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Bodea, Gabriela and Mustata, Razvan V.

Babes-Bolyai University, Babes-Bolyai University

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION, THE BASIS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Gabriela Bodea, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Răzvan Mustață, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

ABSTRACT

Communication expresses the connections between the purposes and the instruments used by a transmitter of a message. Inside the cultural grounds generated by a society – defining for the system of values of a community, it may as well facilitate, complicate or even erase any connection between individual and language. In a binary system determined by what is acquired and what is innate, the cultural factor reveals its multiple meanings, and besides any stream of appearances the two initiate a reciprocal determination. As culture is a guarantee of the functionality of a behavior, the success of an organization also depends upon the communication between the employees but as well of the connection between managerial decisions and their practice. Thus the cultural differences between the employees have to be taken into consideration, and mostly they have to be reduced so as not to transform into conflicts. Still, at times, it is these differences proper which make for the value of the idiom like „unity in diversity” and also define intercultural communication. For such a context like the business one the impact of the professional culture on a more general one is highly decisive. The assimilation of the organizational culture is accomplished by acknowledging and promoting the landmarks of the national culture while its development finds its own landmarks in notions like: the vocation, the effort and the imagination of the ones involved in initiating and maintaining a business. Consequently, the present analysis attempts to express the correspondence between the mental map of a population (its bias for certain values) and the predominant pattern of the organizational culture of that particular country.

Keywords: *Communication, Culture, Intercultural Communication, Image of the Organization, Organizational Culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Be it that it focuses on the simple process of rendering a content of a conceptual nature, by an individual or by a group, be it that it turns this content into a work of art, communication is revealing for the process of transmitting information from an transmitter to an individual or collective receiver. As an intrinsic feature of the human being, communication relates also to an abstract content, which is made visible through speech, gesture or writing.

There are researchers of the field who sustain the idea that in human communication the elements simultaneously related to his ego and to his connection to society radically prevail. They are identified as emotions, feelings, attitudes and interests which generate extremely simple types of truth, which we could all recognize: „I have come to the conclusion that many people know what communication is until they are asked to define it. At that precise moment they stop knowing” because „the relationship generated by communication becomes more important than the informational content which is being transmitted.” (Prutianu, 2000)

It is by means of communication that you find out things, you get informed or announced, or you yourself you say something. Still, what is it that you can transmit? From words to idioms, from wishes to different emotions, from suggestions to imperative orders, from information to a manifestation of an attitude. Nevertheless we cannot speak about communication proper unless in the already mentioned process both sides are involved, respectively if the idiom „speaker – receiver” is understood as such, meaning that a subject offers information and another one takes it over by listening and visualizing the message.

Communication is „a process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli with the purpose of changing other individuals’ behavior.” (Dinu, 1997)

If the elements which are integrated in transmitting a message are remarked and well understood (by means of words or signs) thus if there is a proof of real attention, then we have an emphatic type of communication.

The participants to a process of communication need attention so as to be able to concentrate on the subject matter. They manifest specific behavior: it matters who talks, how and when he / she does this, which are the gestures involved and what is their motivation, and also the way in which the transmitter and the receiver mutually influence each other (their thought and reaction patterns). Consequently, efficient communication does not only involve the simple participation to transmitting and taking over a message but also – and mostly – the acknowledgement of the process.

For example, if during the presentation of a scientific paper the message is not clear or interesting enough, it could still be assimilated easily if the speaker associates verbal communication to a relevant mimic. On the contrary if the voice of the referee is tiresome or if his / her gestures are distorted, the listener cannot focus, he gets distracted and eventually he / she is anxiously waits for the presentation to end. Yet if, in a third type of situation, the transmitter and the receiver succeed to communicate visually, one will definitely feel useful and the other will cooperate easier.

According to some researchers (Mucchielli, 2002) communicating means „talking, modulating your intonation, behaving in a certain manner, adopting a specific mimics, certain gestures and attitudes, preparing complex actions, elaborating physical and normative items, working on and along the environmental elements... all this so as to solve in the best possible way a problem concerning a fact of life.”

The aspects of communication are to be found in nature, in science, in religion... basically in all aspects of our daily lives. Be it that we just talk or use body language, be it that we write or sing we express our personality in all these ways. And no matter how common this may seem man is intrinsically a social being and thus needs to communicate (even with himself).

In most cases communication is explicit and can be understood by a majority at large. Yet there are circumstances which appeal to implicit communication (cryptic or ciphered). There may be a series of information, feelings or acts transmitted through words (spoken or written), sound signals, gestures, glimpses, images, colors and even by mean of a meaningful silence.

Communication expresses a series of connections: on the one hand the ones among the established purposes and on the other hand among the latter and their means of accomplishment. It decomposes the message (the discourse) into sequences, transmits it – on the coordinates of isomorphism– by way of signals. The typology of the latter depends on what they have communicated: they may offer their support, they may get involved out of solidarity, they give rewards and prizes; they are preoccupied of diminishing pressure in a group; they suggest an answer or the resolution of a problem; they analyze and evaluate; they ask for information and details; they express a feeling, confirm or disregard a fact; they influence the behavior of the interlocutor; they criticize and manifest antagonism towards some persons.

