

May 2010

## Berlitz Live! Japanese. Bright Star Technology

Atsushi Fukada  
*Purdue University*

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

---

### Recommended Citation

Fukada, Atsushi (2010) "Berlitz Live! Japanese. Bright Star Technology," *Global Business Languages*: Vol. 1 , Article 13.  
Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol1/iss1/13>

Copyright © 2010 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/).

*Berlitz Live! Japanese* (formerly titled *Berlitz for Business Japanese: Survival Software for the Business Traveler*).  
Bright Star Technology. Berlitz Publishing Co.

As its former subtitle “Survival Software for the Business Traveler” suggests, *Berlitz Live! Japanese* is a neatly packaged crash course in Japanese for business people. The program comes on a CD-ROM and is compatible with PC’s running Windows as well as with the Macintosh. The minimum system requirements are as follows:

For the Macintosh: Mac II; 256-color monitor, System 6.0.7;  
CD-ROM drive, 4MB of free RAM, microphone (optional)

For the PC: 386SX/20 MHz IBM AT bus-compatible system;  
640 x 480 VGA with 256 colors; Windows 3.1; 4MB free RAM;  
CD-ROM drive; Windows compatible sound card; microphone  
(optional)

The program begins with a humorous scene where Harry, a businessman who has just gotten himself ready to go to Mexico on business, is suddenly given a new assignment to go to Japan. This animation is nearly two minutes long, but fortunately, one can bypass it by clicking on the mouse button. In this scene the user is greeted by his personal tutor *Sensei* (meaning ‘teacher’ in Japanese), a samurai character clad in a kimono with a topknot. In fact, with its extensive use of beautiful animation and crisp audio (stereo), it seems as if a real person is tutoring the user. The animation is very well-done; in fact, the package claims that one can learn from watching the accurate lip movements of the characters. Although this is a bit of an overstatement, to say the least, as a CALL specialist I can certainly appreciate the sophisticated software technology behind the lip movement simulation.

The structure of the program is much like that of a foreign language phrase book for travelers for which Berlitz is so well-known. It begins with language essentials that cover basic sounds and writing systems. Here one cannot only listen to *Sensei*’s lectures, but also practice pronouncing sounds and recognizing *kana* syllabary symbols. All sentences and phrases presented in the main parts of the program, however, are in romanization. Users who have a microphone, can record their own pronunciation and compare it with *Sensei*’s. (Although his pronunciation is fairly good, *Sensei* is not a native speaker.) The second part presents basic words, greetings, useful expressions, and a few basic grammar points. The section on expressions is much like a phrase book, containing sentences like “This is my first trip to Japan,” “I have an appointment with Mr. Ogawa,” and “Send me the contracts, please.” Of course, the grammar necessary to produce such sentences is not presented.

The main part of the program deals with typical situations business travelers may encounter: arriving at an airport, checking into a hotel, conducting business in person and on the phone, dining, traveling around, and shopping. Each of these sections has one main dialog where the user can participate in place of one of the characters. The sections also contain a number of related words, phrases, and additional expressions. The last three sections discuss entertainment and leisure, geography, history, etc. Also, every time one leaves a section for another, the program presents a small window giving a bit of Japanese culture or a traveling tip with a couple of sentences.

Also included in the package is a program called "Tokyo subway game" that provides a fun way to become familiar with the Tokyo subway system and the names of stations, while reviewing materials from various sections. The object of the game is to help Harry get to the airport while visiting six tourist attractions on the way. Every time users move from one station to another, they are presented with a multiple-choice question that must be answered correctly in order to advance.

Accompanying the program is an on-line Japanese-English/English-Japanese dictionary. The operation is extremely simple: the user simply needs to click on buttons to turn to the next page, previous page, or jump to the beginning of each section by clicking on alphabet letters.

The major strength of the program lies in its use of multimedia. The program truly makes extensive and generally appropriate use of graphics, animation, and sound. When these elements have the possibility of getting in the way of smooth operation, such as the opening animation sequence and music played at the opening of the main menu, the option of bypassing them is available. These elements have the obvious effect of making the program attractive and fun, which in turn contributes to increasing the user's motivation. Having the model pronunciation for every word, phrase, and sentence presented is a substantial advantage over the traditional phrase book. One could even play back model pronunciations in actual conversational situations if a portable computer with a CD-ROM drive is available.

Another strength of the program to be noted is its focus on cultural information. This ranges from practical traveling tips to concepts underlying Japanese culture and Japanese people's behavior. Behind this emphasis must be the recognition that cultural knowledge is as important as the language itself, especially in business contexts.

