



ORIGINAL PAPER

Linguistic Power Structures: Analysing Social Strategies of Communication and Negotiation

Laviniu Lăpădat¹⁾, Maria-Magdalena Lăpădat²⁾

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to provide focus on the fundamental connection between communication and negotiation. The ability to communicate, to speak and be heard, and ultimately to empathise shall establish a bond of trust between the interlocutors participating in a business negotiation. An honest discussion is the warden of trust and credibility between parties. The generation of a climate of reliability, characterised by mutual cooperation, can significantly aid in the effectiveness of collaborative arguments, as well as the assumption of associative bonds among partners. The purpose of language is to break down barriers, to explore that which we have in common towards the just detriment of the often capricious and artificial factors that seek to separate individuals. Language and honest communication can open the doors of empathy, synergy and symbiosis, making sure all the individuals involved in the process of negotiation prosper, flourish and experience exponential growth through the power of communicational togetherness.

Keywords: *communication; negotiation; language; agreement; cooperation.*

¹⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040773985380, Romania, Email: lapadat_lavinIU@yahoo.com.

²⁾ Assistant Professor, Ph.D, University of Craiova, Department of Applied Modern Languages, Phone: 0040731297911, Romania, Email: magda_faurar@yahoo.com.

Introduction

A thorough investigation into the process of information dissemination and more precisely the objectives of that procedure shall uncover the fact that language, the deliberate distribution, the pre-planned exchange of ideas, shall expose the transactional nature of our communicative endeavours. Subsequently, negotiation constitutes a superior function of language and therefore, we can predicate, based on this pattern of logic, that a good communicator will ultimately be a good negotiator within an enhanced social framework.

Extrapolating the importance of language in the area of social exchanges establishes a clear and undeniable bond between linguistics and the transactional world in which we are all willing or unwilling participants, always negotiating a bigger, better deal for ourselves and our loved ones, in an attempt to assert control and dominance throughout our external space, using our internal prowess. If the communicator is nothing more than a negotiator and vice versa, we can assert that a successful communicator/negotiator should first find all potential methodologies that will help him or her control the negotiation/communication process. A successful negotiation means always being prepared for any and every eventuality, finding ways to reach even the most difficult of interlocutors through preparedness, strategic analysis and transactional empathy, the ability to place oneself inside the mind of the communication partner in order to understand the needs, strengths and vulnerabilities of that person.

Strategic Socio-Economic Communication

The best strategy in starting a successful business endeavour relies upon the natural or even artificial creation of a good, decent and trustworthy reputation when forging the bonds of trust and cooperation with business partners or employees. Therefore, cooperation is reliant on the parties involved and the circle of trust that must include all the participating players that are overtly linked by stable and available communication. According to Gotti, cooperation must stem from a significant degree of specialisation, a dimension of preparedness that activates both language and specific settings: “[...] the specialist use of language in contexts which are typical of a specialized community stretching across the academic, the professional, the technical and the occupational areas of knowledge and practice. This perspective stresses both the type of user and the domain of use, as well as the special application of language in that setting. For specialized discourse to develop, all three of these factors need to be present.” (Gotti, 2011:15-16).

When trying to ascertain business negotiations from a social, communicative perspective, one can uncover three major pillars of distribution and consolidation. The first vector of the equation is the actual preparation of the negotiation. The endeavour of actually planning what exactly you want to obtain out of the negotiation, of what the potential partner(s) might want to achieve as well and actually predicting how the debate and arguments will progress throughout the entire process will constitute a prerequisite of the entire negotiating platform. Secondly, having a plan and a strategy is nothing without the proper implementation and execution of that strategic construct. Talking things through with your partners, finding out what they want to say, not what you might think they want to say will push the negotiation through and formulate a reasonable quid pro quo that will be mutually advantageous for all parties involved. And last but not least, one must find the wisdom and energy to harness the final outcome of the negotiations and finalise the procedures into an unshakable agreement that cannot fall

prey to subsequent interpretations or malevolent misinterpretations. Were we to perceive a communicative act of negotiation as walking on a tight rope, then we are bound to consider that the last step is always the hardest, and were we to lose focus, let our guard down for even a second, would mean a collapse in both communication and negotiation: “Communication is a key element in the development of every society.” (Stoian, 2019:134)

