

AFRICAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

ISSN 0795 – 0065

Volume 9, No. 2

December 2001

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**A JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN**

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LANGUAGE: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

In this paper language was defined both in terms of words and symbols including models or techniques. It has been described as a vehicle for communication. And communication is viewed as a means of discharging the function of the manager. It is therefore concluded that language is an effective tool for both the training and the performance of the manager. The manager must possess mastery of language for effective discharge of his duties.

Introduction

Alexander (1967) feels no society can exist outside any form of communication. In all societies, there must be some interchange of messages in the form of the flow of communication forth and back. In any society there are various forms of association, but each is made possible because communication takes place. It is an obvious fact that there cannot be any communication without the use of language. Umoru-Onuka (2001) opines that language, as a vehicle of communication is an indispensable too for human interaction and exchange of views. He further posits that although language is often taken for granted by human beings, it is nonetheless the very essence of human existence. From Biblical records, it is crystal clear that God instituted the use of language, communication and management simultaneously as can be inferred from Gen. 1:26 when God said 'Let us make man in our own image...' Implied in this statement is the use of language, communication, planning and decision, the latter two are elements of management. We can also infer from the statement God made at the creation of man that communication and management couldn't be separated from each other.

What is Language?

Alexander (1967) posits that language is used to define terms and words stating that "a definition is a statement which seeks to give referential meaning of one in term in of other terms" (p.234). In other words, language which is the systematic way of putting words together to effectively put one's idea or thinking across to the other (Umoru-Onuka, 2001b). A particular language is understood by a particular group of people either through birth in a certain environment or through training in a particular way (profession).

In the first two chapters of Genesis and in the eleventh chapter, it becomes invariably obvious that language is the organized way by which words are brought together to effectively put across one's reasoning or perception to some other person. In the view of Robert Lado (1964), language is the chief instrument of communication by which words are put together. Wiwcharuck (1987) believes that communication is the most effective tool of leadership, which is what management is all about. Thus without effective communication a leader cannot be effective. What marks out a man, as a superior being is his ability to communicate through the use of language?

Adeniyi (1999) gives the impression that there is more than one form of language when he describes the functions of human language as including the emotive/expressive function, social interaction, the control of reality, etc. Linking language to communication, Umoru-Onuka (2001b) points out that there are two types of communication viz: verbal communication which he categorises as oral and written communication on the one hand and non- verbal communication on the other. The latter includes the sign language or body language as well as the work of the artist and architectural designs that speak volumes of the wonderful creation of the Almighty God.

The verbal communication also includes electronic form of communication, which uses both oral and written forms of communication. However, whatever the form of communication may be, language is its means. It is expressed in language, for without language, communication cannot take place at all, if we realized that language is not only expressed or written words, but could be symbols or action. Umoru-Onuka (2001b) postulates that language is the means by which information being communicated is transferred from one person to another. Thus the link between communication and language is that the latter is the tool for effectively in achieving its purpose. Language performs the interaction function of establishing and maintaining social or business relationship. Management communication does both. Implied meanings of language as transaction and interaction tools are that they are the tools for management communication. Success in management depends very largely on effective

communication. Success in any endeavour depends on the means through which the end is earned. Thus success in management is almost solely depended on effective use of language in communication. Umoru-Onuka (2001b) opines that management is effective by the mastery of properly coordinated use of language in communication. He further points out that management is mainly a communicative profession. The manager, therefore must master the use of language in communication if he were to be an effective manager. This is because language is a very useful tool of writing, an art that the manager cannot do without. As a matter of fact, it is a crucial investment in the development process of any nations or Organization (Omolewa, 2000). He also posits that language is a part of living and sustains development.

What is Management?

A meta-analysis of studies in management will definitely lead one to conclude that management bereft of communication is no management at all. It is a well-known fact that the various management organograms or organization charts depict not only lines of authority but also channels of communication. Umoru-Omuka (1999) describes management as the central nerve of a business, school system, and indeed every human organization. Furthermore, he considers management as the act of initiating, planning, directing, organizing and monitoring of the various organs of a system. By implication, therefore, the manager is one who engages in management, pools together all necessary resources towards accomplishing the particular goals or objectives of any organization. This view is confirmed by the assertion of Keith and Gubellini (1975) in their book: *introduction to Business Enterprise*, that management is the direction of human behaviour towards a particular goal or objective or the control and coordination of all activities within a business (or an organization) so as to pool all efforts toward the realization of the organizational goal. No doubt that communication and of course, the use of language, are a very essential part of management. Management as a divine nature, in view of the record of creation story in Gen. 1: 1-2, 26-28, embodies both language and communication thus, it is obvious that management is getting things done and appropriately too. It means that management is planning, organizing, pooling and mobilizing resources of various kinds to achieving an end mostly through the use of language in communication. Management also can be considered as the means by which the objectives and policies of an enterprise are developed and implemented. From the foregoing conclusions about management, it becomes crystal clear that management, like language and communication, is life and we cannot, therefore, avoid it, although, it is not every human being that is a manager it suffices therefore to conclude that management is accepting

responsibility for both decision-making and implementation of decision for the purpose of achieving organizational goals promptly.