One questionable feature is its audio recording feature. With an optional microphone, the users can record their voice while participating in a conversation, play it back, and compare it with the model, etc. This methodology dates back to audio-lingual days when language laboratories were used for precisely this kind of activity. Research since then has shown that such activities do not necessarily contribute to pronunciation accuracy or fluency. Therefore, this feature seems to have limited utility.

Overall, this package does an excellent job in providing a quick introduction to the Japanese language and culture. I believe it to be a valuable resource for business people who cannot take Japanese courses.

Atsushi Fukada  
*Purdue University*

*Issues and Methods in French for Business and Economic Purposes*. Patricia W. Cummins, editor. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1995. xiii+158 pages

This book appeals to a wide audience, ranging from high school instructors who may have never taught a French for Business course, to university professors who have taught such courses many times. All French educators will find the information contained in this volume to provide useful reference material, whether they currently contemplate establishing a new course, or consider modifying elements of an existing course. This book is the first in a two-volume series offered by the Commission on French for Business and Economic Purposes, formed by the American Association of Teachers of French. Two of the contributors, Professors Cummins and Maurice Elton, have served as Chair of the Commission.

In her preface, Professor Cummins gives a brief history of the field since the 1970's, and raises one of the main issues of the book: the evolution occurring in this country from an exclusive focus on economics in France to a broader perspective that includes more interest in Quebec business. Whereas many courses were formerly centered around preparation of students for one of the exams offered by the *Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*, instructors and students are now more eager to understand how to conduct business in French with their NAFTA partner to the North.

Claire Gaudiani's introduction furnishes a good overview of the field, and also of the general contents of the book, showing the growth and importance of French for Business courses. She describes the need to combine a liberal arts background with practical, economic knowledge, so that students can "adapt to a global economy and communicate successfully in a cross-cultural environment."

Approximately the first half of the book is devoted to Professor Elton's article on resources available to the teacher, in a rich compendium of various materials concerning French business and contemporary civilization. Categories include traditional print resources (textbooks, dictionaries, and periodicals) as well as more advanced technological sources (videotape and computer software). The inventory is vast, and represents

an excellent state-of-the-field bibliography. Although such a fine bibliography and list of useful addresses run the risk of becoming dated, they will serve as a solid basis for reference for many years, and a point of departure for updated additions. While the resources are fairly complete, it is unfortunate that the US Department of Education's network of about thirty Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) was not mentioned, which now has various site information on the World Wide Web. These centers can be a valuable resource to the French for business educator, as is another omitted item, the *Journal of Language for International Business* (1989– ), published by Thunderbird—The American Graduate School of International Management, in Glendale, Arizona.

The next chapter describes the Paris Chambre de Commerce exams, and presents teaching techniques and materials that prepare students to take them. Both the *Certificat pratique* and the *Diplôme supérieur* exams are discussed, with details concerning the purpose of each exam, the different parts of each exam, and the method of testing. The two exams emphasize knowledge of business terminology, an awareness of economic geography (such as France's place in the European Union), an ability to write a business letter, and a competence to translate business phrases (both to and from English).

The remaining chapters are devoted to the topics of "French for Business and the Professions in Canada," "Secondary School Programs and Business in the Language Class," "Using the Minitel in the Business French Classroom," and "Federal Grant Opportunities and How to Pursue Them." They are all clearly written, and contain much detailed information and practical advice prepared by experts in each field who share the results of years of experience.

As this overview of the contents indicates, the book is an extremely useful guide for teachers of French for Business at all levels of instruction, and with a wide variety of previous instructional experience. Never before has one volume included such useful reference material. It is a valuable resource that should be consulted by all those working in the area of French for Business.

Allen G. Wood  
*Purdue University*

*When Doing Business in Russia, It Pays to Speak Russian!: An English-Russian Phrase Book.* Dmitry Vinogradov, Eleonora Vinogradova, Mikhail Sergeev. Guilford, CT: Audio-Forum, 1992. 104 pp. (Soft cover).

*Business Russian.* Svetlana Aleksandroff. Montpelier, VT: Russian Information Services, Inc., 1993. 184 pp. (Soft cover).

*Business Russian: A Complete Course for Beginners.* Olga Bridges, with Pauline Rayner and Irina Tverdokhlebova. Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing Group, 1994, 316 pp. (Soft cover).