In truth, negotiations are a complex communicative undertaking, as they are most often plagued by complications, diversions and even sabotage, thus attesting to the fact that they are never smooth or peaceful in their progression. The preparations taking place before the debate are a useful tool but they are by no means a guarantee for stability or communicative equanimity. Almost always, talking about even the most insignificant of details, can lead to new doubts, those doubts will foster new proposals and those proposals, if not kept in check, can lead to endless and counterproductive debates.

Understanding linguistics in economics is crucial to the entire process of preparing for a negotiation. A lack of readiness in the anticipation of future exchanges will expose the unprepared or underprepared party to a reactive chain of events he or she will not be able to control, thus, transforming a proactive speaker into a reactive victim. Being ready, but above it all, being willing and able to talk will shift the focus towards a constructive approach in the communication and negotiating process, forsaking all stubbornness, rigidity or aggressivity.

In the opinion of Harish Tigari, an act of negotiation should abandon negativity and move towards a more cooperative, open and empathetic process: “The negotiation is an interactive process with collective bargaining between two or more parties involved in contractual understanding. The skill refers to understand or to have the knowledge or to know how, means in negotiation skill of the negotiator plays a significant role while bargaining something. The negotiation skill includes tactical thinking, effective listening, assertiveness, empathy, and record keeping, but the behavioural observation by the parties with one another and open ended and close ended questions between the parties are very important.” (Tigari, 2018:1275).

As both a communicator and a negotiator, one must first decide on what you want to obtain in order to articulate and understand what you are also willing to put on the table. If you want to know what you walk away with, you must first analyse not your own objectives, but rather the objectives of your interlocutor. Knowing your rival is quite often enough more important than even knowing yourself, and this transactional, communicational empathy is often the gatekeeper to a successful negotiation, to a felicitous act of communication. Formulating a message based on the desires and expectations of your listener is far more relevant than just basing that message solely and naively on yourself and your gregarious selfish needs. Communication can paradoxically often bring more benefits to the communicator if it is assembled as a selfless empathetic act rather than an instinctual, selfish assault on the interlocutor. Overall, empathy represents the ability to look at things from the perspective of the other, to walk a mile in the proverbial shoes, thus, allowing you to get into the proper mindset necessary for preparing a negotiation. Our own desires and objectives are clear and easily accessible to us, what we don't know is how many of them we can put into practice unless we comprehend and ascertain the full spectrum of purposes brought forth by the other party. Communication and negotiation allow you to bring your objectives to life through the acknowledgement and recognition of the second or even third party,

which in certain contexts can result in symbiosis or even synergy, facilitating positive results for all participants and eliciting a growth potential that can, under exceptional circumstances, grow exponentially and generate a superior level of prosperity, trust and eloquence.

Negotiation as a Platform for Collective, Societal Integration

Negotiations are a platform of communication, regulating the social behaviour and desires of the parties involved, the ensemble of issues and possible solutions. By talking things through, communication can carry out a mission to resolve any outstanding issues or problems and aid all those involved towards finding a pathway towards a mutually beneficial agreement. In order to define the concept of negotiation, Ksenija Čulo and Vladimir Skendrović assert that: “Negotiation is a dialogue between two or more people or parties, intended to reach an understanding, resolve point of difference, or gain advantage in out-come of a dialogue, to produce an agreement upon courses of action, to bargain for individual or collective advantage and to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests of two parties involved in negotiation process. Negotiation is a process where each party involved in negotiating tries to gain an advantage for themselves by the end of the process. Therefore, negotiation is intended to aim at compromise.” (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:323)

