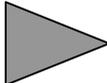# THE PHATIC FUNCTION OF COMMUNICATION
IN ROMANIAN BUSINESS NEGOTIATIONS

Georgeta GHIGA

Abstract

Both linguists and business people consider phatic communication an important element of business interaction. This article emphasizes the role of the phatic function in business negotiations. It capitalizes on the inventory of the phatic elements identified in spoken Romanian and focuses on those contributing significantly to relevant stages of negotiations. On the basis of real life situations, it is shown how various linguistic elements (vocatives, verbs and verbal phrases, interjections, adverbs, tag-questions and conventional dialogues) are involved in the operation of the communication channel making it work in accordance with the negotiators' communicative intention. Therefore, the quality of interaction and, consequently, success and failure in negotiations may depend on the negotiators' ability of using phatic elements effectively.

Keywords: phatic function, negotiation, small talk, interaction, communication, language
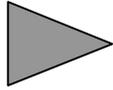
Introduction

The diversity of human activities and the variety of relationships deriving from this have placed the modern society under the sign of negotiation. From the domain of political relations between states to the field of individual domestic life, people resort to negotiation either as consciously oriented action or as a result of everyday encounters.

According to Erlich-Wagner (1995), at least three categories of people show special interest in negotiation:

- professionals – political and business negotiators for whom the necessity of developing their negotiation skills is a job requirement;
- trainees – those who are preparing to become negotiators and need training to develop negotiating competence;
- analysts – researchers interested in studying negotiation as a specific type of interaction.

Business negotiations and the phatic function of language

It is well known that business negotiations are characterized by both ethnologic and socio-psychological elements. They are also strongly related to reality by the participants' economic interests. Therefore, in order to obtain relevant results, any analysis of this type of interaction should be based on real facts, which imposes the necessity of carrying out audio and video recordings of these encounters. It is very clear that the analyst will have serious difficulties in getting access to such data, due to the confidential character of the discussions.

However, some successful analyses of interaction have been done in business negotiations so far, which have encouraged analysts to look more enthusiastically towards this field.

In what follows, I shall try to illustrate the way in which the phatic function of language is involved in the process of business negotiation, more precisely in the type of interaction business negotiations are based on.

Though in the last two decades business negotiations have been approached by many categories of researchers, a brief analysis of these studies shows that, for a certain period of time, business negotiation was defined in terms of results and less as a process. Therefore, in spite of the growing interest in the subject, the concept continued to be vague.

Traditionally it was identified with *sales talks*. Later on, at least in the business practice, the term *negotiation* has been applied to a large variety of business encounters. So additional difficulty occurred for the researchers interested in the specificity of this type of discourse. Consequently, the attempts made to eliminate these shortcomings have been directed towards defining the concept and describing the process.

Thus, Allan Firth (1991) has established a first dichotomy between *negotiation encounter*, centred on the situation of communication, and *negotiation activity*, focused on interaction.

Taking things further, J. Wagner (1995) defines negotiation as "strategic interaction", covering both elements emphasized by Firth. As Wagner states[1], in this type of interaction, the goals of each party are, to some extent, controlled by the other party, and achievements - on each side – depend on the partners' willing to co-operate. Since situations change very fast, each party modifies its own goals so as to adapt to the new situation, especially because, participants bring in new goals or new information as negotiation moves further. In fact, the discourse can be perceived as negotiation only if the discussion is mainly based on the interdependence of goals and on mutual control, showing the partners' intention to reach consensus.

I find Wagner's definition a true description of the process of business negotiation. Therefore, I shall take it over as a basis for my argumentation, and I will add to it gains from other studies for the benefit of the analysis.

Most of the linguistic studies referring to business negotiation have dealt with it mainly from the perspective of discourse analysis. Some of them (Charles 1995) have focused on negotiations between native speakers, others [Erlich – Wagner (eds.) 1995, Firth (ed.) 1995a] on international negotiations involving people from different cultures.

