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TEACHING METHODOLOGY AND CREATION OF
A SYLLABUS FOR BUSINESS KOREAN:
A FOCUS ON BUSINESS KOREAN
IN THE MBA PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

During the last 30 years, Korea has experienced extremely rapid economic growth, as its per capita GNP went from \$100 in the 1960s to \$9,473 in 1997 (Mallaby 3, KEIA ii). Because of the rapid development of its economy, many foreign companies have developed a great interest in doing business in Korea.

In particular, the U.S. is home to many companies with increasing business relations with Korea. According to the American Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM), over 800 American companies had operations in Korea in 1997. Trade statistics show that of \$150.212 billion of total imports into Korea in 1996, \$33.294 billion (22.2%) were from the U.S. Of \$129.835 billion of total exports from Korea in 1996, \$21.765 billion (16.8%) were to the U.S. (IMF 279). In 1997, Korea was the United States' fifth largest export market and its eighth largest supplier of goods ("U.S. Trade Facts" 36).

Despite the large volume of business interaction between the U.S. and Korea, I have found only two American universities (BYU and Utah State University) that currently offer Business Korean courses. Much attention has been given to the idea of intercultural education in the U.S. In fact, over 200 universities, including Georgetown, Georgia Institute of Technology, Duke, Northwestern, Illinois, Pennsylvania State, Purdue, and Brigham Young University, offer business language courses (Sorohan and Petrini 5). However, at most schools these courses are typically offered in German, Spanish, French, Chinese, Japanese or Russian. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to emphasize the importance of

offering Business Korean language classes and to propose a teaching methodology for American universities.

Indeed, Korea has experienced amazing economic growth. However, as recently as December of 1997, it began experiencing an economic crisis. A major reason for the downturn in the Korean economy was the fact that its enterprises had contributed vast amounts of money to overseas investments. Furthermore, in recent years, Koreans have increased foreign travel, thus further depleting US dollars within their economy. The government failed to implement policies controlling the spending of U.S. dollars. As a result, Korea has had to enlist the help of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Currently, the Korean government is searching for ways, collectively with the IMF, to attract US dollars back to Korea. They are concentrating their efforts on finding ways to lure foreign firms to enter their market. One way to do this is allowing foreign businesses to buy and sell property in their country.

Another way that Korea is attracting business is by easing existing labor laws. Until now, these labor laws prevented the laying-off of any employee below the rank of manager. In the past the same law allowed the laying-off of those in upper management, including directors and all levels above director. Because of this law, foreign businesses have been hesitant to establish branches in Korea. The government has changed this law in order to allow companies to lay-off workers at any level. Other incentives for foreign companies to do business in Korea include tax benefits, less government control and regulation, and simplification of procedures to receive government approval for business interaction.

In response to these actions, many foreign companies are entering the Korean market. Therefore, the potential for Korea to regain a thriving economy is great. As a result, the demand for business is increasing. The importance of this fact should not be overlooked, but rather universities should consider how to prepare students to take advantage of the opportunities there.

WHAT CHARACTERIZES BUSINESS KOREAN AT BYU?

Beginning in the fall semester of 1992, Brigham Young University's MBA program offered business language courses in Spanish, German, Japanese, and Korean. In 1993, Business French classes were added, followed by Chinese in 1994 and Portuguese in 1995. These business lan-

guage courses were developed in conjunction with a Department of Education program entitled the Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBER), which was created to promote international business education, business language training, and international business research in U.S. universities. Classes were developed to offer international business fundamentals, languages, and cultural issues to business and non-business students. The number of students enrolled in business languages at BYU since 1992 is illustrated below.

Language	Chinese	French	German	Japanese	Korean	Portuguese	Spanish	Total
Semester								
Fall, 1992			4	18	19		19	60
Winter, 1993			15	10	21		23	69
Fall, 1993		12	5	5	17		19	58
Winter, 1994		5	3	6	23		12	49
Fall, 1994	7	10	7	11	12		26	73
Winter, 1995	4	7	7	11	19	12	15	75
Fall, 1995	6	4	6	9	17	7	23	72
Winter, 1996	5	8	13	4	30	7	7	74
Fall, 1996	10	6	4	8	6	6	17	57
Winter, 1997	5	5	10	5	18	6	11	60
Fall, 1997	7	8	11	8	7	6	18	65
Total	44	65	85	95	189	44	190	712

Source: CIBER, BYU. 16 Sept. 1997.

