



The Study on the Interpersonal Meaning of International Business English Negotiation

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Abstract. With the deepening of global economic integration, international business negotiations have become an indispensable practice in the economic and trade field. Successful business negotiations can bring more business opportunities and further development to companies and companies. The mastery of negotiation skills and intercultural awareness will contribute to the successful business. Business negotiation has rich interpersonal meaning, and it is worthwhile to study and discover how this interpersonal meaning is realized. This paper explores business negotiation strategies from the perspective of the interpersonal meaning.

Keywords: Business negotiation strategies; Interpersonal Meaning; Intercultural Negotiation Awareness

1 Introduction

International Business negotiations are face-to-face exchanges between negotiators, and the provision of merchandise trade and services is carried out through transactional relationships established during negotiations. Successful business negotiations can bring more business opportunities and further development to companies and companies^[1]. Therefore, negotiators need to create a harmonious negotiation atmosphere and strive to establish good interactions to achieve the goal of benefit. Business negotiation has rich interpersonal meaning, and it is worthwhile to study and discover how this interpersonal meaning is realized.

2 The definition of interpersonal meaning

Halliday introduced a new description of mood and modality in the framework of interpersonal meaning of systemic functional grammar, and applied a wide range of modal expressions to discourse analysis, providing a more complete analysis of modality from the perspective of discourse way^[2]. The interpersonal meaning from interpersonal function emphasizes the mood and modality systems, expressing its identity, status, attitude and motivation, so as to establish and maintain social relations with oth-

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ers^[3]. In daily communication, people always choose a specific language role for themselves, and enable the other party to assume complementary language roles, thus making the role change constantly^[4].

3 The application and strategies of interpersonal meaning in business negotiations

3.1 The application of Modality System in business English negotiation

The category of modality is mainly embodied by modal verbs or clauses such as “I think/I believe/I am sure “. It can be divided into two categories: modality and attitude. Modality is to express the negotiator’s subjective belief in the authenticity (possibility) of what he knows and views, or to achieve the mandatory (necessary) or willingness (will) of his requirements, which provides a number of different choices^[5].

Modality is between grammatical means and lexical means. In establishing the interpersonal relationship between host and guest, politeness strategies are mainly followed, i.e. low-modality cognitive modality is the main method. If high-modality cognitive modality words are used, the semantic information conveyed is mostly beneficial to the other party or for the purpose of humor. The use of high modality moral modality words can express self-confidence^[6]. The choice of meaning is mainly based on modality. There are various ways to realize interpersonal meaning in negotiation discourse, and it also shows that interpersonal meaning theory can be used in the study of business negotiations.

It talks about the vital role of pragmatic perspective in business negotiation, with mastery of euphemistic hints, vague expressions, low-key statements, humorous expressions and compliments.

3.1.1 Ambiguous expression strategy

Ambiguous expression is to achieve the purpose of “negating” the other party by means of “affirmative” expression. As long as this kind of deal is good for us, we should not easily say the word of rejection or suspension of negotiations. For example, when the other party wants to propose amendments to its terms, negotiators can’t use negative words such as “no” directly to avoid the breakdown of negotiations. Negotiator can say, “Can I explain it in details again?” Or “we have prepared another item, I believe it is also attractive.” When we meet a deadlock in negotiations, we need to restrain our emotions and try to use modal metaphors such as I think/wonder/afraid to avoid the failure of negotiations. For example, “I am afraid it is too late now, we can keep discussing it tomorrow morning / this afternoon.”

Vague expression has the function of maintaining “face”. In business negotiation process, not only can the atmosphere of negotiation be eased, but also the intention of the other party can be tested. Ambiguous language is also essential in seeking and increasing commonalities. In international business negotiations, when the other party’s opinions are opposite, but it is inconvenient to say something and it is difficult to say clearly, improper language is often a deadlock in the negotiations. At this time, the

fuzzy expression is used to make the output information “fuzzy”, so as to avoid saying too much death and too much, thus alleviating the embarrassing situation.

Example 1:

I'm afraid that the proposal negotiators put forward just now, it's up too much.

Example 2:

Your presentation makes me feel a little too-negotiators know what I mean.

The two examples use vague language to make the language expression euphemistic, thus taking into account the faces of both parties, so that the negotiations can proceed smoothly.

