



Artículo de reflexión

# Role of the language professionals in business management and the relevance of administrative theories

Papel de los profesionales del lenguaje en la gestión empresarial y la relevancia de las teorías administrativas

Papel dos profissionais da linguagem na gestão empresarial e relevância das teorias administrativas

Fecha de recepción: 2 de julio de 2017 / Fecha de aceptación: 21 de octubre de 2017

Escrito por: Dr. Mayuresh Kumar<sup>62</sup>

## Resumen

The role of foreign languages has been widely discussed in the field of didactics, literature and linguistics. However the theories of business administration or the administrative theories in general have not had any significant emphasis on this specific topic. The globalization made us come closer and the learning of foreign languages acted as a bridge for us. This paper is a quest to settle down the dust in this particular stream and it aims to analyze the various players involved in the use of foreign language as a tool for doing business in the most effective way possible. One of the principal objectives of this research is also to find out the relevance of the theoretical bases that support this phenomenon. This research avoids focusing on a broad area and limits itself to the use of Spanish in India for facilitating businesses.

**Keywords:** Spanish, foreign languages, business administration, administrative thinkers, language interpretation.

## Resumo

O papel das línguas estrangeiras tem sido amplamente discutido no campo da didática, literatura e linguística. No entanto, as teorias da administração de empresas ou as teorias administrativas em geral não tiveram qualquer ênfase significativa neste tópico específico. A globalização nos fez aproximar e a aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras atuou como uma ponte para nós. Este artigo é uma busca para resolver o pó neste fluxo particular e visa analisar os vários jogadores envolvidos no uso da língua

## Abstract

El papel de las lenguas extranjeras ha sido ampliamente discutido en el campo de la didáctica, la literatura y la lingüística. Sin embargo, las teorías de la administración de empresas o las teorías administrativas en general no han tenido un énfasis significativo en este tema específico. La globalización nos hizo acercarnos y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras actuó como un puente para nosotros. Este documento es una búsqueda para calmar el polvo en este flujo en particular y tiene como objetivo analizar los diversos actores involucrados en el uso del idioma extranjero como una herramienta para hacer negocios de la manera más efectiva posible. Uno de los objetivos principales de esta investigación es también conocer la relevancia de las bases teóricas que respaldan este fenómeno. Esta investigación evita enfocarse en un área amplia y se limita al uso del español en la India para facilitar las empresas.

**Key Words:** Curricular program, bilingual, technological tools, virtual teaching.

<sup>62</sup> Aligarh Muslim University, India

estrangeira como uma ferramenta para fazer negócios da maneira mais efetiva possível. Um dos principais objetivos desta pesquisa é também descobrir a relevância das bases teóricas que sustentam esse fenômeno. Esta pesquisa evita se concentrar em uma ampla área e se limita ao uso do espanhol na Índia para facilitar as empresas.

**Palabras Clave:** Espanhol, línguas estrangeiras, administração de empresas, pensadores administrativos, interpretação da linguagem.

### Introducción

There are various institutions in India where people learn a foreign language to fulfill the goals they have set for their future. Many of them want to study literature because they want to join the academics and teach the foreign languages. There are others who study a foreign language to gain entrance to the rich culture every language and its parent country possesses. However a sizeable number of them study a foreign language to get a job in a multinational corporation or to become a translator or interpreter. Those working professionals are the main driving force behind the various business meets and intercontinental joint ventures that happen with the help of the professionals whose principal working skill is a foreign language.

Our concern here is that how the globally economy is fuelled by this phenomenon. The administrative and entrepreneurial thinkers have already talked about various common factors like the one in the mainframe here. There are various virtual engines which have been programmed to translate words and sentences for us however their inaccuracy is always a concern. In that scenario, the human resources come into play. One of the prime concerns after talking about current scenario is: Does that workforce lead to a productive or counterproductive outcome?

With the companies having recruited people from the languages field, the situation has developed into an interesting research arena. One of the hypotheses is also the fact that the relying of the companies on such professionals motivates high performance or not. One of the ways in which this study contributes to the

existing research is the linking of it with the already existing theories of administration.