As illustrated above, between 1992 and 1997, Business Spanish classes had the largest total enrollment of students (190), followed by Korean (189).

Both undergraduate and graduate students who have completed an intermediate Korean language course can enroll in the Business Korean courses in the MBA program at BYU. Why are undergraduates allowed to participate in MBA level courses? Many students wish to find em-

ployment in Korean business firms after graduation, yet there are no Business Korean classes in the undergraduate Korean program. Other business languages in the MBA program allow undergraduate students to take the courses for the same reason.

In addition, BYU's student body has a high percentage of students who have lived for one or two years in a foreign country because of the many students who serve Latter-day Saints church missions. Because of this, they already have a good understanding of the culture, political situation, and economy of those countries. They also have acquired good conversational skills. The following chart shows the number of students who enrolled at BYU after completing missionary service in a foreign country and the languages they spoke. These students generally return with at least an intermediate level of proficiency in their second languages.

Year	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Language					
Chinese	95	111	102	113	110
Japanese	986	1,055	1,061	1,010	885
Korean	386	431	417	392	367
French	604	698	736	697	625
German	647	732	714	686	646
Portuguese	885	958	1,031	1,122	1,281
Spanish	3,613	3,898	3,855	3,746	4,025

Source: Institutional Analysis, BYU. 17 Oct. 1998.

If we consider the two charts above, it is apparent that, when compared to other languages, the number of students enrolled in Business Korean classes makes up a much greater portion of the total number of proficient Korean speakers. Why do so many Korean-speaking students take business courses compared with students who speak other languages? The first reason is the increased interaction of American and Korean businesses resulting from Korea's rapid economic development

of recent years. The second reason is that students who take Business Korean can go to Korea as interns at major business firms. The internship is a continuation of the business class in that it allows students to use the knowledge and language skills gained in the class for two to four months immediately following completion of the Business Korean course. Because of its implications in helping students find employment after graduation, the internship is an exciting opportunity for the students, providing them with motivation in the classroom.

When the Business Korean language classes began in 1992, the curriculum focused mainly on intermediate business conversation skills and business correspondence. After sending students on internships for the first two years, the program needed to change the curriculum to meet better the needs of the business firms involved. Two main factors influenced the process of changing the curriculum. The first was an evaluation of the student reports describing their internship experiences. The second was my evaluation of the business firms' needs, determined by meeting directly with members of the companies who had worked with the students. Every year since 1993 I have traveled to Korea for two months in the summer in order to visit each business firm and discuss with both students and mentors the kinds of benefits they gained through the internship program. I pay particular attention to the needs of the companies and try to find out the kind of employee they want to hire. As a result of this evaluation, the curriculum at BYU is being changed to accommodate the actual demands of business firms. After all, business language is determined to some extent by the business needs of the company, and by the particular job. Business language students are likely to be more focused on goals and have high expectations of success, efficiency, quality, and professionalism (Ellis and Johnson 11).

ADAPTING BYU'S BUSINESS KOREAN CURRICULUM

Although the students were satisfied with their internship experience, it was apparent through interviews with executives at the firms that the students were not meeting their expectations due to insufficient knowledge of business terminology and, in the case of undergraduate non-business majors, a poor understanding of business concepts. Because the businesses that accepted interns were among Korea's largest and most influential companies, they expected the interns to have not only language skills related to various fields of business, but also a knowledge of

business management. Included among these conglomerates were the Hyundai Group, the Samsung Group, the LG Group, the Tongyang Group, and the Kumho Group. The American company Price Waterhouse also participated in the internship program. These companies paid undergraduate students a monthly salary of \$1,000-\$1,500 and graduate students \$2,000-\$2,500. Generally companies provided room and board for the interns in addition to their salary. Considering the unusually good treatment the students received, it is understandable that the companies' expectations were so high. The companies viewed the interns as possible future employees and thus expected them to have professional language and business skills. At BYU, a 3 credit Business Korean class was offered during the fall semester and a 1.5 credit class during the winter semester. The latter course focused mainly on understanding culture and current business, political, and economic issues in Korea. Its curriculum was successful in achieving the objectives of the course and has therefore been unaltered for the most part (a more detailed explanation of this curriculum is included below). On the other hand, we found it necessary to change the curriculum of the 3 credit course.

