Effective management of construction company in terms of linguistic communication

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Abstract. The research presented here has been made over the years in the field of increasing the effectiveness of management in a construction company in terms of applied linguistics. The aim of this work is to share with the scientific community some practical findings of applying the technology of process management of the company, in particular the methods of linguistic efficiency considering the factors of the linguistic personality of the employee. The study deals with the description of applied linguistic and managerial models, views, practical results of their application in the applied field in order to assess production sustainability and minimize losses. The authors applied the developed technology to practical use, and the article presents the results of this application. The authors continue the research in this direction aiming at improving the production effectiveness of the proposed technologies and eliminating some identified drawback.

1. Introduction

The current post-non-classical science suggests an integrated approach to solving scientific issues. In particular, the treatment of managerial problems in the building industry, according to multiple scholars and shared by the authors of this article, refers to the synthesis of scientific knowledge in a variety of disciplines. Such approach enables to avoid unbalanced solutions and, consequently, losses related to the imperfection of the chosen method that could be compensated using the knowledge obtained from related fields.

In our opinion, contemporary science may not fully make use of the power of synthesis of scientific knowledge, especially in the field of applied linguistics. Linguistics with its rich possibilities in the management of interpersonal and group communication, the knowledge of the nature and rules of verbal communication and the language identity of the individual, is being excluded from the actual processes of interaction with the natural and engineering sciences, and also excluding some directions in computer science. Meanwhile, the authors of this article have conducted a number of studies in the field of the organization and management of construction companies by applying the methods of linguistic analysis and modeling, which has given us some interesting data about some hidden processes in the company management and enabled us to develop a method that allows to overcome a number of shortcomings in company management. The purpose of our research is to analyze the problems of effective company management in view of the linguistic factors of communication in natural language in the situations where processing documents was done using automated control systems were used for procedures with the use of and without it.
Presently, there are no fundamental works that would describe a specifically sensitive situation in the company management in terms of linguistics and psychology of linguistic persona. However, the authors maintain that the private nature of the industry in question is that any research into the problem of managing the organization as a whole does not reflect any critical features of the industry. However, as the starting point the following fundamental sources should be highlighted: V. V. Vinogradov, "The Problems of Literary Languages and the Principles of their Formation and Development" [1], G. I. Goddess "The Model of Linguistic persona and Its Relation to Different Types of Texts" [2], Yu. Karaulov "The Russian Linguistic Persona and Challenges of Studying It" [3].

Contemporary scholar view the process problems of company management by viewing them from an anthropocentric position, e.g., M. Y. Bloch "Pragmatism, Ethics and Aesthetics of Communication" [4] speaks about the fundamental nature of linguistic communication being the only tool of building an effective team and its managerial processes. In more detail, this point of view is treated in the thesis by I. A. Sokolov, "Improving Company Management Basing on the Logistization of Enterprise Flows"[5]. The organizational side of the matter is solved in the work by Professor V. V. Kostyuchenko "The System Organization and Management of Construction"[6], and also in the work by O. V. Kluuchnikova, O. A. Pobegaylov "Rationalization of Strategic Management Principles as a Tool of Improving the Construction Company Services"[7], David Hussey's "Strategic Management"[8]. From Theory to Implementation O. A. Pobegaylov, G. I. Myasischev, O. E. Gaybarian “Organization and Management Efficiency Assessment in the Aspect of Linguistic Communication and Professional” [9]

2. Linguistics effectiveness of construction company

The whole system of management of a construction company from director to worker is a continuous process of close-circuit communication, which from the organizational point of view means information exchange that gets materialized in the form of specific production and financial profit of the company. The presence of faults and errors in such communication system results not only informational but also real losses to the company. The authors believe that here matters the key feature of the construction industry in contrast to other sectors of economics [4,10].

Investment and construction complex possesses some specific basic characteristics which differ from other complexes, including unconditional time dependence of the efficiency of the complex, logistic maneuverability, limited technological and organizational solutions to the specific design layout, investment time lag of economic efficiency. Unlike any other engineering sector, construction boasts the largest amount of resources consumed at similar or lower prognostic capabilities of economic efficiency. The estimated five-year project payback is solely determined basing on the traditional understanding of the periodicity of crises and inflation fluctuations, which nowadays are not quite obvious or predictable [1, p.35-38].

High degree of economic uncertainty calls for a higher degree of performance and quality requirements to the final product. Sticking to deadlines, design standards, costs and expenses, as well as the implementation of economic efficiency suggests perfect communication within the whole production management system.

