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COMMUNICATIVE AND PRAGMATIC FEATURES OF ORAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL ROAD LOGISTICS

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Abstract

This article examines the communicative and pragmatic features of oral communication in international road logistics. Particular attention is paid to the linguistic, professional, and intercultural factors that determine the effectiveness of verbal interaction among logistics managers, freight forwarders, drivers, customs representatives, dispatchers, and international business partners. The study analyzes the communicative functions of professional dialogue, negotiation strategies, speech etiquette, terminology, and pragmatic intentions in logistics-related communication. Special consideration is given to oral communication in situations involving cargo transportation arrangements, delivery schedules, customs procedures, route coordination, contractual obligations, and the resolution of unexpected transport-related problems. The article also explores the role of intercultural competence, linguistic accuracy, and digital communication technologies in ensuring effective professional interaction. The findings demonstrate that successful oral communication in international road logistics requires an integrated combination of linguistic, pragmatic, professional, and sociocultural competencies.

Keywords: International road logistics, oral communication, communicative competence, pragmatic competence, professional discourse, business negotiations, speech etiquette, intercultural communication, logistics terminology, professional interaction.

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Introduction

The development of international trade and economic cooperation has significantly increased the importance of international road logistics. Road transportation plays a major role in the movement of goods between countries, ensuring connections between manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, customs authorities, and consumers. In this context, the effectiveness of logistics operations depends not only on technical infrastructure and organizational management but also on the quality of professional communication.

Oral communication represents an essential component of international logistics activities. Logistics specialists regularly communicate with foreign partners, drivers, customs officers, transport companies, warehouse personnel, and customers. These interactions involve the exchange of operational information, coordination of transportation processes, negotiation of contractual conditions, and resolution of unexpected situations.

Unlike ordinary everyday communication, professional interaction in international road logistics is characterized by a high degree of precision, time sensitivity, responsibility, and practical orientation. Even minor misunderstandings concerning delivery dates, cargo specifications, transportation routes, or customs documentation may result in financial losses and organizational difficulties.

Therefore, oral communication in this professional sphere requires not only knowledge of specialized terminology but also the ability to select appropriate linguistic expressions, interpret communicative intentions, maintain professional relationships, and respond effectively to changing circumstances.

The purpose of this article is to investigate the communicative and pragmatic characteristics of oral interaction in international road logistics and identify the linguistic and methodological factors contributing to effective professional communication.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Communicative and Pragmatic Analysis

Communication is a complex process involving the exchange of information, intentions, attitudes, and knowledge between individuals. In professional

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environments, communication is determined by specific social roles, institutional expectations, and practical objectives.

The communicative approach considers language as a means of achieving particular goals in social interaction. From this perspective, successful communication requires the ability to produce grammatically correct statements and use them appropriately in specific contexts.

Pragmatics, as a branch of linguistics, examines how meaning is created and interpreted in relation to communicative situations. It focuses on speakers' intentions, contextual factors, speech acts, politeness strategies, and the relationship between language and social interaction.

The theoretical foundations of pragmatic analysis are associated with the works of J. L. Austin and John Searle, who investigated speech acts and the ways in which utterances perform communicative functions.

For example, in international logistics, the statement "Could you confirm the delivery time?" is not merely a grammatical question. It represents a professional request aimed at obtaining operational information.

Similarly, the expression "We would appreciate it if you could send the documents today" functions as a polite request that reflects professional communication norms.

The communicative and pragmatic dimensions of logistics discourse can be analyzed through several components:

Informational component: the accurate transmission of data concerning cargo, routes, schedules, and documentation.

Interactive component: the establishment and maintenance of professional relationships.

Regulatory component: the coordination of actions and responsibilities among participants.

Persuasive component: the presentation of proposals and arguments during negotiations.

Evaluative component: the assessment of transportation conditions, risks, and possible solutions.

Emotional and interpersonal component: the maintenance of constructive communication during stressful situations.

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These components demonstrate that professional communication in international logistics involves both linguistic accuracy and pragmatic appropriateness.

2. Specific Characteristics of Oral Communication in International Road Logistics

Oral communication in international road logistics has several distinctive characteristics determined by the nature of transportation activities.

