

Global English in International Business

TOTALLY REVISED NEW EDITION

Annalisa Zanola



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A Bright Pen Book

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Preface

Recent events and developments have repositioned intercultural communication as a fundamental topic, requiring critical analysis in light of the increasing number of countries participating in global business transactions, various strategic alliances, and multinational joint ventures. As organizations from developed and developing nations struggle to establish their ethical identity and engage in intercultural communication, the business environment becomes challenging and complex, as a result of differing standards, expectations, and language patterns. As Annalisa Zanola indicates in her work, intercultural communication competence as well as understanding cultural differences will not only assist businesses to bridge the communication gap among countries involved in international trade negotiations, but will also enable multinational and multicultural managers and chief executives to manage business more effectively.

Aimed at a public of global English learners and users, Zanola's contribution identifies one basic skill in oral communication, that is, public speaking, and some fundamental tools for the business expert of international business, either native or non-native speaker of English, namely the Corporate Annual Report (AR). Different study areas have been associated with AR, from accounting to finance and marketing, from linguistics to semiotics: in the specific academic context, this genre has interested researchers and scholars since the early 1980s. The Author describes it as a highly specialized text, created by and for insiders, even though also often destined to an audience of non-experts. The interdisciplinary approach the Author adopts sounds new to a public of experts, as a result: the AR genre must be referred to as a 'contaminated genre', given its blending of varied and multiple competencies.

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Annalisa Zanola's work in the field of Business English has been characterized by a specific focus on the role of intercultural interaction and exchange. This contribution reflects such trend providing readers with an insight on the implications of learning and teaching English across borders and sectors.

The Author sets the scene by illustrating the influence cultural contexts exert on the way business is carried out. Specifically, Zanola argues how Hofstede's model as well as some reflections on ethics, society and communication represent the starting point for working beyond linguistic barriers in spite of one's nationality and knowledge of the English language.

From context to language and from language to trainers; those are the issues that the Author discusses in the last part of the book. The blurred boundary between teaching English for International Business and teaching International English for Business represents a challenge for nowadays language trainers. English Teachers' role shifts along a line in which one can be a consultant or a facilitator, a business subject specialist or a teamworker.

Zanola builds her contribution by providing the reader with new reflections on the importance of public speaking in entrepreneurs' oral communication and on the Annual Report genre in global business communication, suggesting how to create targeted effectiveness in learning and teaching Business English.

In a business world that changes rapidly - overcoming nationalities, countries, and company size - Annalisa Zanola's work helps Business English learners and trainers to reflect on the need for flexibility and creativity in a wide field that has been way too focused on traditional principles.

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Introduction

The world has not become a village, but rather a tremendously complex web of villages, towns, neighbourhoods, settlements connected by material and symbolic ties in often unpredictable ways [...]. What is needed is a new vocabulary to describe events, phenomena and processes, new metaphors for representing them, new arguments to explain them.

(Blommaert 2010: 1-2)

English is the global language of business. More and more multinational companies are mandating English as the common corporate language, in an attempt to facilitate communication across geographically and socially diverse areas. Multinational corporations are multilingual communities, in which the language of the parent company and the languages of its foreign subsidiaries are concurrently used and recursively linked through an intra-corporate communication network. Functional language is determined by the corporation's international strategy, organizational structure, and transnationality, and it is mainly English. Aligning language choices with organizational strategy improves business communication and knowledge-sharing.

Consequently, adopting English as a common language in business communication is becoming a rule, as it has been demonstrated in many real situations. I will cite one for all. In 2010, Hiroshi Mikitani, the CEO of Rakuten—Japan's largest online marketplace—decided that English would be the company's official language of business¹. The company's goal was to become the number one internet services company in the world, and Mikitani believed that the new policy—which would affect some 7,100 Japanese employees—was vital in achieving that aim, especially as expansion plans were concentrated outside Japan. He also felt the need to contribute to an expanding worldview of his country, a conservative island nation. The multibillion-dollar company was expanding successfully: it had acquired *PriceMinister* in France, *Buy.*

¹ Source: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20100518a3.html>. M. Matsutani, "Rakuten to hold all formal internal meetings in English", *The Japan Times Online*, May 18; <http://web.archive.org/web/20100703202517/http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/news/20100701p2a00m0na006000c.html>. "Rakuten to make English official language inside company by end of 2012", *The Mainichi Daily News*, July 4, 2010.

com and *FreeCause* in the United States, *Play.com* in the United Kingdom, *Tradoria GmbH* in Germany, *Kobo* in Canada, and had established joint-ventures with major companies in China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Brazil. In May 2010, Mikitani announced the plan to employ not Japanese but English. Overnight, the Japanese language cafeteria menus were replaced, as well as all the possible instructions and signs or notices on the walls. Mikitani stated that employees had to demonstrate competence on an international English scoring system within two years—otherwise they risked demotion or even dismissal. The media instantly picked up the story, and corporate Japan reacted either with strong approval or with strong disdain. Honda’s CEO, Takanobu Ito, publicly asserted: “It’s stupid for a Japanese company to only use English in Japan when the workforce is mainly Japanese”². Mikitani, however, was confident that he had made the right choice, and his policy bore fruit. The English mandate allowed Mikitani to create a remarkably diverse and powerful organization. Today, three out of six senior executives in his engineering organization are not Japanese; they do not even speak Japanese. The company continues to aggressively seek the best talent from around the globe. Half of Rakuten’s Japanese employees can now adequately communicate in English inside the company, and 25% speak English with partners and colleagues in foreign subsidiaries on a regular basis³.

The Rakuten story demonstrates that adopting a global language policy is not easy, because it is a radical choice, meeting almost certain firm resistance from employees. Nevertheless, companies must overcome language barriers to survive and thrive in a global economy, and English is the common ground. English, the fastest-spreading language in human history, is now spoken by some 1.75 billion people worldwide (Neeley 2012), that is, by one out of four people. There are almost 385 million native speakers in countries like the United States and Australia, about a billion fluent speakers in formerly colonized nations such as India and Nigeria, while millions of people around the world have studied English as a second language. An estimated 565 million people use it on the

2 Source: <http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20120812/business/708129964/print/>. “Japanese company tries ‘Englishization’”, *Daily Herald*, August 12, 2012.

3 Source: <http://hbr.org/2012/05/global-business-speaks-english/ar/1>. N. Tsedal, “Global Business speaks English”, *Harvard Business Review*, May 2012.

Internet. The benefits of ‘Englishization’, as Mikitani called it, are significant; however, relatively few companies have systematically implemented an English-language policy and some practitioners and users of English in international business contexts still do not realize the relevance of the problem.

From a linguistic point of view, global English needs new ways of studying the language, innovative materials and techniques for the teaching of English, renewed theoretical and methodological approaches to the classification of spoken and written English varieties. We are witnessing the beginning of a linguistic tradition of scholarship that addresses globalization. Two recent books have analyzed aspects of language in globalization: Norman Fairclough’s *Language and Globalization* (Fairclough 2006), and Alastair Pennycook’s *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* (Pennycook 2007). Both these books study globalization as a topic and framework of analysis, but from different perspectives. Fairclough (2006) usefully draws attention to the fact that we should not look at language but at discourse when we consider sociolinguistic globalization processes: in other words, we have to focus on genres, registers, and styles rather than on ‘languages’. Pennycook (2007) stresses the inadequacy of established conceptual tools in addressing the complexities of globalization. Both also underline the importance of dedicated attention to this phenomenon and they demolish the image of globalization as a unified and unifying process.

Consequently, a definition of English as a ‘global language’ requires an important sociolinguistic awareness. As Blommaert (2010:21) argues, this approach to the definition of ‘global English’ is fundamental:

Mobility is the great challenge: it is the dislocation of language and language events from the fixed position in time and space attributed to them by a more traditional linguistics and sociolinguistics (the Saussurean synchrony) that will cause the paradigm shift we are currently witnessing to achieve success. It is the insertion of language in a spectrum of human action which is not defined purely in relation to temporal and spatial location, but in terms of temporal and spatial trajectories that is the main objective here. In order to get there, the notion of ‘mobility’ itself must be examined, and an improved notion of ‘locality’ needs to be developed as well.

This book proposes a sociolinguistic approach to the study of global English in an extremely movable and non-localized context, that is, the international business context. Great mobility and the absence of fixed locality are among the most striking characteristics of the varieties of English used in business communication. My approach to the field of Business English here presented is characterized by a specific focus on the role of intercultural interaction and exchange, and an insight into the implications of teaching and learning English across borders and sectors is also provided.

Part I describes the influence cultural contexts exert on the way business is carried out. Specifically, the Hofstede's model is adopted as the starting point for working beyond linguistic barriers and some reflections on ethics, society and communication are proposed.

Parts II and III focus on discourse and genres in corporate communication, discussing some theoretical issues of oral and written business English. Entrepreneurs' public speaking is considered here for the first time, as an emblematic context of oral production both in internal and external business communication: empirical data support the thesis of a strict relationship between entrepreneurs' effectiveness in speaking and the social construction of their meanings. Moreover, authentic business texts and genres are furnished in order to bring evidence of the crucial role discourse plays in the construction of corporate identity: in particular, the Financial Statement, or Annual Report, text is described as a component of great social, cultural and ethnographical significance.

From context to language and from language to trainers: these are the issues of the last part of the book. The blurred boundary between teaching English for International Business and teaching International English for Business represents a challenge for today's language trainers. The role of the English teacher shifts along a line in which one can be consultant, facilitator, business subject specialist, or team worker.

In a business world that is rapidly changing - overrunning nationalities, countries, and company size – an understanding of the new requirements and the need for flexibility and creativity in putting these requirements into practice are a mandate. This study aims at furnishing reflections and guidelines in achieving these goals.

A.Z.

Brescia, August 2012

PART I

English: the global language of business

1. The global marketplace

Market globalization is the increasing tendency of the world to act as one market. Domestic markets are opening to worldwide competition to provide growth opportunities for a company's goods and services. Technological advances in travel and telecommunications are the driving force behind market globalization. New communication technologies allow teams from all over the world to work on projects and share information without leaving their desks. At the same time, advanced technologies allow manufacturers to produce their goods in foreign locations that offer an abundant supply of low-cost labour.

Consequently, natural boundaries and national borders are disappearing, as increasing numbers of people work in multinational settings. Even firms that once thought they were too tiny to expand into a neighbouring city have discovered that they can sell in overseas markets with the help of fax machines, overnight delivery services, email, and the Internet. To be successful in the global marketplace, e-commerce companies must consider offering Web sites in the languages that current Internet users speak.

Nevertheless, a company needs not 'go global' or launch a web site to interact with someone who speaks a foreign language or who thinks, acts, or transacts business differently. Even if a company transacts business locally, there are a lot of chances that an employee will be communicating at work with people who come from different national, religious, and ethnic backgrounds. As a matter of fact, today's workforce is made up of more and more people who differ in race, gender, age, culture, family structure, religion, and educational background. Such 'cultural diversity' contributes enormously to the importance of intercultural communication. It affects how business messages are conceived, planned, sent, received, and interpreted in the workplace.

2. The multicultural work force

A multicultural work force is one made up of men and women from a variety of different cultural and racial backgrounds. The labor force of any country is

a reflection of the population from which it is drawn, despite some distortions that may be caused by discrimination or cultural bias. In the United States, the population has continued to grow more racially and ethnically diverse in the last decades and this diversity is now reflected in the work place. Managing this diversity in such a way that the benefits are maximized and the challenges minimized is an important aspect of managing any business today⁴.

As a result of the complex background of their workforce, modern organizations must face many significant challenges. Among these challenges are:

- the use of information and communication technology (ICT)
- a varied linguistic and cultural workforce, and
- new organizational designs.

For this reason, some organizations are trying to understand how the virtual environment affects team effectiveness. An exploratory study by Shachaf (2008) successfully focused on the effects of cultural diversity and ICT on team effectiveness. In her research, interviews with 41 team members from nine countries employed by a Fortune 500 corporation were analyzed. Results suggested that cultural diversity had a positive influence on decision-making and a negative influence on communication. ICT mitigated the negative impact on intercultural communication and supported the positive impact on decision making. Effective technologies for intercultural communication included e-mail, teleconferencing combined with e-meetings, and team rooms. Cultural diversity influenced selection of the communication media. It is on cultural contexts then that we have to focus our attention.

⁴ Multicultural workforce as a descriptive term or phrase has, however, largely been supplanted by the term 'diversity' in describing the increasing heterogeneity of the workplace through the inclusion of different groups of people. While 'multicultural workforce' is still sometimes used in reference to employees of varying social, racial, and ability characteristics, the scope of diversity goes further and includes not only the personal characteristics of an organization's employees but also the way an organization responds to a multicultural or diverse *workforce* (see: *Multicultural Workforce* in: <http://www.referenceforbusiness.com/encyclopedia/Mor-Off/Multicultural-Workforce.html#ixzz24BDQ36DK>. Last visit: 30/08/2012).

3. Cultural context and business

When people write to or speak with someone from another culture, they encode their message using the assumptions of their own culture. However, members of their audience may decode this message according to the assumptions of another culture, so the original meaning may be misunderstood. For instance, a nodding gesture indicates understanding in the United States, but in Japan it means only that the person is listening (Chaney / Martin 2000: 6).

Cultural differences often rise from our assumptions. Consider the two following cases described by Thill and Bovée (1999:48):

When Japanese auto manufacturer Mazda opened a plant in the United States, officials passed out company baseball caps and told U.S. employees that they could wear the caps at work, along with their mandatory company uniform (blue pants and khaki shirts). The employees assumed that the caps were a ‘voluntary’ accessory, and many decided not to wear them. Japanese managers were upset, regarding the decision as a sign of disrespect and believing that employees who really cared about the company would want to wear the caps. However, the U.S. employees resented being told what they should want to do. Similarly, exhibitors at a trade show could not understand why Chinese visitors were not stopping by their booth. Exhibitors were wearing green hats and giving them away as promotional items. But they soon discovered that for many Chinese, green hats are associated with infidelity; the Chinese expression “He wear a green hat” indicates that a man’s wife has been cheating on him. So they discarded the green hats (giving out T-shirts instead) and the Chinese visited the booth.

Problems such as these arise when we assume, wrongly, that other people’s attitudes and lives are like ours. Intercultural sensitivity can be improved, however, by recognizing and accomodating cultural differences, which can be examined in four major categories: contextual, ethical, social, and nonverbal.

3.1. Contextual differences

Cultural context is the pattern of physical cues, environmental stimuli, and implicit understanding that convey meaning between two members of the same culture. However, from culture to culture, people convey contextual meaning differently. In fact, correct social behaviour and effective communication can be defined by how much a culture depends on contextual cues (Hofstede 1984, 1991)⁵.

In a ‘high-context culture’ (such as Japanese, Chinese, Arab), people rely less on verbal communication and more on the context of nonverbal actions and environmental setting to convey meaning. In high-context cultures, the rules of everyday life are rarely explicit; instead, as individuals grow up, they learn how to recognize situational cues (such as gestures and tone of voice) and how to respond as expected.