Seen as one of the most consistent motivations of life communication facilitates inter-human relationship and favors the experience of new aspects. (McLen, 2002)

If for most of us communication is a sort of necessity, for the ones who are introvert it becomes an obligation while for the more expansive ones it is a real pleasure. Whichever the point of view, communication is the vivid proof of the abilities and modalities – more or less formal – of actually thinking, feeling and acting inside the parameters of a social group. Nevertheless – for some opinions – of Western culture „man and language could not co-exist and articulate each other” (Foucault, 1966). Surpassing the philosophical aspect of the matter– the eternal contradiction between content and appearances, communication is that which facilitates, allows, hardens or forbids the connection between an individual and language, between man and his fellows at large.

Let us have a look at some aspects of communication which regard the multinational military forces (the situation of the N.A.T.O. allies which have missions in different conflict area around the world). In this specific „perimeter” communication focuses on two main aspects: the professional relationships between commanders – and their inferiors and the ones inside each „group” (basically relying on obeying the rules, the orders, the discipline and the protocol); the relations of friendship and collaboration settled during activities or during the breaks between missions.

The type of communication which we have in mind especially reflects reactions of solidarity and of mutual understanding, which are based on criteria like: the national identity of the soldiers, their cultural similitude (for example the case of the Turks and the Azeri); professional rewards (picture panels, decorations, presentation of the group’s success); presentation materials of the multinational forces.

Of course tensed manifestations are not excluded there where the military discipline reigns. Among the causes of such situations, specialists include the following factors (Poponete, 2005):

- reduced knowledge of English, both in what concerns the leading personnel and their subordinates (case in which the translators sometimes make the process of taking decisions even harder);
- the monopoly of national groups on certain resources of communication, transport or / and bureaucracy (this could be a premise for misunderstandings and unethical connotations of the power rapports);
- partial information of the cultural characteristics of the national unities (including their style of life).

As means of optimizing communication at all levels, the same specialists (Poponete, 2005) recommend: discussions between the components of the same military unit (originating from various countries), the periodical contact with the ones which are at home (its absence being most often than not a source of anxiety and stress), large access to the equipments of electronic communication, the amelioration of the simulation techniques of the practical strategies, a better preparation of the ones who participate as voluntaries at missions taking place in foreign countries (especially from a physiological point of view not necessarily tactically and physically).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of communication aims to „decompose the universe into fragments of knowledge, being capable to design a catalogue for them, and then recompose them according to another model (...), applying certain rules of interdiction and assembling”. At the same time, it is a „dialectic attitude, opposing the figure and the content, the forms and the message, the order and the disorder, the signal and the noise” (Miège, 1998). In such a context that the term communication is being frequently interpreted according to other terms which multiply its meanings. Consequently we may talk about institutional, strategic, internal, external communication and of course of other possible forms.

Specialists say there are axioms of culture (for details, see Prutianu, Stefan, 2000) which originate in the preoccupations of the Palo Alto School: 1) Communication is inevitable. 2) Communication develops the plan of the content and of the relation. 3) Communication is a continuous process which cannot be approached in terms of cause – effect or stimulus – answer. 4) Communication concentrates both on digital information (communicated through the central nervous system) and on the analogical one (through the neuro-vegetative system). 5) Communication is irreversible. 6) Communication presupposes power relations (symmetrical or complementary) between the individuals. 7) Communication implies the adaptation and the adjustment of behavior. Apart from the content of these axioms which we agree with (or most certainly we accept them) we consider that a phenomenon of the dimensions of culture cannot be measured as precisely as the mathematical rigorist requires it. Consequently, we display such truths also (term which in our opinion mirrors reality in a better way) being convinced that we won’t be able to exhaust the repertoire of such conclusions.

Concerning the intercultural communication we accept the idea according to which culture as a system of metabolism communicates the existential experiences and assures the exchange between the individuals and society (in both senses) (Morin, 1969). Reducing the area of interest of this affirmation we make

reference to the fact that for the business medium the impact of professional culture on the general one is decisive. For example (Harris and Moran, 1989) it matters if the manager of an organization is the cosmopolite type, communicative and supporter of cultural collaboration, a leader of the cultural change even or if he is part of the categories opposing to intercultural.

For some specialists of the field communication is one of the most consistent motivations of life as it facilitates the inter-human understanding and they are also in favor of the experience of something new. To have the guarantee of a natural and successful process of communication the latter has to rely on an efficient and stable cultural influence (McLen, 2002). All the more as there are various particularities of the professional culture (of the managerial one) in relation to the daily ones they have to be studied having in mind the interactions which derive from the intercultural communication (Stokinger, 2002).

Communication at the level of the international management depends, at least in some aspects, on the acknowledgement and the acceptance of the cultural-managerial differences between some countries of the world. In fact, people who have worked or studied abroad in most cases agree that the experience of another culture make people conscious and also curious (in a positive way), motivates them and even bring them closer.

Most often the promoters of the organizational culture are seen as the architects of their own organization, preoccupied with the „game” of power and with the logic of the firm’s identity (Pavy, 2002). On the other side, they are also the ones who make obvious the impact over the economic performance of two key-variables of the organizational culture: sociability and solidarity (Goffee and Jones, 2003).

Even if for the uninitiated ones the notion of firm culture / corporate culture is still seems confusing researchers show which are the „exhibited” attitudes and values of the organization concerning its behavior on the market (Schein, 1999). The explanation of the firm culture helps, to afterwards design the concept of global communication which systematizes the totality of external types of communication (the image, the product etc.) and also of the internal ones (management, the traffic of the information etc.) (Muchielli, 2005) which are promoted by the organization.

