

Número 3 – Enero/Junio 2017

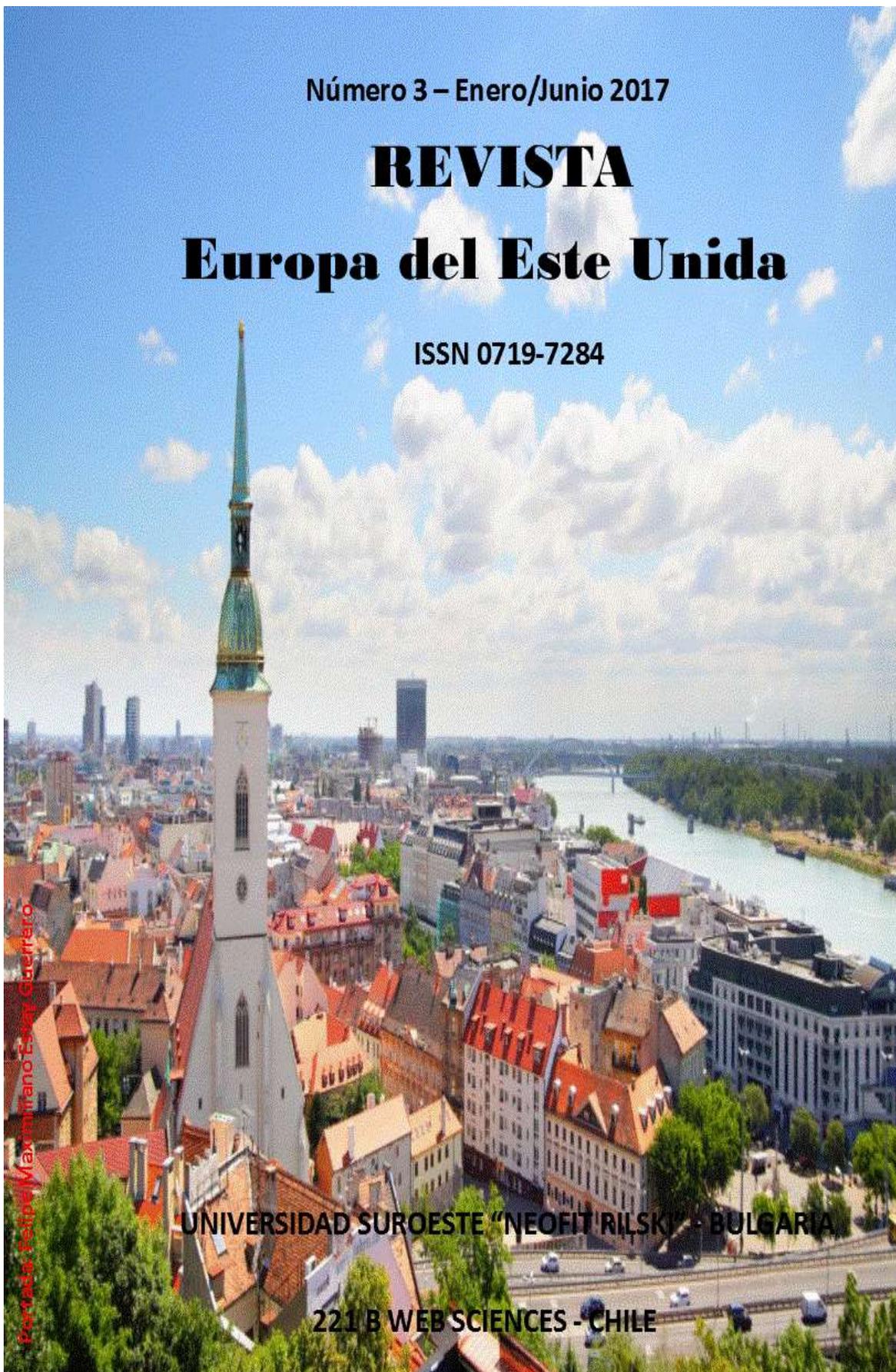
REVISTA **Europa del Este Unida**

ISSN 0719-7284

Revista - Editor Maximiliano Estay Guerrero

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Revista Europa del Este Unida, se encuentra indizada en:



Información enviada a Latindex para su evaluación e indización.