Based either on the diadic structure of sales encounters (involving only two participants), or on the polyadic pattern (bringing together more participants), these studies refer mainly to the structure of negotiation, negotiating strategies or intercultural aspects of business negotiations. At the same time, they illustrate the variety of linguistic acts involved in such an interaction, closely related to the underlying historical, social and cultural background against which the business negotiation takes place.

Communication in business negotiation involves, almost inevitably, linguistic acts such as presenting (goods, ideas), anticipating (goals, interests), interpreting (information, attitudes), analysing (offers), debating (on terms), proposing (solutions), rejecting (proposals), summarising (discussion) etc. The dynamics of the negotiating process and the obvious complexity and diversity of the communicative acts have encouraged especially structural discourse analyses (Ventola 1983, Stalpers 1987, Tannen 1990, Firth 1991, 1995a, 1995b and others) whose immediate benefit was a better, clearer identification of the negotiation stages. These stages are directly related to the necessity of organizing and developing the topic of negotiation (including maintaining and changing the topic). As Marriott (1995b: 11) shows, business negotiations include not only stages typical to any interactive situation (greetings, introductions, main discussion, conclusions), but also specific steps (presenting facts, proposing methods and procedures, looking for new information, defending goals, recommending
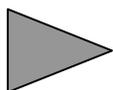
solutions, clarifying and summarising previous information, giving arguments, agreeing, disagreeing).

In this context, the *phatic function* of language (Malinowski 1923, Buhler 1934, Jakobson 1966, Lyons 1968, Laver 1975, Ghiga 1989, Bazzanela 1990, Coupland-Coupland-Robinson 1992, Ghiga 1999), that controls the way in which the channel of communication operates, being involved in the *starting/initiating*, *maintaining* and *terminating* the communicative act, makes a significant contribution to the process of business interaction.

By observing, recording and analysing a number of fifty Romanian business negotiations, I have found out that the phatic function operates at both micro-structural level (a sentence or a larger unit representing someone's utterance), ensuring opening of the communication channel and at macro-structural level (series of utterances, their sequence in the flow of discussion), where it helps interlocutors to check if the channel is open, to confirm their participation in the discussion, to maintain/ prolong communication, to signal their intention to interrupt or end communication. For instance, a relevant aspect of a business negotiation, such as maintaining or changing the topic depends significantly on this function.

In their comparative studies referring to common conversations and negotiating interactions, Gardner (1985) and Marriott (1995a) have proved that shifting of the talk subject/ topic is faster, more obvious and better marked in negotiations and that this can be considered a characteristic of the negotiation discourse. At the same time, Gardner (1985) points out that *shifting* and *recycling* express the speaker's intention (and effort) to maintain the topic of discussion, while *reintroduction* and *full-blown change* signal the intention to replace it. As expected, these aspects are reflected in the negotiator's behaviour and are often expressed by phatic elements.

In a previous research (Ghiga 1989), I have shown that there are a large number of verbal and non-verbal phatic elements that occur frequently in spoken Romanian. I have reasons to think that similar elements can be identified in other languages too, since the need for phatic communion[2] is the same in all people irrespective of the language they speak.

1. Micro-structural level

To identify and understand the manifestation of the phatic function at micro-structural level, we should not forget that business negotiation is, in fact, a face-to-face conversation between two or more persons. Thus, in Romanian business negotiations, I have identified all the phatic elements regularly used in spoken Romanian (Ghiga 1999) for initiating, continuing and terminating a communicative act: vocatives, interrogative phrases (usually, verbal forms), adverbs, interjections, disjunctive questions, more complex forms of address (titles/ special, polite items +

proper name), combinations of the previously-mentioned items. As research has shown, selection of one or another of these terms/phrases depends on the level of formality, the situation of communication and the speaker's attitude.

For organizational reasons, in the present article, I shall use the taxonomy given in a previous work (Ghiga 1998), in which I have classified the phatic elements into three categories, according to their functions mentioned by Roman Jakobson (1960):

> A) *Elements used to establish contact between interlocutors/ to start communication*
> B) *Elements that contribute to maintaining/ prolonging communication*
> C) *Elements used for ending communication.*

This classification proved to be very useful in analysing the phatic function in spoken Romanian. Since there are serious differences between common everyday conversations and business negotiations, we can expect that not all the phatic elements identified in the spoken language (in this case, Romanian) will necessarily occur in business interactions and this article refers only to the most relevant and also the most frequent elements of the A, B, C categories that occur in business negotiations.