3. CULTURE, THE MESSAGE OF COMMUNICATION

3.1 What does culture represent?

Generally it is a familiar notion for most of us. This may be the reason why we tend to take it for granted and not perceive its aspects. The same reason could justify the fact that not anybody *consciously* sees the cultural values. *Culture* is a *product of society*. It is the result of assimilating a *compact* set of knowledge, symbols, representations, practices, beliefs and myths which *define the system of values* of a social group, inside which there are relations of interdependence. It becomes relevant only if the entire amount of the mentioned knowledge is being shared by the members of the community.

Culture has always been a term of controversy. Some have seen it as an „*indivisible whole*” containing the institutions, which in spite of being autonomous, communicate between themselves. (Malinovski, 1968). Under the influence of the permanent and also real duality between what is developed and what is innate, culture seems to be *pure fiction* (Sapir, 1967). There are times when culture is regarded as a system which transmits an *existential experience* (Morin, 1969). It is among these mentioned limits, more or less imaginary, that culture distinguishes the multiple significations which it contains. Besides all appearances culture and communication are „two reciprocal determinations” (Caune, 2000), the first being in fact a secondary medium of the individual.

We come consequently to a legitimate question: Does the individual generate, does he produce culture or is it the reverse process which is valid? Both members of the equation induced by such a question are important and their part cannot be neglected. Still, which of the two poles tends to be more representative? Nobody can answer such a question without taking sides.

Generally, culture teaches us to look both at what is real and at what is imaginary. It stands for no existential priorities; it may be though that it generates convictions and „migrations” from what is unconscious to that which is conscious, offering at the same time *the chance* and *the danger* of an interpretation, or various, of the world.

As exterior manifestations of culture, we talk about behavior (visible elements) and values (invisible elements). Why are the values of a society so important? Because they denote from the way in which the culture of a people distinguishes the ego from the collectivity, the way in which it differentiates the right from the wrong and also how it qualifies the beautiful or ugly things as being logical or paradoxical. Of course these coordinates belong to the impact of culture on the individuals; more precisely they depend on education.

The values of a culture are being reflected-mainly – by some coordinates (categories) which the specialists call *nation's cultural dimensions* (Hofstede, 1996). We would like to be more precise in what concerns the fifth dimension of the „series” which we have presented, meaning that it has been added by the author after his initial research. In comparison, we acknowledge that there are also other criteria of division for the national cultural patterns: the relation of the society with the environment, the temporal orientation (traditions kept along the years), the human nature, the organization of the activity, the human relations and others.

● *Social inequality and the distance from power* – concerning the way in which persons belonging to different cultures feel close or at a certain distance from the point of *authority* (they accept it or not), considering that they have a certain control over it or *not* (and if they do in what percentage);

We remark the fact that it is all about the legitimacy or power (of the authority) and about the individual perception / or the group perception over the role of the state inside an economic system. Let's not forget the fact that worldwide matter elements such as: hierarchy, the relations of subordination or those of collaboration, the rights – obligations report and so on.

● *The relation between a person and the social milieu to which that person belongs to*, respectively the tendency towards *individualism / collectivism* (the measure in which the personal decision is more important than the group one, and also the dissociation between formulations like „I” and „us”);

A conscious individual has at least one motivation for what he is doing, being proprietarily oriented towards society or towards himself. Such a team tendency or on the contrary the individualist spirit becomes a way to success.

● *The option for a society with a masculine or feminine dominancy* – in fact the differences of the „quality” of being born a boy or a girl, the spirit of competition and the parts of both sexes, both in daily life and in the political / family life;

It seems that „masculine” values especially asks for material rewards (of the „power” type), while the „feminine” ones suppose acts of compassion, of emotion and sensibility. Lately, still, both categories rely on the professional success.

● *Avoiding uncertainty* – centered on anxiety and on the unpredictable, on the reaction of what is different or new in a culture when compared to another, and also on the force of avoiding uncertainty inside the society.

According to the way in which it perceives the situations which tend to be uncertain, every person feels more or less menaced of „what will come” and tries to prevent misshapeness. As ways of anticipating uncertainty we mention a certain orientation towards what are stable and a tolerance of limit-situations, of conflicts and deviations.

● *The preference for the temporal orientation of values*: on the long / short run.

In every economic system anticipation and planning of the future are sometimes over passed by the values of the present. Here is an eloquent example: If the Anglo-Saxons look for the immediate advantage in exploring any type of business the Asians (especially the Japanese) search the advantages of things in perspective.

Of course there are notable differences between the existing types of cultures nowadays. There is no possibility or wish for a *homogenization* or for an *attachment* in what concerns them because they tend to maintain their essential characteristics. Still there are two questions:

A. Is culture a concept of *the elites*? *The general* one, no, because it offers an identity to whomever has access to its broad coordination (it is true that there are also the well-known extremes: refinement and art). Yet, the *professional* culture can be called one of *the elite* because the cultural values become specific due to the high level demands. Value has always proved useful in explaining the resemblances and the differences in behavior and understanding such a fact is especially necessary for the managers of multinational companies. This is why the *elitist culture* has generated debates concerning a certain refinement of the mind and of the manners of communication – offering in a majority of cases solutions for the raise of the living standards of the society at large.

Action through culture does not only belong to certain social classes but to the entire civil society. Consequently communication is horizontal (among persons or groups of the same level, be it cultural or hierarchic) or vertical – ascending at its turn (between the dominated ones and the dominating part) and descending (reversely) (Lauwe, 1982).

