

12-1-2007

Introduction

Christiane E. Keck
Purdue University

Allen G. Wood
Purdue University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl>

Recommended Citation

Keck, Christiane E. and Wood, Allen G. (2007) "Introduction," *Global Business Languages*: Vol. 8 , Article 1.
Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol8/iss1/1>

Copyright © 2007 by Purdue Research Foundation. Global Business Languages is produced by Purdue CIBER. <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl>

This is an Open Access journal. This means that it uses a funding model that does not charge readers or their institutions for access. Readers may freely read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of articles. This journal is covered under the [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

INTRODUCTION

The year 2002 proved to be a very gloomy one with its continuing losses on the stock market, coupled with the serious decline in jobs from the manufacturing sector to tourism worldwide. An estimated 2.7 million jobs have been lost in the US since March 2001. This year, even graduates with an MBA degree from prestigious universities were not finding positions.

In light of this job crisis, creating jobs is the predominant issue for Americans. Because so many manufacturing jobs were lost due to the NAFTA agreement ten years ago and the recent recession, particular emphasis on creating manufacturing jobs is needed. President Bush has just announced he will appoint someone to oversee the renewed effort to increase job opportunities.

A positive international example of jobs created might be the Mercedes plant which opened in Alabama in 1997. Today Daimler-Chrysler has even a second plant there. Mercedes is the world's largest bus manufacturer with a recent gain of 10% in production and sales.

Impacting negatively on our economy is the outflow of dollars to other countries. It may surprise our readers to learn that \$6 billion was sent from the US to Mexico by workers to their families in the first six months of 2003. This is a figure 30% higher than last year during the same time period. It represents more than the income from tourism in Mexico and more than all that country's direct investments in foreign firms.

Another factor seriously impacting negatively on the world economy is the steady increase in cyber crimes and other criminal transactions via the Internet. West Europe estimates the cost to its businesses as high as 34%, while Germany puts it at an even higher 40%. The estimated average loss per business worldwide exceeds \$1 million per year. Purdue University has developed special expertise in detecting and stopping cy-

ber crimes. Our government in Washington regularly relies on this expertise for advice in solving such crimes.

According to a study released on September 1, 2003 by the United Nations labor agency, US workers are the world's most productive with an output per worker of \$60,728 last year. This was accomplished over 1,825 hours worked. Looking at Europe, for instance, it compares with Belgium, the highest producing European Union member, with an output of \$54,333 over 1,444 hours worked. Not only do US workers put in longer hours than those of Europe, but they also have access to information and communication technology, which enables the greater productivity. (*Wirtschaftsnachrichten*, Deutsche Welle, Sept. 1, 2003).

By the end of the second quarter of 2003 we finally heard some positive economic news. The stock market has made considerable gains. There seems reason for some cautious optimism. With the strong second quarter growth or 3.1% annual rate the prognosis for growth for the rest of the year may be even as high as 4.5%. Japan, the second largest economy, has also experienced a light upward trend of .5% in July vis-à-vis June. This increase is due to their recent rapidly rising industrial production.

The war and subsequent restoration in Iraq has proven quite costly in terms of human lives lost and dollars expended. It is becoming quite clear that it will not be easy to restore that country and to introduce a democratic form of government. The numerous conflicting cultures and religions make this a daunting task. New economies will surely emerge, but they will only be successful if there is greater effort in cultural understanding. As always, we hope to contribute in a small way to better cultural understanding in the business community with our publication.

In addressing the various issues related to international business communication and culture, whether focusing on developing economies or more economical and efficient ways to approach the discipline, the authors of this volume have chosen some similar themes or categories. It is along the lines of these common elements that this year's volume is organized, beginning first with international experiences, then languages across cultures, and finally with classroom projects and technological aids.

In the first article, "A Corporate Visit Program Within a Summer Immersion and a Business Language Curriculum," Maria Bourlatskaya, Susanne Shields, and Ricardo Diaz present the model of a corporate visit

abroad program involving nine different language or culture areas. Such visits combine content-based language instruction with culture training, in order for student to understand better business practices of foreign corporations. While this program is focused on a student experience, Isabel Dulfano examines how a business can expand into a different culture, and the challenges it faces. In “Intel and Costa Rica: A Model for Global Expansion, Economic Development and Sustainability” she notes the company’s organizational structure, processes and strategies that were successful and proposes them as a model for other enterprises.

If one cannot study or work abroad each year, one can certainly examine the international interaction of languages in the global business community. Taira Koybaeva, in the article “Bridging Cultural Barriers in Bicultural Projects: More than Translation and Interpretation of Language” has a unique perspective, that of a joint Russian and American aerospace project. A number of factors are examined which reveal how translation is influenced by many human factors which need to be recognized and taken into account. The lexical transfers from English to German are analyzed in Norbert Hedderich’s “Language Change in Business German.” Using a German weekly magazine he details several categories of influence (adoption, adaptation, mixed compounds, loan translations, and pseudo-transfers) and provides numerous examples. A similar kind of study is undertaken by Diana Phillips; who examines the use of English financial terms in French to determine if they are borrowed or if a French equivalent is preferred. In “Le Cash-flow” many French examples are examined, and a comparative analysis with German and Dutch reveals some interesting cross-cultural and cross-linguistic practices.

The classroom is more specifically the setting for articles by Michael Hager and Katharina Barbe. In the first, “Culture and German Advertising” Professor Hager demonstrates how advertising can be used to teach German culture. Advertising is a rich source of cultural and linguistic material, and appeals to students as they learn about German culture in general, and German business culture in particular. The teaching of business related materials in the elementary language classroom is studied in “Expanding the Field: Current Issues in Business German,” with implications for curricular development, testing and assessment.

The volume concludes with three articles that explore uses of technology in the business language classroom. David Wright’s “Asynchronous Negotiations: Introducing Electronic Portfolios to Promote Professional

Development in Foreign-Language Business Classrooms” develops many useful ways in which the intermediate course materials can be extended by the use of an electronic portfolio. This successful program shows how a course can be adapted to fit students' needs better with regard to both content and the method of delivery. In “Business Japanese through Internet-based Videoconferencing” the importance of spontaneous communication between groups of native speakers forms the nucleus of Soji Azuma's article. And Christine Uber Grosse, in “E-Communication Strategies for the Business Language Class,” reveals how five steps that relate to communication strategies in companies can be used in the business language class.

Because we have received numerous positive comments regarding the practical and pedagogic value of each volume of *Global Business Languages*, we have plans to put our publication on line in addition to continuing to publish it in hard copy. We hope that you will find this additional access helpful in your work. As always, we would be pleased to receive your comments on this issue and 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.

Christiane E. Keck
Allen G. Wood
September 2003