Before changing the curriculum due to the companies' demands for American students who can speak Korean proficiently, the 3 credit Business Korean class mainly focused on daily communication related to business matters and included topics such as:

- Greetings, introductions
- Using the telephone
- Apologizing and thanking
- Reservations for hotels, restaurants, airplanes
- Buying, selling of goods
- Reading memos and scheduling
- Making, rescheduling and canceling appointments
- Business correspondence

Some of these topics were, of course, covered in beginning and intermediate level Korean courses. However, the language people use in a business setting differs from the language used in everyday conversation, particularly in Korean, since words originating from Chinese characters are heavily used. The same topics covered in the intermediate classes were, therefore, taught again in the business class to provide fluency in

the business situations in which the students were soon to find themselves.

According to the businesses which might hire our interns, knowledge and mastery of these topics were necessary conditions, yet not sufficient conditions to meet their needs. They asked why they needed to employ native English speakers. First of all, native English speakers working in Korea can read materials written in English and report creative ideas and important information in areas such as government policy and regulations, marketing, leadership, and production that will give the company an edge in the world of international business. Obtaining such information can also help to improve business interactions between their companies and American companies or branches of their companies in America. Also, native English speakers can assist in writing joint venture contracts, import/export documents, and other documents related to foreign business. In addition, they can translate brochures about new products and other company publications into English. The companies explained that they prefer hiring someone with fluency in Korean over someone who does not speak Korean. They are eager to find employees who improve communications and effectiveness because they combine language proficiency with business expertise. In interviews I conducted with American executives, I discovered that the same principle applies to American companies with ties to Korea.

BYU's Business Korean curriculum has therefore been adapted to address topics relevant to business management and skills considered essential by Korean business firms. The topics addressed in the class were selected after considering the demands of the companies involved in the internship program as well as the ideas and advice shared in meetings with faculty members. These monthly meetings were led by Lee Radebaugh, the chairman of the Center for International Business Education and Research at BYU, and were attended by faculty from Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, German, French, and Portuguese language programs.

The following table summarizes the revised curriculum of the 3 credit course discussed above. The prior focus on business communication and correspondence was not completely abandoned; these topics were taken care of through homework assignments and occasional class discussion, while classroom time was mainly devoted to the areas displayed in the table.

The table compares the systems of the human body with the different areas of business language, suggesting that there must be a balance when teaching. However, the instructor can choose to emphasize certain areas at his or her discretion according to the demands of the current business environment and the students' needs. The comparison of the body with the areas of business management is intended as an effective example of teaching business language. It is certainly not the only way to deal with business topics, but is intended as a guide for business language teachers in designing a curriculum.

AREA ONE — HEAD
LEADERSHIP

Topics Covered/Vocabulary:

- Leadership Theory B Western/Oriental
- Leader vs. Manager
- Philosophy of Management
- Leadership Style
- Win-Win Negotiation
- Decision Making
- Time Management
- Solving Conflicts
- Creative Thinking

AREA TWO — LIMBS
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Topics Covered/Vocabulary:

- Motivation Theory
- X-Y Theory
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Utilization of Human Resources
- Compensation
- On the Job Training (OJT)
- East/West Employment System Differences
- Labor Unions
- Hierarchy in a Korean Firm
- Team Work (Synergy)
- Careers and Stress

AREA THREE — HEART
MARKETING AND PRODUCTION STRATEGY

Topics Covered/Vocabulary:

- Total Quality Management (TQM)
- Benchmarking
- Trade, Export/Import
- Attitude of Sales

- Customer Oriented Management
- Market Research and Consumer Behavior
- Dynamic Environment

AREA FOUR — ARTERIES

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING

Topics Covered/Vocabulary:

- Capital Structure (Debt and Equity)
- Treasury Functions (Cash Management)
- Capital Budgeting
- Currency Exchange (Won/\$)
- Investment
- Risk Management

AREA FIVE — CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM

INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Topics Covered/Vocabulary:

- Electronic Data Processing Systems
- Management Information Systems
- Strategic Information Systems
- Internet/Intranet

We can compare the management of a business to the management of a healthy human body. To maintain a healthy body, we must monitor five distinct areas: the head, limbs, heart, arteries, and central nervous system (Kim 3). The first area is comprised of top management's attitude and spirit—its mentality and management philosophy. This is the company's *head*. A Korean proverb says, "A fish starts to rot from its head." The mentality of top management must be healthy. Managers must have the will and the vision to make the enterprise succeed based on principles of sincerity, honesty, diligence, and public good. They must possess humane warm-heartedness and knowledge to lead a business.