B. Are there *equifinal* cultures, meaning cultures which have equal for the (un)programmed but *conscious* realization of their evolutionary goals. The question may be a rhetorical one as potentially such chances do exist. The difference is that reality – as it manifests – validates them or not. It has been a fact recently that the socio-cultural influences have become critical factors of success in economical life.

Here are some *truths* concerning culture important in the process of understanding the relations of communication:

- *Culture is not inherited, it is being learned.* Culture is not a „given“ or a „genetic characteristic“. It cumulates principles, norms, and knowledge which were assimilated in a lifetime, starting with the age of childhood. The access to another country's culture, a country which is not the place where one was born, is *possible* and also *limited* by each individual's intellect and also by his / her capacity to stock information. Culture is *accepted* than it is *learned* depending on the intellectual and volitional capacities of each individual.
- *Culture is consciously assumed.* Any manifestation related to a process communication is determined by the degree of culture of the ones who express it; that is why to understand better any behavior people need to have a *minimal degree of culture*. The behavior of the economic subjects is motivated by the *acknowledgement of the cultural influence* on the result of a certain business. Consequently the market has to take into consideration the connections and the aspects offered by cultural and social elements belonging to a certain economic system.
- *Culture is motivated.* Culture has as basis types of behavior like: *the national language, education, the material culture, aesthetics, values, attitudes, religion and others.*
- *Culture offers a broad vision on life.* Cultural differences do not necessarily mean valuable *pluses* or *minuses* but elements of personalization.
- *Culture is also shared.* Cultural aspects are related to perishable matters which unify the members of a social group or elements which differentiate them. All the more we can speak of the representative culture of a nation only if its characteristics are known (by the family, by certain organizations and associations, in schools, in libraries and with the help of *mass media*, or religious cults).
- *Culture offers independence.* Even if the aspects of culture can be examined in isolation (depending on different domains, or area of interests) they have a universal value only when they are being treated as a whole, as a distinct entity.

- *Culture orientates*. Each person reacts differently to the activity of a stimulus (in this case a cultural one – of the information type). This is why the understanding of a culture and certain identification with its principles helps orienting the individuals towards the values of society.

Knowledge which has been assimilated under the form of a personal effort covers the sphere of interest of *achieved culture*. Yet one cannot deny the existence of the so called „live culture“. It manifests itself under the form of different self-education practices which can have positive aspects (the development of the quality of life, progress, intellectual development) or negative ones (the case of the „ghetto“ culture, of the life of the suburbs, in fact aspects of a „culture of survival“).

Basically, culture is a collective phenomenon which is perceived individually depending of the capacities of different individuals. We can say that a national culture is accepted or not (the idiom „partially accepted“ denotes the fact that facts are not perfectly delimited or that there is an uncertainty in expressing facts)

The culture of a region or of a certain époque frequently interacts with elements belonging to another. A subtle perception of the reciprocal contamination of the two entities says that in such cases „there is a zone of borderline communication, the so called «exchange zone»“ (Prutianu, 2000). It is true that it brings benefic extensions for the ones who experience but it also generates contradictions of behavior.

Each cultural element belongs to a set of significations. If one of the terms is taken out of the context than the result can lead to failure. The purpose of culture is a certain type of creation which when modified expels any type of innovation. That is why the idiom „Nothing is lost, everything can be transformed“ is not validated by communicating through culture: when an object of a collection is gone (fires or storms) no simulacra can compensate for the loss of the original.

Nowadays generations – are they more intelligent than the others? Definitely not. *The high class intellectual* is always a category which is represented by people with an age between 45 and 70 years old. Nowadays' children have at their disposal methods which are a thousand times more numerous and professional and with the help of which they can create, learn and manifest themselves. They are tomorrow's people of geniality and they are slowly developing as we speak. The more sources of information they have at their disposal the more *chances they have to an opinion and to education* in general. The energetic and *militant spirit* replaces the *calmness of the old days* and *naivety* is replaced by the vicinity of risks. The brain is differently used. Therefore communication has different and even more demands and people are no longer satisfied with simple affirmations (even if at times there is proof to sustain them) and try to search for different causes or to find solutions that seemed impossible so far. Mediocrity is no longer a matter which generates silence it is blamed and pointed at; the IQ has widely become a criteria when someone is applying for a major job; in conclusion the lack of credibility is roughly taken out of the question. A certain sensibility for details becomes more and more obsessive (and its usage is well known) the public opinion asks for large quantities of information which are gulped instantaneously and there is also an increase in preoccupation for the media.

3.2 Relations between intercultural communication and the organizational culture

*Does our cultural identity stay independent when exposed to elements of another culture? We are convinced that the cultural identity does not disappear but by the loss of its roots. At the interface of another culture as long as there are coordinates which give it *personality* it stands all the chances to remain independent even if its initial elements are no longer intact.*

A motivation for what was previously said is an affirmation according to which intercultural is nowadays worldwide (for details, see Admiral and Lipiansky, 1989); as a consequence international relations can no longer rely so much on the cultural exclusivity as they did decades ago. Still a series of relatively developed societies – materially speaking – are experiencing real shocks not being able to adapt to intercultural changes (see for example the traditionalist European nations which are sometimes reluctant to the dynamics of intercultural confrontations).

As we see culture as a guarantee of a certain type of behavior the success of an organization depends on the communication between its employees and also on the managerial decisions and their practical aspect. *If and how* those differences occur among the employees they have to be understood and dealt with so as not to turn into conflicts. Sometimes *these differences proper* – converted into „the strong points of the group” – give value to the idiom „unity in diversity” and also define the intercultural communication.