In a ‘low-context culture’ (such as North-American, Scandinavian, German), people rely more on verbal communication and less on circumstances and cues to convey meaning. In a low-context culture, rules and expectations are usually spelled out through explicit statements such as “Please wait until I’ve finished”, or “You’re welcome to browse” (Dodd 1991: 69-70). Contextual differences are apparent in the way cultures approach situations such as negotiating, decision making and problem solving.

As for negotiating styles, high-context cultures emphasize relationships and a sociable atmosphere when negotiating, whereas low-context cultures view negotiations impersonally and focus on economic goals. In decision-making practices, high-context cultures encourage lengthy decisions, concentrating on

5 Hofstede’s well-known theory of cultural dimensions describes the effects of a society’s culture on the values of its members, and how these values relate to behaviour. Hofstede developed his original model as a result of using factor analysis to examine the results of a worldwide survey of employees’ values by IBM in the 1960s and 1970s. The theory was one of the first that could be quantified, and could be used to explain observed differences between cultures.

The original theory proposed four dimensions along which cultural values could be analyzed: *individualism-collectivism*; *uncertainty avoidance*; *power distance* (strength of social hierarchy) and *masculinity-femininity* (task orientation versus person-orientation). Independent research in Hong Kong led Hofstede to add a fifth dimension, *long-term orientation*, to cover aspects of values not discussed in the original paradigm. In 2012 Hofstede has added a sixth dimension, *indulgence versus self-restraint*, as a result of co-author Michael Minkov’s analysis of data from the *World Values Survey*.

every detail; on the contrary, low-context cultures emphasize quick, efficient decisions on major points while leaving the details to be worked out later. As for problem-solving techniques, cultures may differ in their tolerance for open disagreement: as a rule, high-context cultures avoid confrontation and debate, whereas low-context cultures encourage open disagreement.

3.2. *Ethical differences*

Cultural context influences many other cultural areas, including legal and ethical behaviour. For example, because low-context cultures value the written word, they consider written agreements binding. On the contrary, high-context cultures put less emphasis on the written word and consider personal pledges more important than contracts. They also have a tendency to view law with flexibility, whereas low-context cultures would adhere to the law strictly (Wilfong / Seger 1997: 277-278).

Legal systems differ from culture to culture. In the United Kingdom and in the United States, someone is presumed innocent until proved guilty, a principle rooted in English common law. However, in many other countries, someone is presumed guilty until proved innocent, a principle rooted in the Napoleonic code (Harris / Moran 1991: 260). These distinctions can be particularly important if a firm must communicate about a legal dispute in another country.

Making ethical choices in business can be very difficult, even within one's own culture. When communicating across cultures, ethics can be even more complicated. What does it mean to do the right thing in a country we do not know? What happens when a certain behaviour is unethical in our country but an accepted practice in another culture? For example, bribing officials is viewed differently from culture to culture, as described here:

In the United States, bribing officials is illegal, but Kenyans consider paying such bribes as part of life. To get something done right, they pay. In China businesses pay 'huilu', in Russia they pay 'vzyatka', in the Middle East it's 'baksheesh', and in Mexico it's 'una mordida'.

The United States has lobbied other nations for 20 years to outlaw bribery, and at last the industrialised nations have signed a treaty that makes payoffs to foreign officials a criminal offence. Of course, bribery won't end just because a treaty has been signed, but supporters are optimistic that countries will ratify the treaty, pass legislation, and enforce the new laws stringently (Kaltenheuser 1998: 11).

Making ethical choices across cultures can seem incredibly complicated, but doing so actually differs little from the way one chooses the most ethical path in his/her own culture.

3.3. *Social differences*

In any culture, formal rules of etiquette are explicit and well defined. When formal rules are violated, members of a culture can explain why they feel upset. In contrast, informal social rules are more difficult to identify and they are usually learned by watching how people behave and then imitating that behaviour. When informal rules are violated, members of a culture are likely to feel uncomfortable, although they may not be able to say exactly why.

Social rules are relevant when we consider the way cultures recognize status, define manners, and think about time:

- a) *attitudes towards status*. Cultures dictate how people show respect and signify rank. For example, people in the United States show respect by addressing top managers as “Mr Roberts” or “Ms Gutierrez”. However, people in China address businesspeople according to their official titles, such as “President” or “Manager” (Thill / Bovée 1999: 53).
- b) *attitudes towards manners*. What is polite in one culture may be considered rude in another. In Arab countries it is impolite to take gifts to a man's wife, but it is acceptable to take gifts to his children. In India, if you are invited to visit someone's home ‘any time’, you should make an unexpected visit

without waiting for a definite invitation. Failure to take the ‘any time’ invitation literally would be an insult, a sign that you do not care to develop the friendship (Thill / Bovée 1999: 55).

- c) *attitudes towards time*. Conducting business entails schedules, deadlines, and appointments, but these matters are regarded differently from culture to culture. Although businesspeople in the United States, or Germany, England, Scandinavia, and other European countries see time as a way to organize the business day efficiently, executives from Latin America, for instance, see time as more flexible (Chaney / Martin 2000: 222-223). Meeting a deadline may be less important than building a business relationship; so the workday is not expected to follow a rigid, preset schedule.

3.4. *Nonverbal differences*

Nonverbal communication is extremely reliable when determining meaning, but that reliability is valid only when the communicators belong to the same culture. The simplest hand gestures change meaning from culture to culture; therefore, interpreting nonverbal elements according to one’s own culture can be dangerous. Nonverbal elements are apparent in attitudes toward personal space and in body language.

- a) *personal space*. People from different cultures have different ‘comfort zones’. Some examples:
People in Canada and the United States usually stand about five feet apart during a business conversation. However, this distance is uncomfortably close for people from Germany or Japan and uncomfortably far for Arabs and Latin Americans (Chaney and Martin 2000: 128).
- b) *body language*. Learning a language related to one culture does not necessarily mean that the learner understands the body language of that culture. People from different cultures may misread an intentional nonverbal signal, may overlook the signal entirely, or may assume that a meaningless gesture is significant.

4. Breaking through cross-linguistic barriers

Once we have recognized cultural elements and overcome ethnocentrism, we are ready to focus directly on intercultural communication skills. To communicate more effectively with people from other cultures, we need to overcome language barriers, study other cultures, develop effective written skills, and develop effective oral skills.

By choosing specific words to communicate, we signal that we are members of a particular culture or subculture and that we know one specific code. The nature of our code – the language we use, the ‘specialized’ vocabulary we choose – imposes its own barriers on our message. For instance, the way a lawyer communicates to his/her colleagues differs from that of an accountant or a doctor, and the difference in their ways of communicating (in terms of lexical, syntactic and pragmatic choices) affects their ability to recognize and express ideas.

Barriers also exist because words can be interpreted in more than one way. The barriers become greater still when we are communicating across cultures. Speaking global English in an international business context implies that we must be able to communicate effectively both with native speakers (NS) and with non-native speakers (NNS), and among them, both with people who speak English as a Second Language (ESL) and with people who speak very little English.

Of the many millions of NNS who use English for business, some are extremely fluent, but some others have only an elementary command. In such a varied linguistic context, slang and idioms, local accents and pronunciation, and vocal variations can pose problems. For this reason, the English used in international business communication tends to be ‘simplified’. Some examples from real business contexts⁶:

- a) *slang and idioms*. If a U.S. executive tells a NNS that a certain product “doesn’t cut the mustard” or that making the monthly sales quota will be “a piece of a cake”, chances are that the communication will fail.
- b) *local accents and pronunciation*. After transferring to Toyota’s U.S. office,

⁶ Examples are adapted from: Chaney / Martin (2000:103).

some English-speaking Japanese employees had to enroll in a special course to learn that “Jeat yet” stood for “Did you eat yet?” (that is, “Have you eaten yet?”) and that “Cannahepya?” meant “Can I help you?”.

- c) *vocal variations*. Some people tend to use the intonational patterns of their native language when speaking English. Russian speakers, for instance, tend to keep a flat, level tone, so that they may sound bored or rude to English NS.

5. Communicating with a global audience

Many companies use translations to communicate with people who do not speak English. However, reaching an international audience involves more than simply offering translations of texts in English.

Successful global communication addresses the needs of international customers in at least five ways:

1. *considering the reader's viewpoint*. The audience may be unfamiliar with English or American phrases and references. To avoid confusion, both European and American units and metric equivalents (for weights, measures, sizes, temperatures) or time expressions should be given.
2. *being sensitive to cultural differences*. Cultural stereotypes or idioms and references which are not universally recognized should be always avoided.
3. *keeping the message clear*. Simple words and sentences are always welcome; abbreviations and acronyms should be defined.
4. *breaking through language barriers with graphics*. Graphics are very useful in order to clarify concepts. However, even though most graphical icons are recognized, some images are more widely accepted than others.
5. *consulting local experts*. Working with local experts may be important in order to develop native-language keywords that will, for instance, direct international customers to one website.

The introductory framework given suggests that linguistic and communicative resources in English, in the context of global business communication, are mobile and difficult to define. The intensified processes of globalization exacerbate the problem. As Blommaert (2010:4) argues:

Globalization [...]is like every development of the system in which we live, something that produces opportunities as well as constraints, new possibilities as well as new problems, progress as well as regression. A critical approach must at least provide an accurate diagnostic of these issues.

Convinced of the strong need for a new, truly ‘global’ approach to the research and the teaching/learning English as an International Language (EIL), I start in the next chapter (Part II) by sketching the relevance of studying and practicing public speaking in entrepreneurial contexts (Zanola 2011c); then I move on to the description of an emblematic example of a written business genre in Part III. Each part will accompanied with a final summary of the main points, with some final reflections and suggestions for further readings, in the hope of providing discussion on the key concepts of this book.

Key terms*Cultural context**Cultural diversity**ESL**High-context culture**Low-context culture**Market globalization**Market place**Nonverbal
communication**NS vs NNS**Workforce***Part I - Summary**

The purpose of Part I was to emphasize the necessity of intercultural communication and clarify the concepts of *global marketplace*, *multicultural workforce*, and *cultural context*. Chapters 1 to 2 argued that recent technological, political and sociological advancements have created a real global village, in which diverse people have diverse values and beliefs that often clash: only through intercultural communication can such conflict be managed and reduced. Chapters 3 and 4 underlined how much language reflects cultural these values and beliefs, and moreover, how difficult it is to manage communication at an international and cross-cultural level. Chapter 5 introduced the concept of *global audience*, that is, the ‘new’ varied audience an EIL speaker will meet in international business contexts.

Discussion Questions

1. Why are so many people afraid to communicate with people from cultures different from their own?
2. Do you feel that you belong to an individualistic or collectivistic culture? Why? What are the signs?
3. What are your initial impressions when you think about people from different cultures?
4. When you actually meet someone from a different culture, what do you remember about him or her?
5. How does your language affect the way you think?

Suggested Activities

Simulations are very useful when approaching the field of intercultural business communication because they can create fictional, but fact-based, scenarios. Participants may play the roles of international businesspersons and negotiators, based upon biographical and behavioural information provided to them in role-plays. The role-players act within corporate and character guidelines and cultural constraints while working toward specific business objectives. Two links are suggested here, for practicing:

- <http://www.carla.umn.edu/culture/resources/exercises.html#games>
- <http://www.multiculturalcenter.org/exercises/>

Further Reading

The following are suggested for readers wishing to broaden their understanding of intercultural communication:

Collins J., Slembrouck S., Baynham M. (eds), 2009, *Globalization and Language in Contact. Scale, Migration and Communicative Practice*, Continuum, London-New York. This book examines the impact of globalization on languages in contact, including the study between the global and local.

Murata K., Jenkins J. (eds), 2009, *Global Englishes in Asian Contexts. Current and Future Debates*, Palgrave-Macmillan, London. It is a multi-perspective volume, which explores the spread of English in the world and describes the ways in which English users communicate with each other, negotiating meaning, accommodating to each other and constructing new communities of practice.

Neuliep J.W., 2012, *Intercultural Communication. A Contextual Approach*, Sage, Thousand Oaks. The volume provides a clear, comprehensive model for examining communication within cultural, microcultural, environmental, socio-relational, and perceptual contexts. It is a core textbook for courses in intercultural communication.

Internet Links

Focused Websites

Available from: <http://www.mislinks.org/communicating/intercultural-communication/>.
(Last updated: August 22, 2012).

- ClearlyCultural
- Culture Values: Hofstede Rankings for All Countries/Regions
- Geert Hofstede links
- A Hot-List on Cross-Cultural Communication
- How Americans Communicate
- Intercultural-crosscultural-communication.com
- Intercultural Communications Institute
- Intercultural Communication Portal
- Kwintessential.com
- Society for Intercultural Education, Training and Research (SIETAR)

Directories

- MavicaNET: Global and Intercultural Communications
- Yahoo: Intercultural Communication

PART II

International public speaking in entrepreneurs' global experience

1. Public speaking in business communication

In international business, the importance of public speaking has been acknowledged extensively by authors as, to name a few, Knapp (1969), Myers / Kessler (1980), Ober / Zhao / Dans / Alexander (1999), Brooker Thro (2009), Cyphert (2010). Their studies emphasize aspects that span from the role of public speaking for successful business practices to the rhetorical aspects that characterize business speech; and from the key themes that emerged from corporate leaders speeches to the effects of certainty (e.g. profit status, industry type) on public business communication outcomes. While extant literature has paid attention to the constituents of the public speech *per se* and to the nuances it takes when deployed for business objectives, little emerges on the way speaking in public is interpreted by those who perform it in international contexts, and on the extent to which their performance serves a wider range of purposes rather than those strictly linked to business. In attempting to fill this gap, this chapter looks at the way entrepreneurs understand and explain public speaking within their ‘globalized’ professional arena.