The corpus of data resulting from the research was really rich in phatic elements but, due to confidentiality restrains, I had to make a very careful selection of the excerpts. I would like to add that all the excerpts from the original texts will be given in the "Notes" at the end of the article. In order to make it easier for the reader who is not familiar with the Romanian language, in the text of the article, I shall use the English translation of these excerpts.

> A) *Phatic elements used to establish contact between interlocutors/ to start communication*: vocatives, imperatives, verbal forms (pronounced disjunctively), interjections, complex forms of address (especially, in formal situations), other terms[4].

Since the distinction between formal and informal registers is strongly marked in Romanian, many of these categories include pairs of (formal – informal) terms.

Effective communication requires good contact between interlocutors. Speakers often resort to such phatic elements[5] in order to open the channel of communication, to make sure it is open or, sometimes, to draw the interlocutor's attention to a certain piece of information that is to be given:

> a) "*Mr. Stanciu*, I can't actually accept your new terms."
> b) "*Mrs. Dumitrescu*, how are you so sure about that? What happens if they [the supplier] don't deliver according to the schedule? Do you realize how risky it is?"
> c) "*You see?* This is what I'm trying to avoid."

    d) *Listen*, you cannot get it from the bank in such a short period of time. It takes much longer, believe me. It's not an advantage."

    e) *You know?* I'd rather close the unit than sell at such a price."

    f) *Well,* if you think it doesn't work, we could expand the execution time for Section C. It's the last offer."
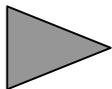
In Romanian everyday conversations, these terms maintain their phatic meaning irrespective of their position in the message. By comparing various situations, I have noticed that, in business negotiations, the phaticity of the elements taking initial position is much stronger than that of the elements situated in the middle or at the end of the message. An exception, in this sense, is the pair of terms *înţelegi?*(I) / *înţelegeţi?* (F) *["do you understand?"]* that maintain a high level of phaticity no matter the position in the message. This is also due to the meaning of the word that appeals to the listener's ability or willingness to assess the situation and understand it:

    g) "Nu pot merge mai jos de-atât (despre preţ), *înţelegeţi*?"

    "I can't go lower than that (about price), *(do) you understand*?"

As we can see, in excerpt g) the phatic term is interrogative. However, there are situations when it is pronounced on a neutral intonation and the meaning is similar to that normally expressed by the following English sentence:

    "I can't go lower than that (about price), *you see/ you know.*"

When in end position, many phatic terms in Romanian vary in their intensity, depending on intonation.

2. Macro-structural level

Any business negotiation develops itself in stages. The number of stages and the order in which they occur depend on the specificity of negotiation, on the situation of communication and on negotiators' communicative competence.

As it was mentioned in other studies (Ventola 1987, Marriott 1995a), the beginning and the closing of a negotiation are particularly important for the human relationship that can be established between the participants. Both stages owe a lot to the phatic function.

It is well-known that the start of the negotiation includes, besides the exchange of greetings and introductions, friendly gestures like hand-shake accompanied by polite phrases, invitations addressed to the guests to take seat at the negotiation table, exchange of business cards, offering of refreshments etc. This well known ritual of hospitality is nothing else than a manifestation of the phatic function of communication through which negotiators try to create a relaxed, friendly

atmosphere, which can ensure a harmonious flow of discussion, despite the participants' contradictory interests they are quite aware of. All that is said and done within this short stage for negotiation is deeply related to the participants' intention to diminish the inevitable tension before starting to talk, especially when people meet for the first time. (Malinowski, 1923)

Because of this, socializing imposes itself as an important stage in the general structure of business negotiation. It is difficult to imagine a meeting in which participants start presenting their offer, giving arguments or debating on various issues as soon as they have met. Not even negotiators who have met many times before or know each other very well can do that. The need for socializing before starting talking business is essential when people meet for the first time or come from different linguistic and cultural areas.