At the enterprise level the global politics of communication refers to the strategies of the company at the present moment and in the future. They are being accomplished in the conditions in which there are reactions of positive feedback between the managerial team and the employees: positive dialogue, through transmission of information (dates and reports in an ascending way, decisions taken in a descending sense – but validated by means of previous interdepartmental discussions), access to information, interest in the specialized preparation of one position or another (knowledge and characteristics), mutual respect. The fulfillment of these objectives target large spans of time and eventually they are preoccupied with the betterment of the image of the organization, with the preparation of new generations of employees and their motivation, the conquest of new markets, the attraction of new clients and so on and so forth.

As specialists state it in the organizational culture the factors which define the image of the organization are (Communication World, 2005): the professional evolution, the style of leading; the reputation of the managerial team; the disposition of the employees; the manner of clothing; the hours of work; the lightness and the frequency of communication; the values of the organization.

When asked how they would characterize the role of communication in influencing the organizational culture some practitioners in the field answered (Communication World, 2005):

→ *The process of communication identifies the type of culture and it educates the man of action (the individual) as he is the „tip of the iceberg” in the organizational change (Paul Sanchez, ABC, APR Communication practice leader, Mercer Human Resource Consulting, London, United Kingdom).*

→ *At an enterprise level it is desirable to have a process of positive influence of culture. In this respect the team communication has the purpose of offering a spatial (global) vision of the firm as a first step in understanding of the cultural difference and of the organizational changes. (Paul Skellon, Head of Internal Communications, Air New Zealand, Auckland, New Zealand).*

→ *The communication inside the team makes use of two innovative strategies in building a „culture of the profit”: collaboration and education. From an organizational point of view they give value to the potential of the employees and turn them into genuine ambassadors of the firm. (Rajiv Arvind, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications, Tata Chemicals Ltd., Mumbai, India).*

In economy as in other fields it is imperative to communicate. If you are in such a position it is good to know *what* you are saying. First of all you have to exhibit a positive attitude in what you are doing. In other words you have to rely on the strong points which represent you, to try and compensate for certain lacks that you have by the qualities which you can prove. You must have courage and also to be open to other people’s ideas – if they are good. Also you have to go confidently towards your purpose: either you take it slow, one step at a time, or you take the fast way depending on the situation or on your personal habits. And especially you must never let yourself overwhelmed by the circumstances which you experience.

„Why do some brilliant people fail? I was close (...) to someone who had all the qualities of becoming a genius (...). In spite of his exceptional innate intelligence he was one of the greatest failures whom I had ever encountered. He has a completely mediocre job (he is afraid of responsibility). He never got married (many marriages end up in a divorce). He has few friends (people make him bored). He has never made an investment (he could lose his money). This man uses his brain power to prove to himself why things are not working.” (Schwartz, 2000)

The positive attitude is not only found in the factors which translate a certain state of success. It is also important as a *method of accepting defeat*. There is a three-step secret: the analysis of the situation, the identification of the causes which led to failure and especially *the new beginning*.

The self-confidence comes from a management of the data of the problem and its proof lies in the professional knowledge, respectively in the professional competence. It facilitates communication in a field or another because it offers the necessary: foundation”.

In many people's opinion memory is essential. According to others thinking expresses more important qualities than remembering something. We cannot level such opinions nor do we know what especially helps us because we act different in different situations which appeal to our own „ego”. There are few who manage to combine the two: thinking and memory. They are not necessarily the first, the ones who take it all: the winners are the ones who apply through any if the two ways the verb to know.

All those who communicate have to know very well the field in which they are working no matter the specificity of an activity or another. Here are, at least, some aspects which give in the professional incompetence: the discussion over some notion which are (pseudo)unfamiliar, the simplistic treatment of important matters; the consideration some procedure hypotheses as facts; the drawing or the wrong conclusions, when or where is not the place for them.

There are many causes for failure in the sphere of communication out of which we make reference to fear. The ones who have studied the problem say that such a behavior has at least the following explanations (Schwartz, 2000) the fear of not being able to keep things under control, the fear of people and / or of their reaction, the fear of not losing a customer and so on.

The managerial communication especially has in mind the purposes of the organization in which it develops. It has the role of informing, transmitting, signaling, correlating and correcting both the leading team and its subordinates. The objectives of such type of communication are built on the need of knowing of the relations between man and the environment, on the betterment of the working norms and of the technical, economic and social parameters of the firm, on the influencing the employees towards a better working performance and towards quality – in a word towards the fulfillment of the requirements of the organization.

Along the process of negotiation it is extremely important to know the interlocutor. Information is a way to fulfill such a task. For example: The manager has accepted the proposal of the syndicate from the company which he is leading to re-discuss the issues of payment. If he is a connoisseur of the human nature he will get informed in advance on the state of facts (the realities and also the possibilities to solve their dissatisfaction) and also on the „weak points” of the negotiator leading afterwards the discussion towards one end. The syndicate has to be aware that in the end the decision belongs to the manager (whom with his homework done has the control over the situation) he being also capable of applying modifications to their demands in the way in which they were formulated.