Negotiators frequently have trouble eloquently expounding what they wish to obtain out of fear of seeming too rigid or unreasonable, often bringing the process of communication and negotiation to a standstill. A solution to this can be ascertainable by creating a road map of communication which clearly indicates the entry point of negotiation, as well as the desired destination. It is up to the parties to openly and efficiently discuss the shortest, easiest trajectory through the labyrinth of personal of subjective desires. According to Marcu: “Negotiations take place in all contexts of our lives. It is impossible to say that we do not negotiate if we are not businessmen or if we are not involved in a business process.” (Marcu, 2013:69)

Any discussion will start based on an entry point in the negotiation and hopefully generate a successful and strategic exit point. This road to success is governed by the primordial rule that one must never accept the primary offer of the interlocutor as there is always a better deal just around the corner that is significantly superior, available and reachable only though intensive discussion. Such a framework of possibility will produce more productive spaces of movement and transitions in order to reach a good deal.

The entry point in the negotiation is nothing more than a reasonable middle ground that is found acceptable by both communicative entities. One must make sure that the final objectives are not to ostentatiously presented, because overextended trust and undermining determination would trigger a negative reaction from the negotiating partner. It is recommended for one to have two distinct offers in mind when starting a negotiation, the first, of course, being exaggeratingly hopeful and selfish while the other will bring balance to the negotiating table, and also encompass the objectives and desires the other party should see as available.

The exit point strategy must test and challenge the limits and boundaries of the potential deal. The line connecting the entry and the exit point should rely on the solidity and force of your arguments and your listener’s willingness to accept or simply tolerate them.

An act of negotiation is a combination between passive-aggressive confrontation and traditional communication. A felicitous outcome in a negotiation is preconditioned by our capacity to win over and dominate our partners of discussion.

A multiplicity of frameworks and approaches are, at least in theory, made available when engaging in a negotiation:

- the non-communicative approach which should automatically fall under exclusion seeing as the purpose of a negotiation is to actually communicate with partners. It can, however, be brought forward in order to show extreme dissatisfaction in reference to a proposed offer and passively-aggressively shock the interlocutor into withdrawing the initial bid and coming up with a vastly improved offer which can provide the basis for ulterior development and communicative openness.
- the extrovert approach which harnesses an ensemble, a multiplicity of information and communicative structures that will sternly guide an individual towards a certain frame of mind or decisional apparatus. This style is apt to constitute or even reconstitute a strong displacement of power and direct authority to you based on dominance and unilateral authority.
- the inductive approach shall lead to a climate of partnership, relaxation and open discussion by correlating the compatible personalities and objectives of the partners involved in the discussion and negotiation. This is by far the most encountered method of negotiation as it harmonises the conciliatory needs of equals so as to achieve success and prosperity under the auspices of honesty and normality. However, the proper functionality of this approach is preconditioned by a robust ability to listen and process, by compatible minds who are not ashamed to recognise both merit and vulnerability, thus, enhancing one's capacity to bring relaxation where there is tension and peace where there is conflict.

The truth of the matter is that there is no singular approach that fits all emergent circumstances. In communication, adaptation shall always be the mother of negotiations and no amount of preparedness can significantly undermine this state of events.

A successful negotiator is nothing less than a flexible chameleon who can navigate all types of approaches with instinctual ease, speculating on both the fortes and vulnerabilities of his or her adversary. If we look at negotiation as a war, then words are most certainly the desired weapon of choice, beyond any internal or cultural contradiction, exposing psychological and sociological tools of relevance subsidised by the need to win in order to serve the gregarious interests of the individual or his or her proverbial tribe.

