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TRADESPEAK

an interdisciplinary study
of business communication in
international trade deals

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy
in Business Studies
at Massey University

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1997



ERRATA

1. pg 7, para 3, Baratheas should read Barthes
2. Bibliography, pg XX, Barhtes should read Barthes
3. pg 78 delete Source: Birgit Stoeckl, 1997

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Abbreviations

ABT	about (<i>preposition</i>)
ADV	advise (<i>verb</i>); advice (<i>noun</i>)
C	Case
CHK	check (<i>verb</i>)
CFM	confirm (<i>verb</i>)
DTL	detail (<i>noun</i>)
ESP	English for Special Purposes
F ²	February (<i>proper name</i>)
FOB	freight (free) on board (<i>noun phrase</i>)
HV	have (<i>verb</i>)
IS	International Sourcing
INCLD	including (<i>preposition</i>)
INFO	information (<i>noun</i>)
NIE	Newly Industrialising Economy
O	Object
PCS	piece, pieces (<i>noun</i>)
PKT	pocket (<i>noun</i>)
PLS	please (<i>interjection</i>)
PRGM	programme (<i>noun</i>)
PT	point (<i>noun</i>)
R	Rule
RE	regarding (<i>preposition</i>)
REF	reference (<i>noun</i>)
REV	revise (<i>verb</i>)
RP	Received Pronunciation
Rs	Result

RTN	return (<i>noun</i>)
S ^d	Signified
S ^r	Signifier
S ^{r'}	Signifier of an abbreviation
S _A	Sign A
TOEFL	Test of English as a foreign language
TOEIC	Test of English for international communication
SHPT	shipment (<i>noun</i>)
WHT	white (<i>adjective</i>)
WL	will (<i>auxiliary verb</i>)
WLD	would (<i>modal auxiliary verb</i>)
YR	your (<i>possessive adjective</i>)
Z _n	infinite number of signs

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A Introduction

In the course of history, English has become the dominant *lingua franca* of intercultural interaction. About 600 million people world wide are either English native speakers or have at least some speaking ability in the English language.¹ With its basic inflection system, English has proved to be particularly accommodating to second language learners. It is a well adaptable language. English has been also called a “hybrid language”² giving its speakers the freedom and flexibility in use for their special purposes, especially business purposes. Business English is regarded as a key advantage and necessary condition for export oriented development and upward mobility in Asia.³ It is important to stress that these modified versions of English are

“(…) by no means [to be classified as] a pidgin speech. A pidgin English is a rudimentary impoverished use of English arising in situations when parties do not share a common language and when accurate grammatical English is not important.”⁴

Opinions diverge as to whether the feature ‘accurate grammatical English’ distinguishes Business English from pidgin English.. On the one hand, the view is held that only a balanced bilingualism enables successful and effective communication. English language assessment tests (TOEFL, TOEIC), for example, aim at determining a profile of the English proficiency required for educational purposes (TOEFL) or different job positions in a company (TOEIC)⁵. On the other hand, there is the ‘insider opinion’ of regarding problem solving skills and flexibility in language use as more relevant than abiding by rigid grammar rules and conventions.

The present study investigates a particular variety of Business English, here called *TRADESPEAK*. The study’s objective is to look ‘behind the scenes’ in order to attempt an initial understanding of what ‘sufficient English language proficiency in the

¹ Naoki Kameda, Jeremiah Sullivan, “English as the lingua franca of the Far East”, in: *Multinational Business Review*, 4 (1) Spring 1996, pp. 52 - 62 [ABI-Database copy], p. 5.

² Kameda, Sullivan, p. 10.

³ Anonymous, “Britannia rules Asia’s soundwaves”, in: *Corporate Location* (ABI-Database copy), p.1.

⁴ Kameda, Sullivan, p. 10.

⁵ Matthew Sindlinger, “An international business language”, in *Business Mexico*, 4 (1,2), 1994 [ABI-Database copy, p. 1].

workplace' actually means. This could also help in the development of a certain style of English which works best as a *lingua franca* in the world of business.

This interdisciplinary study is located in the fields Semiotics, Poststructuralism / Deconstruction and Intercultural Communication. Before the approach (II) is detailed, the situational framework will be outlined by describing the empirical background. The methodological framework and the first part of the empirical analysis (III), introducing two of three firms examined, will then be described. Dialogue is defined as a communication model of the Speech Event comprising the Speech Event's components and their corresponding functions. Discourse, the interactive counterpart to Dialogue, continues by introducing the Native / Nonnative perspective. This is followed by the second part of the empirical analysis and the concluding evaluation of the respective companies come in. At this point, the best adapted *TRADESPEAK* variety is specified and illustrated by a *Profile Comparison*. Finally, this thesis concludes with the presentation of further perspectives regarding *TRADESPEAK* and the new key qualifications.