In a firm, sometimes more than the financial resources matters the vision of the leading team, the courage with which they assume their decisions all this being formulated according to the concept of *organizational culture* (We notice the existence of the Anglo-Saxon concept of *corporate culture* equivalent to the French one which refers to *firm culture* or *enterprise culture*). As it is known, this term represents the system of values of a social group or of a company and it stands for the totality of knowledge, behavior, norms, practices which are shared by the group we mentioned. *Assuming* an organizational culture means knowing and promoting the hallmarks of the national culture, its development having as fertile point's *vocation, effort, and the imagination of the ones involved in initiating and maintaining a business.*

They are directly interested in obtaining the targeted aspects (stage I: making an entrance on the market; stage II: survival; Stage III: the extension and the development of the business; stage IV: the elimination of the competition) and regard the firm as a *cell* integrated in the economic and social context, in the cultural and communication one.

The organizational culture establishes its coordinates considering four points of reference: the impact (the level of acceptance, of embedding and of implementation of the values inside a system); the direction; the area of spreading; the depth (the degree of awareness). It has at least four characteristics:

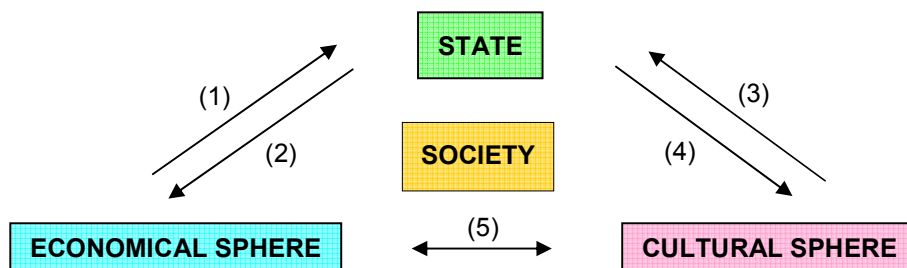
- ✓ it refers to a „whole which is more or less the sum of its components” (Hofstede, 1996) (the holistic aspect);
- ✓ it is historically determined (it reflects the evolution in time of the organization);
- ✓ has as foundation a social aspect;
- ✓ it is difficult to modify, but possible to be influenced;
- ✓ it relies on multiple information.

According to the interferences between the organizational area and the business area there are a few features that need to be developed and cultivated by the ones who would like to adhere to the values of a corporate culture. These characteristics are: initiative, tolerance towards situations of conflict, bias to risk, capacity of coordination, communication, and (self) respect. Depending on them there are also a few realities which can be noticed in the manner of functioning of the enterprise:

- a) The most fertile and flexible medium of activity for the microeconomic agents is the one of the market economy (on the base of free initiative and autonomy).
- b) In this context the general culture „shakes hands” with the organizational and with the individual one.
- c) „Top” management has the opportunity to institutionalize the part of culture in business (starting with the social responsibility of the facts) with the purpose of creating and maintaining the image of the firm.

In the market economy, there must be fluxes of information, permanent and conscious services between economy, culture and state similar to the ones presented in Chart I:

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ECONOMY, CULTURE AND THE STATE IN THE MARKET ECONOMY



Where:

- (1) goods and services delivery;
- (2) the insurance of the climate of order (the legislative, the justice and the executive system);
- (3) maintenance and creation of values;
- (4) protection and collaboration;
- (5) permanent interaction.

Considering what we have mentioned so far we may say that the conscious inter-relation between culture and economy constitutes a real cause of the phenomena (positive and negative) which manifest in whichever business medium. All the more the way towards the purpose of profitability is no fatality but a predestination (as some consider it) – both situations being conditioned by inputs and outputs which change constantly.

The group values, the policy of a firm and even the philosophical premises of an activity of the respective organization (remarkably valorized by some concerns) are not only connected to the developed product (or by the performed service) but also to the team spirit. The employees have to respect „the rules of the game” established by the team of managers because in any organizational culture there are systems of representation and accepted formalisms of the group behavior which assure the interface of communication with the civil society.

Some specialists are preoccupied with the sociology of the enterprise. They define the firm throughout the analysis of culture which is based on the integration of the group in the economic, social, politic and ecologic medium. The organizational culture is thus motivated by its capacity to attract the employees into realizing some common projects. (Sainsalieu, 1987; Francfort and co., 1995; Ruano-Borbalan and co., 1998).

Because behavior and the attitude system are difficult to modify (such an attempt is impossible even on short term) the action zone and the dimensions of the organizational culture are relatively rigid if regarded in a large span of time. Of course there are changes in this field also connected to the necessities of the society (continuously rising) – but their main objective is the good functioning of the organization. Should there be a desire for the *new* this does not necessarily make it *useful* or that its introduction is to *the interest of the firm*; the decision belongs to the managers. Yet many times and especially in the well-known companies such a decision is part of the „ritual” of applying not only the organizational culture but also of *the philosophy of the firm*.

The French press was at a moment preoccupied with „the new industrial and social philosophy of PEUGEOT” (Le Monde, 1992), commenting the leap of the policy of the firm in contrast with its well-known traditionalist culture.

There is a well determined relation between the culture of an organization and its economic results and such a relationship is influenced by the capacity of the managers and also that of the employees to understand how to communicate: high spirits, positive thinking, productivity, professional and emotional stability, satisfaction at work. If we take as basis the values of a culture, the criteria of Geert Hofstede (previously mentioned) denote a valid correspondence between *the mental map of a population* (its predisposition for some values) and *the predominant pattern of the organizational culture* in that country.

There are opinions (Nowotny, 1964) which state that in the USA culture is an internal variable of company aside with all the factors which in its turn implies. In contrast with the American position – which promotes values such as the future, mobility and vitality – the European vision lays emphasis on history (tradition), identity and conveniences. And, if for the Americans the behavior of the firm is an effect of the policy at work for the Europeans it is a cause of the attitude of the organization.