ISSN 0719-7284 – Publicación Semestral / Número 3 / Enero – Junio 2017 pp. 33-41

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF THE SPANISH IN THE INTERCULTURAL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

ACTITUDES Y VALORES DEL IDIOMA ESPAÑOL EN LA COMUNICACIÓN COMERCIAL

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Fecha de Recepción: 28 de abril de 2017 – **Fecha de Aceptación:** 01 de julio de 2017

Abstract

The attitudes, beliefs, customs, laws, values and traditions are stuck in the culture of the people. Culture also dictates their style of communication and how people to produce and interpret information in business negotiations. Global companies increasingly rely on the effectiveness of business negotiations for their survival and growth. In the context of the present work, a theoretical study of the cultural and specific dimensions of the Spanish communication characteristics is located. The purpose of these dimensions is important because they stimulate the understanding and the effective interaction in communication. Emphasizing the characteristics and the values of the business communication in communicating with the Spanish, means active, fast-growing relationships between Bulgaria and Spain.

Keywords

Business communication – Values – Spanish communication characteristics – National peculiarities
Bulgarian – Spanish business environment

Resumen

Las actitudes, creencias, costumbres, leyes, valores y tradiciones están atrapados en la cultura de la gente. La cultura también dicta su estilo de comunicación y cómo la gente produce e interpreta la información en las negociaciones comerciales. Las empresas globales dependen cada vez más de la eficacia de las negociaciones comerciales para su supervivencia y crecimiento. En el contexto del presente artículo se sitúa un estudio teórico de las dimensiones culturales y específicas de las características de la comunicación hispana. El propósito de estas dimensiones es importante porque estimulan la comprensión y la interacción efectiva en la comunicación. Enfatizar las características y los valores de la comunicación empresarial en la comunicación con los españoles, significa unas relaciones activas y relaciones de rápido crecimiento entre Bulgaria y España.

Palabras Claves

Comunicación empresarial – Valores – Características de la comunicación española
Peculiaridades nacionales – Entorno empresarial búlgaro-español

Introducción

The growing globalization and the mass emergence of joint ventures across the world imply a communication of individuals of different nationalities. For their successful business, the communication efficiency is a must, and it is among the most common research themes. Today, an integral part of the daily routine of managers and employees is meeting different cultures and different patterns of behavior. In addition to good knowledge of the specialty, today the employers expect not only good knowledge and vocational training but also social and intercultural competences. Among them it is the foreign language skills and a feel for foreign cultural models in the communication of individuals of different nationalities.

In the context of the present work, a theoretical study of the cultural and specific dimensions of the Spanish communication is located. The purpose of these dimensions is important because they actually stimulate understanding and effective interaction in communication. Emphasizing the elements of business communication in communicating with the Spanish, means active, fast-growing relationships between Bulgaria and Spain.

Spain is an important foreign market for the Bulgarian economy. However, the real effectiveness of international business integration is not only determined by economic parameters, by professional competence and by the institutional environment. The recipe for success hides beneath its surface a very significant cultural component, for which more and more foreign investors have begun to realize clearly¹. This means that the specialized knowledge and professional skills and knowledge of a foreign language are not enough. Knowledge of foreign language is an important prerequisite for understanding, but it is far from being the only condition for successful communication. It is necessary to develop communication skills in a different cultural environment.² To achieve this type of competence, a number of factors are influenced by overall attitudes, established values and patterns of behavior. Communication has to be culturally matched in two aspects: paralinguistic aspect - nonverbal communication - mimic, gestures; And paraverbal - intonation, voice and more. They are crucial to modeling the content of the message, and their proper interpretation is part of the successful intercultural communication³.

Yet, globally, misunderstandings in business can be particularly painful, which is often a major obstacle to ignorance of the partner's language. They can lead to loss of confidence and prestige, as a result of money. When an international transaction is required, it is not only the language, but also the knowledge of the other culture and preliminary objective attitudes, sense and tacitness of the different, that is indispensable for the smooth communication in the business. This calls for a number of serious studies on intercultural differences, especially for countries that are leading economic powers. Therefore, one of the main motives for the deepening of the linguistic, paralingling and especially cultural-specific dimensions of Bulgarian-Spanish communication in business environment is the lack of contrasting research to focus on the main interest in Bulgaria. This topic is relevant especially as regards the current trends in the development of the economy.

