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## Use of Technologies in Intercultural Communication: Virtual Tools for Business Negotiations with Foreign Partners

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**Abstract.** The article explores the growing importance of technologies in intercultural communication in the context of modern business, with an emphasis on their role in facilitating negotiations with foreign partners. The popular video conferencing platforms are analyzed. Recommendations on the use of video conferencing platforms for business negotiations are given. *Conclusions.* The integration of virtual tools into intercultural business communication increases the efficiency and quality of negotiations with foreign partners. Diversification of communication channels, investments in employee training, as well as the establishment of clear protocols for virtual negotiations contribute to the successful conduct of international business negotiations.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communication, technology, business negotiations, virtual tools, globalization, online communication, virtual meetings, negotiation efficiency

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# Использование технологий в межкультурной коммуникации: виртуальные инструменты для деловых переговоров с зарубежными партнерами

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**Аннотация.** Исследуется растущее значение технологий в межкультурной коммуникации в условиях современного бизнеса с акцентом на их роли в облегчении переговоров с иностранными партнерами. Проанализированы популярные платформы для проведения видео конференций. Даны рекомендации по использованию платформ видео-конференцсвязи для деловых переговоров. **Выводы.** Интеграция виртуальных инструментов в межкультурную деловую коммуникацию повышает эффективность и качество ведения переговоров с иностранными партнерами. Диверсификация коммуникационных каналов, инвестиции в обучение сотрудников, а также установка четких протоколов для виртуальных переговоров способствуют успешному ведению международных деловых переговоров.

**Ключевые слова:** межкультурная коммуникация, технологии, деловые переговоры, виртуальные инструменты, глобализация, онлайн-коммуникация, виртуальные встречи, эффективность переговоров

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## Introduction

In contemporary business, technology has emerged as a critical player in intercultural communication. The utilization of modern technologies facilitates the easy and rapid exchange of information, establishment of contacts, and development of business relationships with partners from different regions. Modern social networks play a crucial role in today's business communication. They enable the establishment of online contacts with partners, exchange of information, participation in discussions. Furthermore, specialized programs and applications for intercultural communication are available to aid in translating texts into diverse languages, adapting content for different cultures, and so on.

The problem revolves around the challenges and effectiveness of utilizing virtual tools in intercultural business communication, specifically during negotiations with foreign partners. As Barry Nalebuffe, an economics professor at Yale University, said at his work "In life you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate" [1].

## Purpose and hypothesis

The purpose of the work is to understand how technology impacts the success of such communication in a globalized business environment.

It is assumed that the integration of virtual tools into intercultural business communication can potentially enhance the effectiveness of negotiations with foreign partners. These technologies, if properly utilized, may help overcome language barriers, cultural differences, and geographical distances, ultimately leading to more successful and efficient business negotiations. The article aims to test this hypothesis through an analysis of real-world cases and data to assess the prac-

tical implications of technology in intercultural business communication.

## Negotiations in the era of digitalization

In an increasingly interconnected and digitized world, the landscape of business negotiations has undergone a profound transformation. As we stand at the crossroads of globalization and technological advancement, the way organizations engage in negotiations, especially with foreign partners, has evolved significantly. The digital age has ushered in a plethora of virtual tools and platforms that have redefined the very essence of negotiations. No longer confined to traditional face-to-face meetings, negotiators now harness the power of virtual communication technologies to bridge geographical distances, overcome language barriers, and navigate the intricacies of intercultural communication. In this era, the negotiation table extends far beyond a physical room; it encompasses a virtual realm where screens and devices serve as conduits for dialogue and deal-making.

In the work of G. Kennedy, the following definition is given: "Negotiations are the process of finding conditions to get what we need from someone who wants something from us" [2]. According to the Oxford Dictionary, "Negotiations are a formal conversation between people who are trying to reach an agreement" [3].

