THE FEATURES OF MILITARY COMMUNICATION

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Abstract

Professional bilingualism has proved to become a widely spread linguistic phenomenon in the field of the military communication. The range of the military actions undertaken by the world security system sets as a top class priority the mastering of a common language in order to make the military tasks fully efficient. Bearing in mind the fact that multinational structures have become involved in this respect, the linguistic barrier should be the first obstacle to be overcome at all levels of action.

Communication represents the key element in the normal functioning of every military or civil organisation. Nowadays, productive communication assumed a vital role, because the complexity of modern warfare produced larger leading structures, at the same time multiplying the possible sources of obstacles the essential intelligence flow. Generally speaking, when one examines a problem, it is very useful that he keeps in mind the fundamental human needs that condition it.

Having in mind the Maslow pyramid, communication manifests itself in two different ways: nonverbally (willingly or unwillingly) and verbally (orally and written). Taking into consideration the nonverbal communication first, it is important that it must not be underestimated as a useful intelligence source, because, as Frank Tippet argues in his work “Why So Much Beyond Words”, “maybe almost 20% of the human communication is verbal, mainly for experts; in most of the times, the largest part of the communication process consists of nonverbal signals”.

The nonverbal communication means are the following:

– facial expressivity: it could reveal whether a individual is alert, bored, tired, frustrated, careful;
– body movement: hiding the facial expressions can be easily learned, but it is very hard and uncommon to hide the unconscious signals related to certain body movements; a trained eye can tell whether a person is stressed, even if its facial expression is a relaxed one;
– gestures language: certain gestures are of a very conventional nature, yet they are no necessarily perceived identically by different communities or peoples;
– voice inflexions: besides the meaning of words, the tone and the voice inflexion are very important in learning a foreign language, because
they contribute substantially to the connotations of the words, knowing at
the same time that every language has its own particular inflexion;

– artistic expression: is a very important form of communication;
painting, sculpturing and other artistic forms gather their strength through
the use of symbols; these symbols can communicate messages with a
higher strength than messages communicated through words; it is a very
effective way of communication, and every propaganda institution or
publicity service is aware of this fact;

– silence: we all know that silence often means approval; yet this
thing is not necessarily, and always correct; a silence can also mean
disapproval, indifference, perplexity, interest, and so on; a correct
evaluation of the silence of an individual belonging to a group could be
very important for the leader of that group.

As for the verbal communication (orally or written), we have to admit
that language is a means through which a person reveals or hides its own
intentions (hostile, neutral, friendly), anxiety, fear, frustrations or
satisfactions. The capacity of perceiving the verbal and nonverbal
communication is mandatory in any kind of environment.

A productive communication depends on the following factors:

– the capacity to speak the same language; this may seem to obvious
to even mention it, but it is well to be mentioned, if we are to speak of an
alliance in which the armies of different states participate together at
training, and even war operations; on the other side, even inside a nation,
different categories of specialists created their own vocabulary, which
could seem very hard to understand for the non-specialists in the, let us
say, civil-military cooperation;

– the complete understanding of the meaning of the words used in the
message, by the one who sends the message, and at the same time by the
one who receives it; if the one who receives it gives the words a different
meaning than the one who sent it, he can perceive a totally different
message; an example is welcomed: if an Englishman and an Italian use,
during a conversation, the word “compromise” (a false friend), the
possibility that they don’t understand together could arise; that word exists
in both languages, but in English it has the meaning of positive, rationale
managing of a conflict, while in Italian it means exactly the opposite, an
unwanted solution, a very bad solution.

– the willingness of the individual that receives the message to listen
and to understand the message; the leader of a working group has to
understand the needs of the group and to try to satisfy them; he has to
create all the necessary conditions for a free speech, thus guaranteeing the
satisfaction of its subordinates;
– the capacity of the speaker of not annoying the listener, protecting his more delicate feelings, like his pride or his intelligence; if the speaker uses a condescend tone, or a tone of every similar nature, in order to reveal his superiority, he may not obtain the cooperation of the listener, and thus the collaboration could be compromised;

– the intention of the speaker of sending a clear message, which claims clear answers; feeling itself in an insecurity state of mind, a person may use words as means of self-defence, with the intention of keeping the listener at a distance, and the intention of mystifying a subject which he does not fully know; this is a technique largely used by the candidates that sustain an oral exam; on the other side, the speaker may use different words with the clear intention of winning prestige, but this is not a very useful procedure, because it creates many obstacles in the communication process;

– the rational modesty attitude of all those who participate at the communication process; this attitude should lead the speaker, and the listener also, to a careful analysis of the lacks in the communication process, and to a different vision regarding the problems in discussion.