First, it is strongly goal-oriented. Most professional conversations are conducted to achieve a specific operational result, such as confirming a shipment, coordinating a route, negotiating transportation costs, or resolving a delivery problem.

Second, logistics communication is time-sensitive. Transportation processes frequently depend on strict schedules, and delays in transmitting or understanding information may negatively affect the entire supply chain.

Third, professional communication is highly specialized. Participants regularly use terminology associated with freight transportation, customs clearance, vehicle operations, cargo handling, and international trade.

Fourth, communication is often intercultural. Representatives of different countries may have different linguistic backgrounds, cultural expectations, and approaches to professional interaction.

Fifth, communication may occur under conditions of uncertainty. Weather conditions, border congestion, vehicle breakdowns, customs inspections, and changes in delivery requirements frequently require immediate decisions.

The principal forms of oral communication in international road logistics include: telephone conversations between logistics managers and drivers;

negotiations between transport companies and international customers;

discussions concerning freight rates and transportation conditions;

communication with customs representatives;

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coordination between dispatchers and warehouse personnel;

consultations concerning cargo safety and delivery requirements;

professional meetings and operational briefings;

discussions aimed at resolving transportation disputes.

Each type of communication requires an appropriate combination of professional vocabulary, communicative strategies, and speech etiquette.

3. Pragmatic Functions of Professional Oral Communication

The pragmatic characteristics of logistics communication are determined by the intentions of speakers and the practical results they seek to achieve.
Several major pragmatic functions can be identified.

3.1. Informative Function

The informative function involves the transmission of accurate and relevant information concerning transportation operations.

For example:
"The truck departed from the warehouse at 08:30 and is expected to arrive at the border checkpoint tomorrow morning."
Such statements should be clear, concise, and factually accurate.
In international logistics, information concerning vehicle identification, cargo weight, destination, delivery deadlines, and border-crossing procedures must be communicated without ambiguity.

3.2. Directive Function

The directive function is associated with requests, instructions, recommendations, and orders.

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Examples include:
Please check the cargo documents before departure.

Contact the customs broker upon arrival.

Make sure that the cargo is properly secured.

Please inform the dispatcher about any unexpected delay.

Proceed to the designated loading area.

The choice of linguistic form depends on the speaker's professional status, the urgency of the situation, and the relationship between interlocutors.

3.3. Negotiating Function

Negotiations represent an important form of professional communication in international road logistics. They involve the discussion of transportation costs, delivery conditions, deadlines, responsibilities, and contractual obligations.
Typical expressions include:

We would like to discuss the transportation rate.

Could you offer more favorable delivery conditions?

We suggest revising the delivery schedule.

We are prepared to consider your proposal.

Let us agree on the final transportation conditions.

Successful negotiations require the ability to express opinions, justify proposals, demonstrate flexibility, and reach mutually acceptable decisions.

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3.4. Persuasive Function

The persuasive function involves influencing the decisions of professional partners through arguments and explanations.

For instance:

"We recommend using an alternative route because it will reduce transportation time and avoid expected congestion at the border."

Such statements require logical organization, factual support, and appropriate pragmatic strategies.

3.5. Conflict-Resolution Function

Unexpected situations are common in international transportation. Delays, damaged cargo, incorrect documentation, and misunderstandings may create conflicts between business partners.

In these situations, communication should remain professional, constructive, and solution-oriented.

Useful expressions include:

We understand your concern and will investigate the issue.

We apologize for the inconvenience.

Let us identify the cause of the delay.

We are working on an alternative solution.

We will keep you informed about further developments.

The ability to manage difficult conversations is an important indicator of professional communicative competence.

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4. Linguistic and Terminological Features of Logistics Discourse

One of the defining characteristics of professional communication in international road logistics is the extensive use of specialized terminology.

Logistics terminology ensures accuracy and facilitates communication among specialists. However, incorrect use or misunderstanding of professional terms may create operational problems.