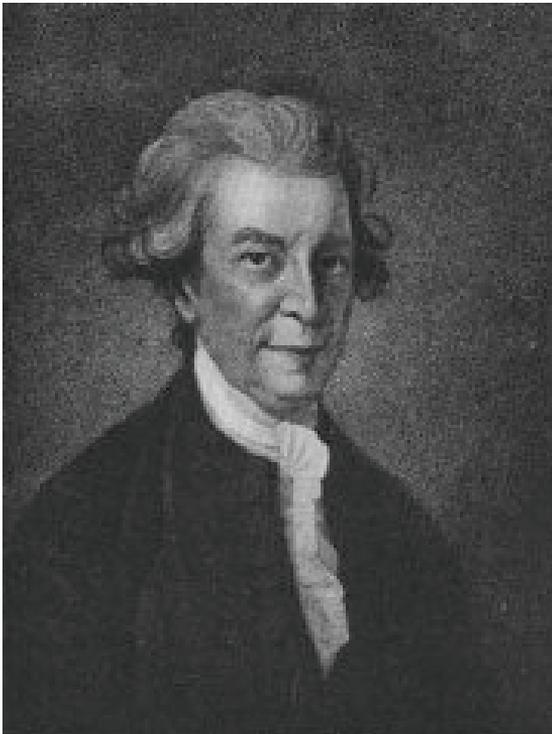


Fig. 1. Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788), actor and teacher of elocution

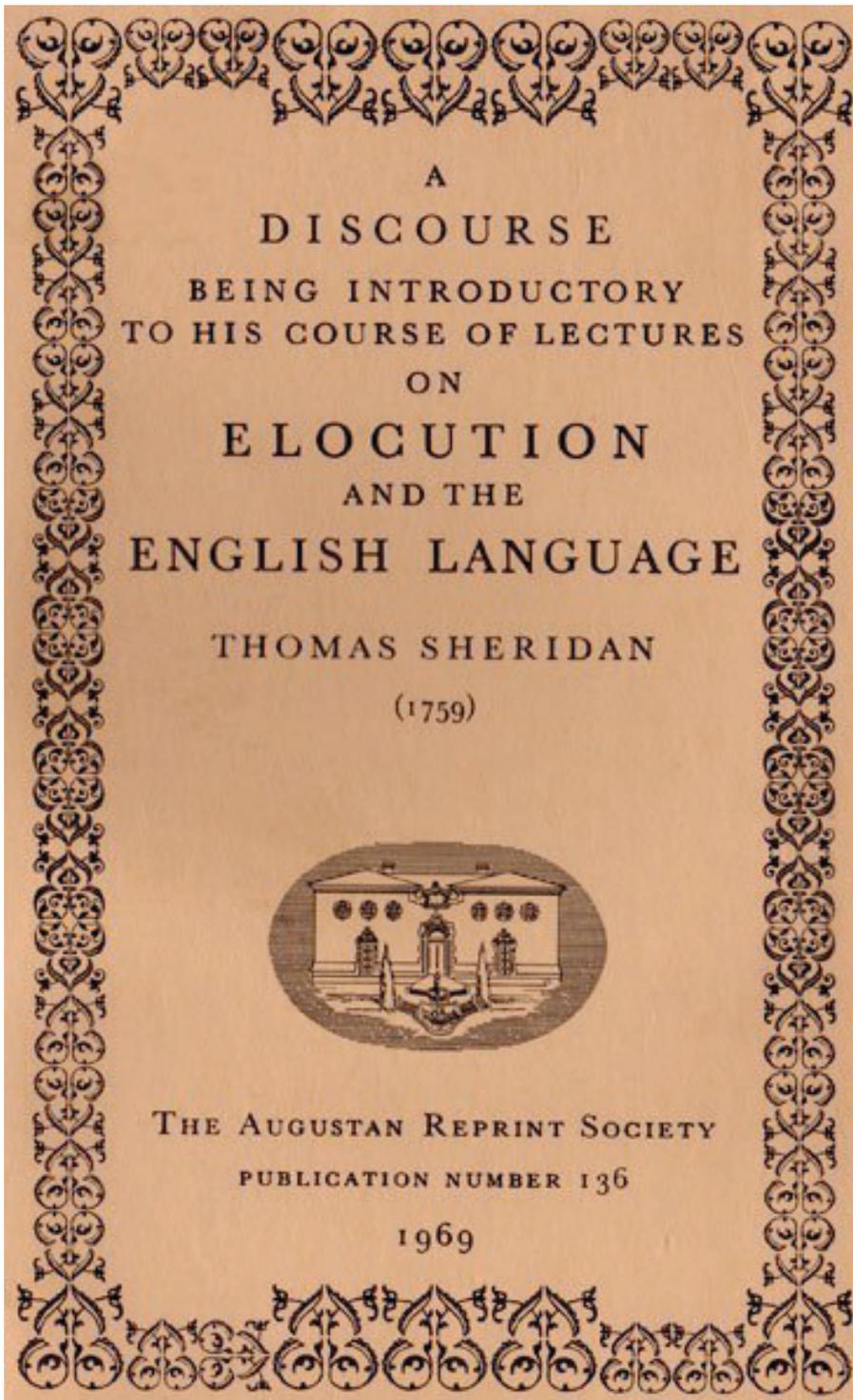


Fig. 2. T. Sheridan (1759), Front Cover

1.1. The historical background

Modern public speaking draws its origins from the British School of elocutionists, among which the importance of Sheridan must be underlined (1762). He theorized the existence of two types of language, namely the ‘language of ideas’ and the ‘language of emotions’. While the former enables speakers to manifest the thoughts which pass in their minds, the latter enables them to communicate to the audience the effects those thoughts have on their minds. By using those two types of language, in Sheridan’s view the office of a public speaker is to instruct, to please and to move. The British School used those principles of elocution in investigative treatises, and for writing manuals destined to technical elocution (e.g. clerical elocution) and illustrative anthologies.

The power of oratory, eloquence and effective speech became central at the beginning of the 20th century thanks to the efforts of the American Elocutionary Movement (Zanola 2002, 2010a). With the American tradition, the relevance of effective speech expanded to the fields of medicine (e.g. lectures) and entertainment (e.g. theatre). Desire for education and the wish to be entertained contributed to the American elocutionists’ success. Many people, often trained for professions such as medicine or the theatre, became ‘teachers of elocution’ in response to a growing demand for training in this field. Though, it was with Dale Carnegie (1913) that oratory and eloquence started to be considered applicable to the business domain from a pragmatic point of view.

Notwithstanding the modern perspective that developed from the 19th century onwards, the basic components of public speaking still preserve elements of the classical tradition elaborated by highly regarded Roman orators such as Cicero and Quintilian. Invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery (Covino and Jolliffe, 1995) and the characteristics of correctness, clarity, elegance and accuracy are still considered important canons of modern public speaking. The studies that focused on public speaking both from a rhetorical perspective (Strike 1994; Lucas 1998; Coopman / Lull 2008; Kumar 2005; Esenwein 2009) and from a political and conversation analysis perspective (Atkinson 1984; Hammond 1993; Nielsen 2004) keep in consideration these traditional components.

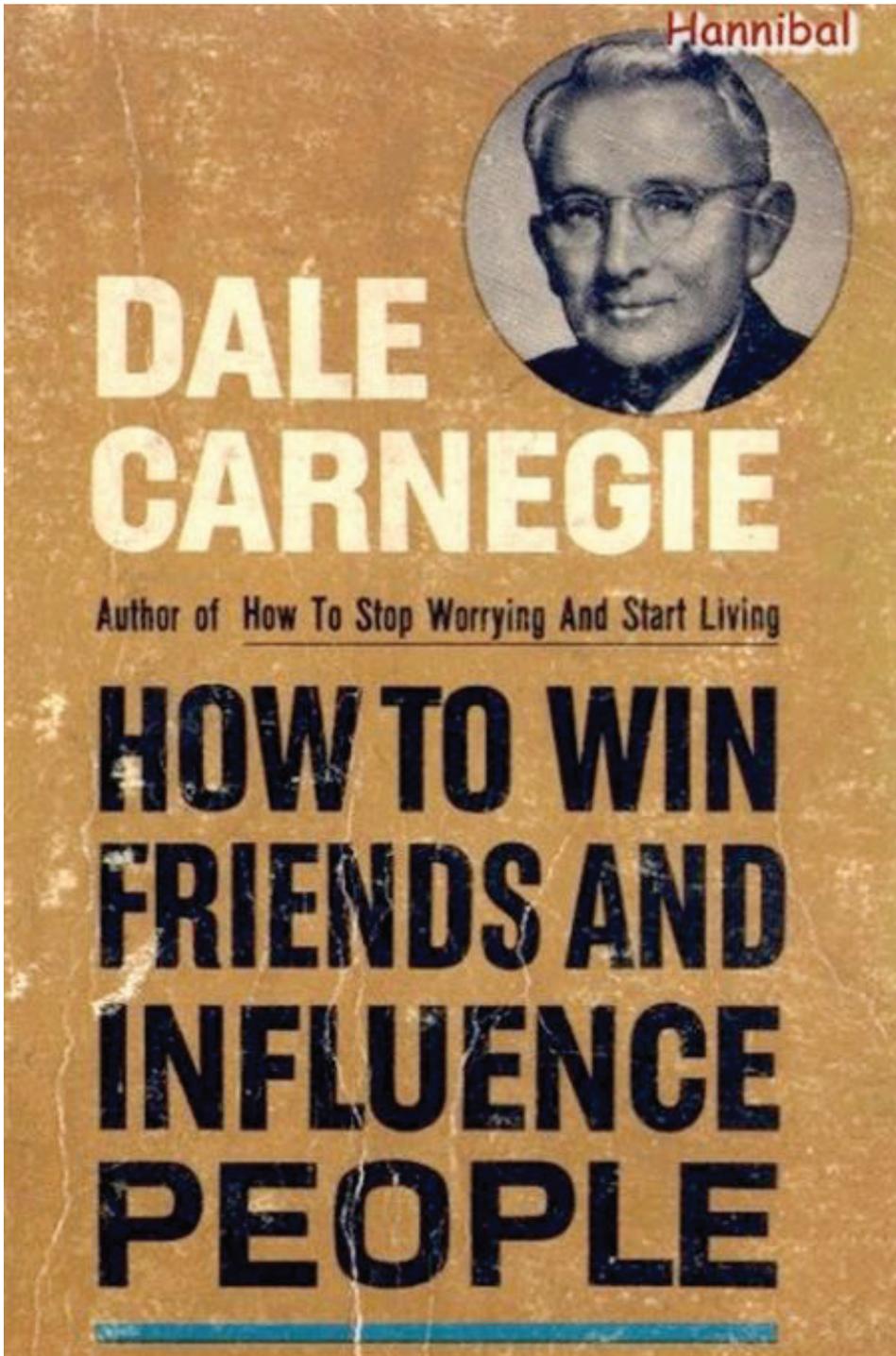


Fig. 3. D. Carnegie (1948), Front Cover

1.2. Entrepreneurs and public speaking

The research on international entrepreneurs' public speaking offers a limited range of specific contributions. Studies in the field tend to highlight either the technical skills required for successful public speaking in business, or the symbolic aspects that entrepreneurs evoke for their speeches to be persuasive. Studies that reflect the former trend focus on the nature of oratorical skills and on the possibility of transferring those skills from political oratory to the management community, to which entrepreneurs are loosely associated by this tradition. Within this stream, Greatbatch and Clark (2005) stated how "oratorical skills are universal regardless of the context within which a speech is given" (Greatbatch / Clark 2005:12).

Despite acknowledging the importance of studies of this nature for deepening the understanding of public speaking in the management community, we must consider that the figure of the entrepreneur is quite peculiar compared to that of the manager (Zanola 2009a). Without intending to expand into entrepreneurship literature, we provide a key definition aimed at illustrating what characterizes entrepreneurs. A distinctive feature of entrepreneurs is that they are part of the

complex process of new venture creation... [the entrepreneur] is viewed in terms of activities undertaken to enable the organization to come into existence (Gartner 1988:57).

This particular feature can embed risk-taking (Brockhaus 1980), belief of being in control (Brockhaus 1982), need for achievement (McClelland 1965), strong creative tendency (Ward 2004) and need for autonomy (Hornaday / Aboud 1971), all aspects that specifically characterize the figure of the global entrepreneur.

Drawing on those considerations, a more focused reflection on the impact of oratorical skills on entrepreneurs has been provided by Putnam and Fairhurst (2001). These two authors reflect on the institutional legitimacy of entrepreneurs from a sociolinguistic point of view. In particular, they argue that entrepreneurs' speech embeds cultural codes that appeal to the public legitimizing their role. The recurrence to such codes manages the impression that the entrepreneur portrays to the audience. Oratorical skills have also been associated with entrepreneurs'

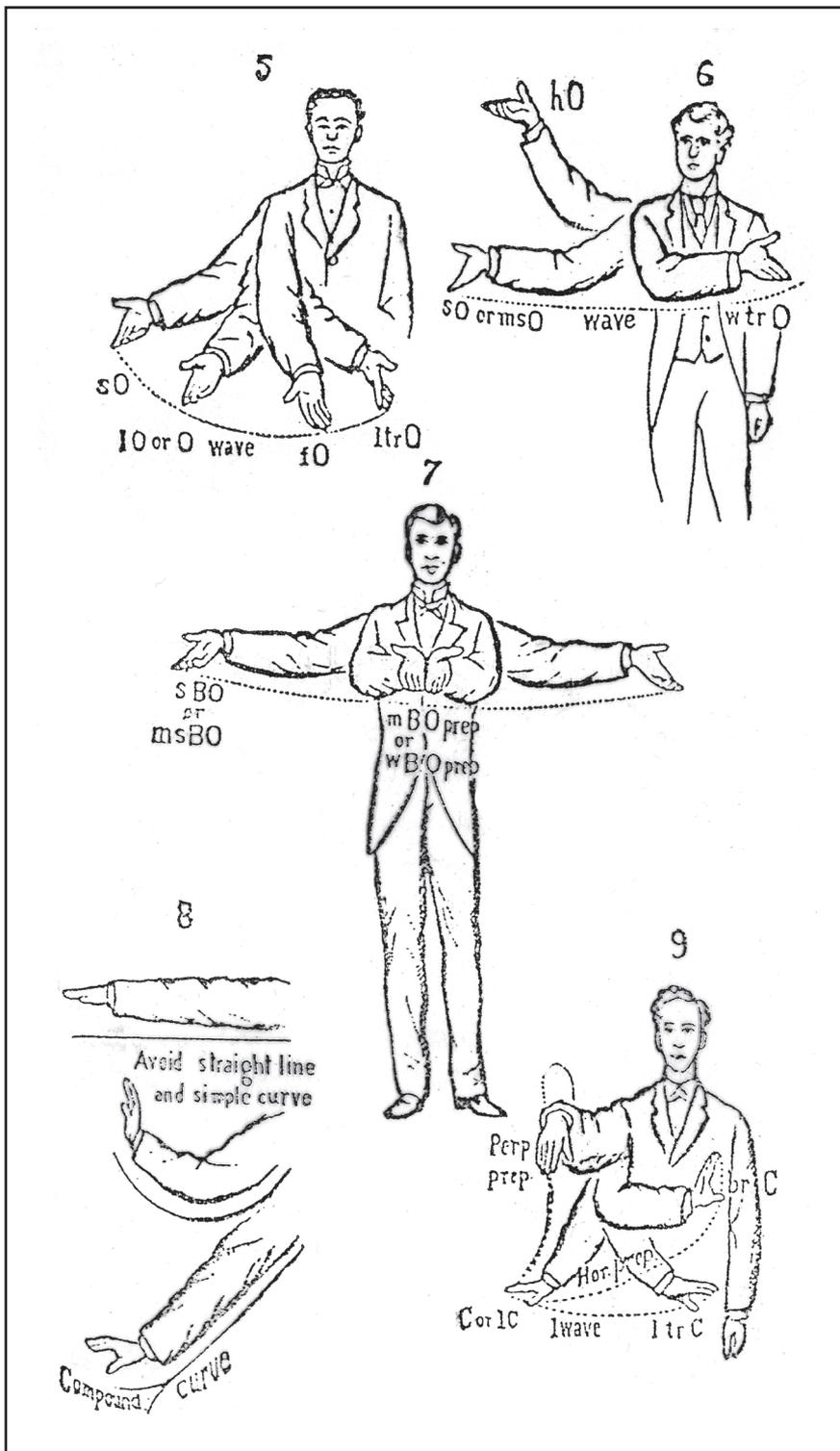


Fig. 4. American Elocutionists (Zanola 2009)

success (e.g. recognition of a successful opportunity, successful exploitation of an opportunity). In particular, in their study on the embodied metaphors in the speech and gestures of entrepreneurs, Cienki, Cornelissen and Clarke (2008) argue that entrepreneurs' speech tends to evoke experiences particular to the life and situation of the speaker. This, in turn, makes arguments persuasive to relevant others (e.g. employees, prospective investors). Drawing on those conclusions, Cornelissen and Clarke (2010) also suggest that

individual entrepreneurs use certain forms of speech – specifically, analogy and metaphor – to induce an opportunity for a novel venture (Cornelissen / Clarke, 2010: 539)

and to establish shared understanding, support and legitimacy. These two authors conceptualize how language and thought interpenetrate in context and how the meaning entrepreneurs want to share is a result of interactions with others.

