices in the process of language use is that language has three characteristics: variability, negotiability and compliance (Verschueren, 2000). The variability of language means that language has a range of alternative possibilities. The negotiability of language means that the choice is made not mechanically or strictly according to the formal-function relationship, but on the basis of highly flexible principles and strategies. Language compliance means that language users can make flexible adaptations from the available options to meet the needs of communication. In addition, the context view proposed by Verschueren is that of a dynamic environment. The context is not given before communication takes place, but rather changes with the development of the communication process. According to Verschueren, context can be divided into communicative context and linguistic context. Communicative context includes language users, psychological world, social world, physical world and other factors. The language user is the focus of the context. The psychological world includes cognitive and emotional factors such as personality, emotion, desire and intention of both parties. The social world refers to the principles and norms required by social occasions and social environments for communicators' language codes. Communicators' language choices must conform to the communicative norms of social occasions, social environments and language communities (Verschueren, 2000). The most important factor in the physical world is the referential relationship between time and space. The above communicative context factors will influence the language choices made by language users when using and understanding language in varying degrees. Linguistic context refers to various linguistic means chosen according to contextual factors in the use of language.

The application of adaptation theory in China Chinese researchers are not just studying adaptation itself, many researchers also study different fields by applying the theory of compliance. These fields which applied the theory of adaptation are roughly divided into seven categories. They are: translation, pragmatic strategy, literary creation and literary appreciation, code switching, education, cross-cultural communication, and the syntactic study (citation). In the field of translation, there is a study named A study of business English translation based on adaptation theory. The paper is based on Verschueren's adaptation theory, discussing the selection and application of translation strategies and methods in business English translation in international business activities to solve the problem of information difference between source language and target language (Zhao, 2014). In the field of pragmatic strategy, there is a study called Study on the adaptability of court ambiguity,

Which is based on the theory of adaptation through a comprehensive study of the function and generating mechanism of fuzziness through language variability, negotiability and compliance, this paper reveals why and how participants in court trials use fuzziness (He & Qiu, 2013). Research in the field of literary creation and literary appreciation has Analysis on the adaptability of Li Qinghai's poetry which applies the theory of adaptation from two aspects: psychological and social, utilizing a dynamic view of context to the analysis of poetry (Yang & Xie, 2011). In the field of code-switching, there is a study, A brief analysis of code-switching in popular songs from the perspective of adaptation theory which takes pop songs as an example to explore the code-switching phenomenon in lyrics, revealing its reasons and uses (Li, 2014). In the education field, there is a study named A pragmatic study of personal deixis in college English teachers' classroom discourse, which starting from the dynamic context of the teaching process, analyzes the position selection of teachers' personal deixis by means of adaptation theory, and discusses the interpersonal and pragmatic functions of teachers in the application of the three personal deixis, so as to cultivate students' pragmatic ability (Chen & Zhang, 2014).

In the field of cross-cultural communication, there is a study called A study on cross-cultural awareness cultivation strategies of business English interpreters from the perspective of adaptation theory which collected data in the form of a questionnaire to investigate the relationship between students' awareness, frequency of using dynamic adaptation theory, and their interpretation scores, putting forward relevant opinions and suggestions for improvement (Zhang & Li, 2013). In the field of syntactic research, there is a study named An analysis of the communicative function of English passive structure discourse from the perspective of linguistic adaptation theory. This paper uses linguistic adaptation to analyze and study the contextual adaptation of the discourse communicative function of passive sentence patterns from two aspects of psychological factors and social factors, concluding that the use of passive structure in discourse communication conforms to the psychological and social factors of context (Jia & Yan, 2010). Clearly, Verschueren's adaptation theory has been utilized to explain many different aspects of communications in many different contexts. Continuing this stream of the literature, the present paper combines the theory of adaptation with intercultural communication and language skills, and attempts to analyze the language skills in international business negotiations from the perspective of the theory of adaptation.

III. LANGUAGE CLASSIFICATIONS IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATION

According to different classification bases, the language types of business negotiation are different. There are two kinds of classification methods according to expression mode and expression feature.

Classification of language expression mode: Language can be divided into sound language and silent language according to different ways of expression (Wu, 2014). Sound language, also known as spoken language, refers to the language that can produce sound; that is, the earliest natural language formed in human society. It is the most commonly used and most fundamental information transmission medium in human communication, relying on human hearing to convey information. Silent language, also known as behavior language, is an important complement to spoken language. It conveys information through posture, gestures, expressions, eyes etc. --also known as body language, which relies on human vision to convey information.