The following table presents frequently used lexical units in international road logistics:

Term

Meaning

Freight

Goods transported by road or other means

Carrier

A company or person responsible for transporting goods

Consignor

The party sending the goods

Consignee

The party receiving the goods

Freight forwarder

A specialist organizing transportation

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Shipment

A quantity of goods transported together

Loading

The process of placing goods onto a vehicle

Unloading

The process of removing goods from a vehicle

Customs clearance

Procedures required for customs processing

Transit

Transportation through an intermediate country

Delivery deadline

The agreed time for delivering goods

Bill of lading

A transport document; the specific document depends on the mode of transport

CMR consignment note

An international road transport consignment document

Route optimization

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Selection of an efficient transportation route

Cargo insurance

Insurance covering specified risks related to goods

Particular attention should be paid to the CMR consignment note, which is widely used in international road transportation under the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road.

The use of professional terminology should be accompanied by clear explanations when communication involves individuals who do not possess specialized logistics knowledge.

Furthermore, abbreviations and technical expressions should be pronounced and explained carefully during telephone conversations to prevent misunderstandings.

For example, when discussing delivery schedules, speakers should distinguish clearly between estimated arrival time, actual arrival time, and the contractual delivery deadline.

Thus, terminological competence represents an essential element of professional oral communication.

5. Speech Etiquette and Politeness Strategies in International Logistics

Professional speech etiquette plays a significant role in establishing trust and maintaining long-term business relationships.

In international logistics, participants often communicate under pressure, particularly when dealing with delays, financial issues, or operational difficulties. Therefore, politeness and professional behavior are important for preventing conflicts and ensuring effective cooperation.

The selection of linguistic expressions depends on several factors, including social distance, professional hierarchy, the purpose of communication, and the cultural background of interlocutors.

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The following examples demonstrate common politeness strategies:

Communicative purpose

Professional expression

Greeting

Good morning. How may I assist you?

Request

Could you please confirm the shipment details?

Clarification

Could you clarify the delivery requirements?

Suggestion

We would recommend an alternative route.

Disagreement

I understand your position; however, we have a different proposal.

Apology

We sincerely apologize for the delay.

Agreement

We agree with the proposed transportation conditions.

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Confirmation

Let me confirm the details of our agreement.

Closing

Thank you for your cooperation. Have a productive day.

Politeness strategies are particularly important in intercultural communication because different cultures may have different expectations regarding directness, formality, and the expression of disagreement.
For example, some professional environments favor direct and concise communication, while others place greater emphasis on indirect requests and elaborate expressions of courtesy.

Logistics specialists should therefore develop intercultural pragmatic competence to avoid misunderstandings and maintain effective professional relationships.

6. Intercultural Communication in International Road Transportation
International road logistics involves communication among representatives of different linguistic and cultural communities. This creates conditions in which intercultural competence becomes an essential professional requirement.
Cultural differences may influence the interpretation of requests, negotiation strategies, attitudes toward deadlines, forms of address, and approaches to resolving disagreements.
One important challenge is the existence of different communication styles.
In some cultures, direct verbal expressions are considered efficient and professional. In others, indirect communication may be preferred because it helps preserve interpersonal harmony.
Another important factor is the interpretation of time and punctuality. International logistics requires strict coordination of schedules, but participants may have different expectations concerning flexibility and operational delays.

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Language proficiency also plays a significant role. Even when participants use a common language, differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, and speech speed may create communication barriers.
To improve intercultural communication, logistics specialists should:

Use clear and simple language.

Avoid unnecessary idiomatic expressions.

Confirm important information verbally.

Repeat dates, times, addresses, and numerical details when necessary.

Demonstrate respect for cultural differences.

Avoid ambiguous instructions.

Use clarification and confirmation strategies.

For example, instead of simply saying "The truck will arrive soon," a logistics manager should provide a more precise statement:

"The truck is expected to arrive at the destination warehouse at approximately 14:00 local time."

This type of communication reduces uncertainty and improves operational coordination.

7. Communication Strategies in Problematic Logistics Situations
One of the most important aspects of oral communication in international road logistics is the ability to respond effectively to unexpected situations.

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Transportation operations may be affected by vehicle breakdowns, border delays, adverse weather conditions, customs documentation problems, or changes in delivery requirements.

In such situations, professional communication should follow a logical sequence:

1. Identification of the problem. The speaker provides accurate information about the situation.
2. Clarification. The participants establish the causes and possible consequences.
3. Evaluation. The available alternatives are discussed.
4. Decision-making. The participants agree on an appropriate solution.
5. Confirmation. The decision, responsibilities, and deadlines are clearly repeated.