3.1.2 Low-key statement strategy

Low-key expression is an appropriate use of “negative” evaluation to achieve “positive” effect. This is essentially a reckless approach. In order to achieve the main purpose of one's own negotiations, sometimes negotiators can deliberately give a “negative” evaluation of the secondary content of their concern, so that the other side can lower the threshold of their real concern. Take price and style as an example. In fact, the style of the product is not a problem for negotiators, but the price is slightly higher than negotiators' expectations. Low-key expression refers to the psychology of the negotiator to emphasize the facts by deliberately reducing the degree of tone. From the perspective of pragmatics, low-key expressions follow the humility and indirect politeness strategies. That is, the talker, despite his own advantages, praises others, suppresses himself, and preserves the other's face, thus effectively completing communication. A low-key statement is an effective way to express one's strengths, and it avoids the impression of being self-proclaimed and arrogant.

Example 3:

What an excellent performance of our equipment!

Example 4:

According to the end user, the performance of this equipment is excellent.

In the case, the exclamatory sentence is quite self-proclaimed, which sounds arrogant and impolite. Cases belong to declarative sentences, and the tone is peaceful. The facts are objectively explained by the feedback of others, and the listener will feel much more comfortable.

3.1.3 Humorous expression strategy

Humorous expression is a way of affecting and weakening the negative factors by positive factors. In business activities, some negative information is inevitable. Negotiators generally respond more positively with positive words and are more likely to demand commitment to positive words^[7]. The use of positive factors can often produce better results than expected. For example, we really appreciate your attending and we can make good friends even if we cannot accept the transaction this time.

The process of international business negotiation is also a process of intercultural exchange and language skill competition, which is restricted by many factors such as people's thinking emotions and negotiation pragmatic behavior. In this kind of negotiating pragmatic behavior, implicitness and humor are sometimes intertwined. The

higher the quality of a person, the stronger the implicit and humorous sense of pragmatics. When the negotiating parties talked with restraint, a humorous discourse often made the atmosphere of negotiation alive.

Example 5:

Your products are very good. But I'm a little worried about the prices you're making.

Example 6:

You think we should be asking for more.

3.1.4 Compliments strategy

Compliments is to use more appreciation sentences to give more positive comments. Even if negotiators are not satisfied with the high price of the other party's product, negotiators can also make a positive evaluation from the style, color and other aspects of the product. For example, your products' style, color, quality are very attractive indeed. When the other party hears negotiators express appreciation for their products, it is likely that they will be interested in negotiation and even make appropriate price concessions.

Praise means that the negotiators use praise and compliments to satisfy the negotiation partner's glory, in order to attract the attention and interest of the other party. Appropriate praise is the ideal medium for the two sides in business negotiations, and also the lubricant for the harmonious relationship between the two parties. Example 7:

You drive a hard bargain.

Example 8:

You are a real businessman.

According to the level of indirectness of courtesy: if the content of the discourse benefits the hearer, the more straightforward the negotiator's words are, the more obvious the desire to be accepted by the listener will be, and the more vocal the words will be enthusiasm and hospitality. Praise does not change or hinder the final intent of business negotiations. If it really works, it is the biggest profit.

3.2 The application of Mood System in International Business English Negotiation

The mood here belongs to the semantic category, not the grammatical category, which indicates the social function or speech act that the negotiator wants to express. In the process of communication, the subject indicates the object proposed by the negotiator to be discussed with the listener. Restrictive elements play a restrictive role in propositions, indicating that the negotiator's statements on the following three aspects: tense, normalization (meaning to express affirmation or negation) and modality (between affirmation and negation)^[8]. In business negotiation, on the one hand, the negotiator gives the negotiator information about the product or service of the enterprise; on the other hand, the negotiator requests the negotiator to take action to purchase the product or service. In business English negotiation, the choice and use of tone are very particular, which should be polite, humorous, and firm.

3.2.1 Euphemistic strategy

Euphemistic linguistic expression usually refers to the use of mild, vague or devious expressions to replace direct or sharp speech expressions, thereby preventing harm to others, improving tension, and making the language polite. Especially when presenting different opinions, negotiator can avoid the feelings of the other party directly.

Example 9:

Well, it's at the disposal of the board. Would you mind waiting a day or two until I get a reply from the home office?

Here the discourse marker word is used to moderate the tone, and the "limited to authorization" politeness strategy is used, and the use of the phrase "would you mind doing?" is very euphemistic. The tone is very polite.

Example 10:

I appreciate your position, but we really can't afford to accept such a big reduction like that.

The above example uses the yes-but technique, which is widely used in business negotiations. In actual negotiations, we can also narrow down our sentences with sentences such as "I understand your position, but..., I see what you mean, but..., you may be right, but...". Disagreement with the other party on a certain issue, reflecting respect for others.

