

On The Impact of Cultural reference in BBC`s Business Articles

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Abstract :

Business texts are included within the informative texts which are the texts whose primary goal is to provide information. They usually include explanations, descriptions, analysis and expository details and examples. The research focuses on the business reports provided by the BBC. The business service in the BBC provides a complete coverage of the market data, economy, companies, technology of business and the entrepreneurship. In this research business reports have been chosen to examine the employment of cultural concepts and the impact a definite culture may have within the frame of highly informative texts; i.e. the business texts.

This research is concerned with (business journalism) which covers news and features articles about people, places, and issues related to business. Business journalists may also cover processes, trends, consequences, and important people. The use of cultural concepts in business reports is not one of the main features of the language of business, but it is much related to the traits of journalism with its main goal of capturing the reader's attention. what the research seeks is the impact of such use of cultural concepts on the understanding of business information.

Introduction:

Languages differ from place to place in the world and each place has its own attitudes, values and customs that are known and defined as culture. We need to learn languages because a certain language and a definite culture are not given to us naturally (like knowing how to eat, swallow, sleep...etc.).

This research surveys the use of culture in the business articles provided by the BBC.com and the impact of certain cultural concepts on understanding economic and business information. Culture is an integrated part of the texture of any language. And language is the tool by which a definite culture is expressed, shared and transmitted. Thus even within the business texts which are known to have certain characteristics: (the use of active voice, the frequent use of the third person pronoun, and the use of certain dramatic verbs to refer to the performance of companies), we can find a reference to the culture related to the language of business texts; i.e. (the English language).

Examples of the use of culture are mentioned in the last section of the research accompanied with explanation of the cultural concept. Business articles are chosen randomly from the BBC.com. Theoretical backgrounds are given in the first and second sections concentrating on the works of Tubbs and Mass (2000), Yule (2006), and Lobner (2002).

Culture:

We use the term culture to refer to all the ideas and assumptions about the nature of things and people that we learn when we become members of social groups. Culture is a way of life developed and shared by a group of people and passed down from generation to generation. It can be defined as (socially acquired knowledge), this is the kind of knowledge that, like our first language, we initially acquire without conscious awareness. We develop awareness of our knowledge, and hence of our culture only after having developed language. With the words we acquire, we learn to recognize the types of category distinctions that are relevant in our social world. (See Tubbs and Mass, 2000:281, Yule, 2006:216).

Language always simultaneously reflects and constructs the situation or context in which it is used. Situation includes: semiotic aspect, activity aspect, and sociocultural aspect ; it is the personal , social and cultural knowledge, feelings, values, identities, and relationships relevant in the interaction .The context of culture includes the traditions, the institutions, the discourse communities, the historical context, and the knowledge base of the participants. Like situations, culture is under a process of continuous change. Cultural and situational elements are often so closely intertwined that it is extremely difficult to see them in isolation. (Bloor and Bloor, 2007:27, Gee, 1999:81)

According to (Tubbs and Mass, 2000:281), the influence of a culture on the person perception of its members is most directly seen in its stereotype. A stereotype is a generalization about a class of people, objects, or events that is widely held by a given culture. Because culture is learned not innate, an infant born in Vietnam of Vietnamese parents but brought to the United States and raised as an American will be culturally an American. Because culture is learned, it also changes as people come into contact with one another or as their experience change their needs.

On the other hand, it can be plausibly argued that “we do not need to have the total cultural knowledge about apples, computers, mice or alcohol in order to

know the meaning of the words apple, computer, mouse and alcohol. Our semantic categories are interwoven with our overall cognitive system in a way that does not allow their separation “ (Lobner, 2002:201).

We develop our knowledge, and hence our understanding of our culture only after having developed language. With the words we acquire, we learn to recognize the category distinctions that are related to our social world, “Some languages may have lots of different words for types of (rain) or (coconut) and other languages may have only one or two. Although the Dani of New Guinea see all the colors of the spectrum, they only use names for two of them, equivalents of (black) and (white). Eskimos have names for these two, plus red, green and yellow. English has names for those five colors plus blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and grey) “ (Yule, 2006:217).

Culture is increasing or growing by accumulation because every human generation can add new discoveries and technologies that are added onto what was learned in previous generation. Culture is composed of different elements including religious and political systems, traditions and customs, music, buildings and artistic heritage “Historically, stories, myths and other cultural manifestations, such as music and the visual arts, technologies, cuisine and costumes are built up into what is sometimes called a national culture. Boundaries of any kind keep some people (in) and others (out)(Bloor and Bloor, 2007:86).

The categorization of many objects and experiences is culturally constructed, “ categorization research focuses on the acquisition and use of categories shared by a culture and associated with language – what we call cultural categorization exit for objects, events, settings, mental states, properties, relations, and other`s components of experience (e.g. birds, weddings, parks, serenity “ (Glushko et al, 2008 : 129).

Language of Business Journalistic Texts:

There are certain characteristics of business reports which are considered to be a news report about the economy and business. Such reports will often speak about how well or badly companies are performing, and the effect of business performance on a country`s economy.