Notwithstanding the attention paid to the role of public speech when looking at entrepreneurs, extant research does not clarify how entrepreneurs interpret the actual speaking in public and whether, by using this form of communication, they only aim to achieve support and legitimacy or to portray other aspects of their profession. My main concern here is that of exploring the meaning entrepreneurs attribute to speaking in public within their 'globalized' role, and with what implications.

These considerations led me to collect data on entrepreneurs using international public speaking; for this reason, I had interviews and meetings with businesspeople seriously interested in this interdisciplinary research experience for professional reasons⁷. Before illustrating the data I collected, in the next section I discuss the context in which the specific research on the field was conducted, as well as the methodological underpinnings that inspired it.

⁷ An organizational approach to the analysis of these data was also carried out, thanks to an interdisciplinary and internationally-based research jointly supported by the University of Brescia (Italy) and the Nottingham Trent Business School (UK), as described in Zanola / Palermo / Bisignano (2012).

2. Interdisciplinarity in public speaking research

The study was conducted at the end of 2010 in seventeen Northern Italian SMEs (Mercado / Welford / Prescott 2004) operating in various sectors, namely: automotive, steel, marble, cosmetics, waste recycling, renewable energies, financial/insurance, marketing and communication, services, textile, stationery, jewellery, luxury goods, and food. Ten of the SMEs in our sample are based in Lombardia while seven are based in Veneto. All of the businesses in our sample export outside Italy.

Interview sequence number	Interviewee's age	N. of employees working in the company	Year of foundation	Sector	Region
1	59	20	1990	Automotive	Lomb.
2	56	30	1989	Marketing and Communication	Lomb.
3	50	100	1960	Steel	Lomb.
4	55	50	1969	Cosmetics	Lomb.
5	32	200	1950	Steel	Lomb.
6	39	20	1774	Luxury goods	Lomb.
7	45	25	1987	Waste recycling	Lomb.
8	46	200	1950	Marble	Lomb.
9	54	50	1970	Financial Services	Lomb.
10	45	20	1989	Financial Services	Lomb.
11	42	30	1990	Clothing	Lomb.
12	52	35	1992	Financial Services	Veneto
13	47	40	1985	Food	Veneto
14	60	42	1986	Food	Veneto
15	65	100	1950	Textile	Lomb.
16	51	38	1995	Cosmetics	Veneto
17	35	12	2001	Food	Lomb.

Table 1. The table provides details on the age of our interviewees and on the size, year of foundation, sector and region in which every company operates.

2.1. Research methodology

An interpretive and qualitative approach was adopted. Careful attention was given to the uniqueness of the research experience and to the richness of the collected data. The inductive approach made it necessary to interpret and analyze new conceptual elements, while they were emerging. The empirical research aimed at emphasizing the ways in which individuals interpret their social world (Bryman 2008). The case study design enabled to investigate the research problem, paying attention to the role of the setting in understanding the phenomenon in question (Yin 1994, Eisendhardt 1989). A mix of convenience and snowball sampling was chosen (Bryman 2008). The former enabled to select people on the basis of their availability, while the latter facilitated the initial contact with a small group of people who were relevant to the research topic and then was used to establish contact with others (Bryman 2008).

2.2. Research context

I carried out seventeen semi-structured interviews within the seventeen SMEs in my sample, for the duration of no less than one hour each, for a total amount of about thirty hours of recorded data. I interviewed the owners, all women, of every firm, without facing any major access issue, apart from needing to reschedule the interview date because of the busy diaries of the interviewees. Interviews were carried out in English, although not all the interviewees were very fluent. Interviewees' names have been omitted to ensure anonymity.

2.3. Data analysis

The approach to data analysis draws on the research of Lofland and Lofland (1995) and Bryman (2008), with regard to general coding of qualitative data. I also followed Ryan and Bernard's (2003) recommendations paying particular attention to repetitions, indigenous typologies or categories, metaphors and

analogies, transitions, similarities and differences, linguistic connectors, missing data and theory-related material. This approach provided with some pointers for organizing the analysis. In terms of the validity and reliability of the study, I referred to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), whose seminal work clarifies the different priorities qualitative researches have compared to quantitative ones in terms of those issues. From the validity perspective, apart from continuously adjusting the constructs while carrying out the study, I aimed to data accuracy, by routinely asking for clarification during the interviews themselves. I concentrated on the sense of what each interviewee said, above all. I was particularly alert in asking every time what exactly words used in the workplace everyday meant to them, also avoiding attributing my own meaning to those words.

2.4. Findings

For understanding the way entrepreneurs interpret public speaking within the context of their role and the implications that derive from it, firstly, I looked at what our interviewees meant by this form of communication and in what settings they used it; secondly, what exactly characterized it, according to participants' accounts was carefully analyzed. To provide examples of those trends our participants' interview extracts were used. The conclusions on the data corpus will be highlighted in the discussion section which follows.

2.5. Discussion

The aim was understanding the way entrepreneurs make sense of public speaking, keeping in mind that the uniqueness of individuals' social context was an influential factor in the creation and development of the interviewees' accounts. The key aspects shown in the data suggest that, for the sample participants, public speaking is about getting a point across, sharing a rhythm, showing a path to others, creating a feeling, persuading, welcoming, and transferring passion for one's profession. At a first glance these points can be seen as consistent with

the general canons associated to the role of a public speaker noted earlier in the chapter. Though, I would look at this from a different perspective arguing that, if linked to the entrepreneur, each of those key aspects reflects the passion and the emotional component embedded in this role. Rather than exclusively considering entrepreneurs' use of oratorical skills (Cienki / Cornelissen / Clarke 2008; Cornelissen / Clarke 2010) and the importance they attribute to the normative component of a text - which is still acknowledged as important – I suggest reflecting on how actually just the fact of being an entrepreneur gives a specific pathos to public speaking, which is different from the one that any other speaker in a different role would give to this type of communication. The emotion that drives the entrepreneur as a risk-taker, as a person in control, as a person with a strong creative tendency, and as a person in need for autonomy reflects on his/her interpretation of public speaking; consequently, this type of communication is turned into a medium for sharing a path, a rhythm and ultimately a passion. This view can suggest that, for entrepreneurs, public speaking may not only be about transferring a message or legitimizing one's position: it can also be about moving into the audience the same feeling that animates them. The latter might not be a mere means to the end of winning the interlocutors' trust and understanding, but a way for sharing the entrepreneurial passion per se.

There are two implications that emerge from this reflection. The first one is that, within the wide arena of business, the speaker's professional role influences the pathos associated to the performance of public speaking. In turn, this sets the emotional antecedent of the process of construction of meaning between the speaker and his/her audience during a speech. Drawing from the professional role, this type of antecedent must be considered as different from both the actual emotion that the speaker feels right before starting a speech and that may influence the outcome of it (on this matter extant literature has widely explored the issue of public speaking as a fearful social situation, and of emotion regulation behaviours aimed at reducing anxiety and the occurrence of fearful thoughts experienced by the speaker while performing the speech – Pertaub / Slater / Barker 2002; Hofman / DiBartolo 2000; Egloff / Weck / Schmukle 2008; Bodie 2010) and the traditional rhetorical appeal to emotion that speakers use to win their audience. Particularly, I would argue that, whether it is deliberate or not

on the side of the speaker, the emotional antecedent I am referring to relates to enduring together with the audience the interpretation of one's professional role.

The second implication that emerges from this reflection on entrepreneurs and public speaking has a more pragmatic unfold and is addressed to public speaking trainers. Traditionally, the main aspects for training people in public speaking tend to focus on managing visual contact, managing the speaker's emotions, structuring the message effectively, developing personal charisma, and using gestures and non-verbal behaviour coherently (Osborn S. / Osborn M. / Osborn R. 2008; Lucas, 2007; Ekman 2003). Targeting those strategies in light of trainees' professional roles can increase the salience of the training outcomes, making the benefits of the training activity fit for purpose.

3. *Speaking in public*

Some of the quotes⁸ in which interviewees specify what they mean by public speaking are highlighted in the following section. One of the study participants who owns a waste recycling company, explains:

For me public speaking is the way an entrepreneur addresses his or her audience. This audience can be characterized by a group of clients, a group of people that join the same professional association, employees, investors...

A similar definition was provided by another interviewee who owns a steel company. She suggests:

When I talk about entrepreneur's public speaking I refer to the way we talk when we have to get a message across to our colleagues, employees or clients.

⁸ Transcription of the interviews were made by the Author on the basis of the tape-recorded data collected and are all in italics.

Also another entrepreneur operating in the steel sector, who took part in the study, clarifies:

It is wrong to think that public speaking takes place only if a person addresses a large audience. In my opinion, speaking in public is when I try to get a message across to people in a board meeting, or in a team meeting, or when I communicate with a group of employees or even when I am invited to talk about my company by voluntary associations, for example. All of these settings represent the arena for... eh eh eh... entrepreneur's public speaking.

The owner of a textile company makes a similar point with regard to the size and variety of the audience:

In my experience, public speaking happens either when I address a limited number of people at one given time... and this can occur in meetings with clients, Union representatives, employees... or when I address a large class of university students.

A more extensive explanation on when to refer to public speaking is provided by the owner of a marble company:

Neither the size nor the type of the audience define the situations when we can refer to public speaking... My view is that this occurs when you talk to the stockholders' assembly as well as when you address three employees. In the past, public speaking was associated to politicians or lawyers... emh... I think... that that wasn't accurate. Public speaking happens every time that you have a point, a message that you want to get across to a group of people, from three all the way to one thousand, you know what I mean?⁹

According to all the sample participants, public speaking is not defined by the

⁹ A detailed description of the interview made to this entrepreneur is given in Zanola / Palermo / Bisignano (2012: 93-96).

size of the audience; instead, it is about getting a message across to an audience that can vary in size but also in nature. An entrepreneur in the cosmetics sector takes this point forward by mentioning the importance of speaking to key people rather than to great numbers. In her words:

You see, I think that a public speech has to be studied, prepared, thought and built ad hoc. It has to achieve the company's selling objective, disregarding the number of people that constitute the audience. Even a public speech addressed to two or three key people can have a decisive role in the success and pursuit of the company's objective.

In interviewees' accounts, the settings in which public speaking can occur vary from those internal to the organization (e.g. board meetings, team meetings) to those external to it (e.g. universities, voluntary associations). After learning about how sample participants define public speaking as well as the variety of settings in which they use it, I move on now to explore what, in their views, characterizes this form of communication.

4. Features of public speaking

In terms of the elements characterizing public speaking, the interviewees referred to its key components, such as speech construction (opening, body, closing of the speech; working outline, formal outline, key-word outline), delivery (body language; visual aids), and argumentation (informative vs. persuasive speaking; patterns of reasoning; developing evidence and proofs). The importance of those aspects was underlined by all the interviewees. For example, the 'delivery' component was considered significant. All interviewees agreed in giving a transitory and temporary role to their background in public speaking; admitting at the same time that, in spite of that, oral communication for their professional purposes is permanent or, at least, has a permanent effect on the listener. This is how an entrepreneur in the automotive sector frames the component of delivery:

Delivery is crucial in public speaking. I think of it as a music, a tune. I carry in my mind the music that I want to play and then my voice... the metaphors I use... my gestures... all these things become fundamental. These things enable me to deliver my tune. Delivering a public speech is also about setting the rhythm, the tempo, the pauses, the silences... it's a music. Sometimes I speak on the basis of a music that I have written beforehand, while some other times I just improvise... but even when I improvise, it's always on the basis of the music that I feel inside, that I have in my mind, and that I want the audience to learn.

As hinted in the above quote, 'voice and gestures' are a fundamental tool. Interviewees revealed that these aspects are important for fighting against the irreversible timed nature of the oral messages. Effectiveness in oral communication in general, and in business communication in particular, might be compromised unless it is combined with variations in the speaker's voice and body movements. This is how another sample participant, an entrepreneur operating in the food sector, explains the relevance of voice and gestures in public speaking:

Speaking in public is like showing to others a path that only I know well. A path of which I know the end, I know where it takes. It's a path on which I have to take the audience... of course the extent to which I deviate from it is related to the type of feeling I create with the public... and I can create the right feeling not only with my message but also with my voice, my gestures. These elements are crucial for getting my point across, for showing the way to my audience, for ensuring the effectiveness of my speech. The right tone of voice, the right gestures... I mean the most appropriate ones for that particular type of message... all of those things impress, stamp the message in people's memory... the audience will remember.

In addition to the components of public speech (e.g argumentation, delivery), interviewees highlighted a second set of elements they illustrated as important in the entrepreneur's way of addressing an audience, namely: sense of welcoming, emotions and emotion transfer, emphasis on people, spontaneity, self-confidence,

and the search for audience's confirmation. Following there are some vivid and energetic examples of how our sample participants illustrated their views on this subject. This is how the owner of a financial services company emphasizes the role of persuasion in argumentation:

The speech deals with economic and normative issues and audience persuasion is its purpose. In my public speeches I always start from normative texts which represent my point of reference; then I explain and spread those contents to the audience (even to those audiences with no experience in the field). If the audience reacts as I would have wanted, then it means that my speech worked, my argumentation worked. One can be more persuasive by aiming to the interpersonal and emotional aspect.

One of our interviewees that owns and runs a marketing and communication company argues that:

Entrepreneur's public speaking is strongly characterized by a sense of welcoming that is often underestimated. When we talk, this sense, this spirit of welcoming reaches our audience... moreover, entrepreneurs have to show their concern for people, the importance of people and their contribution to the organization.

From a similar perspective, a study participant who owns a financial company explains the presence of emotions in public speaking:

Entrepreneurs let their emotions emerge from their speeches. When I talk, I transfer all the passion I have for my profession and for my business to my public. These emotions enable me to be impressive. The leverage that are commonly advertised as typical of entrepreneurs speeches for catching the audience are just too general... competition, challenge... you know what I mean. Do we have to conform to those aspects to be effective in getting our message across as entrepreneurs? Says who?

Another interviewee who works in the financial sector, too, illustrates the characteristics of self-confidence and self-esteem:

I believe that entrepreneur's public speaking is characterized by the presence of self-confidence and self-esteem. The background knowledge is important but showing that you are convinced of what you're talking about makes the speech more effective. The audience perceives the content of the message but also, and mostly, the spirit that inspires it. This spirit reaches the emotional sphere, directly. It involves the listener. Even if listeners disagree with the argument, they still perceive how important that is for the speaker and in general how important it is to acknowledge it, to discuss it, to talk about it.