#### BUSINESS RUSSIAN TEXTBOOKS: WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS TODAY?

As paradoxical as it may seem, the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union and the introduction of a free market economy in Russia, after the short-lived euphoria of the Gorbachev era, has resulted in a downward spiral in Russian language enrollments throughout academic institutions in the United States. In the mid-nineties the profession finds itself in an acute crisis as it attempts to transform and update curricula, adapting to the momentous changes that have taken place in that part of the world.

Most specialists and many non-specialists (politicians, political commentators, businessmen, etc.) agree that, despite the political, economic, and social turmoil in Russia, the country continues to occupy an important geopolitical position and is rapidly becoming a key player in international commerce, especially in the area of energy and natural resources. There is also a consensus that Russia is an enormous potential market for consumer goods produced in the United States and other developed countries. It is only natural, therefore, that the teaching profession, in an attempt to revitalize itself and attract more students, is witnessing an unprecedented upsurge in the publication of Russian language textbooks at all levels, and business Russian is no exception.

New textbooks and teaching materials in the business area are rapidly appearing on both sides of the ocean. Even though the number of publications in Russia proper exceeds those in the West, many of them are coming out under the imprimatur of newly founded publishing houses and/or in a small number of copies, all of which makes it difficult to obtain them in the United States. Therefore, I shall limit my discussion of business Russian textbooks to the three most widely advertised and readily available at the present time in this country.

Of the three publications under review, the first to appear chronologically was *When Doing Business in Russia, It Pays to Speak Russian!: An English-Russian Phrase Book* (1992). It consists of a 104-page manual accompanied by three one-hour audio cassettes. Sixteen rather crude outline drawings illustrate the different sections of the phrase book. As the descriptive material on the back cover states, this “program was developed under the auspices of American-Russian Trade Promotion, which is headquartered outside Washington, D.C.”

The manual begins with 36 pages of transcribed tapescripts of recorded expressions. The expressions involve lexicon ranging from such matters as the arrival at the airport, checking in at the hotel, a visit to the post office, a ride through the city, and table conversation in a restaurant—to business negotiations, agreements, and non-agreements. The remaining two-thirds of the manual consist of appendices—ten pages of tables listing useful everyday vocabulary, units of measure, addresses of trade organizations and business firms, the structure of Chambers of Commerce and the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and fifty pages of English-Russian and Russian-English glossaries. Of course, none of this is on tape. In addition, at the beginning of the book, on page six, the Russian alphabet is given with English equivalents, accompanied by a column of English words meant to illustrate the approximate articulation of the Russian sounds. Unfortunately, it is not always clear what sound in the English word represents the Russian sound being illustrated, and there are inaccuracies throughout.

The initial text in *When Doing Business in Russia* is a fairly accurate transcript of the accompanying audio cassettes. There are only minor discrepancies between the written text and the recording. Each page of the text consists of three columns: in the left-hand column, the English equivalents of the utterances are provided; in the middle column, the Russian text is given in Cyrillic, with the all-important accent marks indicated; and in the right-hand column, the English transliteration of the Russian text is supplied. The transliteration system used is the popular one, for the non-specialist.

The three audio tapes are good quality sound recordings made by native speakers, with standard Russian phonetics and speech dynamics. Each entry is first enunciated in English translation by a female voice, then uttered in Russian three times in a row, with pauses, by a male voice. The fact that all Russian utterances are given by a male creates a problem for female students who might want to avail themselves of this program, since no feminine grammatical forms occur. True, the text avoids the past tense, as well as the use of short form adjectives, where gender is especially critical. Nevertheless, in the half-dozen or so instances where these forms do occur, only the masculine is given, e.g., *ia priekhal* ‘I arrived’ (7) or *ia ne soglasen* ‘I do not agree’ (29). The use of a single male voice presents another gender-related problem. At one point in the restaurant

scene the dialogue has the line, "I am married"; the form for men in Russian is *zhenat*, for women, *zamuzhem* (22). The script provides the feminine form in parentheses, but since the speaker on the tape is a male, he does not articulate the corresponding feminine form.