In business (financial) reports, many of the words and phrases used to describe a company`s success or failure are very dramatic; the rising and falling of prices is often described using verbs which relate to flying. Verbs

like (soaring and rocketing) give the impression of very rapid falling. These verbs are used to create a feeling of excitement and speed, and to reflect how quickly the economy of companies and countries can change.

(The Language of Media: news reports.BBC World Service.www.bbc.co .uk)

When business or economy lose money , the losses are often reported using phrasal verbs (verb+ preposition). This more informal language can be very dramatic (banks have gone bust , money is wiped odd the value of shares) . Such expressions give the impressions of a violent loss of success, and that the developments are very dramatic. According to (Silvereira, 2004:130),business texts tend to the use of active voice over the passive voice and the more frequent use of the third person pronoun.

Following the concepts of discourse by Van Dijk (2007) Fairclough(2001) and Wodak and Chitton (2005), we can define business texts as the verbalization of business mentality, realized in the form of an open multitude of thematically correlated texts on a wide range of business issues , considered in combination with their extra- linguistic context. The concept of business discourse is wide and encompasses some (thematic subspecies) for example (economic discourse) (corporate discourse) and (discourse of negotiations)

Examples of the Cultural Usages in Business Texts

In the followings, the researcher will present and explain examples of the employment of cultural concepts in business texts as they are used in bbc business service. The title of the article is given first, followed by summary of its subject (if necessary), and then the intended example is underlined and explained.

1- John Lewis Warning over Free Deliveries :

(The American import **Black Friday** could have a detrimental effect on how retailers and consumers behave).

John Lewis is a chain of upmarket department stores operating throughout Great Britain, and Black Friday is the Friday following Thanksgiving Day in the United States .The day`s name was originated in Philadelphia where it originally was used to describe the heavy and disruptive pedestrian and vehicle traffic that would occur on the day following Thanksgiving .Black Friday is an American term that indicates the point at which retailers begin to turn a profit. As it is mentioned previously in this research ,what we call cultural

categorization exit for objects , events, settings, mental states , properties, relations, and other`s components of experience . And Black Friday is an event related to the American culture which is used in this article to express a well - known theme.

2- Did Labour Over –Spend?

(There was a gap between what Labour was spending and what it was receiving in tax revenues in the few years before the great crash and recession of 2008.

The Question Time audience did not seem altogether satisfied with the mea culpa that Ed Miliband did make, namely that Labour`s mistake was to put in place inadequately oversight of the banks to prevent them behaving recklessly).

Mea culpa is a Latin phrase that means (through my fault) and is acknowledgement of having done wrong .It comes from a prayer of confession used in the Roman Rite at the beginning of mass. The researcher mentioned earlier in this research that Culture is composed of different elements including religious and political systems, traditions and customs, music, buildings and artistic heritage and that they are all built up into what is sometimes called a national culture. In order to reflect the desire of the Labor Party to clarify its policy regarding the relation with national banks, the writer relied on his culture (religious culture to be specific) and used the expression (mea culpa) to elaborate the idea of admission when one makes a mistake.

3-Does the Queen Speech make Economic sense?

(The devolution of important powers to Scotland, Wales, North Ireland and those cities which decide to elect powerful mayors could prove the high watermark of demands for national and regional self-determination or they could be another amuse- bouche for those who want to feast on the breakup of UK and could be another stage on the route to the secession of Scotland).

Amuse –bouche is a single, bite-sized form of appetizers. They are not ordered from a menu by patrons, but when served, are done so free and according to the chef`s selection alone. The researcher mentioned earlier in this research that cuisine is (along with arts, stories, myths ...etc) is part of the national culture of any community. The writer used the expression (amuse- bouche) to refer to the possibility that there are additional benefits to the breakup of UK; additional gifts and merits to those who support the idea of independence. And

to support his choice, he selected another word that fit the context which is (feast on) in the meaning of celebration.

4-Sajid Javid Urges business not to decide yet on EU vote

(Sajid Javid has urges business groups to help the government get a better deal for the UK in the EU by not making up their minds on the referendum yet. But in a speech ,Mr. .Javid accused the group of having a (**poor poker face**.)

The idiomatic expression (poker face) means the face of a person that shows no emotion because in the poker game it is foolish to show any kind of emotions or traits that might make one loses the game. Games are part of the national culture of any community ,and they can confuse the outsiders(those who are not familiar with certain games or sports) , and therefore can cause a certain gap in the understanding of the text. In this example, the writer used the expression (poker face) to refer that there should be more enthusiasm and vital reactions in regard to the participation in the national referendum in the UK.

5-How Much Is Nature Worth in the UK?

(Have you ever wondered how much nature is worth in the UK? No, I hadn't either, but it turns out it was £1,573bn in 2011, according to a research from the Office for National Statistics. It also includes an attempt to put a value on trickier things like **outdoor recreation** going for a walk in the countryside).

Outdoor recreation which includes a variety of activities like (trekking, biking, scuba diving, tree climbing, skiing, picnicking, camping ... etc.) is an integral part of the activities and sports in Europe. Even tourism gets benefit from the nature by allocating part of its activities to be performed outdoor. And since culture includes the national traditions and activities specially when they are peculiar to a specific community (The British community in this example), it is obviously present in this article as a part of the overall value of the nature in UK. The writer attempted to clarify the expression (for those who are outside the circle of this community) by defining it between two brackets.