Doctors of Political Sciences M.A. Lebedeva and E.S. Zinovieva [4] examine the concept of international negotiations in a historical context and note that negotiations were considered, and, consequently, mainly used, only as a means to complement unilateral, and above all, forceful methods of influence. However, in the modern world, negotiations are becoming not only a defensive, but also an offensive tool in inter-

national relations. Negotiations are used, especially at the present time, primarily to discuss with a partner a problem that is of mutual interest and to take joint actions to solve it. The authors note that the COVID-19 pandemic and forced isolation, which also affected diplomats, became a kind of catalyst for the development of different formats of video meetings and negotiations. Despite the fact that the technologies for the online implementation of conferencing, before the pandemic the meetings were organized in traditional offline ways. Notably, there have been publications pertaining to the topic of asymmetric attention distribution [5]. The issue of attention allocation within the context of online conferences presents several noteworthy facets. Firstly, attention tends to be predominantly directed towards the speaker, with limited opportunities for participants to observe and interpret information emanating from other individuals engaged in the negotiations. Secondly, the concentration of participants' attention is frequently disrupted, often unintentionally, by external factors not directly related to the negotiation proceedings but rather emanating from the work environments of the dialogue participants. Legal and procedural challenges come to the forefront concerning the execution of international negotiations conducted in an online format. For instance, it is noteworthy that the rules [6] of procedure governing the United Nations Security Council do not explicitly prescribe remote work modalities. Consequently, all virtual meetings convened during the pandemic assumed an informal status. Furthermore, concerns pertaining to the confidentiality of information and the integrity of the voting process arise as pertinent considerations in this context.

Evidently, these multifaceted issues necessitate comprehensive scrutiny and reso-

lution, extending beyond the realm of the United Nations system, to ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of online international negotiations.

However, authors also highlight positive features of the video conference format for negotiations:

- Cost and Time Efficiency: online negotiations afford the advantage of significantly reducing the financial and temporal expenditures traditionally associated with physical travel to negotiation venues;
- Enhanced Centralized Interaction: there exists the opportunity for heightened and concentrated interaction with the core representatives of each negotiating party, fostering focused deliberation;
- Continuous Communication: as a direct corollary of the preceding points, online negotiations facilitate near-constant communication between negotiating parties, enabling swift and iterative exchanges;
- Elimination of Venue Selection Conundrum: the predicament of selecting an appropriate negotiation venue is rendered obsolete, a particularly pertinent consideration in the context of international negotiations embedded within conflict-ridden relationships;
- Absence of Formal Protocol Handshake: importantly, online negotiations dispense with the requirement for formal protocol handshakes, thereby mitigating potential discomfort, especially among participants entrenched in conflict.

### **Key Technical Parameters for Successful Online Negotiations**

The attainment of successful online negotiations necessitates meticulous attention to a spectrum of technical parameters [7, 8, 9, 10]. In this regard, the following technical aspects assume paramount significance:

1. Ensuring a Reliable Internet Connection: The bedrock of uninterrupted online negotiations is a steadfast and high-speed internet connection.

2. Upholding Video and Audio Quality: To facilitate effective communication, it is imperative to equip the negotiation environment with high-caliber video and audio equipment.

3. Preserving Secure Communication: The sanctity of information shared during negotiations is safeguarded through the judicious implementation of encryption and security protocols, thereby fortifying the confidentiality of deliberations.

4. Selecting an Appropriate Online Platform: This selection should align with the requirements of the negotiation process, encompassing features such as screen sharing, document collaboration, recording capabilities and the ability to connect interpreters for simultaneous translation.

5. Ensuring Access to Technical Support: The availability of technical support or recourse in the event of unforeseen technical exigencies during negotiations is imperative to maintain the fluidity and efficacy.

6. Verifying Compatibility: The verification of compatibility across all participants' devices and software is pivotal in forestalling any potential compatibility quandaries.

7. Contingency Planning: Robust contingency plans, which encompass alternative communication modalities or platforms, must be meticulously devised and kept at the ready to counteract the impact of technical failures.

8. Advance Document Sharing and Storage: The facile sharing and secure storage of pertinent negotiation documents.

9. Accessibility and User-Friendliness: The selected online platform should be distinguished by its user-friendly interface, en-

suring that all participants are at ease with its navigation and functionalities.

10. Time Zone Disparities: Cognizance of time zone disparities among participants is essential in scheduling negotiations at times that accommodate the convenience of all involved parties.

11. Meticulous Hardware and Software Maintenance: The regular updating of hardware and software components are pivotal in optimal performance and security.

12. Testing and Preparation: Preliminary test meetings and rehearsals serve as mechanisms for identifying and ameliorating potential technical hiccups in advance of the actual negotiation.

13. Enabling Meeting Recording and Documentation: The enablement of recording options within meetings is conducive to maintaining a comprehensive record of negotiations and agreements, serving as a valuable archival resource.

