

Writing paper “When language helps: How to collaborate when you are a competitor”**By Dr.Evgeniya Shamis, RUSSIA (Personnel Touch)**

The paper consists of three parts: Introduction, Main Body and Conclusions.

Introduction

One of the factors hampering development of Electro-technical cluster in the city of Cheboksary (Chuvash Republic, Russia) is the difficulty companies and people from the industry face when looking for common ground. Such common ground is significant for mutual activities and starting collaboration, thus achieving first joint results.

Many people in electro-technical industry in Cheboksary accept the idea of collaboration on a personal level but at the same time they are skeptical about the possibility to achieve it. Among reasons for skepticism the following factors are mentioned: former negative experience in creating associations, various economic state and interests of cluster participants, competitive behavior and relations, attempts to negotiate based purely on business interests, unclear common needs, non-defined concept of being a partner when you are a competitor.

The question is: What should be done in order to start collaboration among competitors in the cluster and achieve first results? How to attract different actors in this process? Who should participate in it?

This study will answer this question by producing a comparative study of the meaning of the term “Collaboration” in English and Russian languages as behavioral practices grow out of language connotations. Understanding that it’s only one of the factors influencing collaboration, we limit this research only to it.

The main argument presented in this paper is that collaboration is achieved among competitors if they agree what collaboration means for them, know practices and mechanisms of collaboration among competitors, discuss and agree upon the rules of collaboration.

Main body

Collaboration is one of key conditions for sustainable economic and social development of Cities, Clusters, Free economic zones, City business districts, Techno-parks, etc. While building collaboration people in all countries deal with the challenge of how to make it work among competitors. To overcome this challenge you need to understand, create and practice collaborative mechanisms, form a culture of communication, partnership and trust. The success of the initiative depends on the territory, its cultural and business characteristics, industry specifics. As a result each territory and country develop its own type of collaboration according to cultural and socio-economic traditions.

People transfer into practical actions only what they understand about processes, techniques and values and what is reflected in their languages. If certain notion (for example, acquired from the other language) doesn’t exist in the language – people have difficulties in transferring it into practices, into life. Studying languages and word meanings in different languages allows us to better understand behavior models, gaps, find reasons and explanations. What does the notion “collaboration” mean in Russian? How does it differ from English meaning of the word?

Below is comparison of the meaning of the word “Collaboration” in English and Russian Wikipedia, English and Russian dictionaries.

English definition	Russian definition
<p>Working together to achieve a goal, but in its negative sense it is working as a traitor. It is a recursive process where two or more people or organizations work together to realize shared goals, (this is more than the intersection of common goals seen in co-operative ventures, but a deep, collective, determination to reach an identical objective) — for example, an intriguing endeavor that is creative in nature—by sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus. Most collaboration requires leadership, although the form of leadership can be social within a decentralized and egalitarian group. In particular, teams that work collaboratively can obtain greater resources, recognition and reward when facing competition for finite resources...</p> <p>Structured methods of collaboration encourage introspection of behavior and communication. These methods specifically aim to increase the success of teams as they engage in collaborative problem solving. Forms, rubrics, charts and graphs are useful in these situations to objectively document personal traits with the goal of improving performance in current and future projects.</p> <p>Since the Second World War the term "Collaboration" acquired a very negative meaning as referring to persons and groups which help a foreign occupier of their country—due to actual use by people in European countries who worked with and for the Nazi German occupiers. Linguistically, "collaboration" implies more or less equal partners who work together—which is obviously not the case when one party is an army of occupation and the other are people of the occupied country living under the power of this army.</p> <p>In order to make a distinction, the more specific term Collaborationism is often used for this phenomenon of collaboration with an occupying army. However, there is no water-tight distinction; "Collaboration" and "Collaborator", as well as "Collaborationism" and "Collaborationist", are often used in this pejorative sense—and even more so, the equivalent terms in French and other languages spoken in countries which experienced direct Nazi occupation.</p> <p>It gives examples of successful collaboration in such spheres as Trade, Community Organization, Game Theory, Military-Industrial Complex, Project management, Academia, Classical Music</p> <p>Collaboration in business can be found both inter- and intra-organization and ranges from the simplicity of a</p>	<p>Mutual help (or cooperation, collaboration in other words) – is one of the key factors of human evolution. At the same time it’s one of the main principles of anarchy.</p> <p>The meaning of “mutual help” is contrast to the meaning of competition (conflict, confrontation) and forms two sides of the same phenomenon. One of important means of provision for collaboration is uniting people (and animals) in kins, tribes and tribal unions for more successful and effective survival and development (to confront threats).</p> <p>Trust is the basis for mutual help.</p> <p>Cases connected with this:</p> <p>Effect of farebeater – economic phenomenon , expressed by the fact that it’s user consciously tries to avoid payment for public goods expecting to receive it without any payment. One of the typical examples – tax payment avoidance.</p> <p>Bratchina (from old-Russian term) – 1. up to the end of XVII century comradeship, brotherhood, artel with the right of self-mob law. Its head was elected and was responsible for the bratchina economy and keeping an order while celebrating with feasting. Only in the end of its existence criminal activities were taken out of competition of bratchina. 2. Clubbing, pooling resources (usually grain, beer), joint feast. Bratchinas were usually organized by peasants in holidays and usually were named after holidays... Besides peasants landlords also participated in them. Bratchinas were accompanied by riots and fights, thus church didn’t recommend to organize them....</p> <p>Examples of human cooperation:</p> <p>Cooperation, Peer-to-peer network, Social network, Co-shopping, CouchSurfing, the FreeStyke Network, Child upbringing in the family, Partnering benchmarking, Good</p>