The brief, half-page "Introduction" to this publication sheds little light on how best the program might be used. Vinogradov, Vinogradova, and Sergeev make only one positive suggestion: "By replacing key words in sample sentences one can easily get new variations." Not much to go on, to say the least. Furthermore, the authors state that this material "will be most useful to people with some initial knowledge of Russian. However, a beginner would benefit from it as well." It is difficult to see how a beginner can be expected to master the material, as the sixth phrase he/she encounters in the first unit is *Èti veshchi oblagaiutsia poshlinoi?* 'Are these items subject to duty?' This is especially perplexing since what students are given in the right-hand column is not a phonetic transcription of the utterances on tape but an English transliteration of the Russian text, which offers few clues to what the phrase really sounds like. Thus, the English transliteration accompanying the entire tapescript is of dubious value. In short, *When Doing Business in Russia* lacks a sound pedagogical base and is little more than a phrase book with accompanying audio tapes and several appendices. In all fairness, however, it should be said that the book's subtitle does not lay claim to more than that. And yet, for a phrase book to be functional, it needs to be compact and convenient for use. Unfortunately, this 104-page publication is unwieldy, having a large (8 1/2" x 11") format and a glued binding that does not permit the book to lie flat when open. This will certainly limit its use out in the field.

In summary, it should be noted that the vocabulary, expressions, and idioms given are authentic, with no Anglicisms in the target language. The same, however, cannot be said for the English text, where awkward phrasing or Russianisms occasionally occur: ". . . the phrase book contains referral [reference?] sections of helpful everyday information" (Introduction); or "*U nas v èto vremia goda teplo,*" which is rendered as "Usually this time of year is warm" instead of "It is usually warm at this time of year" (23). But these are minor irritations. By and large, the publication provides an excellent source of specific business-related phrases and expressions that can be incorporated by an experienced teacher in a variety of classroom and out-of-class activities.

The second publication, *Business Russian* (1993), which is the only one of the three books under review without a subtitle, is much closer to the conventional concept of a textbook. It is intended for students with "intermediate fluency in Russian," though what exactly this means is nowhere stated. Aleksandroff suggests that the book be used either as the text in a business Russian course or for independent study. It consists of



14 units, or “lessons” (*uroki*), each of which revolves around a major topic addressing some practical aspect of doing business in the “new” Russia, for example: the business trip, business correspondence, international exhibitions, advertising, financial organization, business negotiations, legal terminology, agreements, contracts, etc. Each unit, in turn, consists of four parts: a contextual reading, usually followed by commentary; several dialogues; a number of exercises; and, finally, a variety of supplementary materials. A seventeen-page Russian-English glossary concludes the publication. The “lessons” have no grammar explanations of any kind, and the commentary that exists pertains to stylistic points or cultural matters presented in the texts.

The reading selections at the beginning of each unit consist of authentic materials related to the topic of the particular unit. They are designed to present a body of topic-related information, as well as to provide a base of linguistic and socio-cultural “stimuli” for conversation exercises and short writing assignments. By the end of the book the student will have been exposed to a rich assortment of business-related materials. In addition to the short narrative texts, the author sprinkles throughout the textbook common Russian saying and proverbs (*Khochesh' byt' bogatym? Bud' im* ‘If you want to be rich—get rich’, *Tishe edesh'—dal'she budesh'* ‘Slow but sure’); copies of documents (visa application, sample contract, etc.); definitions of commercial and legal concepts (e.g., state enterprise, joint stock company, joint venture); widely used abbreviation equivalents (in particular, of such acronyms as C.O.D., FOB, and CIF); a list of the latest slang words used in the Russian business community (e.g., *griny* ‘greenbacks,’ *artist* ‘con man,’ *dura* ‘weapon’); commentary, in English, on Russian business practices and business ethics (e.g., “Accounting for Differences,” “Lobbies”); and templates for business correspondence (fax, telegram, advertisement, inquiry). This wealth of material greatly enhances the textbook and enriches the student’s essential knowledge of current Russian business culture.

Throughout *Business Russian* one finds glosses in the outside margins. According to the author, they provide the English translation of “new words” in readings, dialogues, exercises, and supplementary materials. Though the presence of glosses is certainly a welcome feature of the textbook, it is unclear to this reviewer how the decision was made which words to gloss. For example, the very first fifteen-word sentence in the reading of the first unit has only one word glossed, *ustanovlenie* ‘establishment.’ Yet among the remaining words of the sentence a number are not to be found in today’s “communicative approach” language textbooks, for example, *iavliaetsia* ‘is,’ *ètap* ‘level’ or ‘stage,’ *razvitie* ‘development,’ *prodolzhenie* ‘continuation,’ or even the adjective *delovoi* ‘business.’ Incidentally, the translation of the last word in this enumeration can be found in the glossary at the back of the book, but none of the others are there. It would have been helpful if the author had explained the

rationale behind the glossing system and/or perhaps expanded the glossary at the back to include more of the less common vocabulary. The glossary is an excellent reference aid on Russian-English business-specific lexicon. One is surprised to see, however, the inclusion of such common words as *god* 'year,' *otvet* 'answer,' *izhuchat* 'to study,' *zhurnal* 'magazine' or 'journal,' *inzhener* 'engineer,' *magazin* 'store,' and *tseñtr* 'center,' to cite just a few.