### **The importance of being able to connect a translator on video conferencing platforms**

In today's world, where business and communication are becoming increasingly global, the ability to connect an interpreter on video conferencing platforms plays a key role in ensuring effective international communication. The ability to conduct international videoconferences with an interpreter simplifies the conclusion of transactions, negotiations and cooperation with partners and clients from different countries.

One of the areas where artificial intelligence has made a noticeable breakthrough is online conferences. The latest artificial intelligence features allow meetings participants to automatically generate subtitles for speech and translate them in real time, which transforms the communication process and increases its efficiency. In the fu-

ture, we can expect even more advanced artificial intelligence technologies that improve interaction at online conferences.

However, now such technologies are still imperfect and due to sound errors at conferences or the peculiarities of the speaker's speech, AI transcription and interpretation may be inaccurate. That is why the function of connecting interpreters for video conferencing platforms is so important.

In a survey [11] conducted among interpreters in September 2021, several key aspects of the interpreter's operation in the circumstances of a videoconference were identified: adaptation to technological changes (the interpreters noted that they easily adapt to new technological conditions and are ready to solve technical difficulties); communication and sound problems (sometimes the interpreter has to act as a moderator of the meeting, because many participants can speak at the same time); psychological aspects (it is difficult for translators to convey the emotional coloring of the speaker's speech, since they do not see him live).

Interpreters also point to difficulties in the perception of paralinguistic means, such

as gestures, facial expressions and emotions of the speaker, which can affect the quality of translation.

All these factors emphasize the difficulties that interpreters face when working remotely and the importance of developing technological solutions to improve this process.

### **Comparative analysis of online video conferencing platforms and their functional characteristics**

In this section, Table 1 discusses the main free video conferencing platforms: ZOOM, Microsoft Teams, Yandex Telemost, Skype, GoogleMeet, VideoUnion and Jazz (Sberbank). Table 2 shows a comparison of their functionality. Also in Table 3, the paid analogues of video conferencing platforms are analyzed: VideoMost, Vinteo, Bizon365, Trueconf, iMind. Table 4 shows a comparison of the functionality of paid platforms.

Each of the free and paid platforms has its advantages and disadvantages, which must be taken into account when choosing a platform for certain tasks of the organization.

Table 1 / Таблица 1

#### **Comparison of free online video conferencing platforms / Сравнение бесплатных платформ онлайн-видеоконференцсвязи**

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Drawbacks</b>
ZOOM	an intuitive interface; stable and high-quality video and audio; a variety of pricing options, including free access and access for large groups; AI companion compose, summarize chat responses, meeting discussions, help in brainstorming and organize ideas on a digital whiteboard; A whiteboard that can be used by all participants of the conference	platform has faced some security issues in the past; the free tariff plan has time limits for long negotiations; impossibility of legal purchase in the Russian Federation; AI functions and other business functions available only for paid accounts

Platform	Advantages	Drawbacks
Microsoft Teams	integration with other Microsoft applications; high level of security; business packages assume a set of Microsoft tools; free 5 GB of cloud storage; tasks can be created within the platform	interface may seem more difficult for new users compared to Zoom; dependence on the Microsoft ecosystem
Yandex Telemost	a user-friendly interface; an integration with Yandex Services; end-to-end encryption for meetings, ensuring that sensitive data shared during video conferences remains secure	doesn't have a global recognition; may not offer as many advanced features as some other video conferencing platforms, for organizations with specific needs, this could be a drawback
Skype	a new user-friendly interface; the most known platform; Skype is owned by Microsoft, and it integrates well with other Microsoft products like Outlook and Office 365; users can purchase Skype Credit to make calls to non-Skype numbers, including landlines and mobile phones	there is no free whiteboard; dependence on the Microsoft ecosystem
Google-Meet	integration with Google Services (Gmail, Google Calendar, and Google Drive); end-to-end encryption for meetings, to protect user data and ensure secure communication.	advanced features, such as meeting recording and large meeting capacities, are only available to Google paid account; occasional technical glitches, such as audio or video synchronization issues or difficulty joining meetings.
VideoUnion	a paid plan, up to 1,000,000 employees can be connected to the server; at the moment there is no time limit for the conference.	at the moment, it is under development, so it does not have such a large number of functions (such as a whiteboard, the ability to connect a translator and others).
Jazz (Sberbank)	SberJazz Webinars can be watched by more viewers than in the most expensive Zoom license (3000 compared to 1000 people).	has an only Russian adapted interface; doesn't have a global recognition; dependence on the Sberbank ecosystem.