Example 11:

I understand your position, but it's impossible to accept the price.

Example 12:

You may be right, but it's too expensive to have all these technical data into Chinese.

Negotiators should stick to their standpoints, harnessing euphemism more, not to use threatening tone. Firstly, try to use the first person instead of the second person in person. For example, when pointing out that the other party's offer is too high for us to accept, instead of directly saying "your price is too high for us to accept", we can use the first-person expression, such as "We will not make any profit if we accept the price". Compared with the first sentence, the second sentence is obviously more tactful, making the other party sound comfortable, and even from our point of view to re-examine their offer. Secondly, try to use affirmative mood to achieve the purpose of negation or refusal. In fact, it is also a euphemism.

3.2.2 Sentence patterns and voices usages strategy

Negotiators should use more advisory, deliberative tone and passive voice. When the conditions of the other side are unacceptable in the negotiation, they do not want to bring the negotiation to a deadlock, how to express their attitudes and views skillfully is very important. If negotiators want to express disagreement with the other party, direct use of such statements as "What negotiators said is unreasonable" may lead to hostility. We can say that "Would you like to agree with me if I give the same clauses to you?" Interrogative sentences are more tactful and polite than declarative sentences and imperative sentences in a certain context, and can achieve the desired effect. In addition, in business negotiations, subjunctive and passive voices are often used to make sentences more euphemistic, more room for negotiation and more conducive to negotiation agreements. For example: but we should remind you that it does not

seem quite fair that the entire onus of responsibility in what is, after all, a joint transaction, should be thrown on us. In fact, the sentence accuses the other party of shirking responsibility, but in order to save the face of the other party, the passive voice is used in the sentence instead of the active voice.

4 The important role of evaluating intercultural awareness in business negotiation process

In business negotiation, good professional quality, skilled negotiation skills and excellent language skills of negotiators are the key to successful negotiation; meanwhile, the psychology of application should not be neglected. How to make a delightful and self-benefiting evaluation is a main factor in the success or failure of the transaction^[1]. The psychology process reflects the subjective ideological aspects of the subject's values, cultural background, knowledge literacy and so on. Evaluating psychology and modality are closely related, both of which express the negotiator's attitude. The proposition and evaluating psychology can help both parties avoid negligence, and inform the content expressed by both parties.

4.1 Avoiding ambiguity of intercultural awareness

In the negotiation, both parties will use a large number of business English sentences. Business English is more formal and standardized. In contracts, documents and legal documents will be continuously divided into compound sentences to improve language expression ability to express the rigor and integrity of sentence meaning^[9]. Under the specific pragmatic principle, the sentence will be carried out without losing the original intention. Accurate translation, the principle of pragmatics is widely used in legal documents, files and contracts in international business negotiations, so that it can accurately understand each other's intentions, requirements and ideas.

4.2 Grasping courtesy of intercultural awareness

Polite listening is a virtue for negotiation^[10]. When the other party expresses his or her appeal, he can nod his head and express his understanding of the other party's expression. To express his or her respect, one can ask questions or repeat the other party's point of view, enabling the other party to have a sense of satisfaction. Additionally, listening carefully to the other party's expression, find the entry point, cutting in the topic after the other party's expression, giving the other party respect to improve the success rate of international business negotiations. The courtesy psychology of both parties ameliorate each other in the mutual respect and manners. After listening to the other party's explanation, they should respond to the viewpoint and find the entry point to issue the article, seek common ground while reserving differences, and if necessary, blur the meaning of the sentence, even if there are differences in interests between the two parties. Be polite and ensure that both parties are equal in status, create a harmonious negotiation environment to negotiate with each other. In a nutshell, the topic

should be developed around the content of the negotiations with euphemistic language to attract each other, and courtesy awareness to reject each other.

5 Conclusion

The content of business negotiations involves the interests of all parties in the negotiations. The outcome of the negotiations may have a greater impact on the business development and benefits of both parties; the parties in the negotiations will make every effort to push the negotiations to develop in a direction that is beneficial to oneself. Therefore, conflicts of interest, differences and contradictions in the negotiations are inevitable.

According to the above analysis of the specific manifestations of interpersonal meanings, negotiators often use declarative mood to provide some information to each other; if they want to obtain information from the other side, they often use interrogative mood; and in order to create an atmosphere of good interpersonal relations, they often use medium value and low value in the expressions of modality. Moreover, in order to persuade the other side, negotiators should attach greater importance to intercultural awareness.

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