Patterns of Communication and Negotiation

The process of communication throughout a negotiation procedure goes beyond being a mere confrontation of conversational opponents or the simple manifestation of a traditional transfer of ideas. A functional negotiation is heavily reliant on our collective capacity to draw the others into our area of perception. The content of information is indeed the most important element of a negotiation, yet we must also underscore the importance of style and grammatical instruments: "The passive voice is frequently used by researchers in economics because it allows them to hide their results and take refuge behind the facts, thus adding additional force to their arguments." (Scortan, 2019:57)

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Any discussion that will compel us to make concessions and reach an agreement is bound to depend on the implementation of a climate of cyclical, free-flowing trust especially if the participants in the act of communication have never met each other or are barely familiar with one another. Even non-verbal communication can act as a powerful foundation as well as an ice breaker for the creation of a negotiation.

The complex semiotics associated with trust will even take into account the subjective intensity of a handshake, respecting the interlocutor's personal space. Greeting and nodding in accordance with the proposed atmosphere. Maintaining a respectable level of visual contact is essential if we are to convey openness, honesty and direction, yet abusing this action can be interpreted as slightly aggressive or excessively inquisitive and force the other party to break eye contact due to certain frustrations or perceptions of exaggeration.

Playing a part is very important and we must take all the necessary psychological steps in order to ensure that the act of communication will become a mutual vector of harmony, equanimity and copacetic productivity.

The manner in which we dress, our adaptation to the context and location of the negotiation are also key elements in a negotiation. For example, even the most honest of negotiators will find frustration in establishing a productive link if one gets to the meeting dressed in shorts while the other will dress highly formal and wear an expensive suit.

Personal and Social Affinity in Negotiating

Moving on, beyond this, it is always a blessing to negotiate with someone you have previously interacted with. Human beings are creatures of comfort, stability and repetition, and a familiar face is always a joy to be hold, even if you make have had skirmishes with that individual in the past. The proliferation of attention and the manner in which information is captured or preserved has helped the researchers Ksenija Čulo and Vladimir Skendrović conclude that: "Oral communication skills include organization of thoughts before speaking, taking notes and planning what to say, outlining the main points to be covered, determining the logical conclusion of an idea and evaluating the possible reactions. It should be understood that also the silence can be a powerful negotiating tool. The speech must be concise and to the point without being blunt. The main point should be emphasized often, focusing on the benefit to the other party." (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:325)

Throughout the process of negotiation, we need to render equal focus to both speaking and listening. When our interlocutor is addressing us, we must maintain a stable, phatic bridge of communication, connect through constant visual contact and keep focus regarding the meaning and the implications of our partner's statements and utterances. Taking notes is also a useful tool as it conveys an atmosphere of inherent professionalism while at the same time eliminating the possibility of losing, misunderstanding or misinterpreting key pieces of information, thus, providing us with a twofold success in both content and wrapping or appearance.

Expanding the platform for listening, not only for speaking will bring forth a plethora of opportunities that can commandeer favourable and useful dimensions of discussion and negotiation.

The Importance of the Non-verbal

The analysis and comprehension of body language can also in itself constitute a rich resource for additional factors of conversational awareness and interpretation.

Reading body language possesses and inherent duality of strategy and intent. By interpreting the clues given away by our partner's body language, we will gain an entire arsenal of undisclosed information, which we can use to either manipulate and harm our interlocutor, or simply be aware of those vulnerabilities and fears and be a truthful and honest partner by deciding to put those fears at ease and create an even more stable climate for agreement and debate. Čulo and Skendrović envision metalinguistic capabilities as a methodology of uncovering and exposing that which is hidden or dissimulated: "Nonverbal communication can provide information on what one participant in a negotiation may be concealing from the other one. It is significant in normal interpersonal exchange, and it differs between places and cultures. Although the words coming out of the mouth may mean one thing, the body language could be quite hostile. Therefore, it is advisable to always check on body language in order not to send out negative vibes, which may put off the negotiator completely. It is important to be aware that facial expressions and body posture may have different meaning in different cultures, and to know what kind of physical contact is appropriate with special attention to the physical distance between the communicating persons." (Čulo&Skendrović, 2012:325)

Body language is always a two-way street. Through this medium, our deepest and innermost thoughts can be exposed or betrayed, therefore, the ability to deliberately control our mannerisms can be a powerful nonverbal tool of negotiation. Moreover, a skilled communicator can indirectly and nonverbally let slip pieces of fake information through artificially generated movements or mannerisms which are designed to deceive or bamboozle the person standing in front of us. No matter the variations or strategies implemented, body and facial variations are undoubtedly robust tools of negotiations.

