



## Intercultural Interactions in Business and Management

Rita Salvi, Hiromasa Tanaka (eds).

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Studies using the term “intercultural communication” can be divided into two main groups. Some can mainly focus on face-to-face encounters between individuals from different backgrounds, while others pay special attention to the “underlying communicative style differences in interethnic communication” (Connor, 2008: 309-310). The book *Intercultural Interactions in Business and Management* shows examples of both groups of studies within a very particular background, as it is the business world.

As explained by RITA SALVI and HIROMASA TANAKA in the “Introduction” the present book originates in a seminar on intercultural discourse held at Turin in 2010, as part of the 10th ESSE Conference. The connecting topic of the articles included in the book is the analysis and comparison between Eastern/Western European speakers of English, as well as Asian/European/North American speakers.

Unlike those kinds of seminar-based books, this one includes a foreword section. In her preface, FRANCESCA BARGIELA-CHIAPPINI offers a critical and encouraging view of the field of intercultural business communication, specially promoting one of the original contributions of this volume, the Asian discourse in international settings and ELAB (English as a Language of Asian Business).

The book is divided into two sections: “Genre, Culture and Language”, and “Intercultural Interaction, Identity and Organizations”. In the first one, apart from the cultural basis, there are some other common links such as multimodality, persuasive language and language for promotion. The second section is rather more varied on the topics studied, having in common the analysis of the English language used in real intercultural contexts. Throughout the book, the multilayered and integrated methodologies of data collection and analysis are proved to be key factors in most articles.

The first section starts with RITA SALVI's article about a multimodal and interactive visual genre, such as the chart. After explaining the needs of the globalized professional environment and discourse communities, the language features of different intercultural business events, and some keys of methodological analysis, she tries to show the role of the chart in the contemporary global business communication world as well as its effectiveness as a persuasive tool.

WINNIE CHENG's article focuses on a corpus of company brochures. She analyses their move-structure, their semantic fields used, and some other lexico-grammar features by means of relevant and innovative computer-mediated programs (e.g. Wmatrix and ConcGram). Her research shows that the knowledge of the phraseological patterns of business and professional English is necessary for both writers and readers to master them so as to be part of their discourse community and communicate efficiently.

The following article written by JUDITH TURNBULL studies glocalization in websites (six versions of Unilever "About us" section), analyzing their core themes, the linguistic and visual means to convey the corporate image and the similarities and differences between versions to assess to what extent glocalization is practiced. As in the previous article, she also uses innovative computer-mediated programs, although other unspecified discourse analytical tools for multimodal analysis are mentioned. Results show a language and visual tendency to project a single identity of the company worldwide.

Glocalization in websites is also the topic of DANIELA CESIRI's article. She analyses the linguistic, discursive and visual strategies appearing in European and Asian multinational food companies. In this study, local culture plays a special role in the creation of national Corporate Websites. Those companies use their websites to answer allegations (keeping the company's face and respectability) and to establish a direct link with their customers trying to "awaken the sensitivity" of the specific, local culture of the customers address.

The following article analyses the representations of time, space and human action within the "local" organizational culture and rhetoric for the creation of shared meanings. MARIA CRISTINA GATTI conducts a discourse analysis of her corpus, made up of the historical webpages ("About us" section) of Baltic States companies listed in the Baltic Stock Exchange. She looks at the grammatical and semantic levels of texts, resulting in verb and noun forms as the main ones to construct the temporal dimension.

This first section ends with the article authored by OLGA DENTI and MICHELA GIORDANO. They also use websites from different cultures and countries as their corpus; they analyze Online Dispute Resolutions (ODRs) procedures websites, that is to say, disputes resolved online through mediation or arbitration. As a result of an intracultural and multimodal analysis, they check how close and intelligible those texts are for laymen.

The more diverse second section starts with an article written by SANTA NAIR-VENUGOPAL. The author studies the discursive and “subversive” strategies employed by trainees in training sessions conducted in a leading financial service provider in Malaysia. She proves that, although English is the traditional non-native language of Malaysian business, Malay is the *de facto* language in certain organizations.

The following article also deals with English usage in Malaysia. JANET BOWKER describes some business consulting discourse events in a 3-day workshop which included a US-based multinational consulting company and Malaysian human resources professionals. A multi-faceted methodological framework leads her to study interpersonal strategies in intercultural backgrounds and especially in an interculturally sensitive situation.

HIROMASA TANAKA deals with the investigation of empirical data which includes naturally occurring business interaction between Japanese entrepreneurs and Indian business practitioners. The corpus is used to analyze the interlocutors’ identities and discursive strategies as well as their relationship to the forms of English language they use to better communicate in an intercultural interaction.

The following article deals with two corpora of emails written by Chinese and Japanese employees of an internationally operating freight-forwarding company based in Italy, where English is the lingua franca for company communication. FRANCA POPPI studies how interactants adopt global practices in the usage of English and politeness strategies and adapt them when communicating in lingua-cultural backgrounds.

VITTORIA GROSSI focuses her research on intercultural communication and how it takes place in institutional settings within a migrant host society. The discourse levels of interactions of migrant professionals who have been granted or are eligible for permanent residency in Australia are studied. Results show that participants achieve collaboration by using a number of linguistic strategies.

The last article seems to be a bit different from the previous ones. VANESSA LEONARDI and IRINA KHOUTYZ's article is probably the closest one to pedagogical issues as it deals with the teaching of intercultural business communication applied to the teaching of "small talk". They explain and exemplify how to improve conversational skills involving the learning about the local cultures, while contrasting them to the target cultures. Language and intercultural competence progress simultaneously and become a must to succeed in business.

Definitely, this book is an excellent contribution to the world of intercultural communication in the business world. Researchers interested in the topic will find it useful for the main topics researched (Asian business culture, or interaction between the Western and Eastern intercultural business communication) and, particularly, for the methodological issues followed (different quantitative and qualitative approaches in discourse analysis).

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## References

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