For example:

Situation: Truck transporting goods from Uzbekistan to another country has been delayed at a border checkpoint because additional documentation is required.

A possible professional dialogue:

Logistics Manager: Good afternoon. We have received information that your truck has been delayed at the border. Could you explain the situation?

Driver: Good afternoon. The customs officers have requested additional documents related to the cargo.

Logistics Manager: Thank you for informing us. Have you contacted the customs broker?

Driver: Yes. The broker is currently checking the documentation.

Logistics Manager: Understood. Please keep us informed about any updates. We will also contact the receiving company and notify them about the possible delay.

Driver: Certainly. I will send you an update as soon as the issue is resolved.

This dialogue demonstrates several important communicative strategies: clarification, information exchange, cooperation, reassurance, and confirmation. The ability to use such strategies contributes to operational efficiency and reduces the risk of professional misunderstandings.

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8. The Development of Communicative and Pragmatic Competence among Logistics Students

The development of professional oral communication skills should be an important component of educational programs preparing future specialists in international logistics and transport management.

Students need to acquire not only general language proficiency but also the ability to communicate in situations directly related to their professional activities.

A professionally oriented teaching approach should include several interconnected stages.

Preparatory stage. Students acquire basic logistics terminology, professional expressions, and grammatical structures.

Reproductive stage. Learners practice standard dialogues involving shipment arrangements, delivery confirmation, and transportation coordination.

Productive stage. Students participate in negotiations, professional discussions, and problem-solving activities.

Reflective stage. Learners evaluate their speaking performance, identify communication difficulties, and improve their professional language skills.

The following interactive methods can be particularly effective:

role-playing business negotiations;

simulated telephone conversations between dispatchers and drivers;

case studies involving transportation delays;

group discussions about international freight operations;

professional presentations;

simulated customs-related consultations;

problem-solving tasks based on realistic logistics situations.

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Assessment should focus on linguistic accuracy, fluency, terminological competence, pragmatic appropriateness, intercultural awareness, and the ability to achieve communicative objectives.

The integration of these methods can help future logistics specialists develop the communication skills required for successful professional activities in international transportation.

9. The Role of Digital Technologies in Professional Oral Communication

Digital technologies have significantly transformed communication practices in international road logistics.

Video conferencing applications, mobile communication platforms, GPS-based tracking systems, and transport management software facilitate the exchange of operational information between logistics companies and their international partners.

Telephone and video conversations remain important for discussing urgent issues, clarifying transportation conditions, and negotiating solutions.

Digital communication also allows participants to exchange voice messages and conduct online meetings across different geographical locations.

However, the use of digital technologies does not eliminate the need for strong oral communication skills. On the contrary, it increases the importance of concise, accurate, and contextually appropriate verbal interaction.

In particular, logistics professionals should be able to communicate clearly through telephone conversations, online meetings, and voice messages while ensuring that important operational information is accurately understood.

Conclusion

Communicative and pragmatic features of oral interaction represent an essential aspect of international road logistics. The effectiveness of transportation operations depends not only on organizational and technical factors but also on the ability of specialists to exchange information accurately, negotiate effectively, coordinate activities, and resolve professional problems.

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The analysis demonstrates that oral communication in international road logistics performs several important functions, including informative, directive, negotiating, persuasive, and conflict-resolution functions.

The specific characteristics of this professional discourse include goal orientation, time sensitivity, terminological precision, intercultural interaction, and the need for immediate decision-making.

Particular importance should be attached to pragmatic competence, which enables specialists to select appropriate linguistic expressions according to communicative intentions and professional situations. Speech etiquette, politeness strategies, and intercultural awareness contribute to the establishment of constructive business relationships.

Furthermore, the development of professionally oriented language education should incorporate role-playing activities, simulated negotiations, case studies, and problem-solving exercises based on realistic transportation situations.

In conclusion, effective oral communication in international road logistics requires an integrated combination of linguistic, professional, pragmatic, and intercultural competencies. Their systematic development can improve the quality of international cooperation, reduce communication barriers, and contribute to the efficiency of modern transportation processes.

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