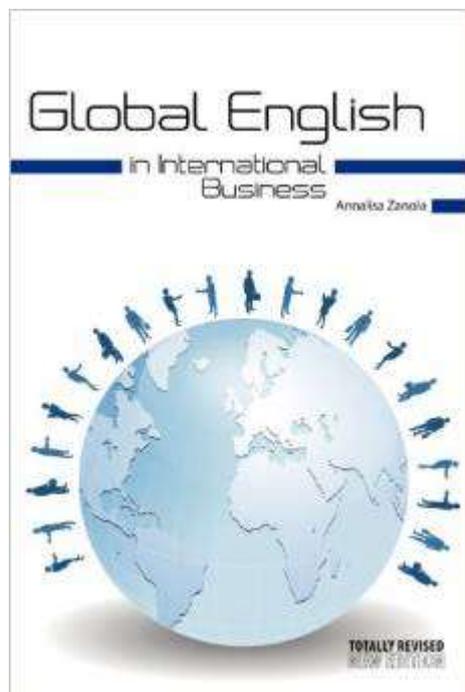




## Global English in International Business

Annalisa Zanola

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Reviewed by Marta Degani<sup>1</sup>

Annalisa Zanola's book provides a clear and concise overview of different aspects that characterize the study of Business English from an international perspective. Her book particularly focuses on the effects that economic globalization has on language use and communicative practice in the domain of business.

Multinational joint ventures and international transactions make it necessary for people working or willing to operate in the global business sector to acquire specific linguistic and communicative skills. Zanola's work provides Business English learners and trainers with useful suggestions on how to meet these challenges.

The implementation of English as the corporate language in international organizations is presented as a radical but necessary choice and the book emphasizes the need to approach this phenomenon from a culturally informed perspective. Given the fact that English has become the language of business, due consideration should be given to the new contexts that define business interactions all over the world. In this respect, the author reminds her readers about the importance of developing sociolinguistic awareness and, above all, intercultural sensitivity.

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Zanola's exploration is informed by Blommaert's interpretations of 'mobility' and 'locality' as flexible concepts, and it takes Hofstede's model as a starting point for reflecting on issues related to intercultural communication and exchange beyond national borders. In line with Hofstede's proposal, readers are confronted with the idea that managing cultural diversity requires specific types of knowledge (e.g. differences is portrayed as a priority for businesses acting in the global market place).

From a purely linguistic point of view, the book also makes clear how interactions in global English throughout international businesses are guided by the principle of communicative effectiveness. Since communication mostly takes place between people who do not share a common linguistic background, the type of English that is preferred tends to be devoid of idiomatic expressions, slang terms as well as local accents and pronunciations. Indeed, a further consideration could be added here. The supposed 'simplification' of the linguistic code is obviously dependent on the actual linguistic competence of the business interlocutors and should not be taken as a criterion for how to speak Business English. The suggested use of 'simplified' English can be seen as connected to the notion of cultural sensitivity, which can call for the need to linguistically accommodate in order for successful communication to take place.

In line with a tradition of studies that have recognized the importance of public speaking in international business, Zanola also devotes Part II of her work to this topic and focuses on a so far unexplored aspect. While other scholars have discussed technical, oratorical and symbolic aspects of entrepreneurs' public speaking, Zanola considers how entrepreneurs understand and explain public speaking starting from their own experience in the global market. To this end, a selection of interviews made by the author in seventeen Italian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is presented.

In addition to these observations on oral performance, Part III of the book revolves around the Annual Report (AR) genre in global business communication. Here, the author demonstrates her profound interest in this topic. First, she gives instructions on how to read the AR, providing details about its different components, and she illustrates the range of its potential users. Then, reasoning from a more theoretical perspective, the author describes the main approaches to genre analysis (the ESP approach, the Sydney school approach, The New Rhetoric approach and Bathia's revised approach) and she reflects on the AR as a genre. In particular, she relates the AR to the debated notions of hybridity, contamination and interdisciplinarity in order to underline, on the one hand, its blended character and, on the other, the possibility of approaching it from multiple disciplinary perspectives. As a matter of fact, the AR is a genre that has attracted a lot of scholarly interest and one that has been analyzed for different aspects (e.g. strategic and efficient communication, use of symbols and illustrations, content analysis, CEO's letter and so on). The author also foresees possible future perspectives on the study of the AR when she claims that "it is time [...] 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" (85).

The last part of the book deals with international English for international business and it is addressed, more specifically, to business trainers. The author mentions the traditional distinction between courses on English for General Business Purposes (EGBP) and courses on English for Specific Business Purposes (ESBP). The discussion, however, also indicates that nowadays the teaching of English for international Business cannot so easily be differentiated from the teaching of International English for Business. In this context, the role of the teacher has become more and more demanding since it fluctuates from that of a facilitator or consultant to the one of a specialist in the domain of business.

To conclude, Zanola's book makes for an engaging read that will be of particular interest to learners and users of global English in international business. Its readers will also appreciate the range of additional resources it provides at the end of each part. They include discussion questions, suggested activities, internet links and further readings.



### Works cited

Blommaert, Jan. *The Sociolinguistics of Globalization*. Cambridge: CUP. 2010.

Hofstede, Geert. *Culture's Consequences. International Differences in Work-related Values*. London: Sage. 2014.