

12-1-2007

## Introduction

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### Recommended Citation

Keck, Christiane E. and Wood, Allen G. (2007) "Introduction," *Global Business Languages*: Vol. 5 , Article 1.  
Available at: <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/gbl/vol5/iss1/1>

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## INTRODUCTION

Millions of viewers all over the world watched nations from East to West around the globe ring in the year 2000 with a great deal of fanfare and joyous celebration. Compared to the fireworks, the much-feared and endlessly discussed and anticipated Y2K problems fizzled. Once more technology seemed to reign supreme as fears of any major problems with the computers subsided. As the world watched the celebrations, we could witness the many similarities in the smiles and joyous demeanor of the people around the world. We could also witness the great differences among nations and cultures. These differences should always be celebrated and appreciated. Language contributes significantly to the makeup of a culture as well as to the understanding of that culture. Language thus facilitates a deeper understanding of a people and can therefore foster the well being of international communication as well as global peace efforts. "Internationalization and the New Millennium" seems particularly appropriate as a theme for our issue 2000 of *Global Business Languages*.

The world has seen many changes since January 1. The technology stocks, which last year had been recklessly advancing daily on the NASDAQ, suddenly experienced enormous volatility, more frequently down than up. The US government took on mighty Microsoft and may indeed succeed in crippling that successful company, supposedly rescuing those "forced" to buy products without choices from competitors. The jury is still out on the outcome of that trial and its financial effects on the economy.

Meanwhile, Europe, as the US and other parts of the world, is experiencing a real shortage of technologically educated persons and is enacting new green card laws to import such expertise. Germany reports a renewed economic growth, especially in the western states, and a slight

decrease in the high rate of unemployment. The powerful banks, Deutsche Bank, Dresdner Bank and Commerzbank are talking of mergers, continuing last year's trend of mega-mergers, such as Daimler-Chrysler.

Europe is now in its second year of the Euro, and even though the value of the Euro has fallen vis-à-vis the dollar, it is deemed successful. A number of other countries are in the process of applying for membership in the European Union in order to take advantage of the great markets of Euroland. The strong US dollar continues to be a problem for investors from abroad and for our exports. Europe and especially Germany's exports again outweigh their imports, resulting in a positive balance of trade for them once more.

The Far East has largely come out of its slump and especially Japan is slowly recovering from its serious recession. China finally achieved permanent status as a favored trading nation, giving that country a needed boost. The US also expects to gain from this trade arrangement, as it will open even greater business opportunities for Americans.

Closer to home, the Krannert School of Industrial Management at Purdue University has just completed its first year in a new international venture in Hanover, Germany, where the first MBA class graduated with Purdue degrees on July 8 from GISMA, the German International Graduate School of Management and Administration. Hanover is also the site of the world's fair this summer, the first ever held in Germany. This event made the graduation of the first class of GISMA students even more memorable for the participants. For more information on this exciting international educational opportunity, write to [info@gisma-hannover.de](mailto:info@gisma-hannover.de) or check with URL: <http://gisma.mgmt.purdue.edu>.

Within the framework of economic and educational growth that has occurred globally and locally, the articles in this volume reflect upon past practices within our field as they comment on current trends and future possibilities. Although most of the authors mention the crucial role of technology in the world marketplace, and the ever-growing role it will play, they all stress the primary importance of personal contacts with partners in other cultures. Business and business language education will continue to be assisted by electronic machinery, but is built upon a solid interaction among linguistically and culturally competent people.

The volume begins with a retrospective look at the field in James L. Schorr's "A Generation of Business Foreign Languages." The study

traces some of the major developments in the last twenty years, from educational programs (Thunderbird, EMU, South Carolina, San Diego State) to the vitally important creation of CIBER centers beginning in 1989. The responses from education, business and government to the growing needs for a workforce competitive globally in the areas of foreign language and intercultural awareness are well documented. In "Designing and Implementing a French-for-Specific Purposes (FSP) Program: Lessons Learned from ESP," Elizabeth Martin provides a useful historical overview of the lessons which Language for Specific Programs (LSP) learned from earlier work done in English, and shows how a French program can be developed. The steps of needs analysis, syllabus design, choice of activities, and evaluation are helpful for those beginning a new program, as well as educators reviewing existing programs.

Several articles that follow focus upon specific pedagogical questions. The process of developing intercultural competence is approached in a most unique way in Kandace Einbeck's "Crossing Cultures and a Millennium with Kao-tai: How a Time-Traveler from the 10<sup>th</sup> Century can Prepare Business Students for the 21<sup>st</sup>." Herbert Rosendorfer's novel, about a funny case of cultural shock, is both amusing and instructive in a course on frames of cultural interpretation and theories of perspective transformation. It is often easier for students to understand miscommunication and miscomprehension happening to somebody else, say in a work of fiction, than in their own experiences. In "Developing Cultural Awareness with International Business Students: A Look at Empathy Breakdown," Thérèse Saint Paul presents a model of activities for cultural awareness development involving a summer program in France for MBA students. Defined as "an informed openness toward other cultures," empathy is seen as a key element in cultural competence, which can be increased by some of the activities described. Chin-Sook Pak's article "Towards a Development of Global Communities Within: Service-Learning Projects in a Business Spanish Course" furnishes details on her course at Ball State in which students incorporate activities with the local Hispanic community with their academic language instruction. Students learned a great deal about themselves, their community, and Spanish language and cultures. Finally, Eileen M. Angelini and Salvatore Federico present "Cross-Cultural Aspects of the French Cover Letter." The different expectations between American and

French employers are explored, as are strategies to compose appropriate and effective letters for both business cultures. A well written cover letter is, after all, an achievement in linguistic, stylistic, and cultural competence.

The business letter is also our transition to business education and the business community, which is the emphasis of the last three articles in the volume. Charles A. Grair describes a cooperative effort in business and foreign language learning in "An Interdisciplinary Approach to a Business German Curriculum: The Texas Tech University Model." He explains the history and content of Texas Tech's International Business curriculum, which aims to "provide students with the theoretical knowledge and practical skills needed for the international marketplace." Nina M. Ray's article "Beyond Spanish for Business: Teaching Marketing Issues in the Spanish-Speaking World" describes the efforts at Boise State to provide significant business content in the course on Marketing Issues in the Spanish-Speaking World, as part of a Foreign Languages Across the Curriculum Grant which her university received. And in "Communication in US Firms Employing Limited-English-Proficient Workers," Carol C. Rose examines a study conducted in the Kansas City and Wichita areas dealing with how companies manage the language barrier with their Limited-English-Proficient workers.

Judging by the very many positive comments about our 1999 issue of *Global Business Languages* on the topic of "Technological Advances, Electronic Data and Languages for Specific Purposes" readers found the information useful and interesting. Please be sure to contact us if you need any 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://ciberweb.mgmt.purdue.edu/busilang/gblang.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 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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