Different socio-cultural backgrounds will, of course, influence the negotiators' behaviour and may often be the source of "dissonance" or "discord deviance" related not only to the content and form of communication, but also to the channel of communication (Marriott, 1995b). It is generally known that the socio-cultural norms are deeply rooted in the participants' behaviour and influence their actions and attitudes significantly. Therefore, success in cross-cultural negotiations depends on the negotiator's ability to adapt to his/her partner and the phatic function helps them to step easier towards mutual understanding.

Though greetings and introductions take a good part of the beginning of a negotiation, practice has proved that they cannot induce the desired atmosphere of sociability alone. Consequently, they are, almost regularly, followed by the so-called "conventional dialogues" whose function was clearly explained by Gardiner (1951) long ago:

> *The topics are conventional, and their expression is merely a means of establishing contact.* (Gardiner 1951: 98)

But sociability grows/ intensifies with sharing and, as we all know, only few topics can give people the opportunity of sharing. Therefore, in their conventional dialogues, by talking about weather, touristic places, business trips, customs and traditions or sports events, negotiators can create the social bond they need in order to make sure that, later in the discussion, they can display their antagonistic interests and fight for them, within mutually-accepted limits of sociability. Linguists and business negotiation trainers have unanimously recognized the role of these conventional dialogues or "small talk" or "casual talk" in inducing a friendly, co-operative atmosphere. Being a benefit interactionally, small talk does not affect the transactional co-ordinate of a business negotiation, leaving the partners open field for developing their strategies:

> *(…) the aim of small talk is to maintain conversation; whatever is talked about has no bearing whatsoever on the topics of the agenda to any of the parties.* (Villemoes 1995: 292-3)

At the same time, as it has also been mentioned in the relevant literature, the extent to which negotiators resort to small talk varies according to culture. As Tannen (1986) stated,

> *Many Western businessmen think it's best to "get down to brass tacks" as soon as possible, and not "waste time" in small talk (social talk) or "beating around the bush". But this doesn't work very well in business dealings with Greek, Japanese, or Arab counterparts for whom "small talk" is necessary to establish the social relationship that must provide foundation for conducting business.* (Tannen, 1986:15)

At present, there is vast literature on 'small talk", especially business training materials, but few authors refer to the phatic nature of this kind of talk. Because of this, 'small talk" is perceived only as a method of initiating a discussion. In reality, this can be used for some other purposes that fall in the domain of phaticity such as interrupting the flow of negotiation with the intention to change the topic, avoiding or passing over a critical moment, ending a discussion in a more subtle and pleasant way. The excerpt below in an example in this sense:

h)

S₁

AT: We'll go on excavating down to Section C. When the base of …eh… of the canal is ready, we'll start compacting the embankment.

GG: Do you have the right equipment? I don't like to hear afterwards that you've stopped because you need…don't know what.

AT: We've got everything we need. In fact, it's about sheep's foot rollers and…. what else?

GG: We won't stumble over it…and I suppose humidity won't be a problem either. If we think of how much it's rained lately…

S₂

AT: No, not at all. Eh, yes, rain comes when …
GG: When you least expect it. I've talked over the phone with a friend in Constantza. He says it's been raining for the whole week. (*to the secretary*) Carmen, is there any coffee left for us?

S₃

R: Yes, sure. Just a moment.
AT: But Section C might take longer than the time you mentioned in the draft (of the contract).

s_4

GG: Don't want to hear about that. What's been settled is settled. Terms are firm.
But don't let the coffee get cold…. (*he looks out of the window*)…. The sun's coming out. Just in time for Steaua's match. (*"Steaua" = a Romanian football team*). It's in the afternoon.

AT: Is it? I didn't know. I don't want to miss it. I mean … watching it on TV.

GG: It's on the Ghencea Stadium. My son's got a ticket….goes there with his colleagues… He's a (*he laughs*) fanatic supporter of Steaua.