¹ Bulgarien - von Profis für Profis

² Cultural differences in business – are you aware of them?

³ Cultural Factors Encyclopedia of Public Health 2002 The Gale Group Inc., p.1/
<http://www.encyclopedia.com>

The purpose of this study is to prove our hypothesis that Bulgarian and Spanish cultures, albeit European, are significantly different, which means that the failure of communication when ignorant of the business partner's national peculiarities is quite likely. There are major differences between the two cultures, and for this purpose the specifics of the respective behavior must be realized.

In direct communication as a complex phenomenon, the verbal language is only one of a series of components that form the meaning. No less information is contained in:

- The body language - in mimicry and gestures, as well as in cultural patterns of behavior;
- The influence of the cultural environment on the formation of behavioral and communicative models;
- The overall attitudes, values and patterns of behavior according to established in contemporary anthropology indicators;
- The differences in Bulgarian and Spanish cultures in working environment with the help of the model of Heather Hofstede and Edward Hall⁴
- Outlining the possible problem areas in the Bulgarian-Spanish business communication at verbal and paralingual level
- Summary of manifestations of cultural differences at verbal, nonverbal and paraversal level.⁵

The comparison of the Bulgarian and Spanish cultures means to reveal their characteristic features, which manifest themselves both in social practices and in the language and the way they communicate with the partners.

The objective intercultural analysis of Bulgarian and Spanish mentality helps to overcome prejudices, hasty criticism and potential conflicts. Our ability for social interaction, respect and sensitivity to foreign perception is the key to successful communication. When we know the cultural identity of our interlocutor, we can develop successful strategies and achieve the goals we have set.

The term "intercultural communication", introduced in the 1950s by American anthropologist Edward T. Hall, shows that this is a more specific type of social co-communication.⁶ Hall's views and works play a key role as they draw attention to the cultural context of human communication. Hall finds that not only the language, but also a number of cultural-specific elements, which at first sight remain hidden, have a strong impact on behavior and interpersonal communication. It divides the world of communication into three:

⁴ Hofstede's model, Gert Hofstede, a Danish psychologist, interviewed thousands of IBM employees during his work, and subsequently developed a cultural model that, as he says, generalizes the different cultures. The Hofstede model has five dimensions, each of which has a value between 1 and 120, <https://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html>

⁵ Geer Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-Related Values* (Cross Cultural Research and Methodology) (California: Sage Publications, 2011).

⁶ Edward T. Hall, *Intercultural communication*, <https://translitco.com/blog/intercultural-communication/#>

language - material property – behavior

Language transmits information unambiguously and is central to understanding. Material ownership means power and public status, and behavior shows emotions, thought-provoking relationships, and the ability to avoid conflicts.

For the Spanish, it is very important to note the Business Etiquette in their attitude to foreigners.

Spain or España is a diverse country, sharing the Iberian Peninsula with Portugal at the western edge of the Mediterranean. Spain is considered an exotic country in Europe thanks to friendly people and a peaceful lifestyle⁷.

Spain shows a significant change in people's values and attitudes, especially since the re-establishment of democracy in 1975. The Spanish modernizes with its opening to the outside world. The influx of tourists in Spain has a huge impact in this respect. Tourists not only bring incomes but also the democratic political and social values of Western Europe. Another reason is the migration of Spanish workers in France, Switzerland and Germany, who, on their return to Spain, take on the cultural habits of other developed Western European countries. In Spain, the education serves as an important tool in national integration by promoting equal opportunities, as well as Democratic social and cultural values. Primary education is free and compulsory. There is also a broad network of private schools, some of which are subsidized by the state and offer basic education free of charge or at a reduced fee. In recent decades, the number of students enrolled in higher education has been among the countries in Europe with the highest share.

Many young Spanish go to study abroad to gain international experience and improve their language skills. *The use of information technology in the country is spreading rapidly.* All these factors contribute to improving education and training.