Areas of resolution

Just like any other endeavour of communication, negotiation as a paramount pillar of social and economic interaction is achieved in a predetermined spatial matrix that is described by areas of convergence but also divergence. The art of negotiation, the art of the deal is the ability or the capacity to embrace social convergence while learning to minimise or tolerate the impact of divergence. Divergent pathways coalesce structures of conflict between both ideologies and individuals, potentially including taboo or categorical elements that could potentially cripple the entire process of communication. The forbidden, the taboo must be skilfully navigated and harmoniously cast aside so that these elements are not allowed to proliferate and disseminate towards saboteurs of change, progress and transformation. Raymond Williams asserts that language, as a tool of negotiation, exists within a realm of complexity and intellectual displacement: "Between languages as within a language, the range and complexity of sense and reference indicate both difference of intellectual position and some blurring or overlapping. These variations, of whatever kind, necessarily involve alternative views of the activities, relationships and processes which this complex word indicates. The complexity, that is to say, is not finally in the word but in the problems which its variations of use significantly indicate." (Williams, 2015:53)

From a communicational standpoint, an honest debate can become the purest form of negotiation, where we are both active and reactive in relation to our interaction with our interlocutor. A discussion should always set forth to reach some sort of agreement and not linger on inextricable elements of disagreement or separation. After

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the establishment of reasonable and honest standpoints on both sides, a negotiation will give both parties the chance to test their own constructs via external judgement and objective milieus of assessment and analysis. According to researcher Denisa Barbuceanu any successful act of communication begins with preparedness and harmonised agreement: “Preparation or organisation of conversations are progressive and cooperative enterprise that the parties involved decide upon.” (Bărbuceanu, 2019:51)

Questions can never be frowned upon or excluded as offensive or aggressive because through them we can facilitate the honest flow of information and the ultimate highways that ensure that the flow of ideas will reach a fortuitous destination. Talking things through is ultimately a test of human honesty. An overt structure of dialogue between parties will bring into light all of the potential advantages that can bring growth and prosperity to both parties. A negotiation can only become toxic if the negotiations are fundamentally angry and prejudiced and use a platform for communication as nothing more than a simple stage on which they can vent their capricious anger. Not letting the other speak, playing the blame game, virtue signalling, personal and ideological attacks will only generate a collapse in discussion, productivity and human interaction in general. A passive-aggressive lack of respect or even simple irony can be equally powerful tools of deterrence, because minimising the merits of others can, under no shape or form, act as the building blocks for a successful human relation, business or otherwise.

At the beginning of each and every negotiation, awkwardness and tension are always the unwanted proverbial elephants in the room. What we must do is to make sure that we are able to starve these toxic elements of our being and not let tension make way to hostility and even conflict. Anger must be avoided at all costs, but this should be achieved without appearing as docile, weak or vulnerable. If a negotiation is not achieved among equals, then it is doomed to fail from the start, as bullying and abuse can never act as substitutes for trust and partnership. Respect must always be shown and if it is not genuine, let it at least be an almost perfect replica of the real deal, as respect controls our lesser instincts and ensures the elimination of selfishness inside a discussion or human interaction.

Negative reactivity has to be kept at bay. Even the choice of the proper pronoun can be a useful tool in circumventing conflict or confrontation, suggesting the idea that everyone is on the same side. Boundaries of discussion are always to be upheld and such apparent elements like allowing your partner the necessary talk time can go a long way towards articulating healthy boundaries of communication and understanding.

