

Global Business Languages

Volume 7 *Communication and Commerce*

Article 1

12-1-2007

Introduction

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Recommended Citation

Keck, Christiane E. and Wood, Allen G. (2007) "Introduction," *Global Business Languages*: Vol. 7 , Article 1.
Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol7/iss1/1>

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INTRODUCTION

Our last issue came out September 1, 2001, just days before the horrific attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. To state that the world has changed in so many ways since that day seems trite and inadequate. The immensity of the destruction, while documented in statistics, cannot be fathomed in terms of human lives, emotions, rescue efforts and energy expended. Now, a little over one year later, our country, so united in its resolve to fight terrorism by finding hidden terrorists in Afghanistan and elsewhere, may be on the brink of another war against Iraq.

Also in this past year, the economy has taken a serious turn for the worse, with a great deal of volatility and significant losses in the stock market—which go far beyond the technology sector. Lower than expected company earnings, yet continuing the practice of giving outrageous incentive packages for CEOs, widespread unemployment statistics and company lay-offs, along with reports of unethical behavior among top-level management, are daily news headlines in our papers. This is affecting all citizens, including recent college graduates who are not getting the anticipated three and four job offers with signing bonuses which they had envisioned after graduating. And that holds true even for those students who are earning MBAs from reputable institutions.

What have we learned in the academy from the events of the past year? Surely one lesson we can draw is the ever more urgent mission to prepare our students to live and work not just in our own country in the future, but to understand better this complex world in order to become better world citizens. If we don't teach our students so that they can better grasp the differences in the diverse cultures of the world, we may all suffer serious consequences. Because the world is globally interlinked, we must find ways to solve problems, even economical and

technical problems, which are acceptable to, and helpful for, those who think as we do and those who approach life very differently from us. We who teach foreign languages and cultures have much to contribute to this global understanding. With this in mind we offer you this new issue of *Global Business Languages*.

Authors this year have chosen to focus on one of a few basic categories. These are general surveys or overarching concerns in the whole field of business language education, studies of specific educational activities and finally the events and institutions in specific countries that deserve attention for students' cultural competency.

An overview of the teaching of business languages is provided in Christine Uber Grosse's article "Research Priorities in Languages for Specific Purposes." A review of research priorities in languages for specific purposes is examined in past publications and conferences, recent shifts are determined, and current priorities established. Research opportunities are plentiful in the field, and many research initiatives are discussed. The specific question "Can We Get Tenure While Teaching Online Language for Professional Purposes?" is raised by Rafael Gomez. As he states, teaching a course of Spanish for Professional Purposes online "becomes a scholarly activity when it is part of a systematic effort to develop a subject-matter knowledge base . . . and to share this information with colleagues." As such, it is definitely part of the research mission of an educational institution.

A number of articles in this year's journal examine various pedagogical approaches and tasks used in the business language classroom, as they reveal the rich diversity of methods and materials which our colleagues employ. In "A Hypothetical Business Plan Highlighting Approaches to International and Trans-cultural Education," Michael E. Jones describes in detail the development of Korean language software that is culturally contextual and based in trans-cultural communication strategies. One of the core concepts of his project is the need "of creating global knowledge foundations that are shared across cultural boundaries." Virginia Yonkers examines the way commercial language is taught in the United States in "The Business Communication Model for Teaching Foreign Business Languages." The model emphasizes the cultural basis for business formats and the need for speaker flexibility. The use of American Depository Receipts as real-life examples that can be used in the classroom is explored in Anton Pujol's

“ADRs: A Web-Based Approach to Understanding Financial Concepts in a Foreign Language.” The negotiable securities in foreign companies provide a point of departure for students to examine a particular company, its background, sales and product lines, among other things. In his article “Teaching about the Media to Prepare Professional German Students to be Culture Competent,” Michael Hager studies some of the critical cultural differences for doing business between Germans and Americans. These include conversational styles and a need for details and background information, which are incorporated into a teaching unit. Charles Grair develops the concept of the value of lived, authentic experience in the learning of language and culture. In “Experiential Learning in Business German Workshops,” he studies the active role which students themselves must play in the creation of knowledge, as it relates to a business language workshop.

Finally, events and institutions deserve our further attention. Margrit Zinggeler points out “The Educational Duty of the German Chamber of Commerce.” The general structure, function and services of the more than eighty DIHKs are described, which both promote trade and administrate vocational education. A lengthy commercial history is analyzed by Denise Koch in “La Reconquista: Spain’s New Relationship with Latin America.” Dramatic new developments affecting Spain’s economic growth and a greater entrepreneurial push in Latin America are revitalizing an old relationship, with mutual advantages. And, in the last article, Albert Wimmer explores the impact of the currency switch to the euro in the European Union. In “The E: Monopoly Money or Veritable Contender: The Effect of the Changeover on German Everyday Life,” many of the economic, psychological and practical details of the change are outlined, in an economic story that is still unfolding.

Again we received very many positive reactions to our 2001 issue of *Global Business Languages* entitled “Proficiency, Efficiency and Business Languages.” We hope you will also find this volume practical and applicable. Please contact us with your comments and your orders for back issues.

We can be reached at our email addresses: ckeck@purdue.edu or wooda@purdue.edu. Please visit us also at our website <<http://www.mgmt.purdue.edu/centers/ciber/language/index.htm>>. We hope that this will help facilitate subscriptions and to disseminate the call for new articles.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to the US Department of Education for its support of our Center for International Business Education and Research here at Purdue University. This publication would not be possible without financial support from CIBER and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures.

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November 2002