As it concerns the Business Communications or how to establish a contact, the *Spanish are very sociable and do not avoid physical contact.* For them in the communication, it is very typical the non-verbal communication, including gestures such as embrace and kisses. Treat yourself calmly to this level of informality so you do not seem cold or indifferent, which may have a negative impact on business negotiations.

Spanish prefer personal communication because they think it's easier to build a good relationship. The first contact is crucial for your Spanish business partners. Your appearance has a huge impact on the first impression you will leave. In the same way, your Spanish colleagues will do their best to present themselves well and to make a good impression.⁸

It is acceptable to shake hands at every business meeting, especially when you meet someone you do not know. In Spain, many men shake hands with both hands, placing their left hand on the other man's right hand. Handling must not be too strong. When you have a closer relationship, men can be hugged and patted on the shoulders. Women are kissed on both cheeks, starting from the left⁹.

⁷ <http://www.spain.info/en/>.

⁸ <http://www.justlanded.com/english/Spain/Spain-Guide/Culture/The-Spaniard>.

⁹ The same page

For Spanish, as for any nation, communication is an integral part of modern business communications, one of the forms of human behavior without which the exchange of information is not possible. As a social phenomenon, the process of communication means not only dissemination but also perception of this information at different levels. Structurally speaking, communication is determined by the **three interrelated aspects** - *communicative, interactive and perceptive*. It is the communicative component of communication that is the foundation of efficient modern communications. It is a continuous exchange of information that feeds and maintains the network of interpersonal relationships and business contacts between in-house audiences.

The Business label or the attitude to business meetings, or the way in which business is done in Spain, is more relaxed than in other countries. You must be prepared for lengthy negotiations. Take enough time to get to know your business partners before you start negotiations. Good relations are important for successful negotiations in Spain. Often, the written submissions are not as important as, for example, in the UK or Germany. You can expect your Spanish partners to be interested in the products or services you offer and to ask many additional questions. *The Spaniards attach great importance to trust and honesty*, so they have to present the realm of things in their true form.

The reason for cultural obstacles are often the misunderstanding of the foreign language. Organizations, with their global markets and operations, must be aware of what they say. This is particularly important if the message is to be translated into another language. For example, the Spanish is much more formal when it is in a writing than in a verbal form. Spoken Spanish is more conversational and direct, supported with appropriate gestures and eye contact. So when doing business communications, there must be a translator of the same nationality to get the confidence that the original message will be translated.¹⁰

When communicating with Spaniards, we need to be aware of some peculiarities, depending on the circumstances in which part of Spain we are going to work on.

What is the true Spanish character. The residents of the Iberian Peninsula are very friendly, entertaining and communal. They refer to tourists often as friends, they are hearty and have a sophistication. They even differ with their talking mode. Observing how they communicate with each other creates the impression that they are not listening and talking at the same time, but also very quickly. The conversation is always lively and very emotional. There is a mockery or joke in the conversation.

As any nation, especially the mediterranean ones, the Spanish have their **disadvantages**: First of all, their lack of precision can be highlighted. Spanish arrive late everywhere: at school, at university or at work. It is considered to be an acceptable delay between 10 and 30 minutes. Exceptions are made by those businesses where the work day begins at a certain time and the delay may be a reason for dismissal. As for business meetings and family, it is indescribable. In these cases, they may be late for a few hours or

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<http://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/culture-for-business-and-management/doing-business-in/Spanish-business-and-social-culture.php>

not at all. To the question: "Why?" your interlocutor responds innocently: "Unfortunately, today it can not be happened, let`s leave it for tomorrow."¹¹

Besides that, the Spanish have a *very incomprehensible language*. That's why they like to criticize everyone, starting with their own closest relatives and friends, and using sharp words. At the same time, none of them has the courage to say in the face of the criticized even a small part of what they say behind them.