With regard to the aspects of spontaneity and constant search for audience's confirmation as well as control, an entrepreneur operating in the steel sector explains:

I have to say that spontaneity and search for audience confirmation are the aspects that characterize entrepreneur's public speaking. Spontaneity is driven by the passion of being an entrepreneur, of believing in one's venture... at the same time the reaction that comes from the audience channels the way one sends the message.

5. Public speaking research: present and future

My research experience was based on in-depth data from a small sample and pertain to Italian entrepreneurs working in an international business network; the implications of aspects such as gender, age, family background would require further research to identify. Exponents of case study research (Yin 1994) suggest that it is not the purpose of this research design to generalize to other cases or to populations beyond the case (Bryman 2008: 57). However, it is suspected that

some elements of it are likely to be representative of the experiences of individuals within similar contexts. The reflections that emerge from this experience may suggest investigating the way the pathos of public speaking varies according to other business roles (e.g. sales person, buyer, consultant, etc.). But more of this further on. In the meanwhile, it must be pointed out that this interdisciplinary research was born out of a concrete need for training business expert in oral business communication, rather than a theoretical framework on public speaking in general, and it is very open to...interdisciplinary discussion. As far as the research has revealed, public speaking is a very fertile ground for global English in international business.

Key terms

Public speaking

Entrepreneur's business communication

Speech delivery

Persuasion

Internal and external business communication

Verbal vs non-verbal communication

Emotion transfer

Effectiveness and efficiency

Part II - Summary

Part II focuses on the importance of public speaking in global business communication. In particular, the main concern here is on the way entrepreneurs make sense of public speaking within their professional arena. After introducing some historical and theoretical foundations, the chapter gives empirical data in favour of the need for entrepreneurs to study public speaking both for internal and external corporate communication. A study conducted by the Author in seventeen Italian SMEs demonstrates that speaking to an international audience means transferring passion for one's organization, that is, persuading listeners in spite of their cultural, ethical and social background. Public speaking should no longer be studied *per se*, but considered as a powerful instrument for real business practitioners.

Discussion questions

1. Read the following list of priorities in public speaking practice, suggested by Osborn M. / Osborn S. (2003:276):

The Six Cs of Effective Language Use

- a) *Clarity makes speeches understandable*
- b) *Color adds punch to your message*
- c) *Concreteness reduces misunderstandings*
- d) *Correctness enhances your credibility*
- e) *Conciseness keeps you from wasting your audience's time*
- f) *Cultural sensitivity is an ethical imperative*

Do you agree on the order of priorities given? According to your personal experience, is there any other point you would suggest in order to complete the list?

2. Interview someone in a business leadership position (a business executive, an officer in an organization, a CEO, etc.). Construct and organize a series of questions designed to discover his or her views on characteristics of effective and ineffective public speeches.

Suggested activities

Public speaking requires much exercise and careful examination of other public speakers' performances. You should always practice your speech until you have the sequence of main points and supporting materials well established in your mind. Tape-recording or video-taping can be useful for self-evaluation. Speeches for analysis should be also taken into consideration, however. Among them, we suggest: Grice G. / Skinner J. / 2007:409-421; Osborn M. / Osborn S. 2003:453-480; MacArthur B. 1992.

Further reading

Bibliography on 'public speaking' is extremely productive. We propose here two of the most interesting and recent readings on the topic, for international entrepreneurs' usage.

Hall R., 2011, *Brilliant Presentation. What the Best Presenters Know, Do and Say*, Pearson, Harlow. The book covers every aspect of presenting, from preparation and planning to dealing with nerves and mastering the art of presentation performance.

Khan-Panni P., 2012, *Making Business Presentations. How to Deliver a Winning Message*, Pearson, Harlow. Written by the co-founder of the Professional Speaking Association, the book focuses on getting the required results from a presentation, giving concrete examples of successful or unsuccessful business presentations.

Internet links

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- **Body language.** <http://donnellking.com/>: an introduction to the area of nonverbal communication based on the work of Albert Mehrabian.
- **Nonverbal communication.** <http://www3.usal.es/~nonverbal/introduction.htm>: an extensive directory of materials and websites devoted to the study of nonverbal communication.

PART III

Genres in corporate communication: the Annual Report

The evolution of genres in business communication studies reflects the pressure of technological innovations and the profound social changes triggered by globalization in the contemporary world. In the last three decades of genre analysis, however, one specialized business text has never stopped attracting the attention of researchers and scholars: the Annual Report.

Different study areas have been associated with the Corporate Annual Report, or Annual Report text (AR), from accounting to finance and marketing, from linguistics to semiotics. In the specific academic context, this genre has interested researchers and scholars since the early 1980s.

The AR may be considered a highly specialized text, created by and for insiders, even though also often destined to an audience of non-experts. In linguistics, in particular, it has been an instrument for studying business English and, less frequently, legal English. Moreover, the AR has been studied as a *hybrid* text, particularly suitable for interdisciplinary research. If it is true that “the term ‘interdisciplinary’ is appropriately applied to knowledge of complex problems” (Repko 2012:52), we have here an authentic case of interdisciplinarity. The inadequacy of a single discipline approach to address and fully understand the AR genre is demonstrated by the flourishing of books, articles, websites and contributions on the topic. These seem partial or biased to many readers, precisely because they are based on disciplinary, and not interdisciplinary, perspectives. Interdisciplinarity aims at filling the gaps in knowledge created by the lack of attention on the part of the disciplines: from these gaps new knowledge emerges, and this process of gap filling may be called ‘hybridization’, that is, the integration of specialties across disciplines.

Hybridity as an analytic concept draws upon basic linguistic notions, such as semantic indeterminacy, pragmatic ambivalence, and context dependency: the notion is embedded in the linguistic and interactional choices the user makes in his/her daily practical action. The AR expert produces or uses texts which are never homogenized entities, and Hasan’s (2000:43) observations on hybridity and genre combination, that more specifically concern permeability as situated performance rather than a mixing of existing categories, are here pertinent:

[...]in normal everyday discourse speakers do not have a sense of

‘speaking’ a genre/register; their concern seems to be simply to fashion their language according to the ongoing context. And this language in use is what provides the basis for the discourse analyst to make objective, after the fact generalizations about who says what to whom where, when and how – the subject matter for the delineation of genre.

Practitioners are familiar with the complexity of the AR text, with its hybridity and ‘contaminated’ contents and forms. As a consequence, the AR genre must be referred to as a ‘contaminated genre’, given its blending of varied and multiple competencies.

Users of this genre definitely share the set of communicative purposes that their parent discourse community recognizes. This recognition provides the genre’s rationale, which, in turn, generates genre conventions and key words and concepts. The varied community that reads the AR (shareholders, potential investors, but also employees, customers, suppliers, community leaders, etc.) shares some basic knowledge which allows it to understand whether the company’s report that is being consulted provides the so-called ‘true and fair view of the state of the company’¹⁰.

As far as this research is concerned, the Annual Report is an international professional genre adopted and shared by a global community of users.

1. Reading an Annual Report

A balance sheet is internationally recognized as a statement of the wealth of a business, or an organization, on a given date, usually the last day of the financial year. However, it is also the firm’s primary tool for presenting its degree of reliability and level of productivity. For a finance and economics expert, it is the identity card of a company. For a linguist, it is a highly specialized text. In this sense, it may be considered as a ‘hybrid text’, including features of different

¹⁰ On the complex and internationally discussed definition of the ‘true and fair view’ see: Nobes / Parker 1988/89, Parker 1992, Parker / Wolnizer / Nobes 1996, Ryan 1967.

discourse areas. The aim of this chapter is to define the identity of this specialized text, by means of a description of the report textual components, for the usage of linguists, and non-experts of finance and accountancy.

The entire package of statements, some in narrative form and some numerical in content, tell the shareholders what has been happening during the twelve months since the date on which the last report was presented.

Some companies provide only a minimum amount of information: ARs of this type are usually only a few pages in length and they are produced in an inexpensive fashion. Many other companies, on the contrary, view their AR as a potentially effective marketing tool: with this in mind, many medium-sized or large companies devote large sums of money to making their Financial Reports as attractive and informative as possible (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Annual Report front cover

Some companies provide only a minimum amount of information; many other companies, on the contrary, view their Annual Report as a potentially effective marketing tool (Source: © <http://jenniferbaileyportfolio.blogspot.it/2011/04/no-go-gala-invitation.html> . Last visited: 08/08/2012)

The full package has been summarized in the form shown in Fig. 6.

Some of what appears here is inserted by the company in order to present itself appropriately to its shareholders. Most of it, however, is required by law or by accounting standards. This changes the nature and form of the text in a considerable way. The main components of this text will be described in the next paragraphs.

1.1. Annual Report components

An Annual Report can comprise many different components, including the following:

- financial statements,
- chairman’s address,

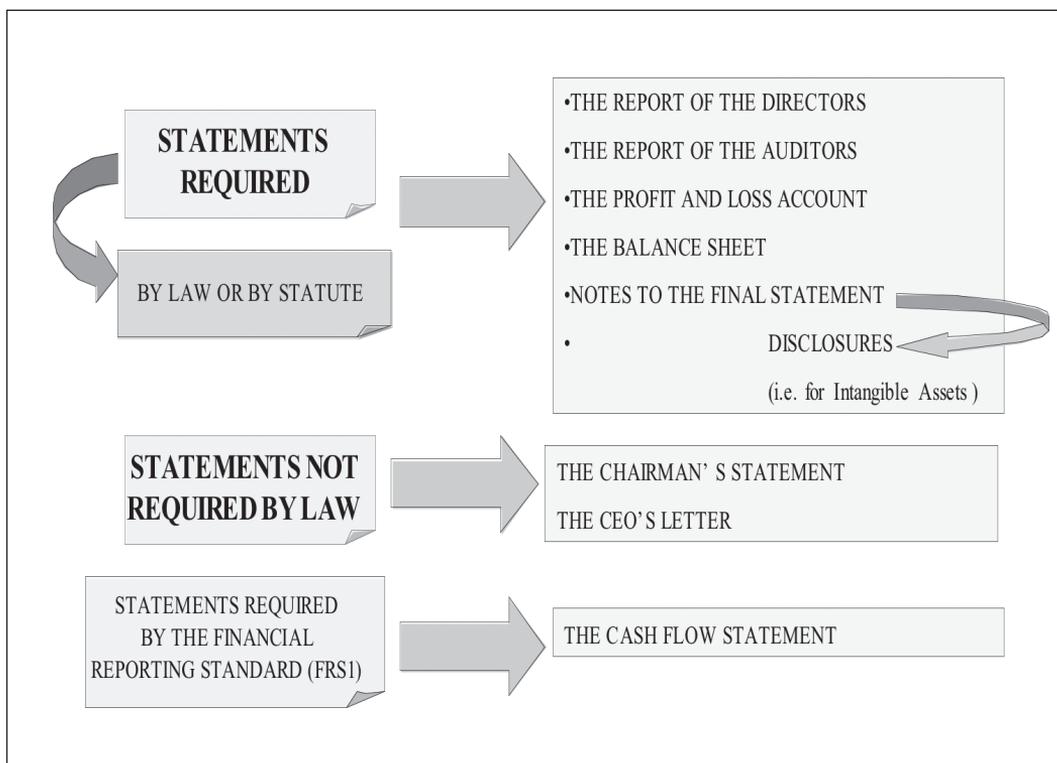


Fig. 6. The Annual Report package

- corporate address,
- listing of board of directors,
- stockholder information,
- auditor's report and management messages.

There are many other miscellaneous pieces of information contained in an AR, which vary from company to company, but the bulk of information of interest to investors is usually contained in the Financial Statements.

There are three components to company's financial statements as part of their report:

- the cash flow statement,
- the balance sheet,
- the income statement.

All components compare statistics year by year, showing the past one to three years' statements, in addition to those of the most recent year. This allows the investor to compare numbers and figures in order to see how the company is progressing overall.

In principle, any reader of an Annual Report can detect if a company is getting well after a recent takeover, how an industry is reacting to certain pressures, and (most importantly for investors) whether or not to keep money invested (or invest more). A good reader can see where companies are spending their cash, and how this is being translated into revenue for the company, and ultimately for the investors. Finally, the source of companies' incoming cash can be also discovered: whether it takes the form of profits, sale of goods, or new investment is described in the report.

1.2. Financial Statement components

The three main components of a Financial Statement (FS) provide a true picture of the solvency and direction of a company.

1.2.1. Cash flow statement

A cash flow statement details all the money flowing in and out of the company. It contains the following three main sections:

1. *Operations*: these detail the company's earnings, as well as the depreciation of assets and inventory changes.
2. *Investing*: expenses in this category include investing in new supplies, property, equipment, land, and anything that will generally add value to the business. Investments that have been made over the year will be shown as a negative number (but will ideally increase the value of the business or its ability to turn a profit).
3. *Financing*: positive numbers in this section indicate where the company is getting its money from: selling stocks, bonds, or borrowing from the bank. Negative numbers show the company buying back stocks from holders, paying out dividends, and repaying borrowed cash.

In the cash flow statement, ideally the reader wants to see that a company can pay for their investment activities with their operations activities.

1.2.2. Balance sheet

The balance sheet should be designed so that it clearly lists the company's assets and liabilities at end of the financial year (Fig. 7). Required by law, it must show the assets into two categories: fixed and current. Fixed assets (mainly a British, rather than an American expression), or non-current assets, are the assets that

are to continue to be used in the business, such as land, buildings and machines. [...]they are intended for use on a continuing base (Nobes 2006:140).

On the other hand, current assets, such as cash or stocks,

GROUP BALANCE SHEET

	Note	As at 31 March 2010 £m	As at 31 March 2009 £m
ASSETS			
Non-current assets			
Intangible assets	10	64.6	57.5
Property, plant and equipment	11	256.1	258.6
Deferred tax assets	12	39.2	57.7
Trade and other receivables	13	11.0	9.5
Derivative financial assets	15	1.7	–
		372.6	383.3
Current assets			
Inventories	14	166.9	262.6
Trade and other receivables	13	128.4	187.2
Derivative financial assets	15	2.6	23.2
Income tax receivables		0.7	17.1
Cash and cash equivalents	16	468.4	252.3
		767.0	742.4
Total assets		1,139.6	1,125.7
LIABILITIES			
Non-current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	17	(26.5)	(23.8)
Deferred tax liabilities	12	(1.6)	(2.3)
Derivative financial liabilities	15	(0.2)	(0.4)
Retirement benefit obligations	18	(0.5)	(0.6)
Provisions for other liabilities and charges	19	(5.5)	(7.9)
		(34.3)	(35.0)
Current liabilities			
Bank overdrafts and borrowings	20	(206.4)	(244.7)
Derivative financial liabilities	15	(9.0)	(57.1)
Trade and other payables	17	(200.2)	(162.4)
Provisions for other liabilities and charges	19	(34.4)	(33.5)
Income tax liabilities		(51.8)	(49.1)
		(501.8)	(546.8)
Total liabilities		(536.1)	(581.8)
Net assets		603.5	543.9
EQUITY			
Capital and reserves attributable to the Company's equity holders			
Ordinary share capital	21	0.2	0.2
Share premium account		186.1	175.9
Capital reserve	21	27.2	27.2
Hedging reserve	21	(1.1)	(13.4)
Foreign currency translation reserve	21	136.3	150.2
Retained earnings		241.4	199.2
		590.1	539.3
Minority interests in equity		13.4	4.6
Total equity		603.5	543.9

The consolidated financial statements of Burberry Group plc (registered number 03458224) on pages 82 to 124 were approved by the Board on 25 May 2010 and signed on its behalf by:

John Peace Stacey Cartwright
Chairman Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer

Fig. 7. Balance Sheet Burberry Group Annual Report 2009/20

(Source: © <http://annualreview2009-10.burberry.com/downloads/index.html>,
'Full Annual Report' section, p. 84. Last visited: 08/08/2012)

are not intended for continuing use in the business (Nobes 2006: 93).