Classification of language expression characteristics : According to the characteristics of language expression, spoken language can be divided into professional language, legal, diplomatic, literary and military language (Song, 2012). Professional language, also known as business language, refers to some special or specialized terms related to business; for example, used in the process of business negotiation. It is professional, normative and rigorous, which can avoid differences in understanding between different countries and nationalities and make the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the negotiating parties under the jurisdiction of different social, political and legal systems. Legal language refers to the legal terms involved in business negotiations. It is mandatory, universal and rigid, and can clearly define the rights and obligations of both parties. Diplomatic language is a flexible language, which generally refers to all tactful, polite, non-decisive, acceptable and indefinite tactful expressions and expressions in business negotiations. The diplomatic language used in business negotiations makes it easy to give people a sense of respect, which is conducive to clear up the problem and make room for advance and retreat. Literary language generally refers to the language that adopts exaggeration, metaphor, parallelism and other modification techniques, which can resolve the contradictions in business negotiations and enhance its appeal. Military language is a concise but firm attitude of the negotiating language; it has crisp, brief, firm, confident, sonorous and powerful characteristics.

IV. ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE ART IN BUSINESS NEGOTIATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ADAPTATION THEORY

In business negotiations, the flexible use of language could produce the effect of land on your feet even surprise to win. When people do not know how to exert the art of language, they often get into trouble in the negotiations. The reason is that although every negotiator can use "language" as basic tool, it does not mean that they are able to use language skills in the negotiations, exerting the full power of language. To adapt to different situations in business negotiations and achieve their expected goals, it is necessary to attach importance to the expression strategies of various negotiation languages. A good negotiator is required to demonstrate good language communication ability. This means the negotiator can not only clearly express their own ideas and opinions, but also accurately grasp the other side's behavior, attitude, and ideas. Furthermore, as negotiation is a form of intellectual exercise, people need to pay more attention to the use of language strategies and skills. Only by mastering the art of language at the negotiating table can language expression produce the best effect and promote the ideal negotiation target and result. International business negotiation has certain complexity and difficulty, which requires the negotiators to choose different language expression according to different person, contexts, times, and places. For various negotiation objects, language skills should be targeted and treated differently. In international business negotiations, both sides of negotiations come from different countries or regions with divergent cultural background. Their dissimilar political, legal, economic, cultural and social background, leads not only to differences in the process of negotiations, but also exerts influence on the implementation of agreement, and, of course, on the future negotiations. Therefore, negotiation strategies must adapt to different situations and choose an optimal language strategy. Generally speaking, language skills in business negotiation can be divided into behavioral and cultural language skills.

Behavioral language skills in business negotiation: Successful application of behavioral language skill means to make full use of silent language for the fullest desired effect. Behavior is an effective symbolic method to cooperate with sound language and assist sound language, and sometimes can replace sound language. It is a tool for people to express ideas and spread information since ancient times, so it is also can be called a kind of language. Upon entering the negotiation, the negotiator's behavior has specific expression. Negotiators often consciously (or unconsciously) use body language such as facial expressions, eyes, body movements or gestures to convey information to their opponents. At the negotiating table, the behavior of the negotiator plays an important role in the communication of information. Behavioral language skills generally include dress, speech and behavior. The clothes of the negotiator are a prerequisite for a successful negotiation. At the negotiating table, dress requirements vary not only from time to time, but also from person to person and place to place. If the negotiators want to initially leave a good impression in an important business negotiation, they have to focus on clothing. These negotiations are formal activities, so negotiators from all countries generally wear formal clothes. In terms of color, countries have their own national taboos. For instance, Mexicans consider purple to be an unlucky coffin color, while yellow flowers represent death and red symbolizes spells. Therefore, in negotiations with Mexican negotiators, clothing cannot choose this color. In Brazil, brown signifies the color of mourning, while purple represents sadness, and yellow symbolizes despair. Brazilians think that people's death are like yellow leaves fall, so Brazilians consider yellow as an unlucky color. Similarly, Brazilians also believe that dark brown can bring misfortune. Therefore, when negotiating with Brazilian negotiators, negotiators should avoid wearing these colors. In addition to the color, the dress needs to be appropriate. Business dress generally falls into two categories. They are business dress for women and business dress for men. In business negotiations, a man should wear formal business attire. A dark suit with a white long-sleeved shirt and the tie that is darker than the shirt. The full body suit that is within three colors. In business negotiations, a woman's business dress should reflect a solemn, generous professional image.