The second part is human resource management because "An enterprise is its people." This involves the acquisition of talented employees, the utilization of human resources, and the maintenance of appropriate compensation. Employees' ideas must be heard and utilized. Motivation must be given and exceptional results must be expected. Human resource management corresponds to the *arms and legs* of a corporation. The third part is production and marketing strategy. A corporation must know what its consumers want and provide them with products that satisfy those wants. It must anticipate and meet the current trends. Marketing is the

heart of an enterprise. When customers are taken care of and are therefore happy and satisfied, the enterprise has a strong heart.

The fourth part is financial management. A corporation that does not produce profit can not survive. A company can not grow unless it can generate enough cash flow to pay interest on its debt and create shareholder value. The appropriate management of labor costs, maintenance, taxes, and debt are all important. Financial management represents the *arteries* of an enterprise.

Finally, the fifth part is information systems management. Information makes up the *central nervous system* of a company. Electronic data processing systems facilitate everyday transactions and organize human resources, material resources, customer and market data, and other information. Management information systems help middle and low-level management in making decisions. Strategic information systems provide decision-making support to top management.

Specialized business language can be categorized by using the same functional divisions that are used in categorizing the management of an enterprise. Within each of these functional divisions are even more specialized categories that can be utilized if desired. The topics and materials were derived from a general framework and were specifically tailored to reflect the situations of companies and business environments in Korea. More time was allocated to the first three categories than the last two, because the management of Korean companies tend to place more importance on them. Theory is supplemented with actual case analysis to demonstrate Korean business situations. As explained before, the 1.5 credit Business Korean course, taught during the winter semester, did not undergo major changes. The curriculum for this course can be summarized as follows:

1) Introduction to top 10 Korean Conglomerates

Hyundai, Samsung, LG, Daewoo, etc.

Overview of Main Business Interests, Leadership, Financial Structure, Organizational Culture, Human Resources, Overseas Investments, Management Information Systems, Marketing and Production, Future Goals, and Dedication to the Development of the Korean Economy

2) Cultural Perspectives in Business

Confucian Capitalism, Vertical Society, Changing from Life-long Employment System to Merit System, Using Honorific Forms, Seniority System

3) *Current Political and Economic Issues*

Newspaper Articles, TV Newscasts

4) *Business Writing Skills*

Write letters, memos, and reports clearly to inform and not to impress. Koreans commonly make mistakes in this area. Emphasis is placed upon being concrete, clear, objective and specific and upon avoiding being abstract, confusing, subjective or general (Bartell 1). Important grammar rules are also taught. Also, those business writing skills not obtained in earlier Korean courses are taught.

TEACHING MBA BUSINESS KOREAN

The suggestions listed here for teaching Business Korean are a compilation of methods used in BYU's Business Korean classes that proved successful in the past added to the teaching techniques we plan to use in the future.

First, the Business Korean instructor should fulfill the following roles in preparing for the class:

- The instructor should prepare reading materials in English about the business management topic that will be the subject for the Business Korean lesson. When possible, he/she should also give materials written in Korean on the same subject matter, but not necessarily the same materials written in Korean. This gives the students some prior knowledge of the subject matter and facilitates their learning of the business language concepts. There is no need to review an entire business textbook; rather, the instructor can gather and distribute materials that detail case studies of successful businesses and briefly explain theory.
- The next step is to begin the classroom discussion in Korean on the materials read. This can be a question and answer session or any other type of discussion that involves the whole class.

- The next step is for the instructor to assess the students' understanding of the material and to ensure that all of the students have a clear understanding of the topic being discussed. After confirming that this is the case, the instructor should continue the discussion in Korean and use English when students do not understand concepts. The instructor should use the Korean materials including a vocabulary list as reference.