Spanish is being taught in various universities in India now. Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, Jamia Milia Islamia are based in Delhi. In the southern part of India we have the EFLU<sup>63</sup>, the Hyderabad Central University and the Marathwada University. In the north and the west we have the Doon University in Dehradun and the Central University of Gujarat inGujrat respectively. One of the new players in the field is the Aligarh Muslim University in Aligarh where the BA programs have just started. All these places are making academicians, entrepreneurs, language translators and interpreters who will join the league of the people helping in a swift conduct of business in India and overseas.

### Challenges of doing business in India

As in any other country, it is not an easy task to do business in India without facing any obstacle. The first thing that a guest notices is the astounding difference in the cultures of their own and the host country. We will talk about the business between the Latin American countries and India in specific in this paper. Be it in a conference where the leaders meet or a business meet where entrepreneurs exchange the ideas of their business, the Spanish speakers hardly find someone who speaks Spanish here because it is not a common tongue here. Another problem is the deficient communicative skills in English which is common for a foreigner visiting India whose mother tongue is not English.

India is not a country based on a single language speaking region. It is a country where

<sup>63</sup> English and Foreign Languages University





diversity defines everything better. It is a country of multiple states where various different languages are spoken. The constitution of India itself recognizes 22 languages. Those are Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. So speaking of any one language will not suffice. Besides, all these languages add a lot of cultural baggage with them too.

Even if a visiting client possesses a certain level of English speaking skills which is an official language in India and a language which the most entrepreneurs speak, the cultural baggage inherent in the way of being of an Indian presents challenges in the way of the successful closure of a business deal. Local adaptations are indispensable for communication and English does not guarantee a successful business deal (Seeta Gupta A. Uday Bhaskar, (2016).

Other cultural differences that one encounters are the way of greeting. With the world becoming globalized Indians don't mind a handshake but a kiss on the cheeks is still not taken casually here and presents an awkward situation in most of the cases if attempted. Not only that but various other cultural differences exist here that might present challenges. The eating habit of the most of the Indians by hands is not a common scene in a Spanish speaking country. These cultural differences make a business meeting very interesting and challenging at the same time.

### **Role of language professionals**

In the face of the various obstacles that are discussed above, the most important factor that needs discussion is the role of the language professionals. Those who learn a foreign language in any Indian university cannot escape but learn the culture of that country which is inherent in the course structure. Even if there is not a course on the culture, it comes automatically with the nuances of language

learning. One has to assimilate the culture to understand it better. Not only the Indian professionals but it stands true for all the professionals of the world. A good example of this assimilation is the one set by the current Mexican ambassador to India Melba Pria who uses an Indian auto rickshaw<sup>64</sup> as her official vehicle. She could easily use a comfortable sedan however she uses a vehicle that most of the Indian middle class people use as their mode of transport. A behavior like this makes her presence comfortable among the common masses and this instills people's confidence in her.

Indians who study Spanish have an added advantage as they know their culture well in addition to their knowledge of the foreign culture. They are playing a pivotal role in the business exchanges through their work of language interpretation or translation. With the multinational companies hiring the language professionals, their role has grown manifold.

They are acting as a bridge between the two cultures. But with more involvement comes more responsibility. Ethics has to play a big role in this case as those language professionals have to respect the faith instilled in them. India's labor force is commonly viewed as being low-cost and highly skilled (Sebastian, Parameswaran, Yahya 2006). Being low cost gives them an edge over the language professionals from other developed countries.

Language professionals have to be very careful even if they are high skilled because language users have to keep updating themselves. For example, if they translate a term, they have to be very careful as some words have totally different meaning in different countries.

On the other hand there are different Spanish terms for the same thing in different countries. For example the use of *acá* in place of *aquí* might surprise a few if they have not understood the various usage of different words being used in different regions of the Hispanic world.

<sup>64</sup> It is a small vehicle which has three wheels.

### **Administrative theories and their relevance**

The ethical guidelines that the language professionals can follow are not enumerated in a single book. However the administrative theories that talk about the various principles of general and business administration are the benchmarks for all to follow. Their relevance in the modern world is the concern of the hour. Let us go through the findings and theories of various administrative thinkers to understand the situation better.

