



INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

A2 Intercultural Business Communication Challenges

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Introduction

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a rapidly growing nation located at the southeastern end of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia and Oman. The UAE is a federation of seven states, which includes Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras al-Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm al-Quwain. The UAE has become one of the most attractive business destinations in the world due to its location, infrastructure, supportive government policies, and tax-free environment (De Waal , 2016). The UAE also has a rapidly growing foreign population, making it an ideal destination for British companies looking to expand their business operations.

The approach to communication between high language low context countries in the previous courses is well suited as a theoretical basis for addressing business communication between the UK and the UAE. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the communication problems prevalent in high-context countries and diverse approach of communicating in business in the UAE. Firstly, there are cultural issues common to high-context countries, including notions of respect, hierarchical differences, and taboos of conversation. Secondly, there are high and low context differences in linguistic and cultural practices including different attitudes to address, eye contact and dialect issues specific to the UAE countries. Finally, the paper will describe the development of business technologies in the UAE, such as the commonalities of social media, the differences in electronic payments and the development of mobile communications.

International Business Communication Situations

Communication in highly contextual countries is generally inextricably linked to local culture, social development and other factors. As a result, UK companies will face a variety of international business communication situations when doing business in the UAE. These situations fall into three main categories: cultural, linguistic and technical (Rajagopal, 2020).

Cultural Category

The most critical consideration when doing business in a high-context country is the culture and customs of the region. Understanding the cultural nuances of the area is essential for successful business communication. For example, it is crucial to be aware of the cultural differences between the UAE and Britain. In the UAE, people are more reserved and formal in communication. Observing proper etiquette and respect when communicating with local business partners and customers is crucial. The UAE is an Islamic country and religion plays an important role in the culture (De Waal, 2016). It is important to be aware of this when conducting business in the UAE. For example, it is necessary to dress appropriately, respect the local religious culture, and avoid discussing topics such as religion or politics.

One of the fundamental cultural considerations for doing business in a high-context region is the concept of respect (Zhang, 2020). Respect is essential to the UAE culture and business practices should respect local customs and traditions. This includes

precisely addressing people, using appropriate language and not making any comments that could be seen as offensive or disrespectful. British companies should also be aware of the different dress codes in the UAE, as this can affect how their local partners perceive them. Another essential factor to consider is the concept of 'face,' which is very important in the UAE. The face is a concept of honour, respect and dignity highly valued in the UAE. It is essential to be aware of this concept when communicating with local business partners, as it can significantly impact the success or failure of a business venture.

Another critical cultural consideration when doing business in the UAE is the concept of hierarchy. Hierarchy is a characteristic culture of high-context Asian countries, which is linked to the traditional thinking of feudal times. Hierarchy is an integral part of UAE culture, and British companies must understand the different positions of authority in the region. This includes understanding the other titles and roles in the organisation, and respecting the authority of those in higher positions.

The issue of business etiquette is also often an area of frequent conflict between high and low context countries when it comes to business communication. British companies should also be aware of the local business etiquette in the UAE. Business etiquette in the UAE can vary from company to company, but certain norms should be followed when conducting business in the region. This includes arriving on time for meetings, speaking formally, avoiding overly aggressive behaviour and respecting local customs and traditions. Finally, British companies should be aware of the different cultural

influences in the UAE. This includes the different religious beliefs, the various nationalities living in the UAE and the diverse cultural values held in the region. British companies should take the time to understand these different cultural influences, as this can help them to navigate the local business environment successfully.

In the UAE, people like to communicate directly and get straight to the point when discussing business issues. But it is vital to avoid being too direct as this can be seen as rude and disrespectful. In high-context countries, the listener has the more complex task of ensuring, firstly, that he or she understands the meaning of the other person's language and, secondly, that he or she responds in an equivalent way. The same is true of the UAE.

Finally, it is crucial to be aware of the concept of time in the UAE (De Waal , 2016). People in the UAE are more relaxed about time and deadlines than in Britain. As a result, UK companies should reduce their expectations of time management from UAE companies and ensure that overtime replacement plans are in place.