The text and dialogues of the units form a loosely connected narrative revolving around the business affairs and adventures of a Mr. John Green, president of a major US company, who is visiting his operational headquarters in Moscow. The plot involves a number of characters who weave in and out of situations around the office, a trade exhibition, the Moscow subway, a business seminar, and several business meetings. Besides Mr. Green, there are his Moscow employees, his Russian assistant Iurii, and three women who run the office: Olga, Mary, and Dasha. Typically for a Russian setting, the women appear to have been relegated to the secretarial role, while Iurii, the male, seems to be involved in some of the managerial decisions of the company. On a cultural level this is a realistic touch, reflecting the reality in present-day Russia.

A number of minor typographical errors mar the text of *Business Russian*. For example, on pages 54 and 55, the ending “-a” is missing in the feminine past tense forms of the verbs *rasslyshal* 'overheard' and *popal* 'reached,' while on page 71 the genitive plural form of “tons” is incorrectly given as *tonnov*, instead of *tonn*. More serious shortcomings are the absence of stress marks throughout the book (except for the glossary in the back) and the unavailability of accompanying audio, video or computer-aided materials (this is the only textbook under review that is not accompanied by audio cassettes). And yet I believe that *Business Russian* merits serious consideration as a tool for promoting the development of business-specific language skills. I cannot endorse it for use in the third year, because from the outset the textbook presents authentic, unadapted business texts that deal with vocabulary and speech patterns far removed from the everyday conversational Russian that today's basic language textbooks emphasize, but I feel it is most appropriate for use at the fourth- or fifth-year levels.

The third and last book under review, *Business Russian: A Complete Course for Beginners* (1994) is based on a “Russian for Business” course that had been offered at the University of Surrey in England. A publication in the “Teach Yourself” series, which includes over 200 titles in such diverse fields as “languages, crafts, hobbies and other leisure activities,” it is not aimed at the university student *per se*, but, rather, “designed to meet the requirements of the businessman who foresees the possibilities of trade with Russia.” Thus it is, just as the subtitle indicates, a course for beginners who have no prior knowledge of Russian.

The relatively large (316-page) textbook is comprised of twenty-one units, each consisting of four imaginatively titled sections: 1) “A Business Conversation” (*Delovoi razgovor*)—a text in dialogue form dealing with a business-related topic, followed by a vocabulary of basic words and expressions in that dialogue; 2) “Language Matters” (*O iazyke*)—an elucidation of grammar; 3) “Let’s Get to Work!” (*Za rabotu!*)—practical exercises utilizing the vocabulary and grammar of the unit; and 4) “Briefing (*Brifing*)—cultural information, in English. At the end of the book there are a number of useful supplements: a key to the exercises; grammar tables; and an overall Russian-English glossary. Simple but humorous line drawings by Ludmila Bausheva illuminate the text.

In addition, there are two one-hour audio cassettes with recordings of all the dialogues (“business conversations”) and some of the associated exercises. The complexity of this material should not be underestimated. Although the textbook is meant for beginners and starts out with the introduction of the Cyrillic alphabet, it quickly escalates in difficulty, so that in unit three, titled “Who is Our Competitor?” (*Kto nash konkurent?*), we have a discussion not of the traditional home, family, school and store, but, rather, a discussion of business competition and ways to counter it.

Like the preceding textbook, *A Complete Course for Beginners* utilizes a story line: the dialogues, from unit to unit, follow Steve Thomson, a Western businessman, and Mikhail Stromov, his Russian partner, through a variety of business situations, ranging from the obligatory arrival at Moscow’s Sheremet’ev Airport to discussions of competition, barter trade, the medicinal properties of vodka, and insurance policies. The language in which these dialogues are couched reflects the authentic speech patterns of the contemporary Russian business world, with a generous admixture of common proverbs and sayings used in that milieu. The grammar explanations that follow are brief and straightforward, utilizing excellent examples and often accompanied by helpful summary charts, tables, and lists. The associated exercises are varied and well-designed. They include many of the old staples (word substitution, fill-ins, completion of statements, true-or-false, multiple choice), as well as some newer types (crosswords, role-playing). There are very few Russian-English translations, whereas the consistently employed English-Russian translations are intended primarily for oral, not writing, practice (they are the ones on tape). The “briefings” at the end of each unit are a veritable gold mine of information on a wide variety of cultural issues, though the focus is, as always in this textbook, on business practices and etiquette. The briefing on “Women in Russian Society,” for example, discusses sensitively and in depth the role of women in Russian society, both in the home and in the workplace, citing figures and historical facts. Another briefing is devoted to a more daring aspect of economic life in post-

Communist Russia, “a legal ‘loophole’ by which it is possible for a foreign company to purchase a property.”