1.2.3. Income statement

Also known as ‘Statement of earnings or statement of operations’, this is the statement that shows the bottom line: profit or loss. It documents the money coming in from sales, and the expenses associated with making those sales. A number of subsections is usually contained in the Income Statement, that is: ‘Sales/operating revenue’, ‘Sales costs’, ‘Gross profit’, ‘Operating expenses’, ‘Operating income’, and ‘Net profits’ (Earnings).

1.3. Constituent features

While most Annual Reports contain optional elements, all reports contain information the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) requires. Optional elements include:

1. Financial highlights
2. Letter to stockholders
3. Corporate message
4. Report of management
5. Board of directors and management
6. Stockholder information

SEC-required elements include:

1. Auditor’s report
2. Management discussion
3. Financial statements and notes
4. Selected financial data

1.3.1. Optional elements

The components which are not required by law are the following:

1. *Financial highlights.* Probably the most often read section of any report, these highlights give a quick summary of a company’s performance. The numbers appear in a short table, usually accompanied with supporting graphs (Fig. 8).
2. *Letter to stockholders.* This letter may be from the chairperson of the board of directors, or the chief executive officer, or both. It can provide an analysis of the year’s events, including any problems, issues, and successes of the

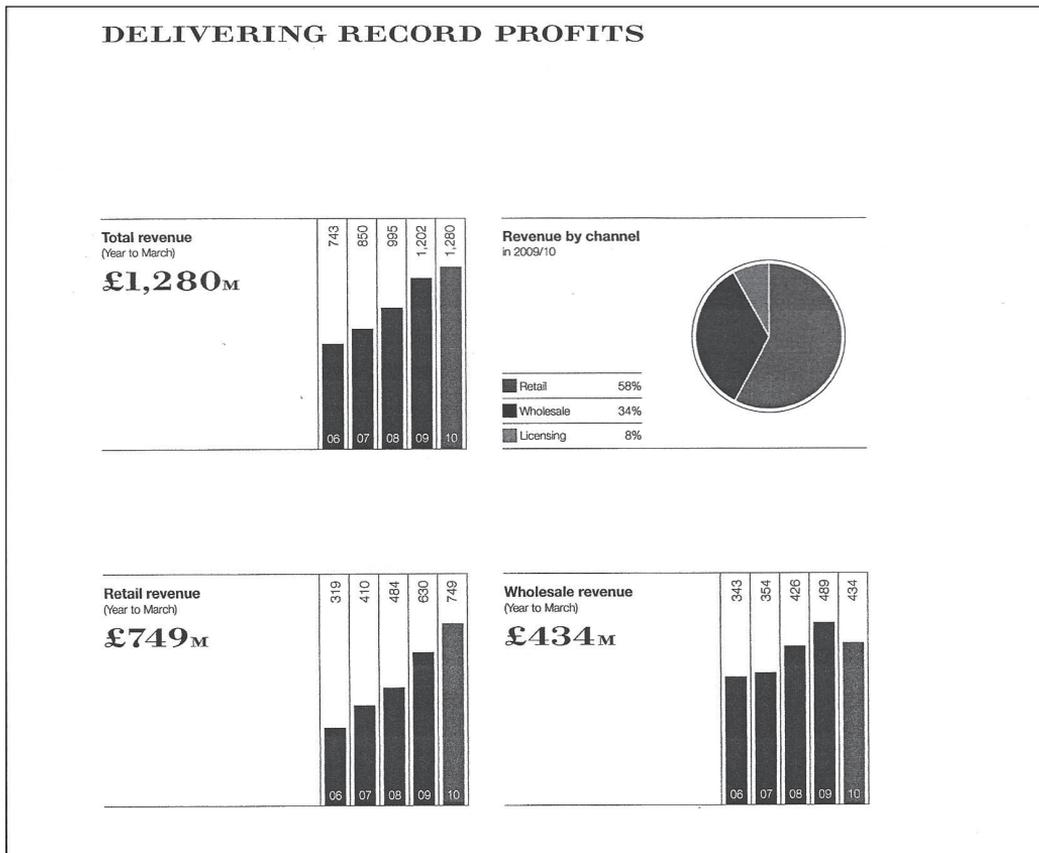


Fig. 8. Financial Highlights Burberry Group Annual Report 2009/2010
 (Source: © <http://annualreview2009-10.burberry.com/downloads/index.html> ,
 ‘Financial Highlights’ section, p. 4. Last visited: 08/08/2012)

company. It usually reflects the business philosophy and management style of the company's executives, and often it lays out the company's direction for the next year.

3. *Corporate message.* Some analysts, business executives, and stockholders consider this message a piece of advertising for the company: it almost always reflects how a company sees itself, or how it would like others to see it. In the corporate message, the company can explain itself to stockholders, using photographs, illustrations, and texts. This message may cover the company's lines of business, markets, mission, management philosophy, corporate culture, and strategic direction.
4. *Report of management.* This letter, usually written by the board chairperson and the chief financial officer, takes responsibility for the validity of the financial information in the Annual Report, and states that the AR complies with SEC and other legal requirements. The discussion attests the presence of internal accounting control systems that cover the effectiveness of operations, the reliability of financial reporting, and compliance with federal laws (in US).
5. *Board of directors and management.* This list gives the names and position titles of the company's board of directors and top management team. Companies sometimes include photographs.
6. *Stockholder information.* This information covers the basics, the company's corporate office headquarters, the exchanges on which the company trades its stock, the location and time of the next annual stockholder's meeting, and other general stockholder service information. Stockholder information is usually at the back of the Annual Report.

1.3.2. Mandatory elements

The components which are required by law are the following:

1. *Auditors' report.* This summary of the findings of an independent firm of certified public accountants shows whether the financial statements are complete, reasonable, and prepared consistently with the generally accepted

accounting principles (GAAP) at a set time. In this section the ‘true and fair view’ of the state of the company is certified.

2. *Management discussion.* This series of short, detailed reports discusses and analyzes the company’s performance. It covers results of operations, and the adequacy of liquid and capital resources to fund operations.
3. *Financial statements and notes.* These statements provide the raw numbers for the company’s financial performance and recent financial history. The SEC requires three statements - statement of earnings, statement of financial position, and statement of cash flows - all covered in this guide (the statement of stockholders’ equity is not addressed here). These statements include a comprehensive set of related notes that provide explanations, additional details, and supplementary financial information.
4. *Selected financial data.* This information summarizes a company’s financial condition and performance over five years or longer. Data for making comparisons over time may include revenue (sales), gross profit, net earnings (net income), earnings per share, dividends per share, financial

11 IASB is the International Accounting Standards Board (<http://www.ifrs.org>); it was founded on April 1, 2001 as the successor to the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC) and it is responsible for developing International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS, the new name for International Accounting Standards issued after 2001), and promoting the use and application of these standards. FASB is the Financial Accounting Standards Board (<http://www.fasb.org>); it was created in 1973 as a private, not-for-profit organization whose primary purpose is to develop generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) within the United States in the public’s interest. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) designated the FASB as the organization responsible for setting accounting standards for public companies in the United States.

Though both the IASB and the FASB have come together in most of their functions, they are still different in many aspects. When comparing their origin, the IASB can be called as the successor of International Accounting Standards Committee. It deals with the development of IFRS and the promotion of the application of these standards. The IASB, which is based in London, is an accounting standard setter: it which is independent and funded privately. The FASB is based in the United States, it replaced the Accounting Principles Board (APB) and the Committee on Accounting Procedure (CAP).

Coming to the organization, the IASB has sixteen members on board, each having a vote. The members are chosen on the basis of their professional competence and practical experience. Though unanimous vote are not counted for publication of a standard, the approval by nine members is required.

The FASB has five full time members, who are appointed for five years and also get an extension of one year. Apart from the five full time members, there are about 68 other members who are professionals drawn from various fields such as government, public accounting and industry.

ratios (such as return on equity), number of shares outstanding, and the market price per share.

2. Annual Report users

Financial reports have multiple, heterogeneous audiences, which have been variously identified in the disciplinary and linguistic literature: these audiences include ‘primary users’ or ‘decision makers’ or ‘investors’ and ‘other users’ (according to IASB’s and FASB’s frameworks¹¹), ‘direct and indirect individual and group users’ (Stittle, 2003: 14), ‘sophisticated’ and ‘non-sophisticated users’ (Piotti 2009: 60).

At the February 13, 2009 Meeting of the Financial Crisis Advisory Group (FCAG)¹² a number of questions and areas for discussion were on the agenda, relating to the purpose of financial reporting and including the consideration of whom financial information should primarily be targeted at. In the final paper, it was outlined that users include: present and potential investors, lenders, suppliers and other trade creditors, customers, employees, governments and their agencies, and the public.

2.1. Legal constraints

The heterogeneity of the financial report in terms of discourse used may be seen, to a certain extent, as a result of the different regulatory sources that determine its framework. These sources are:

- the statutory framework;
- the accounting framework;
- the stock exchange.

¹² The document is downloadable at: http://www.fasb.org/fcag/02-13-09_fcag_handout.pdf. See page 2 of the document for details on this topic.

Financial reporting is also a reflection of the cultural, economic and legal system of its country of origin. It illustrates instances of internal heterogeneity and hybridity, being framed by a variety of different sections and textual types as required by local laws. Accordingly, the documents included can be subdivided into two macro-categories:

- documents required by the regulatory framework of financial reporting;
- supporting information.

2.2. *Who writes the Annual Report?*

A company's accountants are extremely important in preparing the report in general, and the financial statements in particular. They will collate all the financial data, select various accounting policies and techniques, and attempt to present an interpretation of what they think is an objective portrait of a company. However, it is the aspect of objectivity that causes many problems in the world of accountancy. Accountants still have to use their own judgements and opinions in constructing the final accounts: they can take identical financial data and end up with a different reported profit in the final accounts (Flowerdew / Wan 2009).

Accountants only prepare the most technical document. The non-technical, supporting sections of reports are normally prepared by the company's managers: the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Chief Operating Officer (COO), etc.

As regards the 'Letter to shareholders', the person who signs the letter is also the author of the letter (Piotti 2009). However, this isn't strictly true in every case. In a typical company, the president or CEO might write a draft of the letter, send it to the chief financial officer, who makes revisions and sends it to the chief legal officer, who makes further revisions and sends it back to the president or CEO, who then makes final revisions. The chief legal officer may then do the final editing or someone else may do it. In some companies, the letter is drafted by the chief financial officer or the chief legal officer and then sent to the president or CEO for revision. In any case, the document is rarely the work of one

person, but the product embodies the ‘corporate-speak’ of the top management of the company. Even though documents such as letters to stockholders represent the company ‘voice’, some corpus-driven research on corporate communication (Yeung 2007) suggests that writers of company documents are profoundly vested in the messages they write and see their messages as representing them personally.

Accordingly, it can be argued that there are two categories of authors, the so-called ‘primary authors’, responsible for the tenor, the content and the linguistic choices, and other ‘writers’, responsible for all the other details.

2.3. *Who reads the Annual Report?*

As for the possible readers of the documents, statements may be consulted by users for different purposes:

- Owners and managers require financial statements to make important business decisions that affect their continued operations. Financial analysis is then performed on these statements to provide management with a more detailed understanding of the figures.
- Employees also need these reports in making ‘collective bargaining agreements’ (CBA) with the management.
- Prospective investors make use of financial statements to assess the viability of investing in a business.
- Financial institutions (banks and other lending companies) use them to decide whether to grant a company fresh working capital or extend debt securities.
- Government entities (tax authorities) need financial statements to ascertain the propriety and accuracy of taxes and other duties declared and paid by a company.
- Vendors who extend credit to a business require financial statements to assess the credit worthiness of the business.
- Media and the general public are also interested in financial statements.

2.4. *Cross-cultural components*

Differences exist in financial reporting across countries, which can be attributed to historical reasons. As previously stated, financial reporting is a reflection of the linguistic, cultural, legal and economic systems of its country of origin. For example, Germany and Japan have historically demanded much less financial disclosure than the United Kingdom and the United States because the first two countries relied on a limited number of banks for their capital needs. As the economic systems of continental Europe and Japan have evolved and many businesses now obtain capital from many more sources, so too has the financial reporting system improved. In both Europe and Japan governments have recognized the need for transparent organizations and have adopted more stringent accounting disclosure requirements (Piotti 2009: 65).

3. **The Annual Report genre**

Swales (1990:45-47) provides the following assertions regarding *genre*:

- It is a class of communicative events.
- The principal criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes.
- Exemplars of instances of genres vary in their prototypicality.
- The rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form.
- A discourse community's nomenclature for genre is an important source of insight.

Users of a genre share a set of communicative purposes, that the parent discourse community recognizes. This recognition provides the rationale for the genre, which, in turn, gives rise to genre conventions. Genre is a relatively stable set of conventions that is associated with, and partly enacts, a socially ratified type of

activity; it implies not only a particular text type, but also a particular process of producing, distributing and consuming texts.

In Annual Reports, shareholders and potential investors are the primary audiences; employees, customers, suppliers, community leaders, and the community-at-large are also targeted audiences. As previously described, this large and varied community reads ARs for different reasons and at different levels. Moreover, the challenge for producers of ARs is to disseminate pertinent information in a comprehensible way, while simultaneously communicating the company's primary message.

3.1. *Operational force*

Texts originating within specialized discourse communities can influence a wide range of common social activities. Following Bazermann and Paradis (1991:8-9), texts produced inside the financial community have a strong operational force: the expertise originating within the defined research field is then transformed into terms of 'socially operative texts' that guide human actions. These texts constitute a transactional domain, where 'hieratic' discourse of expertise is converted to the 'demotic' discourse of everyday practice. The two categories described by Bazermann and Paradis are particular useful in describing migrant

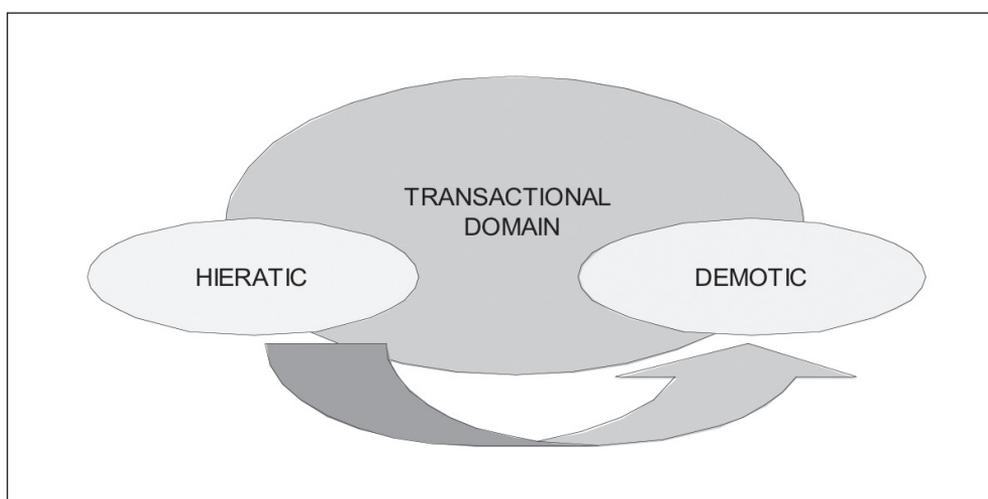


Fig. 9. The operational force of the Annual Reports

features of financial specialized discourse, which originates from formal and institutionalized forms of communication (hieratic texts) but then has to translate them into demotic, that is to say, popular texts (Fig. 9).