In the above fragment, there are two distinct moments when one of the negotiators (GG) attempts to interrupt communication by small talk. His intention in the s_2 section is not taken into account by his interlocutor (AT), who continues negotiating, as shown in s_3. GG accepts to go on and emphasizes his attitude as related to previously established terms. But he makes a new try to introduce small talk. A football match proves to be a successful choice. So the end of negotiation looks like a discussion between two friends.

GG is an experienced, polite and careful negotiator. We can notice that each of his attempts to shift to small talk is supported by additional actions: interrupting the flow of main discussion by addressing the secretary, enquiring about coffee, inviting his guest to have a new cup of coffee, interrupting eye contact by looking out of the window. The excerpt is also illustrative of Firth's (1995) idea that, in the case of previously established relationships, business people use small talk to strengthen their friendship:

> *The parties are acquainted to one another, have a history of previous mutual dealings, and would, we may presume, vested interests in maintaining cordial, personal relations – interests that may be directly attended to in "casual talk".* (Firth, 1995: 193)

The existing familiarity gives the participants the chance to shift smoothly between *small talk* and *work talk* by explicit or implicit agreement.

So far, I have analysed mainly the phatic elements used to initiate business talks, particularly, negotiations. But good operation of the channel means also the possibility of maintaining or prolonging communication, which has to do with the phatic function again. Sometimes, due to background noise, lack of interest, tiredness etc., the locutor may lose contact with the listener. In other situations, even if there are no such alarming signals, the speaker themselves would like to

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check whether the interlocutor is on the same wavelength. In these cases, the speaker wants to make the listener pay attention to a specific part of the discussion, usually, a piece of information that is to be given. As shown elsewhere (Ghiga, 1999), this class of phatic elements includes: items used to re-establish the contact (questions, repetitions of words or full sentences), items that check the interlocutor's level of attention, conjunction "and", conventional dialogues, other structures. As far as negotiations are concerned, this category includes:

> B) *Elements that contribute to maintaining/ prolonging communication in business negotiation*: feedback signals, disjunctive questions, repetitions of words and sentences.

In the corpus I have analysed, feedback signals and disjunctive questions are the most frequent and I will refer mainly to them:

> Feedback signals
> i)
>
> AT: There are two possibilities: to go on trimming according to the regular method….
>
> GG: *Mhm…*
>
> AT: and then we pour concrete, *you know*, as two distinct stages.
>
> GG: *Yes*.
>
> AT: Or, we could use a more complex machine, which does all these operations as a whole.

As excerpt i) shows, feedback can be obtained directly (*Mhm, yes*). In a way or another, the speaker can have an idea about the listener's reaction. In other cases, the speaker tries to involve the listener indirectly by making him/her recognize, even if not explicitly, the existence of certain knowledge they have in common, which might be a guarantee for their mutual understanding:

> j) "SP: We could resort to credits, *you know*, but this would mean …eh,… a short delay. Under the circumstances, we don't think it would be a good solution."
>
> (The meaning of *you know* (pronounced neutrally) is *I'm talking about something we both know quite well.*).

As elements of feedback, these items confirm the fact that the channel is open and encourage the speaker to go on because the interlocutor is listening. In some cultures, however, some of these items may express different attitudes of the listener, for instance, impatience to take turn, signaling rather the intention to

interrupt communication, as Fant points out with reference to the use of *"mmm"* in Swedish:

> "when the hearer's *mmm* is no longer produced between the sentences, but rather in the midst of the speaker's sentence, it is not perceived as supportive, but will rather be felt as a signal of impatience: *yield me the floor soon*."(Fant, 1995: 190)

Disjunctive questions

Other elements ["aşa-i?"/ "nu-i aşa?"- equivalent to various tag-questions; "este?"/ "corect?" (*OK?*, "*all right*?", *"correct?"*)]represent instruments by which the speaker tries to involve the listener in a more direct way, by asking him/her direct questions.

The use of disjunctive questions/ tag-questions is a rather rhetoric attitude. No one expects a prompt answer and the speaker continues as if an answer were given. In business negotiations they occur particularly in the bargaining stage. Because this stage is based on frequent disputes, speakers feel the need to structure their discourse or to prolong their speech, especially when their position is somehow threatened:

k)

"SP: But this would mean to reduce the delivery time, *wouldn't it*? Taking into account all the points I've mentioned, it's not, it's not possible. Honestly, I can't.