Management Approaches

There are various approaches to and styles of Management, among which are management by exception (MBE) usually characterized by exclusiveness in management; management by committee (MBC) which is characterized by a decision-making process involving the use of committees; management by objectives (MBO) which is a form of management where the top management initiates a process which involves the entire levels of management in the ultimate formulation of the decision and thus voluntarily elicits the involvement of every participant in the execution of the decisions arrived at in the decision making process, and the more recently introduces total quality management (TQM), which is a holistic approach to management in which the quality of every segment is given priority and strategy for its improvement is put in place. It consists in the internationalization (integration into) the management process of both the endogenous and exogenous factors like employees' welfare, customer-relations, and product quality and market variables among others. These various approaches but one MBE, are consultative and hence communicative in nature and form; thus involving the use of language. Even MBE involves partial use of communication in that its communication is only a one-way process. MBE is an authoritarian style of management in which only the manager communicates down the line of authority expecting only the required action to take place where as the other forms involves two-way communication.

Some Special Features of Management

Basically, management is a decision-making process. Thus a number of analytical techniques or models have been developed to simplify the process. It is pertinent at this point to state in no unclear terms that there are principally three types of risks viz: risk averse, which category consists of those who would take a decision only when they are hundred percent certain of the profitability of the effect of that decision. They do not experiment. Of course this group of persons are unlikely to succeed very well, as business or management decision are usually taken under conditions of uncertainty and are based on forecasting. The second group of decision takers consists of the average risk takers who based their decision on 50/50 percent certainty of positive results or possibility of failure.

The last category comprises those who would forecast about the future and take decision with little or no hesitation. This group is called the risk takers.

they are those who often succeed in business or management. They take decision without too much consideration for proven profitability (Umoru-Onuka 2001b). They are also perhaps the most prone, to the biggest misfortunes in case of failure. Since they invest with little or no consideration for the possibility of failure.

Decision Making Models or Techniques includes among others: Decision Tree Analysis (DTA), Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT), Network Analysis Critical Path Analysis (Method) (CPA (M, Critical Path Scheduling (CPS). Programme, Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS) as well as Linear and Mathematical Programme Technique (Snappe and Gear, 1981). Others, according to Hardnig and Long (1998), are Internal Rate of Return (IRR) which includes return on investment (ROI), pay back-net present value (NPV), discounted cash flow (DCF), Profit variance analysis and Generic strategies. All these among others are strategies meant to aid management decisions. They constitute elements of management language or management 'register'. Thus management also has its peculiar language, which must be learnt and use appropriately for one to succeed as a manager.

Management Function

There are principally four management functions viz: Personnel function, which deals with the administration of the human resources of the organization. This function is the management equivalent of what, in the economic parlance, is referred as labour economies, the finance function deals with the financial administration of the organization including its accounting system; there is also the production function (which could also be termed as the operations function) which deals with actual productions (or operation) of goods and services of the Organization and the Marketing Function which is the management of sales, sales promotion, distribution, advertising etc. of the products or services of the firm or institution. Each of these functions has its own language in addition to the general management language. For instance, we know that in English language the word 'publics' does not exist. Yet in management language it means the totality of the Business Environment or the environment factor (both internal and external) that have bearing one way or another, on the particular business in reference. The language of production is very different from that of marketing segment, as does that of personnel function from that of finance function. Since management covers all facets of life, the management language in one industry will differ in the use of language from that of another industry. Thus apart from being versed in general management language, the manager must be versatile in the use of the management language applicable to the particular industry he belongs.

The Need for Management Education

From the foregoing, it is obvious that manager needs to be educated if he were to perform his duties effectively, since according to Zayyad (1981); 'Management education is the intellectualization of empirical evidence which is result oriented' (p15). It is also true that with better education, which is actually enhanced by the mastery of the appropriate usage of language in the profession, managers will be more responsive to new ideas. In fact the manager needs continuous education for him to succeed, since his knowledge will be updated through such education, in view of the rapid changes that take place in our contemporary world.