Let us put the example of the theory given by Henri Fayol on table and see it from the perspective of the role of the foreign languages in the business administration. He was born in 1841 in France in a middle class family. Starting as an engineer he came to be the managing director of a company. He classified the main elements of running a successful business into five categories namely planning, organization, command, coordination and control.

He emphasized on the role of planning as the most important one and the first to be executed when it comes to setting up of a business. Experience is a major factor if we talk about planning as an inseparable part of execution. Fayol's opinion on the unity, flexibility and precision being the salient features of a good planning is very relevant in the profession related to the language. It is a common notion in India to give all the credit to the sciences and engineering but a language professional's job is as important as the job of a market analyst. For even a meeting lasting 10 minutes, a rigorous planning is required to make arrangements which fall in line with the culture of the guest or the visiting party or client.

As far as the organization of an industrial or multinational firm is concerned, Fayol considered that the human organization is the best and the most requisite part of any successful execution. The language professionals are the frontrunners of this kind of organization. One of the perks that these kinds of organization provide is that they reward employees for the services rendered. As in India too, the language professionals boast about going abroad on a foreign trip. The various

multinational companies now require its employees to visit other countries if needed.

The rest of the three points of command, coordination and control are also still found relevant today. It is the coordination and command of the team leader which controls the business scenario in a positive way for maximum output and optimal growth. The most interesting part of his research was his demonstration that the technical knowledge gradually gets lessened with time but administrative acumen and knowledge always remain with the person. Same stands true for a language professional who might forget a word or two but his experience of having held various meetings make him a skilled expert which cannot be replaced by a mere dictionary.

Herbert A. Simon is another political and social scientist whose theories on behaviorism will help us understand our case better. Simon was born in Wisconsin in 1916. In 1978 he received the noble prize. He was of the view that decisions are made at all levels. He was all for rationality in decision making; a fact that cannot be avoided in the present scenario. An interesting fact is that Simon was supportive of the social, political, cultural and economic factors for the most efficient administrative behavior. For any kind of interpretation or translation, cultural factors come into play which gets influenced by the administrative behavior.

Chris Argyris who was a professor of Industrial Administration at Yale before going on to join Harvard as a professor wrote on management and organizational behavior. His works include an analysis of interpersonal competence and its importance for doing business. He was of the view that interpersonal competence is a part often neglected. Interpersonal communicative skills are the backbone of the work done by the language professionals. They have it as their prime concern without which any communication will fail. For the language professionals, interpersonal competence is an indispensable skill and their role depends very much on it.





## Conclusion

Like any other country, India needs a pool of professionals to help it get closer towards development. When it comes to hosting global business partners, we need a trained group of language professionals who can handle a tremendous amount of work in terms of translating a culture and presenting it to another and vice versa. The administrative thinkers have always backed the need of a trained human resource team and the development of interpersonal competence in them. If we talk about the role of the language professionals in business management, those administrative theories are still relevant. The language interpreters and translators have the responsibility of overcoming the existing challenges in the Indian market. India is getting connected with the Latin American countries and many business deals are in offing. It has created a huge demand for the language professionals in India who will help shape the future of the global market and in turn help create many jobs.

## Referencias

Argyris, C. y Donald A. (1978) Schon, Organizational Learning: A Theory of Action Perspectiveness, Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley.

Argyris, C. y Donald A. (1974) Schon, Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness, London, Jossey Bass Publishers.

Argyris, C. (1960). Understanding Organisational Behaviour, Homewood, Ill, Dorsey.

Henri, F. (1957), General and Industrial Management, London, Isaac Pitman.

Seeta, A., Uday B. (2016), "Doing business in India: cross-cultural issues in managing human resources", Cross Cultural & Strategic Management, Vol. 23 Iss 1 pp. 184 – 204

Rodney, S., Parameswara A., Yahya F. (2006). New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies 8, 1 (June, 2006): 17-40

Simon, H. (1957). Administrative Behaviour: A study of decision-making processes in

Administrative Organization, New York, The Free Press.