6-Markets Recover After Disappointing US Jobs Figures

(The US economy added just 142,000 jobs in September lowering the chance of an interest rate rise this year. The proportion of Americans who either have a job or are looking for one fell to a 38-year low, partly reflecting retirements of older workers from the **baby boomer generation**.)

In this example, (baby boomer generation) is used to indicate certain age group of older workers. Baby boomer are people born during the demographic post World War 2 – approximately between the years 1946-1964. According to the US Census Bureau, the term (baby boomer) is used in a cultural context. Some historians explain baby boomer that it was a desire for normalcy after 16 years of war and depression. Also it was part of the Cold War campaign to outnumber the communists. The term (baby boomer) has gained widespread popular usage since it is related to the historical impact of the generation and associated to a rejection or redefinition of the traditional values.

7- UK Power Supplies Enough for Winter, says National Grid

(Ten years of **crying wolf** on power cuts had probably served only to confuse the public, who will be entirely aware their lights have stayed on.)

The meaning of (crying wolf) is to raise a false alarm; to ask for assistance when you don't need it. The phrase comes from the Aesop fable (The Boy who Cried Wolf) in which a young shepherd find it amusing to make the villagers think a wolf is attacking his flock. When they came to his rescue, they knew of the false alarm. However when a wolf actually menaced the flock, the villagers disregarded the shepherd's calls for help and the wolf ate the flock.

As it was mentioned earlier in this research , culture feeds from folklore and stories (among other resources), and in this example , the writer used the phrase (crying wolf) which is derived from an old tale to give the meaning of false and unnecessary warning.

Conclusions:

1-Business texts are considered informative because they provide details, explanations and even solutions to specific problems. Business texts have special characteristics which set them apart from another closely related type or genre within the informative type of texts.

2-Our awareness and knowledge of culture is developed after having developed language. Language is the expressive tool by which we express our customs, habits, the shared thoughts, traditions, political and religious views i.e. our culture.

3-Business texts are known to have definite features and characteristics and in this research, it becomes clear that the employment of certain cultural

concepts can enrich business reports; especially when the readers are quite familiar with such concepts. In such case, culture can become a very powerful and rhetorical force that adds to the impact intended. on the other hand, lack of cultural knowledge (as in the case when such articles are read by non -native speakers of English) can hinder the full understanding of the information mentioned in business texts.

4-In the examples discussed in this research, the business journalists kept using the cultural concepts to a minimum (not more than one example for each article). So as not to impose a heavy rhetorical effect .

5- The use of cultural concepts in business texts (and informative texts in general) is a field that need further research and analysis. Culture is a wide field of study that can – without doubt- affect different types of texts and discourses. Even when the main goal is to provide information not to add dramatic effect.

6-Deep and detailed studies of business texts and their types, in addition to examining the use of culture in such texts along with its impact can be of great and vital importance in the field of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) especially to those who study translation and English language and those who translate business texts, or rely on them to gain business details and information.

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أثر الاشارات الثقافية في نصوص بي بي سي الاقتصادية في المتلقي

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الملخص:

تُعَدُّ النصوص الاقتصادية جزءاً من النصوص المعلوماتية التي تَبَغِي تقديم المعلومة ولذلك فهي تحتوي على الشروحات والتفاصيل والتعريفات والامثلة التي توضح هذه المعلومات . يركّز البحث في موضوعه على النصوص الاقتصادية التي يقدمها موقع (بي بي سي) كجزء من الخدمة الاقتصادية الوافية والتي تتضمن اخبار المال والاعمال والاسهم وتحليل أداء الشركات ورجال الاعمال والبنية الاقتصادية في الدول .اختار الباحث نصوصا اقتصادية حديثة مركزاً على توظيف بعض المصطلحات والمفاهيم الثقافية فيها، اذ لا يُعَدُّ توظيف المصطلحات الثقافية احد ابرز خصائص هذا النوع من النصوص المعلوماتية لكن الطبيعة الصحفية لها (كون البحث يختص بالنصوص الاقتصادية الصحفية) تفرض استخدام هذا النوع من التعبيرات الثقافية التي تعد جزءاً لا يتجزأ من اي لغة . فاللغات ادوات تعبير عن الثقافات ولا يمكن تجريد اي لغة من الثقافة التي تجسدها . يقدم البحث امثلة مختارة من النصوص الاقتصادية مع توضيح التعبير الثقافي المستخدم وعلاقته بالنص وتقديم شرح يوضح اصل هذا التعبير ودلالة استخدامه .

لا توجد دراسات كثيرة تتناول النصوص الاقتصادية وما يأمله هذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على جانب قلّ وجوده في النصوص المعلوماتية وهو أثر ثقافة اللغة على تقديم المعلومة الاقتصادية ومن ثم تلقّي القارئ ودور الثقافة لهما أثر في إغناء النص الاقتصادي من خلال براعة الكاتب في توظيف المفهوم الثقافي المناسب في المكان المناسب .