In their everyday life, *Spanish are very hardworking people*. They work hard and can only sleep for 3 or 4 hours. As far as their own business is concerned, most Spanish prefer to work alone or with their family, and if they do not have close assistants, they hire outsiders. It is important to note that bosses often do the same work together with their employees. For example, in a restaurant the boss can easily serve customers and his wife wash the floor or the dishes. And they do it not because they can not hire someone but because they think no one can do it better than them. Working hours in the companies are between 8 and 10 hours a day, while working hours at the restaurants are unmarked. If there are many orders and customers, they can open at 7:00 in the morning and end at 01:00 pm. At night, leaving a total of two hours for breakfast, lunch and dinner, although it is acceptable because workers are paid for an hour. When there are not enough orders, work can only last for 2-3 hours.

Nationalism is a typical feature for the Spanish people. Currently, Spain has a total of seventeen regions and each has its own capital, its own flag and its laws. Many of them have their own language. But the more one goes to the south and the sun is getting warmer, the more the Spanish jealousy fades, and it even evaporates during the siesta.

In the **Basque Country**, or as they call their homeland, all road signs are written in Basque. They have their own Basque police, their own taxes, Basque schools, Basque TV channels and their own terrorist organization ETA ("Euskadi Ta Askatasuna" (Basque expression translated into Spanish "Basque Country and Freedom").

In **Catalonia**, with the capital Barcelona, they also prefer to speak in their native language. Do not accept warmly speaking non-Catalan speakers who speak Castilian Ispanic. They do not like not to speak Catalan.

In **Galicia**, the situation is similar. The population also prefers to speak in Galician. Nationalism is characteristic of the population in every area. The Catalans are considered patriots or nationalists and persuade them to be heated. But they do not talk about Spain, but about Catalonia.

Irrespectively of these peculiarities, everywhere in business, the priority is in the Spanish language - Castilian or *Castellano*.

Business contacts are a key means of achieving a goal, and this goal is the successful business. In order to achieve a successful business, the language plays a key role as knowledge, from a linguistic point of view, along with the knowledge of the writing and punctuation of the language of the partner, but also the language of the contacts and

¹¹ <http://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/culture-for-business-and-management/doing-business-in/Spanish-business-and-social-culture.php>

the behavior. This language must meet certain requirements such as: accuracy, clarity, laconicity, business, order and good education.

For the Spaniards, of a particular importance in business relations, is the good and polite tone. Kindness does not mean falling into extremes. The language has to express sincerity, to inspire trust. These two key elements in the business relationships would greatly contribute to success in the commercial communications and transactions.

When communicating with Spanishspeaking people, it is important that the contractor to be aware of the details of the direct communication in the Spanish environment, the instructions for conducting a telephone conversation, the mastering of example phrases for making an official letter, etc. In general, the partner must be familiar with some basic rules and patterns in the trade correspondence. It would be good if the contractor does not have the required level in the language, to provide preliminary a vocabulary with commercial terminology and other useful information about the Spanish people's psychology. Each contractor must be aware of the spirit and the content of the Spanish phrase, as well as the speech label.

The Spanish world is very much different. As it is known from the above-mentioned, there are differences in all Spanish-speaking countries, such as in Spanish, spoken in Spain and the one in Latin America. But this is not a barrier to communication. Cultural differences from Spain to Chile are based on rich cultural traditions, but these differences do not divide people, on the contrary, they unite them, because it is the culture that unites people. Knowing the culture of a future trading partner would not hamper commercial relations, on the contrary, it would unite them.

Anyone who speaks Spanish would ask: Can something not be said in Spanish with fewer words. Maybe it would be possible, but that would not be real Spanish.

Each language has its peculiarities. The different nationalities are distinguished by multitude or laconicity, habits and traditions. The German says: Why the things to be simple, while they may be complicated¹². The Spanish says, "Why should I express my thoughts in two words, when it is possible in two hundred." In this case, the wealth of the Spanish is not due to the words. The extended expression implies the use of many adjectives, nouns, verbs, from a linguistic point of view, and courtesies, repetitions and stylistic figures from a lexical and stylistic point of view.

A main moment for the kindness, this is the courtesy to the business partner. It is not just an idea to start a conversation, it is a readiness for a dialogue, not a lack of determination and firmness when exposing ideas. Or, as the Spaniards say, courtesy does not mean weakness - "*Lo cortés no quita lo valiente*". If the American starts negotiating straight to the goal, then the Spaniards do not "shoot right" (*No ir directo al grano*). Anyone who speaks the language of Cervantes should be guided by the maxim: "Hay que dar tiempo al tiempo" or "let's give time to the time."