Student presentations have proven to be an effective way to increase student interest, participation, and learning. They provide students with motivation and give the instructor a unique opportunity to observe and evaluate students' language ability and knowledge of business concepts. The following suggestions will prove effective in implementing a presentation program in the classroom:

- The instructor assigns the students a general topic for presentation.
- The students research the topic in business magazines written in English or Korean, making a case study of a person or company relating to or demonstrating the assigned topic.
- The students copy the article and make a vocabulary list of Korean terms, which they distribute to class members one week before giving their presentations.
- The student gives his/her presentation in Korean.
- After the presentation, the students ask questions in Korean and the presenter answers them in Korean. In order to ensure that the students pay attention during the presentation, the instructor asks each student to prepare a question to ask the speaker at the conclusion of the presentation (DeVries & Long 374). When the class size is relatively small, each student will ask a question of the presenter. If there are too many students to accommodate this, the instructor will have several students ask the questions they have prepared.
- When necessary, the instructor provides additional explanation to the students' discussion of the topic. Also, while the students present and ask questions, the instructor takes notes on important words and phrases, as well as mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, and phrasing. The instructor then reviews them and corrects the mistakes.

- The instructor comments on ways to improve presentation techniques to convey better the purpose, main points, and application of the material.

Role-plays are also used and have been very effective methods in teaching Business Korean. In particular, role-plays allow students to practice the manner in which one interacts with subordinates, colleagues, and leaders in the Korean business world. Because Korea is a hierarchical society based on Confucianism, major business firms have a vertical structure consisting of around 20 different management ranks. Students need to learn the names of these titles and the order of hierarchy. In role-plays, students practice addressing superiors and subordinates by their appropriate titles and showing proper deference according to the individual's position.

In addition, sometimes students who have worked as interns for a business firm in Korea are invited into class to share their experiences with Korean culture, language, politics, and economy. Other guest speakers who have done business in Korea or have done research in Korean business are invited to share their knowledge and experience.

WHO WILL TEACH BUSINESS KOREAN?

The mission of a Business Korean teacher is to teach business students or other students who have interest in business to communicate in Korean. The question remains, what qualifications best prepare someone to teach Business Korean?

1. Ideally, a Business Korean teacher should be a language teacher, rather than a business teacher, but it is preferable that he or she have some type of formal business education or some actual business experience.
2. If such an individual is unavailable, a business teacher who has an interest or talent in speaking Korean is also appropriate.

A Business Korean teacher should consider the following in his or her responsibilities (Ellis and Johnson 28-33):

1. Because the political, social and economic environment in Korea is changing so rapidly, the teacher should continually be informed of current issues in Korea by reading relevant

materials on a regular basis. For example, the teacher should read current economic and business journals, and collect data about Korea through the Internet.

2. The teacher should attend as many business language seminars as possible in order to gain knowledge, obtain information, and learn the latest methodology to teach most effectively. For example, in mid-June each year, the BYU-University of Utah CIBER sponsors the Asian Business Language Seminar in Park City, Utah. This is the largest seminar of its type in the U.S.
3. The teacher should collect and make use of the introductory videos and brochures of the large Korean conglomerates such as Hyundai, Samsung, LG, etc.
4. The teacher should make efforts to make and maintain a network of business professionals in Korea from whom information and recruiting contacts for the students can be obtained.

The same attributes and activities that make a good businessperson are required for a business teacher who will be teaching his or her students to be successful in business in another language.

CONCLUSION

The demand for business language training continues to grow, and it is important to note the recent link between export success and language/culture abilities. U.S. businesses lose \$2 billion a year on overseas ventures due to insufficient language ability and failure to adapt to culture (D'Agruma and Hardy 43). Yet the U.S. remains "the only nation in the world where one can graduate from college without ever having studied a foreign language" (D'Agruma and Hardy 40). American companies will find that employing proficient Korean speakers who understand both business and Korean culture will lead to greater success in dealing with Korean businesses.

These trends should not be ignored by universities and their language programs. It is important to remember that the purpose of a business language course is not only to teach language and culture, but also to build the students' business minds and to help them become more effective professional business people. An MBA Korean language course should be dedicated to training students to share ideas in Korean about vision,

planning, and the future direction of the company. It should also teach the extensive language skills beyond daily communication. The curriculum described in this paper has been successful in connecting the experiences of classroom learning, internship experience, and full-time employment.

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