It is important to understand that an effective communication process is at the base of every military strategy. As the well known Chinese thinker Sun Tzǐ said, “the supreme art of war is the domination of the enemy without a fight”. From this concepts derives another concept: the strategy of discouraging the enemy, which means letting the enemy know that it is not in his best interest to engage in military actions. From this perspective we have to see the message sent by the Reagen administration to the libian leader Ghadafi, message sent with the bombing of the Tripoli city. Or let us take as an example the well known definition of war given by Clausewitz: “an act of violence with the intention of compelling the will of the adversary”. Yet, more significant is the opinion of Liddel Hart, which argues that “it is necessary to engage on the weaknesses of the enemy, because, in strategy, this constitutes the supreme weapon”.

Globalisation shows itself as a multidimensional phenomenon, with crucial effects in the fields of economics, sociology, culture or security. Through these dimensions, the cultural one is the most accepted and sustained, as a phenomenon, and as a open competition too, while the security field proves itself to be the most sensible in the relationship with the globalisation trends of terrorism and criminality. Yet, the global security environment cannot be reduced to the security of the states. It should allow the promotion of individual interests and of the group interest, in safe conditions, and the maintaining of the social global system equilibrium. The globalisation phenomenon can also produce risks and
threats at the national, local and global level, and the global defence could be a solution for the high intensity global threats.

The states belonging to NATO and EU declared their agreement in this matter, and accepted the collective defence and security policy which is still in progress. In the globalisation context, the military organisations are summoned to intervene between nations and their dispute, the role of the military missions being that of peace-enforcing and peacekeeping. In such missions, military personnel from different countries are confronted with the situation of co-working together, in order to achieve the established goals, having the advantage of a training that is very similar in all the participating countries.

The Romanian officers that participated in international missions or graduated different courses in foreign countries, have been selected using, as main criteria, the knowledge of English. Thus, the linguistic obstacle is simply surpassed, because all the military personnel that activates outside our borders has to speak a fluent English. The interoperability with NATO structures has become, and remains, a major objective for the Romanian army, especially in fields like command, control, communication and information, standard operating procedures, doctrines, strategies, training and teaching.

It is well known that a language becomes a global language not because of the high number of speakers, but because of the prestige of the speakers. It has been proved that there is a strong relationship between linguistic domination and cultural power. Without a strong basis (political, military or economic), no language can become an international means of communication. Yet, through time, different false motives have been promoted, motives for which a language becomes a global language. It is not the case of English, because English has a few true qualities that make it very appealing at an international level, such as its cosmopolite character. A language does not get a global character because of its intrinsic properties, of its vocabulary or because it was once associated with a great literature, culture or religion. All these can be only some motivating factors for learning that language. A language achieves an international statute thanks to one prior reason, and that is the political power of its speakers, and, to be more specific, the military power of its speakers. We can also add the economic power of a nation, very important too in promoting its spoken language. This was, actually, the case of English, which had the chance to be at the right place, at the right time in history, and this promoted her to the status of an international language.

The army also had a major role in promoting English as the major means in the communication process. Officers belonging to NATO, ONU,
or EU, engaged in multinational operations, are often heard speaking at television, arguing in front of the cameras about ways of managing crises, and the language used is none other than English.

Everyone knows that NATO is one of the most successful alliances in the history of humanity, yet the most important problem identified by almost all its partners, as an obstacle in road to further development, is the communication deficiency. Thus, in 1976, the Bureau for International Language Coordination was created, in order to act as a body with a consultative role in problems regarding education and communication. Since then, the Bureau had an intense activity, and managed to surpass many obstacles in the communication process.

The range of military actions undertaken by the world security system sets as top class priority the mastering of a common language in order to make the military tasks fully efficient. Bearing in mind the fact that multinational structures have become involved in this respect, the linguistic barrier should be the first obstacle to be overcome at all levels of action.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**