¹² Teodora Kiryakova-Dineva / Maya Kitkova, Intercultural dialogue: A prerequisite for successful tourist adaptation. In: Živković, Živan (Ed.) Book of proceedings. XII International May Conference on Strategic Management IMKSM 2016, May 28 – 30, 2016. Bor: Technical Faculty, Management Department, 593.

The rules for oral communication are not passed by the Spaniards in the negotiations, but as far as the trade agreements and the further business are concerned, what is important, this is the business correspondence. It matters not only for ongoing business relationships, but also for maintaining interpersonal contacts. It is expressed in the written relations between business people and companies. In order an official letter to be formed, the first and the essential condition is the initial and the ongoing communication and, of course, the language in which it is written. In our case, this is the Spanish language. The compiler of the letter should be aware of the problem that is the subject of the letter. The letter itself should be polite, clear and concise, to be stuck to the problem, to avoid unnecessary phrases, deviations and repetitions. **There is no place for personal questions and literary gossip in the business letter.**

Many companies have not been paying attention to the technical layout lately, but it is important. Apart from the fact that the letter should be written in a clear way, and that the knowledge of grammar and punctuation to be evident, there must be attached the logo of the company. Outside the written correspondence, the oral communication remains a major element in the trade relations. For this purpose, each contracting party should be aware of the protocol rules. When we have a conversation with a client or a foreign agent in the business world, we need to know something about his personality and character. Everyone is unique in their own. The behavior of each individual is inevitably reflected in the character of the nationality he is a representative of. There can also be followed the typical of the environment in which the person has been formed and the environment in which he works. Everyone who is to develop an international business is familiar with the phlegmatic actions of the English, the precision of the Germans, the quick vocabulary of the Italians and the Greeks. Spaniards are significantly different. When the word *mañana* is heard, the Spaniard does not mean just the next coming day, but it gives an idea of their sense of accuracy. They are not less garrulous than the Italians, which is also proved by the fact that it is enough to ask the Spanish to orientate you, and that already means the beginning of a friendship.

In the business world, however, the things are not the same. Although the Spanish-speaking are a varied mosaic of nationalities, they are impulsive, they can think, speak and act almost simultaneously. They can keep the given word, the arrangements, and in their behavior they are guided by the phrase: ***Amor, con amor se paga.*** /Love is paid with love/.¹³ It should not be forgotten the fact that Spain in Europe and the Spanish-speaking countries in South America are influenced by strong neighbors and a strategic geographic position. Spain borders with France and the former colonizer - Portugal, and Latin America is influenced by the United States. These facts affect the behavior and the way of communication as well as the development of the business environment. Spanish and Bulgarians are similar in temperament, and the Bulgarians generally resemble in some respects the Mediterranean peoples, but the neighbors of the Balkan Peninsula are others, and the influence on the habits and the traditions has been different. It is important to emphasize, in view of the above-mentioned facts and characteristics, how significant the polite manners are, as well as the readiness for a dialogue, the courtesy and the good manners, the observance of the protocol that the Spaniards keep in the business communications. Taken together, they contribute to the success in trade negotiations.

All these circumstances are reflected in the language of the trade negotiations. The mandatory congratulations, the correct and well-written invitations, the well-written CV, a

¹³ B. Mira; A. Baraona y N. Veleva, *Español Comercial* (Sofía: Jusautor, 1992).

good presentation, presented in a proper tone and in an appropriate form, are significant details that, although not being elements of the deal, define the atmosphere of the dialogue in the trade Activity and would help to achieve and develop better Bulgarian-Spanish commercial relations, the realization of close and distant trade goals and the creation of lasting bilateral business and interpersonal contacts.

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Para Citar este Artículo:

Kirilova Ivanova, Lyubov. Attitudes and values of the Spanish in the intercultural business communication. *Rev. Europa del Este Unida*. Num. 3. Enero-Junio (2017), ISSN 0719-7284, pp. 33-41.

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