*Source: developed by the author based on<sup>1</sup>*

*Источник: разработано автором на основе<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> ZOOM digital platform [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://zoom.us/> (accessed: 13.09.2023).  
Microsoft Teams [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://www.microsoft.com> (accessed: 13.09.2023).  
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VideoUnion [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://videounion.ru/> (accessed: 14.09.2023).  
Jazz (Sberbank) [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://jazz.sber.ru/> (accessed: 14.09.2023).

Table 2 / Таблица 2

**Comparison of the functionality of free platforms / Сравнение функциональности бесплатных платформ**

Function	Platform						
	ZOOM	MS Teams	Yandex Telemost	Skype	Google Meet	Video Union	Jazz
Intuitive interface	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Phone and web	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Screen sharing	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Number of participants	100	100	40	100	100	8	100
Recording	+	+	+	+	+ transcription	+	+
Group chat / Channel	+	+	+ on a meeting	+	+ Google Chat	+	+
Meeting duration	45 min	30 hours (one-on-one) 60 min (group)	unlimited	24 hours	60 min	unlimited	40 min
File sharing	+	+	+	+ up to 300MB	+ through Google Drive	+	+
The digital whiteboard	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
Interpreter connection	+ paid	+ paid AI translation	-	+ free AI translation	-	-	+ free transcript
AI functions	+ paid	-	-	-	-	-	-
Calendar and e-mail integrated	+	+	+ paid	-	+	-	-
Working space	+ paid	-	-	-	+	-	-
Cloud	+ paid	+ 5 GB	+ paid	-	+ Google Drive	-	-

*Source: developed by the author based on<sup>1</sup>*  
*Источник: разработано автором на основе<sup>1</sup>*



From the results of the data analysis presented in Table 1 and Table 2 it can be concluded that the Zoom platform is still a universal platform for conferences of various purposes, however, its free version is not suitable for long-term events; the comparison table of platform functionality can be used to select a specific free platform for a specific conference task. Microsoft Teams provides a high level of security and integration with other Microsoft applications, but it can be difficult for new users. Yandex Telemost has a user-friendly interface and end-to-end encryption, but not many ad-

vanced features. Skype has a user-friendly interface, but does not offer a free whiteboard. Google Meet integrates with Google services and provides end-to-end encryption, but some features are only available for paid accounts. VideoUnion allows you to connect a large number of employees, but it is under development and does not have many functions. Jazz (Sberbank) allows you to conduct webinars with a large number of viewers, but it has an interface adapted only to the Russian language and depends on the ecosystem of Sberbank.

Table 3 / Таблица 3

**Comparison of paid online video conferencing platforms /  
Сравнение платных платформ онлайн-видеоконференцсвязи**

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Drawbacks / peculiarities</b>
VideoMost	integrated with the corporate messenger Team-Spirit IM and optimized for use as a convenient platform for videoconferencing in any company, including government and commercial organizations with an extensive branch system and a large number of employees working remotely; can be installed in the organization's infrastructure and can work on a local network without Internet access; a high degree of protection of user information and transmitted data and the ability to connect encryption using «Infotex ViPNet», «Zastava», «Security Code» (relevant for state and military enterprises); free trial subscription for 3 months.	a fairly high cost; it is more designed for large organizations, state institutions, military structures.
Vinteo	since 2005 in the conferencing market, since 2009 in the videoconferencing market; supports all open communication standards, including H.323 and SIP, and provides full (more than 90% of cases) protocol and functional compatibility with equipment known on the market today; built-in ability to broadcast video conferences to various Internet platforms; automatic making o protocols on different languages; Support for multiple audio channels for multilingual translation.	is not available in mobile apps from different devices, it is needed to open a browser from a phone; no access to the cloud platform.

Platform	Advantages	Drawbacks / peculiarities
Bizon365	rich marketing functionality: subscription pages, mailing lists, selling banners; from 5 positions for presenters, organizers and moderators; allows to link webinars, courses, tests and payment acceptance into one; from 30 webinar rooms, with or without a password; the price for using the platform depends on the number of webinar participants.	more suitable for commercial purposes, courses and sale; broadcasts are carried out using third-party live broadcasting services, most often it's YouTube; audio and video delay for viewers for 15-30 seconds
Trueconf	integration with meeting rooms and videoconferencing terminals; offline work in closed networks without an Internet connection, compatible with PBX and telephony; corporate messenger; automatic creation of the protocol of a video meeting	the web version of TrueConf Online lacks some of the functions.
iMind	up to 200 participants with the video turned on or up to 1000 participants with the microphone turned on can participate in a video conference at the same time; suitable for different areas of micro, small and medium-sized businesses, teachers, speakers, coaches, organizations.	there are no complete instructions for using the videoconferencing program, if there are any questions, the user will have to figure it out on their own or call technical support.