Socially operative texts materially shape the activities of specialists. Annual Reports, for instance, are produced by a community that stands between the legal system and everyday financial matters: they may shape financial activities on a massive scale and are bound in a textual system that serves to translate the activities of finance into legal representations, and viceversa.

All the text-types composing the Annual Report genre must be interpreted in terms of their social and epistemological functions for the international and global community using them. They form a complex network of interaction, a structured set of relationships. Globally, this genre is designed to fulfill a corporate need, as it is mainly a corporate product.

From a strictly linguistic point of view, financial reports may represent an interesting case of hybridized discourse. As stated in Gotti (2007:148-149):

genre analysis (Swales 1990, 2004; Bhatia 1993, 2004; Berkenkotter / Huckin 1995, Bargiela-Chiappini / Nickerson 1999, Gilaerts / Gotti 2005, Bhatia / Gotti 2006) has proved to be particularly suited to identifying the discrepancies between global textual conventions and concrete realizations and has introduced new concepts such as *genre mixing*, *repurposing*, or *hybridisation* to account for generic dynamism.

An example could be the case of financial statements on company websites, which no longer concern one genre, but the interaction between genres within the genre system of a company's website. Indeed, the financial and economic information given on the website aims at keeping or acquiring the confidence of current and potential stockholders of the company, thus repurposing information into persuasion. At the same time, disclaimers are added to renounce any responsibility for the information given – a clear sense of genre bending and of the intertwining of this genre with law and business.

3.2. *Hybridity*

Considering the strong operational force of any Annual Report, we must reconsider the concepts of ‘interdisciplinarity’ and ‘contamination’ in applied linguistics as a new methodological basis for an area that is certainly not new as regards recent research into specialized English (Bargiela Chiappini / Nickerson 1999; Garzone 2004, 2005; Gotti 2005; Gotti / Giannoni 2006) but that has, in our opinion, lacked, up until now, an analysis that is ‘integral’ (that is to say in all of its numerous elements) and ‘integrated’ (based on an interaction between linguists and experts in the sector).

Interdisciplinarity is a concept widely applied to recent approaches to Annual Report studies, where financial specialized discourse is based on competence and on texts that require the attention of both financial and linguistic experts. As for contamination, the concept is widely used in medicine, chemistry, biology and music but has been applied more recently to the linguistic and literary area (Hartmann / Stork 1972; Matthews 1997; Pei / Gaynor 1954). In manuscript tradition, for example, ‘blending’ is the term used to indicate whether a single manuscript contains readings originating from different sources or different lines of tradition. In literature, contamination refers to a blending of legends or stories that results in new combinations of incident or in modifications of plot. In linguistics, the word takes different connotations according to its area of usage, in phonetics and phonology, syntax, and semantics. The corporate reports are among the most hybrid, heterogeneous and ‘contaminated’ genres (Berkenkotter / Huckin 1995; Bhatia 1993; Bhatia 2004, 2008; Bhatia / Gotti 2006; Bhatia / Flowerdew / Jones 2008; Biber / Connor / Upton 2007; Crawford Camiciottoli 2009; Del Lungo Camiciotti / Dossena / Crawford / Camiciottoli 2006; Fairclough 1995; Gunnarson 2009; Hyland 1998, 2005; Skulstad 1997, 2005; Swales 1990, 2004; Swangboonsatic 2006; Thomas 1997; Yates / Orlinkowski 2002).

3.3. *Interdisciplinarity*

Interdisciplinarity as a metadiscipline needs still to be defined. In a recent

overview of the problem, applied to academic research and practice, Orland (2009) underlined that most academic research is conducted within a single traditional academic discipline or sub-discipline, with the researcher working alone or with one or two colleagues. This structure is functional for the continued development and growth of academic fields and sub-fields, as well as for rewarding individual researcher productivity. However, it is not well-aligned with the nature of most problems, which require knowledge and expertise from multiple disciplines and consequently disciplinary collaborations involving many researchers and research traditions (Orland 2009: 118).

Analyzing ARs requires interdisciplinarity. In financial literature, the fundamental role of studying the so-called ‘narratives’ of accounting has been widely recognized since the ‘80s (Beattie / McInnes / Fearnley 2004; Veneziani / Carini / Bendotti / Teodori 2010). Sydserff and Weetman (1999, 2002) acknowledged the relevance of linguistic and language studies to their discipline, and wrote:

Whilst the disciplinary base of accounting research is outside formalist linguistics or language studies, it is nevertheless appropriate that accounting researchers considering accounting narratives should have regard to the theoretical and analytical frameworks developed in this discipline. Indeed, researchers in this area of linguistics argue that narrative discourse analysis has an important role to play in the wider communities of social scientific research (Sydserff / Weetman 1999:478).

Fairclough (1995: 208), in particular, advanced theoretical and methodological arguments in favour of his contention that if one is dealing with ‘narratives’, irrespective of the disciplinary base of the study, it is always worth analysing them in a serious way. He underlined the previous paucity of usable analytical frameworks in the field and he contributed to develop relevant interdisciplinary models of language, which turned the insights of linguists into comprehensible and usable forms (Fairclough 1995: 210).

3.4. *Contamination*

When referring to new and current models of genres and subgenres, the adjective ‘contaminated’ is often used (Sarangi / Polese / Caliendo 2011). As previously stated, ‘contamination’ is sometimes used in linguistics to refer to hybrid texts. Leonard Bloomfield declared its relevance in linguistics many decades ago, and in more than one field of linguistic studies. With regard to phonetics, for example (Bloomfield 1933: 423):

Psychologists have ascertained that under laboratory conditions, the stimulus of hearing a word like ‘four’ often leads to the utterance a word like ‘five’ – but this, after all, does not account for contamination. There is perhaps more relevance in the fact that contaminative “slips of the tongue” are not infrequent. [Example: I’ll just GRUN (GO plus RUN) over and get it].

In syntax,

Innovations [...]sometimes have a contaminative aspect. The type “I am friends with him” and “We are friends”. Irregularities such as the “attraction” of relative pronouns seem to be of this nature.

As for semantics,

So-called popular etymologies are largely adaptive or contaminative. An irregular or semantically obscure form is replaced by a new form of more normal structure and some semantic content [...]. Thus, an old SHAM-FAST ‘shame-fast’, that is, ‘modest’, has given way to the regular, but semantically queer compound SHAME-FACED.

In principle, contamination means here ‘adaptation’ (Bloomfield 1933: 521), as widely recognized in the literature (Hartmann / Stork 1972: 51; Hock 1986: 197-198; Lehmann 1992: 223-224; Matthews 1997: 72; Nash 1968: 43; Pei / Gaynor 1954: 47).

We will not take into consideration here non-literary meanings of the word, such as ‘illness’, or ‘pollution’. By ‘contaminated genre’ we refer here to the hybrid nature of the Annual Report texts, which may be considered as a blending of varied and multiple competencies. Business writers face many difficult complexities, because the situations about which they write are often ambiguous, depending also on different perspectives. When the writing process itself is complex because of genre expectations or collaborative project requirements, the writer faces additional challenges. The genre may privilege or constrain choices in style, organization, scope, and content.

3.5 *Multimodal dimension*

In an academic context, such as a Department of Economics, or in a Business School, Annual Reports may be selected with the specific aims of:

- studying the narratives as a support to (or explanation of) the numerical data;
- reading the more technical sides of the text (e.g. ‘notes to the financial statement’) with an eye to the lexical-syntactic items adopted;
- looking for the most effective methodology for interpreting the different styles and registers of the different parts of the text.

The immediate result of the building and usage of such a corpus is, as demonstrated in the previous paragraphs, the strong ‘contamination’ of the two areas (English language and accounting in particular), which underlines the strong need for:

- a contextually-oriented description of the financial reporting writing process in the financial world;
- an ESP-based functional-structural analysis (for ESP teachers and learners) within an international context;
- the complex internationalized and globalized interpretation of the whole ‘hybrid’ text.

The emphasis on a multimodal dimension to genre analysis and on context provides a more insightful set of findings, with greater value for the ESP practitioner. As a result, a more profound analysis of the financial report genre is required, together with new and more solid foundations to the approach of this ‘contaminated’ text.

3.6. *Multiple perspectives in Annual Report analysis*

Even though the majority of studies regarding Annual Reports have concentrated on the financial aspects, nowadays the narrative part is considered an important area for study and research. Recent studies have demonstrated that new textual strategies used in ARs have considerably influenced the communicative efficiency of the entire document (Beattie 2000; Beattie / McInnes / Fearhley 2004; Beattie / McInnes / Pierpoint 2008; Beattie / McInnes 2006; Bowman 1984; Hirshleifer / Teoh 2003; Jameson 2000; Jones / Shoemaker 1994; Krippendorff 2004; Smith / Taffler 2000; Weber 1985; Yeung 2007).

Over the years, ARs have been central to many studies which have analyzed numerous aspects. The main areas which were explored in the last decades are the following:

1. ARs contents (Rogers / Grant 1997)
2. Strategic communication (Yuthas, Rogers / Dillard 2002): very often companies use their ARs strategically, to inform shareholders of results achieved
3. Efficiency in communication (Campbell / Parker 1992)
4. Content analysis (Bowman 1984; Krippendorff 2004; Syderff / Weetman 1999, 2002)
5. The use of symbols (Thomas 1997) and of illustrations (Preston / Wright / Young 1996)
6. The CEO’s letter: Swales (1990, 2004) and Hyland (1998, 2005) turned their attention mainly to the CEO’s letter, and in particular to how it is

organized, the relationship between text and context, and its rhetorical make up.

4. Current linguistic approaches to the analysis of narratives in Financial Statements

It would be presumptuous, besides realistically impossible, to provide an exhaustive panorama here of everything experts from the various disciplines have written so far about this subject, so we attempt here to offer only a brief outline of the main linguistic methods and approaches that have been followed in this field over the past few decades.

4.1. Foundations and earlier studies

As stated before, the basis for defining a Corporate Annual Report as a genre is Swales' definition (1990: 45-47), which identifies "a shared set of communicative purposes" as "the principal criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre".

Since Swales's (1990) seminal book on the topic, the notion of genre has been extremely significant in research in the field of ESP (Bhatia 2004, Hyland 2002, Swales 2004 for overviews). Genres can be defined as organized, structured, communicative events, motivated by various communicative purposes, and performed by specific discourse communities (Berkenkotter / Huckin 1995, Bhatia 1993, 2004; Swales 1990, 2004). A multitude of structural and functional analyzes of various genres has appeared over the years, providing studies on their prototypical linguistic/pragmatic features and social contexts. These investigations have in turn provided insights for syllabus and materials designers working in ESP pedagogy (e.g. Bhatia 1993, Hyland 2005). The great majority of this research, however, has been focused upon the various academic genres, most notably the research article,

much less attention being paid to professional and workplace genres. Bhatia (1993, 2004) and Bargiela-Chiappini / Nickerson (1999) showed a consistent development of their approaches towards professional genres and Bhatia (2008) made a shift towards an integration of discursive and professional practice, emphasizing the function of interdiscursivity in critical genre analysis.

At present, following Flowerdew / Wan (2009), at least three approaches to genre analysis may be distinguished:

1. the ESP approach (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993)
2. the Sidney School approach (Hasan 1977, 1984)
3. the New Rhetoric approach (Bazermann 1994; Bazerman / Paradis 1991).

Following Freedman / Medway (1994), the last two approaches should be called respectively the Australian approach and the North American approach.

4.2. *ESP approach*

The ESP approach to genre was developed by practitioners working in the field of ESP. The best known members of this group are John Swales and Vijay Bhatia, authors of the two seminal books on the subject (Swales 1990, Bhatia 1993). The motivation for genre analysis for these researchers was the goal of developing pedagogic materials for non-native speakers of English.

They both define genre as a type of communicative event with a particular purpose, which is readily identified by what they refer to as its discourse community (that is, the people who regularly engage in it). Genres are ‘staged events’, that is they develop through a sequence of what the authors call ‘moves’ and component ‘steps’. Some moves may be optional, some others may be repeated, but a prototypical schematic structure is always recognizable in terms of the most typical realisation pattern, as identified by the discourse community (Swales 1990: 58).

4.3. *The Australian Sydney school*

This approach to genre is referred to by Flowerdew / Wan (2009) as the Sidney school, because it developed at the University of Sidney among followers of the systemic-functional linguist Halliday. Martin (1992, quoted in Flowerdew / Wan 2009) devoted considerable attention to the notion of genre and how it might fit into a systemic model, developing the notion of schematic structure, or ‘structural formula’ (Hasan 1977, 1984).

4.4. *The North American school*

It is a rather different way of looking at genre, more ‘social’ in its preoccupations (Bazerman 1994). Yeung (2007) argues that a definition of genre should be focused on the action which is used to accomplish rather than on the substance of form. As Flowerdew / Wan put it (2009:3-4):

Perhaps because of its social nature, the New Rhetoric stresses the fluidity of genres, how they are ever-changing and may be manipulated by their participants (Schryer, 1993, refers to ‘stabilized-for-now’ structures of genres). One ramification of this fluidity is that even conventionalized genres may be open to change when manipulated by particularly influential or powerful individuals or institutions.

4.5. *Bhatia’s new approach*

The overview of the approaches to genre analysis would not be complete without reference to Bhatia (2008). In his contribution entitled *Genre analysis, ESP and professional practice*, Bhatia claimed that:

[...]in order to develop a comprehensive and evidence-based awareness of the motives of such disciplinary and professional practices, one needs to look closely at the multiple discourses, actions and voices, both text-internal as well as text-external (Bhatia 2008:168).

His studies emphasized the need to go from text to context, underlying the crucial role of text-external factors not only for the construction of professional discourses, but also for the eventual success of professional activities typically undertaken by professionals in the field.

5. The Annual Report narrative genre: future perspectives

As Grandgenett puts it:

When someone (such as a map maker) attempts to measure a coastline, the often jagged line of where water meets shore can actually be measured by many perspectives, ranging from the height of a satellite to the very close viewpoint of a person kneeling on the shore (2008:148, quoted in Hall, Smith, Wicaksono 2011).