Some researchers (Hall, in Caune, 2000) say that the so called *discrimination of the organizational cultures* (with which we are confronting nowadays) is also due to some temporal aspects: for cultures like the American one or like the North-European one time is *monochromic* (there is one item performed in a unity of time); in the South-European cultures time becomes *polychromic* (in such a way in which one can perform simultaneous activities).

The specialized bibliography tends to make place to an interesting notion, that of *habitus*. Apparently exotic, in the idiom of the organizational culture it stands for the „generating matrix of the behavior which is historically determined and embedded in the structures of specificity of the enterprise” (Bourdieu, in Caune, 2000). In other words *the habitus* stands for *the specificity of the enterprise* and two of the elements which characterize it could be *the manner of recruiting the personnel and the modality of acting at the level of the firm*.

In addition, each organization cultivates *its own symbols* (its personalized emblems): fabrication brand, uniforms, advertising equipment – all a form of distinct identity for the ones who use them.

We are all familiar with the strongest multinational companies of the present day. No matter their denomination (COCA-COLA, GENERAL ELECTRIC, SONY, PHILIPS, BOSCH, MCDONALD’S, MICROSOFT, TOSHIBA, FORD, ROLLS-ROYCE, L’OREAL, UNITED COLORS OF BENETTON etc.), what characterizes them is a solid organizational culture (shattered at times by the „wars” with the competition). Sometimes it was the product of the initiatives of the founders of the company (see MICROSOFT) and at other times it was the outcome of the work of extremely performing teams of managers (the case of GENERAL ELECRIC); in each of the situations the purpose was attained and systematically there was a valuable result which bared and the name of the team and made it develop.

The act of authority presupposes a pattern which is made up of three levels of legitimacy which influence the organization in a firm (Weber, in Caune, 2000): the first, traditional (based on „the sacred order”), the second, charismatic (the exceptional qualities of the leader); the third, bureaucratic (the criteria of the delegated authority). In the same context of the culture of the organization there seem to be three ages of the cultural management (Caune, 2000):

- *The theological era* appeals to the mythical identity of the founder of the firm.
- *The metaphysical era* is concerned with the introspection in: the soul of the enterprise”.
- *The positive era* regards the legislated and rationalist system of the organization (Notice the similitude with the theory of Auguste Comte, of the three phases of the evolution of humanity).

In the market context communication develops in a few fundamental variants:

I.) On an integrated level (between the competitors of the same market): as odd as it may seem, even if they are opponents, the firms which have the same profile also communicate to one another: they sometimes reciprocally offer information (not the essential ones, of course), and at other times they have some „leaks of information” – more or less on purpose – offering elements which are important to the others; in some situations, „the rivals” collaborate so as to make pressures on a third element of the competition scene, an element which seems to be undesirable and at times they even get to cooperate (oligopoly) having a common purpose.

II.) On a horizontal level (between the managers of the same „rank”): powerful firms rely on the leading team and on the interface in create in what concerns the public. The leader of departments tends to leave aside their small interpersonal misunderstandings and work together for the success of the *brand*.

III.) On a vertical level (managers – subordinates): this type of communication is absolutely compulsory as long as there is mutual respect between the two categories of persons. Here are some of the benefits of the communication and of the collaboration between the leading team and the employees: obtaining a good flux of information, clear and efficient; coordination of the actions and projects; the building of an interdepartmental leading team; the facility of locating the problems and also their transmission; concentration of the common effort on matters of high priority. It has been noticed that a style that displays too much authority is reliable only on a short term and as far as larger spans of time are concerned there emerges the dissatisfaction of the employees. It is most suitable in such a style to be also the consultative type.

IV.) Between sellers – clients, according to some „rules” of communication:

- Wait for the right moment. If there is a new product on the market, such a moment has to be very well analyzed so as to surprise the competition, the potential customers, or even both groups.
- Build up „group relations”. For example the customers list of a firm can extend primarily through the family connections or the professional ones (recommendations, advice, and imitation effect);
- „Cherchez la femme”. Communication is even more successful if the seller finds „the feminine element”, able to influence the act of buying.
- Do not underestimate your competition. Underestimating the opponent is not only an illegal tactic but it is also not an elegant one. Should you be asked about the product of the competition, you have to give up „the bad profile” attributed to it. Persuade the client that the object at stake is not necessarily suitable for him (motives of personality, physical aspect etc.)

V.) Between the consumers of the same product: when they discover that some friends or even people he knows are not part of the same group of consumers, the individuals tend to revalorize their relation with them: „If we do not purchase the same goods, we do not have the same social status!” or „Why should I be ashamed for buying that certain product? My boss uses it too!”

The organizational culture is one of the advantages used by the great companies in defining and also in practicing the employment, production or sale strategies, predominantly relying on criteria of flexibility (the South-Western-European economy or even the American one) or a rigidity one (the Asian and the Northern-European ones, including Great Britain). A decisive part is played by the periodic evaluation of the activity which has as an effect the perpetuation or the modification of the policy of the organization (according to the results).

One of the basic ideas of communication inside a firm is the principle of separation (We are the initiators of the term). We are pointing at equidistance, the firmness of opinion and the selection of the information

at a level which would allow us – with no further justifications – to visualize the differences between the following concepts:

(a) The separation of the problem from the person who experiences it (in other words, the difference between content and appearance) so as to maintain the impartibility of the analyst:

The relevance of the problem overpasses the one of the person because as it tends to disregard its beholder – we know him more or less – consequently this makes our action more difficult. Besides this there could be another problem, one of consciousness (of ethics) and eventually they would fight for supremacy. The starting point would be a failure thus is recommended that the analyst detached from the familiar elements (people, places, past or present events).