It is clear that such system should meet the following criteria:

1) Feasibility. Information should reflect the realistic picture of the world, not its phantom, which often occurs at the stage of complex management where reporting and the real picture of the situation are hardly alike.

2) Promptness. Information should timely reach the recipient.

3) Efficiency. Organizational solutions must be effective.

4) Relevance to the needs of communicators. Information must match communication request to enable the recipient to correctly verify it. Meanwhile, the Russian reality still features two key organizational concepts: "sort it out by yourself" and "match it to the situation". In such cases, delegating organizational solutions to the contractor means inefficient both communication and the overall management of the company, low performance of top managers as per their functional responsibilities [8,11].
The proposed model of the linguistic performance management in construction could meet certain challenges when creating effective communication which, eventually, may lead to the regulated, effective, and timely production management.

The interactional structure of the members of communication in the building company means competence determinants, which are quite specific in every activity. Repeatedly, it has been proven that by using an active (quantitative) and open (qualitative) dialogue you may stimulate the innovative attitudes of the employee [12,13].

Moreover, companies need to manage their activity to achieve their end state. However, the key task of management is to limit a variety of possibilities (degrees of freedom), its constituent elements, with the sole purpose being achieving the desired state [7,14]. Here communication is an essential mechanism of reasonable restricting the abilities, choice of action, of stimulating people towards achieve certain results.

Construction companies being influenced by uncertainty, are to continuously reduce uncertainty and produce clarity and information in order to survive. Here, communication plays a part of meaning maker and transporter by allowing its participants to understand what is happening, to concentrate on most vital issues and interaction in the process.

Companies are continuously in production, interpretation and transmission of meaning. This process is initiated by different centers, top managers, environment, customers, etc., thus the initiator/owner's original plan is constantly distorted, and the effectiveness of communication gets lowered. Besides, there exist factors such as complexity, variability, uncertainty of external environment, huge volume of communication, mediation management, abstractness, symbolism, virtuality, high importance of the consequences of erroneous actions. All such aspects hamper the company's ability to build effective communication and destroy clarity and high demands to meaning-making and decreasing uncertainty [15].

The companies proper are directly embodied in the system of social interaction; they exist and are reproduced only due to such interaction. Communication is the essence of social interaction. Thus, communication has a function of reconstructing reality at any given moment for each of the communication parties.

Company communication provides criteria for decision-making, social interactions in this process. Communication possesses a cross-cutting and forming nature that results in a new qualitative state of affairs, structures, and internal organizational interaction [16, p.112-118].

Linguistic communication involves understanding of the special role of language and management text in the communication managerial structure.

The network nature of communication attributes it all the features of the "blood circulatory system" where the generated text is a most common form of information exchange, it is transmitted from link to link being enriched, distorted, or doubled [17,18].

Communication effectiveness is the quality of production, transmission, and interpretation of the meaning that transform the state of reality.

From our point of view, the criteria of efficiency of communication are linked to its ability to realize the basic functions of activity and ensure the synergy within the company.

The quality of meaning-making and meaning transfer, that is, communication effectiveness, are extremely "loaded" via their relationship with the state of organizational productivity and consequences due to errors, deviations, and distortions. The ability of the language to produce an ideal image of the product, realized in motivating its physical implementation, is in the decisive factor here.

Here, the linguistic persona being an ideal creator of the linguistic picture of the real world is the main generator of meaning and, consequently, the final product.

Considering the above, the company management means controlling linguistic personas interlinked by their unbreakable communication links in a wholesome interaction, no link of which may be excluded without a loss in performance and functionality of the entire system. Therefore, company management is essentially the management of linguistic network of its active linguistic personas. Thus, the linguistic performance of the company primarily means its economic and production performance.
3. The practical application of customer-oriented communication technologies in construction

Within the framework of studying the problem of the building company inefficient management, the authors have analyzed the experience of 12 companies operating in the domestic market of the South of Russia, foreign partners being also involved.

While looking into their activity, we have identified some systemic weaknesses associated with the following problems:

1) incompetent organization of interaction of communicators;
2) duplication of functionality, creation of surplus links in the system of organization and management of the company;
3) lack of understanding by communicators of incoming information, generation of noise separate by some communicators;
4) violation of information exchange, delays in the channel work, unreasonable multiplication of information in exchange;
5) existence of a few information networks instead of one desired, performing communication via a spontaneously emerging channel;
6) sporadic exception of such "surplus" links from the real process of production management, while formally preserving them in the communication structure;
7) complete non-performance of the company communicative environment, creation of virtual reality at one of the communication stages [for example 19, 20].