Like Grandgenett's map-maker, we have explored the terrain of the Annual Report genre from a variety of perspectives. The common ground of all the different approaches to Annual Report studies is the affirmation of norms and rules which are behind – and come before - the texts collected in a 'financial package'. These texts reflect the beliefs and norms of the 'globalized' professional community to which their authors belong; they mirror how the authors structure the knowledge they want to present, or at least what they believe is the accepted way of structuring this knowledge within the group to which they belong. In other words,

The text can [...]be seen as the product of the author's adaptation to the requirements and his or her own unique way of structuring the subject matter (Gunnarsson 2009:31).

It is time, therefore, for the Annual Report researcher, to study the internationalized key requirements of this genre at the economic and linguistic levels, in parallel and at the same time, so as to draft models of authentic interdisciplinary analyzes.

Key words*Annual Report**Balance Sheet**Cash flow**Demotic text**Financial Statement**Genre**Hieratic text**Interdisciplinarity**Profit & Loss account*

Part III - Summary

The importance of going beyond language in classroom contexts, although a big challenge for teachers and trainers, must be recognized. The proposal here has been that of contextualising English for International Business in its most natural academic ground, that is to say, a Department of Economics, or a Business School where students will be given the opportunity to work on authentic business texts, such as the corporate Annual Reports: these are informative and persuasive texts, required by law or by statute, which are very interesting from both the linguistic and the economic point of view. Reading an Annual Report is an excellent way to be trained at an interdisciplinary level: mixed competencies are required in order to understand these texts, from the linguistic one to the economic one, up to the cross-cultural or ‘global’ one.

Discussion questions

1. The use of English as a reporting language for firms from non-English speaking countries is very consistent all over the world. Do you think that language ‘per se’ may be an attribute of the firm’s visibility?
2. In your own experience, or as far as you know, were English-written ARs all born in English? Or are they sometimes produced in a language which is different from English, and then translated to be internationally accepted?
3. Do you think that a truly-born English Annual Report and a ‘non-native’ English Annual Report, i.e. a translated version into English, may show some differences?

Suggested activities

1. Annual Reports are often downloadable from the companies’ websites. Choose one of them, in its most recent version, read it carefully and prepare an oral presentation aimed at summarizing the main trends of the organization for the current year.
2. Find financial data from a company’s Annual Report. Describe the main points from the data either orally or in writing.

Further Reading

The Annual Report has been approached here as an emblematic example of authentic business material for entrepreneurs at work. It is an internationally

recognized business genre, which deserves consideration both from practitioners and linguists. We suggest the following further readings on the topic:

Rubinstein A., 2000, *Economics and Language*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Economic theory is applied to a careful analysis of the language as a mechanism of communication.

Helm S., 2010, *Accounting and Finance. Market Leader Business English*, Pearson, Harlow. The book is aimed at University students of Accounting and contains updated language activities on finance and investment topics in an international context.

Internet links

Focused Websites

You will find here links to web resources for English teachers sent in by contributors around the world (edited by British Council and BBC, plus CNN materials, last version 23/08/2012):

- <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/links?page=0%2C23>
- http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/search/apachesolr_search/business%20english (with special reference to International Business English)
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/business/talkingbusiness/>
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/general/talkaboutenglish/2009/02/090211_tae_bltg.shtml (for practicing EIL oral communication)
- <http://www.businessenglishmaterials.com/cnn.html>
- <http://home.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/flare/EnglishStudySite.html>

PART IV

International English for International Business

1. TESOL, EFL, ESP and EIB

The multi-faceted aspects of teaching and learning English for International Business should be among the main concerns of any teacher and student of Business English. In fact, due to the complexity of the issues involved, defining what English for International Business (EIB) is seems to be impossible. We mainly focus here on:

- a) studying the special needs of a possible user of an EIB course,
- b) identifying the basic requirements needed by an EIB teacher,
- c) exploring old and new EIB materials on disposal.

The context should be that of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). The term refers to areas where English is taught both as a second language and as a foreign language. In particular, EFL (English as a Foreign Language) should be the main concern here: the acronym is adopted in places where English is not generally used as the language of communication or instruction.

In the 1970s, the development of communicative methodology focused attention on English as a tool for communication, and course contents were mainly chosen to match the communicative needs of the learner. This shift resulted in the production of needs-based courses, which were designed to meet the specific requirements of course participants. Such courses are known as ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses.

English for International Business (EIB) is part of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Some authors (Goddard 2007) suggest that EIB is a category within English for Occupational Purposes (EOP) and therefore an EIB course should be taught under the umbrella term of ESP. EOP courses include, for instance, English for Professional Purposes and English for Business Purposes. However, the kind of English to adopt as a standard for a business English course is not clearly defined.

2. English for General or for Specific Business Purposes?

As previously stated, English for International Business is very difficult to define. Choice of language may be influenced by the purpose of an interaction, the professional relationship between the interlocutors, and the topic under discussion. Indeed, some business communication may be no different from the English used by the general public. There are, however, a number of identifiable characteristics of EIB: most of the English communication in international and intercultural settings is likely to be EIL communication, where interactants who do not share a language cannot help using English as the unique means of communication (Murata / Jenkins 2009).

Before discussing this topic, however, we need to revisit the distinction between English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP), following some guidelines from Dudley-Evans / St John (1998) and Goddard (2007).

EGBP courses are often for either pre-experienced learners or for learners at an early stage in their careers. There is a similarity between General EFL courses and courses in EGBP, in that the latter are often extensive courses, with groups formed on the basis of language levels, and with most materials containing work on the four skills, but set in a business context. This context is simply used as ‘carrier content’. For example, the ‘profit and loss account’ in a financial statement could be used as the ‘carrier content’ for teaching the present perfect (e.g. ‘Distribution costs have increased this year’). These courses, which teach a range of English through business settings, can not accurately be described as ESP courses. The language activities tend to be core EFL activities and are not designed to meet particular needs.

In contrast, ESBP courses are often run for experienced people who will take the time off work for study. These courses are often ‘tailor-made’, with a focus on specific communication skills, such as ‘presentations, report-writing, etc.’ The programs are usually intensive, of short duration and with small groups. Furthermore, participants of ESBP courses may be at different levels of language proficiency and aim at fluency rather than on accuracy.

For the teacher, the principal differences between teaching an EGBP course and teaching an ESBP course will be as represented in Fig. 10:

EGBP	<i>Extensive course</i>	<i>One coursebook</i>	<i>Predictable pattern to the lessons</i>	<i>Familiarity with teaching materials</i>
ESBP	<i>Intensive course</i>	<i>Varied materials (authentic)</i>	<i>Intercultural sensitivity is a priority</i>	<i>Intercultural competence and awareness</i>

Fig. 10. EGBP vs ESBP courses

3. The English for International Business speaker

English for International Business is spoken and written in global companies. By ‘global’ we mean that customers, colleagues, team-members, managers can be located in almost any part of the world. All communication between them is English, and the English they use is English as a World Language (EWL) or English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) rather than the native language of such countries as the US or the UK (Jenkins 2007). International English is about effective communication: although non-native speakers want to communicate effectively, they do not necessarily want to use native-speaker communication style. Equally, native speakers need to be able to use international English. Aspects of native-speaker English are not very helpful when communicating with non-native speakers. Some examples from Goddard (2007: 24):

... idiomatic expressions which have their roots in British culture (e.g. ‘He’s on a sticky wicket’, or ‘In for a penny in for a pound’) are unlikely to be understood by non-native speakers. Furthermore, non-native English is littered with first language interferences which, although incorrect, do not necessarily hinder communication. For example, it is very common to hear

an Italian or a German using expressions like: ‘I am born in 1952’, or ‘I work in Shanghai since two months’.

At this level, the concept of ‘correctness’ of any linguistic form becomes necessarily a secondary one. On this point, Bruton (2005) argues that it is inevitable that certain native-speaker varieties will serve as reference points and models. On this point, we agree with Jenkins (2006), who is far from placing everything which is linguistically acceptable and ‘legitimate’ on the native-speaker side and everything that is unacceptable and ‘illegitimate’ on the non-native speaker one; on the contrary, she interprets international English as ‘English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)’, occupying a ‘third space’ (or ‘third place’ or ‘third culture’) between ‘English as a Native Language’ and ‘English as a Foreign Language’. If we accept this interpretation of English as an international language, in the field of business above all,

we open up the possibility of accepting norms which differ from those of NSs rather than simplistically defining all that differs from NS English as wrong by default (Jenkins 2006: 155).

4. The English for International Business teacher

Teachers of English for International Business (EIB) need experience, knowledge, and interest in business matters. Furthermore, they may have a good deal to learn. Most teachers of EIB have not experienced the world of business at first hand, as a matter of fact. Following Goddard (2007: 26-28), EIB teachers should:

- be sensitive to the expectations that business people may have;
- keep up to date with research into discourse communities and how they operate;
- be aware of the research into Business English genres and the attempts to identify the linguistic features that differentiate one genre from another;

- know how language works in the key communicative events of business (possibly by attending ‘real’ business events in order to hear how language is used in these key contexts);
- be familiar with management training courses which focus on business communication skills in the learners’ native language.

The five objectives seem hard to be reached, however. Dudley-Evans / St John (1998) identified five key roles for a ‘general’ ESP teacher, that is:

- a) teacher;
- b) course designer and material provider;
- c) collaborator;
- d) researcher;
- e) evaluator.

These five roles are not enough for an EIB teacher, who is no longer an ESP teacher, in behaviour, knowledge, skills, and teacher-learner relationship. In fact, while the principles of ESP can usually be applied to the teaching of EIB, there are some consistent differences, namely:

- the fundamental concern of most business people is not language learning for its own sake, but how language learning will impact on the company’s bottom line and/or their salaries;
- the teacher of EIB is working in a world where most communication is between non-native speakers, and the language of communication is English as a world language;
- the growth of EIB will increase the need for awareness of cross-cultural issues. It may well be that EIB teachers become consultant and advise on the effectiveness of intercultural communication in global companies;
- another area of importance for the EIB teacher is the study of discourse communities and the role of ‘text’ within those communities. This may involve the use of specific corpora to look at what is said and how it is said in particular genres.

4.1. *The teacher as consultant*

Many EIB teachers who work in companies are obliged to behave like consultants as much as they do teachers. In order to organize seminars, the teacher may be required to work with staff at many levels. For example, in order to do a needs analysis and make decisions regarding course content, teachers will need information. That information will be obtained from face-to-face contact, phone contact and email contact. In order to operate in this environment, EIB teachers need highly developed interpersonal skills.

This means that teachers need to be good team members. They must be EIB professionals and experts, and have developed good teamworking skills and interpersonal skills. Guirdham (1990) suggests that there are five critical interpersonal skills, that is:

- a) *understanding other people's behaviour*. Understanding others refers to interpreting their speech and actions. This means listening actively, which implies listening to those things that are not explicit. For example, emotions and attitudes may not be stated, but the listener should be sensitive to them;
- b) *managing impressions*, which means presenting oneself in the best possible light to other people. EIB teachers need special skills in managing impressions, by using body language adequately. Body language can substitute for, accompany, reinforce or moderate spoken language, and it may indicate how verbal statements should be interpreted;
- c) *communicating*. In order to communicate well, we need to remember that communication is a two-way process. According to Hargie (2006) receivers take in, understand and remember only about 8% of what they hear. Listeners are usually distracted, and what they hear is often distorted or interpreted in a way that was not intended. Ineffectiveness on the part of the EIB teachers can include that: they do not structure their thoughts, speak too long, too quickly or without clarity, express themselves too loosely;
- d) *persuading*. Persuasion is an activity directed at influencing other people. There are no infallible ways of doing this, and persuasion does not depend on authority or power;

- e) *using power*. It might appear that teachers of EIB are in the unenviable and powerless position of knowing less about business and management than their group of learners. Most EIB teachers have a language teaching background and do not have first-hand experience of business. Nevertheless, what EIB teachers do need to understand is: what business people do in their jobs, what and how business people communicate, and how language is used in business situations.

5. Teaching English for International Business in the academic world

In principle, the qualities associated with corporate EIB teachers should also be developed by EIB teachers in the academic world. However, there are significant differences between the corporate and the academic situations.

In universities teachers usually deal with undergraduates with little or no experience of the business world. In the corporate world, on the contrary, the trend is towards short and job-specific courses with an emphasis on skills and language. In the academic world, there may be short courses designed as ‘pre-sessional’ or even ‘in-sessional’ courses, but the emphasis is on helping learners cope with their future studies or professions.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the corporate world and the academic world is the assessment procedure. In many corporate EIB situations, tests may be inappropriate: it is unlikely that EIB trainers in the corporate world will ever have to cope with the type of formal assessment carried out in large academic institutions.

Finally, there is a question of culture. In the UK and US academic world, the learners usually have to adapt to language and cultural expectations of the British and American universities. In the corporate world, learners may use English language but not adopt the cultural values that go with it.

Key Words*EFL**EGBP**EIL**EOP**ESBP**ESP**EWL**Global English**Lingua Franca**TESOL*

Part IV - Summary

The definition of English for International Business in the wide context of ESP is becoming more and more difficult, due to the fast changes that have been driven by different social, economic, political and cultural trends. Among these trends are: the increasing internationalisation of economic activity, strongly increased cross-cultural and cross-linguistic interaction, increased mobility of labour, and the increased public interest in all professions, including teaching.

The role of the business English teacher has become more and more demanding in many ways. It requires some basic qualities in addition to those which were typical of the good modern language teacher of the past. In this context, and in continents where higher performing economies show advanced forms of curricular integration, the traditional profile of the teacher as a 'lone rider' imposing his or her subject in isolation from others is no longer valid.

Discussion questions

Make a list of all the places you can think of where EIB is usually taught.

1. What are the differences between these various environments? Consider the learners, their expectations and the language they need.
2. Consider these environments again. How does/should the environment influence the EIB teacher? And the student? Consider the skills and knowledge required, and the teacher behaviour.
3. Why does the EIB teacher be sensitive to cultural differences?
4. Teaching and learning cultural differences is not really appropriate at lower language levels. Cultural differences are only important to those who can already communicate effectively in EIB. What do you think?

Suggested activities

Some samples of self-assessment tests for evaluating one's entrepreneurial skills at:

- http://unienglish.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/Self_assessment.pdf
- <http://www.mvp.cfee.org/en/selfassessskills.html>
- <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/immigrate/skilled/assess/index.asp>

Further reading

The following are suggested for readers wishing to broaden their understanding of EIL:

Goddard R.J., 2007, *Teaching English for International Business*, Authors OnLine Ltd, Bedfordshire. The Author has considerable experience in teaching English for International Business in both the private and public sector. His volume gives a complete, exhaustive, and updated overview of the environment and scope of EIB.

McAlpine R., 2005, *Global English for Global Business*, CC Press, Wellington. As stated in the Preface, “here’s a book that helps you write and speak English that your international clients can understand. Armed with the rules of Global English, you can communicate successfully with people all over the world” (p. 1). The Author gives a summary of what Global English is meant to be in business communication. A useful tool for students and practitioners.

Internet links

A lot of people approach EIB without knowing which skills or which level of knowledge they need in order to communicate successfully in their professions. For information on language qualifications the following websites may be consulted:

- IELTS: www.ielts.org
- TOEFL: www.toefl.org/index
- Cambridge CAE: www.cambridge-efl.org
- UCLES: www.ucles.org.uk

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