NV: But we don't discuss now…eh… ab…

SP: I don't agree."

But, in some tense discussions, despite the speaker's expectations, such elements may lead to unexpected turn taking:

l)

"CM: Up to here (*he indicates a certain area*), the excavation is exactly as in the drawing, *right?* I don't see why…
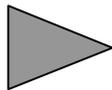
GG: I'm sorry, but the drawing has been altered and we notified by letter. I can't pay anything which is not in the approved drawing."

C) Phatic elements used for ending communication: specific structures, "well", small talk

The phatic function also contributes to the last stage of negotiations, when the intention to end communication is diplomatically expressed by words and gestures. Because discussions are extremely varied, negotiators have to be very creative in signaling the end of communication. As a rule, *small talk* is intensively used to end negotiations. In Romanian business negotiations, small talk is often preceded by specific structures ("*Well, I think that's all for today/ for the moment.*", *"I think we could stop here."*), and ended by sentences expressing appreciation for the interlocutor's contribution and good will, satisfaction for the mutually beneficial discussion, pleasure for having met friendly people, hope to co-operate successfully in the future *("It's been real pleasure to have this discussion with you", "I'm sure we will co-operate successfully"*, etc.).

The small talk sections used to end a business discussion is not significantly different from those used to start it. However, because a relationship – no matter how fragile - has already been established through the initial endeavour, the small talk parts at the end of the negotiation are more relaxed, more fluid and they work effectively towards ending communication successfully, leaving room for a friendly continuation.

I would like to mention that communication during business negotiations benefits significantly from the phaticity of gestures. Though, I have mentioned it above several times, the subject is more complex and should be treated separately.
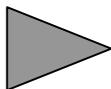
Conclusions

In this article, I have tried to emphasize the importance of the phatic function in business negotiations, particularly in stimulating the interaction these specific encounters are based on. From what I have presented above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The phatic function in business negotiations is centred on the operation of the communication channel, and interferes in establishing, maintaining and interrupting the contact between participants/those taking part in the interaction.
2. Phatic elements occur at both micro- and macro-structural level of a negotiation, they help the development of the negotiating process and are involved in almost all stages of the negotiation.
3. According to the role they play in communication, phatic elements can be classified into:
   a. *elements used to establish contact between interlocutors/ to start communication*: vocatives, imperatives, verbal forms (pronounced disjunctively), interjections, small talk.

    b. elements used to maintain/ prolong communication: feedback signals, disjunctive questions, repetitions of words and sentences.

    c. elements used to end communication: specific structures, "well", small talk

4. Many of the phatic elements present in Romanian business negotiations can be used for other phatic purposes, not only for the one specific to the group/category they belong to.

5. Selection of the phatic elements in Romanian business negotiations depends on the social distance between the participants, on the situation of communication and on the speaker's attitudes and his/her communicative intentions.

Phaticity of linguistic elements varies culturally. That is why good knowledge about the phatic function may help negotiators communicate successfully cross-culturally.

▶ Notes

1. "A negotiation is the interaction of two (or more) parties, which optimises their mutual goals. Each party wants to realise its own goals in the best possible way. Neither of the two parties is able to reach its goals alone, because the goals are, to some extent, controlled by the other side. This means that both parties need to co-operate.

   During the negotiation, each party modifies its own goals and co-ordinate them with the modified goals of the other party. In this sense, a negotiation is a strategic interaction. Both parties know that the other party has goals to reach. In this sense, negotiations are exchange relations. Both parties exchange the posibilty of realizing their goals" (Wagner 1995: 11)

2. "There is in all human beings the well-known tendency to congregate, to be together to enjoy each other's company." (Malinowski 1923, ed.1966: 316)

3. "There are messages primarily serving to establish, to prolong or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works ("Hello, do you bear me?"), to attract the attention of the interlocutor or to confirm his continued attention("Are you listening?" or in Shakespeare's dictio "Lend me your ears!" and on the other end of the wire "Um-hum!") " (Jakobson, 1960, p. 355)

4. The group of "other terms" includes rhetorical questions like "Ce se-ntâmplă?" ("*What happens?*") or some other structures like "Să vă spun" ("*Let me tell you*") that contribute to increasing the listener's attention.