*Source: developed by the author based on<sup>2</sup>  
Источник: разработано автором на основе<sup>2</sup>*

Table 4 / Таблица 4

**Comparison of the functionality of paid platforms /  
Сравнение функциональности платных платформ**

Function	Platform				
	Video Most	Vinteo	Bizon365	Trueconf	iMind
Intuitive interface	+	+	+	+	+
Phone and web	+	+	+	+	+
Screen sharing	+	+	+	+	+

<sup>2</sup> VideoMost [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://www.videomost.com/> (accessed: 16.09.2023).  
Vinteo [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://vinteo.com/> (accessed: 16.09.2023).  
Bizon365 [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://bizon365.ru/> (accessed: 16.09.2023).  
Trueconf [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://trueconf.ru/> (accessed: 16.09.2023).  
iMind [Official website]. — Mode of access: URL: <https://imind.ru/> (accessed: 16.09.2023).

Function	Platform				
	Video Most	Vinteo	Bizon365	Trueconf	iMind
Number of participants	Up to 500	Up to 1000	Up to 500	1000+ Up to 1000000	Up to 10000
Recording	+	+	+	+	+
Group chat / Channel	+	+	+	+	+
Meeting duration	45 min/ unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited	unlimited
File sharing	+	+	+	+	+
The digital white-board	+	+	-	+	+
Interpreter connection	-	+	-	-	-
AI functions	-	-	-	+	-
Calendar and e-mail integrated	+	+	+	+	+
Working space	+	+	-	+	-
Cloud	+ up to 50 GB	-	-	+	-
Technical support	+	+	-	+	+

*Source: developed by the author based on<sup>2</sup>*  
*Источник: разработано автором на основе<sup>2</sup>*

From the results of the data analysis presented in Table 3 and Table 4, it can be concluded that paid video conferencing platforms are more suitable for long-term corporate use, and many of them are aimed at specific needs of organizations. Video-Most is optimized for video conferencing in companies of any scale, the platform provides a high degree of data protection and supports encryption. However, it has a high cost and is more suitable for large organizations and government agencies. Vinteo allows you to broadcast video conferences on the Internet and automatically create

protocols in different languages. However, it is not available in mobile applications and does not have a cloud platform. Bizon365 — offers marketing functionality and the ability to combine webinars, courses and tests. However, broadcasts are carried out through third-party live broadcasting services, which can cause audio and video delays. Trueconf — integrates with conference rooms and video conferencing terminals. The platform can work in closed networks and has a corporate messenger. iMind is more suitable for small business development.

## Recommendations on the use of video conferencing platforms for business negotiations

Organizations should consider using different video conferencing platforms to meet the different preferences and technological capabilities of their international partners. These can be popular platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Yandex Telemost, as well as good analogues created specifically for organizations such as VideoMost, Vinteo and others. The diversification of the platforms and software used ensures flexibility and accessibility for all stakeholders.

To maximize the benefits of virtual tools, organizations should invest in comprehensive training programs for employees involved in international negotiations. This should cover not only the technical aspects of the platforms, but also the best practices of effective intercultural communication in a virtual environment.

In addition, a dedicated technical support team can promptly resolve any issues that may arise during online negotiations.

While video conferencing is a powerful tool, organizations should also integrate other forms of communication such as instant messaging, email, and document editing together. Such a variety of communication channels ensures a richer and more comprehensive exchange of ideas and information, especially during complex negotiations. It is important to establish clear expectations and protocols for virtual negotiations. This includes defining meeting agendas, roles, responsibilities, and follow-up procedures. The creation of a clear conference structure ensures that all issues will be agreed upon and effectively addressed in the negotiation process.

## Conclusions

1. The integration of virtual tools into intercultural business communication increases the efficiency and quality of negotiations with foreign partners.

2. The introduction of virtual tools for business negotiations with foreign partners holds great potential for organizations seeking to improve intercultural communication. By diversifying platforms, providing comprehensive training, embracing multimodal communications, prioritizing cross-cultural competencies, using advanced functions and establishing clear protocols, organizations can confidently and competently conduct international negotiations.

## Conflict of Interests / Конфликт интересов

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов

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