All of the above problems result from the companies being ineffectively while take into account communication opportunities and also completely ignoring the factor of the linguistic persona of the communicator. The authors, based on some fundamental sources in the field of psychology, linguistics, and the organization of work of the company [6,p.54-56], maintain that that the man's linguistic persona means a collection of their purely linguistic features of expressing ideas in their natural language and also manifestation of psycho-emotional activity, expressed via their natural language.

Thus, one of the companies engaged in processing highly toxic raw materials, submitted a request about designing a pipeline for pumping raw materials. The request assumed transmitting neutral liquid at a temperature of about 20º Celsius. They had actually needed a line for pumping aggressive liquids at about 100º Celsius. The study showed that the request of the top management to find a cheapest way of implementation of the plan of development of the company resulted in the order that was originally incorrect. The main reason here was a distrust of the middle management of the instructions issued by the company's top managers that resulted in the wrong interpretation of the governing documents of their own authorship.

There's been another situation where a company was suffering from significant losses in production due to delays and constant changes in the project implementation that required additional approvals after such changes had been implemented. An analysis showed that due to the absolutely incredibly elaborated system of communication inside the company with lots of surplus links, there was built up a backup circuit of communication, in which, in order to maintain a viable production process, the executives had to solve production problems on their own without any actual control from the top managers. Moreover, the top management kept on successfully generating a virtual reality, consisting of an abundance of summaries, reports, and orders - all of those hardly having any relationship to the actual state of affairs. It is important to note that in every case the leadership of the organization there had the wrong understanding of the communicative interaction process in which the elaborated structure of the management and the existence of a certain text without the true understanding of its nature and importance, was the key to successful management.

Meanwhile, basing on the experience of researching some specific conditions of the organization and operation of the construction company we have determined the optimal number of links for transmitting primary information equals no more than three.

No more than three links are required to generate a sustainable communicative process with the primary text retaining its original meaning as the result of its further transformation by communicators, each of which, to some extent of their competence, makes substantial additions and amendments to the
original text. Each link should have a clear and steady contact with all the rest of the communicators involved in the exchange of such an information package. It is viable to understand that even a sustainable feedback, that is hardly present in every company, does not involve reception of information by the end user of an extensive network of information with its original meaning preserved. By casting off interpretive discrepancy, it should be noted that each link adds conceptually new meanings to the source text, since information is provided purely in textual form (oral speech for no more than three links in the network). Table 1 shows some typical results of an analysis of the company’s activities from the standpoint of implementation of effective linguistic communication.

Table 1. Analysis of the Company’s Activities in View of Implementation of Effective Linguistic Communication.

| No | Index             | Effectiveness in % |
|----|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Relevance.        | 45                 |
| 2. | Reference reality.| 65                 |
| 3. | Ergonomics.       | 37                 |
| 4. | Reliability.      | 68                 |
| 5. | The optimality.   | 53                 |
| 6. | Handling          | 73                 |

In times of crises or increasing instability, these figures change to the following (Table 2):

Table 2. Analysis of the Company's Activities in View of Implementation of Effective Linguistic Communication

| No | Index             | Effectiveness in % |
|----|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Relevance.        | 21                 |
| 2. | Reference reality.| 48                 |
| 3. | Ergonomics.       | 24                 |
| 4. | Reliability.      | 27-29              |
| 5. | The optimality.   | 31                 |
| 6. | Handling          | 21                 |

Thus, the head of the company should either have an ability to periodically scan the entire network information (e.g. through inspection missions of the department of quality management), or to be confident about the competence of and even necessity in every communicator involved.

4. Conclusions

Despite the variety of aspects that produce an impact on the effectiveness of linguistic communication in construction companies, it is essential to allocate its production function - an ability to create real changes, to implement the intention of making an ideal product in the real product and capital.

Identification of obstacles to effective communication may enable intensification of production in the face of economic and other uncertainties of the environment, to reduce losses due to subjective reasons, to activate and motivate the workers. Elimination of non-functional links in communication, increased bandwidth of the communication channel, realistic management of the entire communication network, understanding of the nature of language persona of the communicant are the keys to company’s most successful performance.

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