Skirts is the first choice for professional suits for women, followed by pantsuits. The skirt length of a professional dress is best at the knee (Wu, 2014). The negotiator's speech refers to the way of language transmission, which is, the specific way of speaking, including the speed, strength and tone of the voice. Take the United States as an example, influenced by its status as an economic power, American businessmen are full of confidence and superiority. They act powerfully on the negotiation table. Their language expression is very straightforward and their personalities tend to be very humorous (Zhang & Zhao, 2010). At the negotiating table, when interacting with American negotiators, you can choose open and honest language. Sincere expression and words of honesty without embellishment sometimes may be contrary to what they like to hear, but the effect is often unexpectedly good. When the atmosphere is tense, negotiators can use humorous language. Sometimes humor is an expression of wisdom. People with a sense of humor are popular everywhere and can resolve many interpersonal conflicts or awkward situations. They can often turn one's anger into generosity. In business negotiations, humor can be a kind of lubricant in the creation of harmonious feelings. Humor can make a tense

negotiation atmosphere suddenly very relaxed; it can make the negotiator be welcomed because it is full of fun; it can change the explosive situation of conflict into harmonious negotiation process, even it can make the other person understand, accept, admire, and accept your point of view with dignity. Person's behavior is fully reflected in their inner activities, and the meaning expressed by one's behavior is often related to the personal character and differing cultural background. So, at the negotiating table, parties not only should pay attention to their own behavior, but also examine the opponent's behavior to grasp the connotation of its hidden meaning. For example, Americans like to use gestures and other body language to express their feelings. Americans think when communicating with others sticking tongue out in front of someone else and sitting with ones legs crossed. This non-verbal communication has the meaning of the insult; therefore, when negotiating, negotiators should avoid the occurrence of these non-verbal communication behaviors. In addition, Americans attach great importance to personal space, so keep a distance of 120 centimeter to 360 centimeter when negotiating with American negotiators (Yan, 2002). Besides, Americans shrug their shoulders with an unhappy expression symbolize surprise, while shrug their shoulders with a smile represent approval.

Cultural language skills in business negotiation: Although behavior language can reveal a negotiator's mind, behavior language often does not provide the other party a very real and accurate feeling. The reality is more dependent on language expression. Language is as important to us as a tool as a horse is to a knight. The best steed for the best rider; the best language for the best negotiator. This sentence points out the meaning and function of language in expressing thought. Cultural language skills include the exertion of professional, of diplomatic, of legal language, of military and of literary language. When negotiating with businessmen from different countries, negotiators should adopt different cultural and language skills. However, professional language is the most basic language of business negotiators and the most basic language tool in business negotiations. Therefore, professional language would be used in any business negotiation with any country. Americans are honest, optimistic and generous. They go after efficiency instead of formalism. In the process of doing business, American businessmen are usually more direct and attach great importance to efficiency rather than the establishment of personal relationship before negotiation.

When negotiating with American businessmen, there is no need to make polite remarks (Wu, 2014). Therefore, when negotiating with Americans, it is advisable to mainly adopt professional and legal language, with little or no flexible diplomatic language and literary language, combined with exaggeration and other rhetorical devices. The Japanese approach to negotiation is very different from that of Americans. Japanese businessmen like to do a lot of public relations work to build a good relationship with the other party before the negotiation. At the same time, Japanese people also attach great importance to etiquette and dignity. Japanese businessmen value reciprocity in trade activities. Negotiators should not reject Japan's request directly, but express it tactfully (Wu, 2014). Therefore, in negotiations with Japanese negotiators, it is advisable to focus on the use of diplomatic language and literary language, but professional language and legal language is also essential. In addition, Japanese have an instinctive sense of national superiority and xenophobic tendency, even the Japanese have a certain degree of aggression, so at such a time, negotiators can adopt a concise but firm attitude of negotiation language, namely military language. When it comes to being a gentleman, British people are deserving of their reputation. They are well-mannered, polite, gentle and friendly. British businessmen attach great importance to details when dealing with business (Gong, 2014). So negotiators should use professional language and legal language to clarify the rights and obligations of both parties. However, British businessmen tend to hold their own when there are differences between the two sides. Therefore, when Chinese negotiators negotiate with them, they can properly use literary language to solve conflicts in a humorous way. Russian businessmen cling to tradition and lack flexibility.