From the above remarks it should be clear that what we have here is a textbook employing the so-called “communicative approach”: the aural and oral skills take precedence over reading and writing. This explains the total absence from the book of reading selections and the virtual absence of traditional translation exercises. As Bridges and her co-authors state in the “Introduction,” their goal is simply for the student “to feel comfortable when communicating with Russians in a business environment.” Therefore, they suggest that the student “may only want to learn the printed version of the alphabet”—“you can always print out any Russian words you need to write.” The fact that Russians do not print words but use longhand from grade one is irrelevant, as far as the stated goals of this course are concerned.

A positive feature of the book is the utilization of business-specific vocabulary from the start. The authors try to include as many business-related simple words as they can, beginning with the alphabet, where each letter is illustrated with a Russian word that begins with that letter, for example, *bank* ‘bank,’ *import* ‘import,’ *kredit* ‘credit,’ *renta* ‘rent,’ *firma* ‘firm,’ and *chek* ‘check.’ The examples used to explain different aspects of grammar inevitably rely on business vocabulary, be it in a discussion of double negation (*My ni s kem ne obsudili novyi proekt* ‘We have not discussed the new project with anyone,’ 204) or of the instrumental case (*Nam nuzhno poslat’ èto pis’mo faksom* ‘We must send this letter by fax,’ 111). Even the tables in the reference section at the back reinforce business-specific words to illustrate declension; thus the nouns *stol* ‘table’ and *sestra* ‘sister,’ traditionally used in beginning textbooks to illustrate the masculine and feminine declensions, are replaced by *kontrakt* ‘contract’ and *firma* ‘firm.’ The student who masters the vocabulary and the exercises will be ready to deal with most basic situations that might be encountered in the business environment.

There are from my point of view several flaws that detract from the effectiveness of the textbook as a teaching tool. First, the phonetic transcription employed at the very beginning, in the “Russian Alphabet” section and in unit one. In what obviously is an effort to aid the student, the authors have adopted a peculiar system of transcription to approximate the pronunciation of Russian vowels, one that is actually quite misleading. The expression *Dobroe utro!* ‘Good morning!’ for example, is phonetically transcribed as “dóh-brah-yeh oótrah.” An “h” is inserted at the end of each syllable ending in a vowel sound. This may confuse the student and even prove to be detrimental if the textbook is used independently outside the classroom (there is no “h” sound at the end of these syllables). Fortunately, however, this transcription system is abandoned after the first lesson. Second, all monosyllabic Russian words are left unstressed, making it impossible for the student to differentiate between

stressed and unstressed monosyllabic words. In the sentence, *My nikogdá ne narusháli právila!* 'We never broke the rules!' for example, the pronoun *my* does receive a stress, while the negative particle *ne* does not (leading to vowel reduction). How is a student to know? Lastly, I noted only one error, the misuse of a preposition in Russian repeated twice, on pages 79 and 203: *na firme* instead of *v firme* 'in the firm.' As in most textbooks, there are some typos.

Barring these minor critical remarks, I find that *A Complete Course for Beginners* provides a straightforward, uncluttered, and uncomplicated approach to studying business Russian. The textbook can be used either in an intensive business Russian course for students majoring in business and management, with no prior knowledge of Russian, or it can be utilized at the second- or third-year levels in the regular Russian language sequence to expose students to basic business-specific lexicon and structures and to business-related cultural material.

At the present time there is no ideal business Russian textbook on the market. The publications we have considered vary greatly in scope, content, and approach. Even though all three have interesting and authentic discipline-specific texts and dialogues, they lack a balanced and moderately paced presentation of the material. They also lack the modern-day ancillaries: video tapes, computer-assisted programs, and interactive CD programs, all of which are quickly becoming standard components of textbooks in the profession. Despite this fact, anyone of them could be successfully used in a business Russian course by the experienced teacher who is aware of their strengths and shortcomings.

Zinaida A. Breschinsky  
*Purdue University*