The articulation of communication within a negotiation draws strength from the acknowledgement of position, boundaries and common synergetic interests. It is highly productive for a negotiation to include the interests of both parties from the get-go without necessarily going into details or profound exploration. The intent of the initial stages of discussion is implementing a blueprint for respect and cooperation as it refers to the entire agenda.

A negotiation is a discussion between members of society who are trying to obtain something from the other side, both focusing on the merits of what they have to offer and trying to minimise the advantages of services brought forth by the other side of the table. In a tough negotiation social actors will try to validate their own position, trying to get a lot while offering very little in return. The initial dissemination of ideas

will make both sides seem like they are entrenched in an unreasonable proliferation of angst.

Were we to try to define the need for strategy in negotiation, we ascertain the fact that the totality of deliberate objectives of the negotiation will be tributary to the tactical ensemble used in one stage or another, a fusion of distinct conversational battles whose ultimate outcome will decide the end of the entire negotiation skirmish.

The idea of negotiation as conflict is pertinently expounded by Ilana Zohar who perceives negotiation as: “a way to resolve conflicts or disagreements or divide resources among two or more parties, carried out willingly by free choice. The two sides make contact for suggestions and counter suggestions and in this manner, communication takes place between the parties. Each side employs its own tactics in an effort to reach maximum results.” (Zohar, 2015:540)

The biggest impasse in a conversation/negotiation is the emergence of conflict that instils a climate of disdain and suspicion mindsets. Both sides will inherently fuel the conflict because of their natural propensity to establish dominance and take control of negotiation. This dominance is fuelled by the belief that one of the sides possesses more advantages, has bigger and better cards to play. If both parties, believe theirs is the winning hand then a positive outcome is ultimately unreachable as even a singular party trying to assert dominance is usually a vector for failed agreement or negotiation. They say it is often a buyer’s market and, in most negotiations, buyers tend to seek dominance, however, this is not always the case as certain products, patterns or companies are so good, so revolutionary that they tend to sell themselves. In this case, we might even witness bidding wars that sees a singular vendor establish dominance against a multiplicity of buyers, thus, employing the laws and logic of supply and demand towards its advantage.

If somehow through discussion and negotiation, both parties are able to circumvent the rift between them, they will achieve a cooperative understanding that will ultimately the strong bonds of a deal that can be mutually advantageous for years to come and possibly unite the two sides to the point of merging with one another, acknowledging through dialogue, pragmatism and shared ideals that their future in the business world can only be together or it shall not be at all.

Conclusions

The social partners of a negotiation shall always be separated and judged based on their behaviour and overall attitude. The fuel behind all these mechanisms of rendering and restoring value shall be provided by genuine convictions, honest practices of dealing, as well as intelligence and a steadfast discipline and respect for all the negotiators at the table. Conversational and ideological tolerance need not be perceived as an act of selflessness, but rather, paradoxically, as an act of indirect selfishness. It is true that through selflessness, we will open the door to the interests and necessities of our partners of negotiation. But only by opening that door for social dialogue, only by unlocking those pathways, can we make sure that the objectives we desire will go be achieved, thus, ultimately securing our own personal endgames that are at times detrimental to the social, collective agenda. A bleak perspective on dialogue and negotiation would entail that ultimately all negotiations are an inextricable act of selfish validation, yet, this is, fortunately, only a limited approach. Dialogue and discussion, in a negotiation, guarantee the fact that in order to take care of our personal interests, we must also learn to protect and respect the interests of our partners and friends, to obtain

personal prosperity without compromising or sacrificing the interests of our fellow members of society. True and steadfast progress means all parties should flourish, find synergy and exponential growth through social collaboration. Human beings are not termites, they are social animals who find comfort in the collective progress of the community, and ultimately of the species. Communication and dialogue will make sure that we uncover what is good and noble in all of us, that the sum of our qualities shall be brought to light and encouraged to proliferate, while the darkness of our flaws and hesitation will be forever undermined by the legacy of our shared humanity.

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