The attitude of leading a firm by „overlooking” of the errors of an employee or another could be seen through the eyes of the other employees (who take him as a protégé) or through the eyes of society as large. In most cases people identify the out of the ordinary and even judge what they consider a disregarding of the norm, even if they do not apply it to the phenomenon at stake but their own familiar examples: „Do you see X? Did you know that he is the protégé of the boss?” In fact, in such a monophonic way, the society identifies the normal with the classic and the law with the convenience, forgetting the differences that exist between them.

(b) The separation of *the concrete* from the more *general aspects* with the purpose of concentrating on the „backbone” of communication and not on dissipating energies towards the connected information:

Concrete cases make the generalization become more profound. We are referring to the fact that the emblem of *the general acceptance* does not always fit with a situation which only apparently resembles another which already has a solution. In the field of communication a generalization cannot be taken as norm – it does not have a normative character – for the simple reason that it does not refer to something which can easily be put in a system of parameters (numbers, distances and other such clear categories). This does not mean that the sphere of communication is not a precise one, it only presupposes – aside from its predominantly objective character – aspects of approximation, correlation and even subjectivism, all these not being part of the boundaries of the law.

Here are some examples which show that from a legal point of view the support-elements of the managerial communication are sequentially valid only in some countries (Bertrand, 2000): the personal decision in keeping the professional secret is part of the law in Germany; the access to the achieves is legal in The United States; the right of refusal of what is against personal convictions is legal in France.

(c) The separation of pragmatism from theory with the purpose of increasing the degree of applicability of the research concepts:

Pragmatism grants stability and increased value to any theory. It is true that sometimes we are tempted to accept the beauty of an expression, of a mathematical formula or of a technical conception only because they exhibit harmony and logic of the form, of the presentation, of the exposure. But in comparison to the mathematical theories (which presuppose rigorous demonstrations, „pencil in hand”), inter-human communication needs a *different* factual load. Information or / and feelings can be transmitted only if there is a connection to the immediate reality, by means of examples and comparisons between similarities.

The means of communication have the task of presenting complete data, unfractured and coherent contributing to the increase of the degree of culture of the listener. For example, the news from the context of economy or TV documentaries can be typical cases: words become concrete with the help of images and with that of numbers which tend to give „life” to the dictionary like aspects thus making them more accessible to the public. The latter manages to assimilate the information, understand it as the demonstration was efficient.

Each of the three „solutions” represents an option for the individual or – depending on the case – for society. Our attempt is not subscribing to a firm presentation as that would make it unilateral. What really matters to us is the concrete importance of communication for our sphere of interest. What proves to be more useful: to punish or to forgive? In other words, is it better to be intransigent or tolerant? Putting aside injustice and any form of partisanship we plea for the social, responsible attitude of communication.

Like in other fields there are factors of disturbance of the communication between two or even more persons and such a factor is gossip. This is a real danger which can destroy relationships, which envenoms the work ground; it spreads doubt and can even stimulate wars. Almost in all cases it relies on two aspects: envy and malice. What is gossip? Information or an affirmation contrary to any deontological norms. Who gossips? The employees of both sexes who spread words around about the others for various reasons, to feel better, even if „the needle is the other’s eye” doesn’t make them happier, doesn’t enrich them.

Ironically or not there is a certain tendency to gossip at the level of society and whether it is present or not inside us, can get cleared up with the help of questions like (according to Schwartz, 2000): Do I launch or spread rumors about the ones around me? Do I always say good things about the others? Do I like being told about a scandal? Do I support providing reasons for rumors? Do I start a conversation with „Do not tell anybody!”? Do I respect confidentiality? Am I guilty of some affirmations or remarks about anyone?

4. CONCLUSIONS

Culture implies diversity. Although sometimes such an expression presupposes selectivity and ambiguity (the cultural elements are not strict ones like those belonging to the exact sciences) and in most cases it offers the satisfaction of intercultural meaning the contact between civilizations. And what is such a process if not evolution?

On the other hand the organizational culture is what it discovers – explicitly or implicitly – the individual interested in the image of a company, in its symbolism and value, in the aspirations of the managers and those of the employees. It gives coherence to any action, openness towards the new so as the firm could face any demand of the market. How important is it to know whether we are working with a *projected organizational culture* (Linton, 1977) of the American type or with the *real* type, estimated by the European management?

To reveal the force of the organizational culture it is common to use the example of the ascension of a supernova: an extremely bright star, which appears suddenly on the sky and shines with fluctuant intensity. Maintaining the first part of the comparison we mustn’t forget that the inevitable destiny of the star can be avoided by a solid organizational culture. The argument of the paper is that a synergic intercultural communication ensures the success of the organizational cultures which promote it. It offers dynamism, cohesion and efficiency to the ones who adopt it and nowadays, in a world in which alienation seems general, it also transforms the idea into facts and the effort into success.

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6. AUTHOR PROFILES

Dr. Gabriela Bodea earned his Ph.D. at the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 1997. Currently she is senior lecturer of Economics at Babeş-Bolyai University.

Răzvan Mustață is Ph.D. student at the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, since 2003. Currently he is Ph.D. student at Accounting Department of Babeş-Bolyai University.