<p>partnership and crowd funding to the complexity of a multinational corporation. Collaboration between team members allows for better communication within the organization and throughout the supply chains. It is a way of coordinating different ideas from numerous people to generate a wide variety of knowledge.</p> <p>Collaboration with a selected few firms as opposed to collaboration with a large number of different firms has been shown to positively impact firm performance and innovation outcomes. The recent improvement in technology has provided the world with high speed internet, wireless connection, and web-based collaboration tools like blogs, and wikis, and has as such created a "mass collaboration." People from all over the world are efficiently able to communicate and share ideas through the internet, or even conferences, without any geographical barriers. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collaboration)</p>	<p>Co-creation, one of two key principles in judo.</p> <p>Links are also given to: Voluneeer, Crowd-sourcing, Creative cluster, Symbios, Synergy, Game theory, Egregor, BitTorrent, Gift Economy (http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE)</p>
<p>1. the act or process of collaborating. 2. a product resulting from collaboration: This dictionary is a collaboration of many minds. (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/collaboration)</p>	<p>1. Cooperation, participation, co-working. 2. Collaborationism, collaboration with enemies and occupants , e.g. collaboration with Nazi Germany (http://lingvo.yandex.ru/collaboration/%D1%81%20%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BE/)</p> <p>Sotrudnichestvo - (sotrúdníčestvo) n. ,originates from composition of two words "co+labor". cooperation, collaboration, cooperation (with), partnership, contribution, participation. http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE</p> <p>International cooperation includes science-technological cooperation.</p>

Besides traditional dictionary definitions there is a number of materials devoted to collaboration via new e-resources given at first pages of search sites such as Google (www.google.com) and Yandex (www.yandex.com). There are public talks devoted to this, e.g. speech of Howard Reingold at TED talks – with accent on coming world of collaboration, participatory media and collective action - and how Wikipedia is really an outgrowth of our natural human instinct to work as a group.
(http://www.ted.com/talks/howard_rheingold_on_collaboration.html)

We can make the following observations and reflections out of those definitions:

1. In English language the word collaboration is referred to the meaning of “working together” while in Russian – to “mutual help”, though historically it also has the meaning of “co-labor”. That difference can lead to different consequences: in first case - working together when there are no

- problems, in the second – collaboration is probably to occur when somebody is in trouble/ has difficulties/ has not enough resources.
2. In English language the word “collaboration” focuses more on human efforts of creating collaboration, achieving shared goals which can be set for wide range of activities and market-economy oriented. Russian definition focuses more on evolutionary development, child-upbringing, co-creation.
 3. Concept of “sharing knowledge and building consensus” is not reflected in Russian language, where more personalized concept of “Leader - Observer- Order-keeper – Individual solution maker” is expressed. So those practices should be introduced additionally in Russian cultural context while building collaboration and trust.
 4. In English language there is more attention to technologies, practices, concrete situations of the team, while in Russian – on communication, setting values, upbringing.
 5. In English more attention is made on “team and co-working” while in Russian – on “person-to-person cooperation” with additional accent on cooperation with people having higher status.
 6. Question of innovations arising out of collaborations appears in English language. Russian explanations have more of festivity descriptions on the other side, not drawing attention to innovative process.
 7. In Russian explanations there is more description of “negative effects” (farebeater, collaborationist, some of bratchina effects), whereas in English there is only one definitely “negative” connotation.
 8. In both languages there mentioned a number of e-effects and e-practices involving collaboration.
 9. In English there is a small part devoted to collaboration of competitors, while in Russian explanations there is an accent on science-technological cooperation.

Conclusion

How language observations can help organize collaboration in Cheboksary electro-technical cluster? What should be done in order to achieve it? Several recommendations are presented below.

1. Create Code of Ethics of the cluster in cooperation with different participants, which would serve as written agreed basis for trust-building and collaboration in the cluster. In this Code describe principles and guidelines for collaboration for current and future actors.
2. At first stage involve two-three leading companies from Cheboksary who can achieve agreement both amongst themselves and with Regional and City Governments. Use this model in order to achieve the “snowball rolling down the hill” effect: once a snowball is a certain size and starts rolling down the hill, more snow sticks get to the snowball, it gets much bigger and is able to overcome everything in its path.
3. Make joint cluster project or initiative which will lead to overcoming obstacles and achieving joint result in the short-term perspective. One of the options for this can be defining common needs for the majority of cluster participants, choosing one of them and getting fast visible results (=low fruits). Thus creating precedent of collaborative action with wide number of participants.
4. Discuss and describe collaborative practices and mechanisms, which are successful in the World. In a training mode regularly practice them, forming new understanding of the collaborative activity in cluster. E.g., organize special talks in electro-technical community on collaborative practices and learning World experience.
5. Create special collaborative areas for the meeting which would serve as symbols of collaboration.
6. Find supporters of the idea of cross-company collaborating among youth . They know mechanisms and already value collaboration. Youth of cluster is capable to transfer mechanisms from e-communication into “live” communication and interaction. So it’s reasonable to involve them in creating e-communication platform for the cluster.
7. Obligatory organize celebrations as part of cluster collaboration, specially design common activities for this.