These are cultural recommendations that are easy to implement in real life. The strategies of these British companies towards the UAE market has not always been the same. As globalisation and advanced ideas continue to evolve, both sides of business communication will continue to compromise and develop in alignment.

Linguistic Category

Monolingual cultures tend to exist in high-context countries, but the situation in the UAE countries is even more unique (Georgiadou, 2020). Therefore, when conducting business partnerships, UK companies need to be aware of the following issues. British companies will face a range of linguistic communication challenges when doing business in the UAE. One of the most critical challenges is the language barrier. The official language of the UAE is Arabic, and although English is widely spoken, it is not the primary language. Therefore, British companies must ensure that their staff members have a sufficient understanding of Arabic to communicate effectively with their counterparts.

In addition to language barriers, British companies will also need to be aware of the different dialects used in the UAE (Georgiadou, 2020). While Standard Arabic is the official language, it is not spoken as a native language by many people in the UAE. Instead, they use a variety of local dialects, such as Gulf Arabic, Iraqi Arabic, and Levantine Arabic. Therefore, British companies must be aware of the different dialects used in the UAE and ensure their staff members are trained in the appropriate dialects to communicate effectively.

Another linguistic challenge that British companies may face is the use of non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is an integral part of communication in the UAE, and British companies need to understand the different non-verbal cues used in the region. For example, in the UAE, eye contact is considered very important and a

sign of respect. British companies must be aware of this and use eye contact appropriately when communicating with their counterparts (Lipson, 2020).

Finally, British companies should also be aware of cultural expectations and etiquette when communicating in the UAE. For example, in the UAE, it is considered polite to address people using titles and to maintain a respectful distance when speaking (Georgiadou , 2020). It is also important to note that in the UAE, the concept of "saving face" is fundamental, and there is a strong emphasis on avoiding public disagreement or criticism. Therefore, it is essential for British companies to be aware of these expectations and to ensure that their staff members adhere to them when communicating with their counterparts (Abugre, 2020) .

British companies face various international business communication situations in the UAE. Of the culture, language and technology categories, the linguistic category is the most challenging, as it involves overcoming language barriers, understanding different dialects, using appropriate non-verbal communication and adhering to cultural expectations (Mead, 2020). Choosing the right language translation is one of the essential steps. Helping UK employees gain a thorough understanding of the local culture is one way of cracking a high-context conversation, but it's not easy to do in a short space of time. It requires a long period of study and understanding on the part of the UK company.

Technological Category

The widespread use of technology is one of the hallmarks of today's business communication. Highly contextual countries share many of the same characteristics. Like most high-context countries, the UAE is a technologically advanced country. In terms of technology, the UAE has an advanced internet infrastructure, a high mobile penetration rate, and a highly developed telecommunications and postal system. It is therefore important for UK companies to be aware of the different technological situations that can arise when doing business in the region (Nardon,2020). One of the essential specialized situations is the use of digital communication tools. The UAE has a well-developed digital infrastructure, and many companies use various digital communication tools to stay in touch with their partners and customers (De Waal 2016). These tools can range from email and instant messaging to video conferencing. British companies need to be aware of the different digital communication tools available in the region. By understanding and utilizing the different technologies available in the UAE, British companies can ensure that their business communications are conducted effectively and efficiently.

Another crucial technological situation is the use of mobile phones. Mobile phones are widely used in the UAE and can be used for various purposes, including communication, banking, and shopping (Georgiadou, 2020). British companies should be aware of the different mobile phone networks available in the UAE and the different types of mobile phones commonly used in the region. The UAE also has a highly developed telecommunications infrastructure, which includes landlines, mobile phones, and

satellite communications. This makes it easy for British companies to stay in touch with their UAE counterparts and communicate quickly and easily. Additionally, the UAE has a highly developed postal system, which can be used to send physical documents and materials (Nardon,2020).

Awareness of the different payment methods available in the UAE is essential (Zander, 2020). As digital payments become more popular, British companies need to be aware of the other payment methods known in the region, such as credit cards, debit cards, and mobile payments. The system allows UK companies to transfer funds quickly and securely, ensuring that business activities are carried out.