A manager must keep abreast of the developments in the economy and apply them as appropriate. Thus continuous education for the manager cannot be overemphasized, whether by means of personal development or attendance at conferences, workshops or seminars or a training course. The needs for management education becomes obvious when we realize that education is a learning process resulting or culminating in a positive change in the behaviour of the manager and also the needed dexterity (efficiency and effectiveness) for the carrying out of his function as a manager.

Language and Management

The function of the manager cannot be effectively discharged unless he is versatile in the use of the appropriate management language to communicate decisions and ideas to his sub-ordinates who will either transmit them to someone for execution or who will personally carry them out to produce the desired results,

Each manager must undertake the process of mastery of the relevant language for the discharge of his functions. Therefore, there is no gainsaying that language is an effective tool for management. Language in this regard can be spoken language or expressed in words, it could also be written or transmitted through electronic media or it may be symbols, techniques or models or codes design to ease communication between the manager and either the outside world or the factory hands or such other people charged with the responsibility of executing the decision of the manager or the customers who will procure the products or services of the manager's firm.

When we recall that management is basically a communicative profession, then the function or the role of language as a tool for management cannot be ignored. An effective management/manager must acquire the mastery of professional language as well as the ordinary language of communication for effective execution of his decision. he's a trainer who has to bring up others in the art and science of management only language can facilitate that. We can therefore

conclude that without communication that no management can take place because it involves interaction and no interaction without communication can take place.

It is also to be noted that management as applied to various aspects of human endeavour, uses language peculiar to that industry or that endeavour. For instance, a manager in the aviation industry has to understand the terms in use in every section of that industry. The same holds for the engineering industry, the maritime industry, the education sector, or the steel sector and in fact in any other sector of the economy. The military, the police and security outfits have their individual languages. The manager must understand the language of his outfit very well if he is to be effective. It is thus clear that the effective use of good language is essential to good management. It should be noted that editing is one of the manager's effective tools. He cannot but employ editing every now and then in the course of discharging his duties as a manager.

Evidence

In an investigation we carried out on the effect of the appropriate use of language on some aspect of management function in some industries/sectors namely the Engineering Industry, Banking, Communication, Agriculture and Education using a total sample of 100 managers with 20 drawn from each industry/sector through observation and interview over a period of time, we discover that each industry/sector indicate that appropriate use of language was useful up to at least 69% as effective tool for management. The perceived level of effectiveness of language as tool for management in each sector is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: The Perceived level of Effectiveness of Language as a tool for Management

| Industry/Sector | % of Effectiveness |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Engineering | 78.2% |
| Banking | 88.0% |
| Communications | 69.1% |
| Agriculture | 79.9% |
| Education | 82.0% |

Aggregate for the five sectors is 79.6%

Judging from the above brief analysis, we can safely conclude that it has been shown here that the appropriate use of language by management aids the accomplishment of management objective and thus language is an effective tool for management

For more effectiveness in achieving managerial output it is hereby recommended that every manager must be well educated in spoken and written language as well as in various other forms of management or organizational language to facilitate management effectiveness since management is more of a communicative profession. (See details in table 2 below.)

Table 2: Effect of Appropriate use of Language on:

| Industry/Sector | Mgmt. Commercial | Mgmt. Decision Making Process | Mgmt. Directives | Correct/Interp of Curves | Customers Responses | Subordinate's Effectiveness | Productivity Level | Mgmt. Staff Relation | Decisions Implementation | Realization of overall org. good | Industry Aggregate |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| | 8.0 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 6.5 | 8.7 | 9.0 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 78.2 |
| | 7.0 | 8.0 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 8.5 | 8.7 | 8.2 | 8.0 | 8.0 | 7.1 | 88.0 |
| | 7.6 | 8.2 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6.7 | 9.5 | 7.9 | 9.1 | 7.1 | 8.0 | 69.1 |
| | 8.0 | 5.9 | 7.1 | 7.7 | 8.2 | 9.2 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.0 | 9.1 | 79.7 |
| | 8.2 | 7.1 | 6.9 | 7.5 | 9.5 | 9.2 | 8.9 | 8.5 | 8.2 | 8.0 | 82.0 |

- Row 1 = Engineering Sector
- Row 2 = Banking Sector
- Row 3 = Communication Sector
- Row 4 = Agriculture Sector
- Row 5 = Education Sector

Conclusion

The above analysis clearly brings out the fact that language is indeed an effective tool for management, since language facilitates communication. Communication is the means by which management function is carried out. The manager must, therefore, be thoroughly educated in the language of management, if his performance is to be enhanced. It is also shown that only proper mastery of language and education in management including management language ('register') can facilitate effective management.

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