They like to do things according to plan, and their bargaining power is very strong. Although the Russian businessmen were at a disadvantage in the negotiations, they always found ways to make the other side give ground and thus gain profits. On this point, many businessmen in other countries who have dealt with the Russians regard them as formidable negotiators (Wu, 2014). Russian businessmen pay special attention to the technical content and demand specific clauses in the negotiated projects. Working with Russian businessmen requires a strong sense of risk. Therefore, when negotiating with Russian businessmen, in addition to the most basic professional language of business negotiation, legal language and military language should be used when necessary. Australians value efficiency and negotiators generally like to have the last word. They don't want to spend their time in empty talking where they can't make a decision. Therefore, it is appropriate to conduct business negotiations with Australian businessmen in professional language, legal language and military language. Also, avoiding the use of diplomatic and literary language can improve negotiation efficiency. Latin Americans approach business negotiations with great confidence, in other words, they are stubborn and do not

compromise easily. Latin Americans have a slow negotiation pace and low time utilization rate. Thus, negotiators can use professional language to avoid misunderstandings. They should also limit using diplomatic language and literary language, which reduces wasting time. Latin American businessmen have little sense of responsibility and credibility. In business activities, there had the situation that they did not comply with the payment date, without reason to delay payment (Gong, 2014). Therefore, when conducting business negotiations with Latin American businessmen, legal language and military language can be used to clarify the rights and obligations of both sides in a firm manner.

V. CONCLUSION

Enterprises are profit-making operations and therefore, the purpose of conducting business negotiations is to establish profitable trade cooperation relations(Wu, 2014). There are many ways to increase corporate profits, and business negotiation is a primary one. As former President Bill Clinton's chief negotiating advisor mentioned in *Secrets of Power negotiating*, the fastest way to make money in the world is to negotiate (Dawson, 2008). The success of a business negotiation is significantly influenced by the party's bargaining ability. A single word can boost the country; yet, a single word can also hurt the country. Language skills and strategies are the key to bridging success in negotiation, dealing with interpersonal relations, and effectively expressing one's own views and attitudes. The essential pursuit of business negotiation is to adapt to different environments and choose negotiable language strategies to achieve win-win results of both parties. Therefore, the skillful use of language skills is the stepping stone of a successful business negotiation. The present review points out how to use language skills in business negotiation under the guidance of adaptation theory. But with the continuous development of China and the world economy, the demands of the negotiators increased accordingly. This review assists with solving the problem of the shortage of business negotiators and improving the business competence of the business negotiators, schools, businesses and helping individuals making their own development efforts.

Recommendations for schools:To meet the social demand for business negotiation talents, colleges and universities should set up business negotiation courses. Business negotiation courses are not only theoretical but also practical. This means that professional courses not only improve students' English level and ability, but also emphasize students' practical business communication ability, and they can use accurate and clear business language to express and communicate. There are some problems in the traditional teaching mode. If students are divided into groups for discussion and case analysis on the basis of classroom teaching, it will be helpful for them to absorb the theories they have learned and apply them to solving practical problems. Holding mock business negotiations could be utilized in the classroom. It can help students flexibly apply the theories learned in class to practice, make students understand and familiar with each link in the actual negotiation, and then improve their comprehensive negotiation ability (Mu &Xue, 2011).

Recommendations for businesses: To improve the success rate of the business negotiation and demonstrate the importance of the business negotiation, enterprises also can make contributions. Enterprises should give negotiators more time and opportunities. The chosen business person, no matter how experienced, needs time to understand the company's policies and practices and explore solutions to problems. If a leader expects his or her negotiator to be top-notch, it is best to support, motivate, and train him or her effectively (Wang, 2008). The enterprises could cultivate groups of professional negotiators who work in industry. Enterprises can also establish their own internal reward mechanism according to the company's own situation. What the enterprises can do is to reward excellent negotiators with material measures to stimulate their competitive spirit. In addition, the objects of international business negotiations concerns mostly non-domestic enterprises or people. Therefore, To know the enemy and win every battle, enterprises need to train their negotiators abroad.

Recommendations for individuals the negotiator is the main body of the negotiation, so the quality of negotiators is directly related to the success of the negotiation. One successful negotiator should have the good qualities of temperament and character, splendid psychological quality, nice ideology, fantastic knowledge quality and physical quality. In addition to quality, negotiators should also have relevant abilities. Such as keen insight, excellent language expression ability, and strong logical thinking and judgment (Wang, 2008). To be a good negotiator, one must be familiar with the rules of the international market, master the cultural customs and negotiation thinking of different countries, and flexibly use international business negotiation strategies and language arts. And must good at using concise and accurate words to express one's point of view to be understood. In conclusion, Business negotiation plays a very important role in enterprise trade cooperation--and the language plays a very important role in the communication. If one wants to negotiate successfully, they must exert the advantages of language skills at the negotiation table.

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