High-context societies often have common preferences on social media, and such a social culture is an important element of business communication that cannot be ignored. One of the most frequently utilised technologies used in the UAE is social media. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are widely used in the UAE and can be used by British companies to reach a wider audience and build relationships with potential customers (Nuseir , 2019). Additionally, many people in the UAE use social media for business networking and to share information about their business activities.

In addition, it is important for UK companies to understand the different types of social media users in the UAE. In high-context countries, different types of social media also represent different customer segments. Users of the same social media product are

often similar in age, experience and literacy, and there are typical characteristics of interconnected groups. For example Instagram and Tik Tok are most frequently used by teenagers and young adults, while business people prefer the simple and practical Link and Facebook. Social media is a popular way of keeping in touch with partners and customers and can be used by UK businesses to promote their business, connect with potential customers and build relationships (Nuseir , 2019).

The use of science and technology to improve the efficiency of business cooperation is a major trend in modern society, but a single online communication will lead to many communication misunderstandings and a dilution of the emotions of the partnership. This is especially true as there are huge differences in cultural thinking between high and low context countries. UK companies should therefore look at technological business communication in a dialectical way and consider the different effects of meeting offline and communicating online.

Conclusion

This paper reflects on the problems of international business communication prevalent in high-context countries, represented by the UAE, and the business culture specific to Emirati society. The analysis is conducted through three dimensions: cultural, linguistic and technological. The paper draws the following conclusions, taking into account a wide range of business characteristics and literature references in high-context countries:

Firstly, it is essential to understand the local culture of high-context societies, to respect local religions and customs and to avoid talking about political issues. This is a typical feature of cultural communication in high-context countries.

Secondly, in terms of technology, the UAE has an advanced internet infrastructure, high mobile phone penetration and a highly developed telecommunications and postal system. UK companies should make efficient use of the developed local technological resources to ensure smooth communication for business cooperation. By taking advantage of the interconnectedness and similarity of social media users in high-context countries, UK companies can enhance the smooth expansion of their business.

Finally, the paper concludes by comparing real-life business practices with an objective assessment that the language barrier is the most difficult part of developing the UAE market. This is not only because UAE society is characterised by the ambiguity of language in highly contextualised countries, which is difficult for UK companies to understand. It is also because UAE society has unique ways of communicating, such as complex and varied dialect communication and eye contact, which do not exist in other high-context countries.

British companies looking to do business in the UAE should ensure that they understand the region's local culture, customs, and communication styles. Additionally, they should ensure that their staff members have a sufficient understanding of Arabic and should be aware of the different dialects used in the UAE. They should also be

familiar with the other non-verbal communication cues used in the region and cultural expectations and etiquette when communicating in the UAE. Furthermore, they should ensure that they are familiar with the different digital communication tools available in the UAE and the different types of mobile phones and social media platforms commonly used in the region. Finally, British companies must be aware of the other payment methods available in the UAE. By understanding and utilizing the different technologies available in the UAE, British companies can ensure that their business communications are conducted effectively and efficiently.

Recommendations

When doing business in the UAE, British companies should ensure that they understand the local culture and customs and the different communication styles used in the region. This is essential for business communication and relationships with local business partners and customers. British companies should also ensure that their staff members understand Arabic enough to communicate with their counterparts effectively (Nuseir, 2019). British companies should also be aware of the different dialects used in the UAE and ensure that their staff members are trained in the appropriate dialects to communicate effectively.

British companies should be aware of the different digital communication tools available in the UAE, such as email, instant messaging, video conferencing and social media. Additionally, British companies need to be aware of the region's different mobile phone

networks, payment methods, and telecommunications infrastructure (Nuseir et al., 2019 p65). By understanding and utilizing the various technologies available in the UAE, British companies can ensure that their business communications are conducted effectively and efficiently.

British companies should be respectful of local customs and traditions and observe proper etiquette when communicating with local business partners and customers. Additionally, it is vital to be aware of the different cultural expectations and politeness when speaking in the UAE and to ensure that their staff members adhere to them when communicating with their counterparts. British companies should ensure that their staff members use a professional and respectful tone when communicating with their counterparts in the UAE. It is essential to avoid being too direct, as this can be seen as rude and disrespectful (Lane, 2019).

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