5. Original excerpts:

a. "*Domnule Stanciu*, nu pot accepta noile dumneavoastră condiții."

b. "*Doamnă Dumitrescu*, cum puteţi fi atât de sigură de asta? Ce se-ntâmplă dacă (furnizorul) nu livrează conform graficului? Vă daţi seama cât este de riscant?"

c. "*Vedeţi*, este exact ce încerc să evit."

d. "*Ascultaţi-mă*, nu puteţi obţine asta de la bancă într-un timp aşa de scurt. Vă ia mult mai mult, credeţi-mă. Nu-i niciun avantaj."

e. "*Ştiţi*, mai degrabă închid unitatea decât să vând la un asemenea preţ."

f. "*Ei bine*, dacă credeţi că (soluţia) aceasta nu-i operativă, am putea extinde perioada de execuţie pentru Secţiunea C. E ultima ofertă pe care o fac."

h.

S_1
AT: Vom merge cu săpătura până în Secţiunea C. Când …ăă…baza canalului este gata începem compactarea taluzului.

GG: Şi aveţi utilajele necesare? Nu vrem s-auzim dup-aia că mai trebuie nu ştiu ce …

AT: Avem absolut tot ce ne trebuie. La urma urmei este vorba despre un compactor cu crampoane şi … ce altceva?

GG: Am înţeles. Nu ne vom crampona de asta. Şi cred ca nici umiditatea nu va fi o problemă. După cum a plouat în ultima vreme…….

AT: Nu, nu va fi. Ei, da' şi ploai-asta … când…

S_2
GG: Când te-aştepţi mai puţin. Am vorbit la telefon cu un prieten din Constanţa. Zice că pe acolo a ţinut-o lanţ întreaga săptămână.

GG: (*către secretară*): Carmen, mai ai cafea pentru noi?

R: Da. Sigur. Imediat.

S_3
AT: Dar Secţiunea C s-ar putea să ia totuşi mai mult timp decăt aţi fixat dumneavoastră în GG: Nu vreau s-aud despre asa ceva. Ce-am convenit atunci e strict. Nu umblăm la termene…

Da' să nu lăsăm cafeaua să se răcească…… (*priveşte pe fereastră*)… .

S_4
Iese soarele. Tocmai bine pentru meciul Stelei (echipa de fotbal). E azi după masă.

AT: Da? Nici nu ştiam. Nu vreau să-l pierd…… adică, să-l văd la televizor.

GG: E pe "Ghencea" [stadionul Ghencea]. Are fiu-meu bilet. Se duce cu colegii. E mare "stelist".

i.

AT: Există două posibilităţi: să continuăm trimarea după metoda obişnuită…

GG: *Mhm …*

AT: şi apoi să turnăm beton, *ştiţi*, ca două etape distincte.

GG: *Da.*

AT: Sau putem folosi o maşină mai complexă care face toate aceste operaţii ca un tot.

j.

SP: Putem recurge la credite, ştiţi, dar asta ar însemna …ăă… ceva întârziere. În
     conditiile date, nu cred că ar fi o soluţie bună.

k.

SP: Dar asta ar însemna să reducem timpul de livrare, *nu-i aşa?* Având în vedere
     punctele pe care le-am menţionat până acum …… nu, nu e posibil. Cinstit, nu
     pot.

NV: Dar nu discutăm acum …ăă…   despre…

SP: Nu sunt de acord.

l.

CM: Până aici (*indică o anumită zonă*) săpătura urmează planul, *este*? Nu văd de
     ce n-am …

GG: Îmi pare rău, dar planul a fost modificat şi v-am notificat în scris lucrul ăsta.
     Nu pot plăti dacă nu este în planul aprobat.

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