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## Introduction

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## INTRODUCTION

We are happy to bring you this year's volume, which shows the continuing development of quality research in Business Languages across a wide range of subjects and languages. As always we appreciate the continued support of our readers, and welcome your submissions for our 2009 issue entitled "Borders and Frontiers."

The United States has just come off an interminably long and bitter two years of political campaigning. The outcome brings renewed hope to a divided people, downcast by the ongoing war and the frightening economy. A new tone prevails, and even the bitter enemies of the campaign trail now pledge to work together for the common good. We must repair our standing in the world with a more conciliatory tone and a willingness to listen. The world welcomes this new attitude and encourages the renewed exchange of ideas. Leaders around the globe have responded enthusiastically to the election results as they look forward to the dawning of a new day and a new regime in Washington. The challenges are many and daunting.

No one could have predicted even a few months ago how quickly the economic downturn would come this fall and how wide-ranging it would be. Not only are major world banks, renowned investment companies, and the entire housing industry rapidly collapsing, but many other industries, such as the Big Three automobile companies, hover at the brink of extinction. Wall Street rides a daily out-of-control roller coaster and even the brightest financial minds seem to be at a loss as to how to get the economy back on a reasonable track. Proposals for government bailouts make daily headlines, with much discussion regarding how much money should be given, to whom, and with what strings attached.

What will corporations and financial institutions learn from this economic downturn? Hopefully, among many lessons to be gained, one will stand out: rampant greed and selfishness cannot sustain a business in the long-term. On the other hand, education and hard, honest work do lead to success. Each individual, whether buyer or seller, employee or employer, whether in the private or public sector, must learn to take personal responsibility for actions and their consequences. The government simply cannot continue to give out vast amounts of money to help failing industries at every turn or we will be faced with a possible depression in the near future.

The economic crisis is not just here in the US but reverberates around the globe as we become ever more aware that we are all somehow interconnected.

In this “flat world” no country exists in isolation and no company can exist in total insulation. This reality presents ever-new challenges to our universities as they prepare students for citizenship in tomorrow’s world. Understanding languages and cultures other than our own remains crucial. It is central to any successful business, even a small local business. Universities therefore continue to stress the importance of a study or work experience abroad as a way to gain valuable insights first hand. We also hope that our journal contributes to a better understanding of the world of global business in its many aspects.

Most of the articles found in this volume were first presented as papers at Ohio State University’s CIBER Language conference entitled “The Key to US Competitive Edge: Bridging Language and Business” held March 28-30 2007. The authors revised their papers into article form, which were peer reviewed by *Global Business Languages* and edited before reaching the form in which they appear here.

The first article, entitled “*Sararii-man NEO*: Integrating Business Japanese into Japanese Language Instruction,” examines the needs of learners preparing for an internship program in Japan. Ayumi Nagatomi discusses in particular one way to improve linguistic and cultural competency by incorporating segments from the Japanese television program *Sararii-man NEO* into the curriculum. The popular show depicts various situations, often humorous, that arise in the Japanese workplace. Michael Hager’s study of an innovative use of modern technology in the classroom, “Using the Internet to Teach Business German,” examines issues of the value of resource materials found on the Internet. It then describes a WebQuest project in which students access authentic electronic materials to gather information to be applied to a real situation. Several useful German websites are listed in the appendices.

Chad M. Gasta explores current thinking about refocusing the traditional study abroad program to combine it with coursework in different professional majors, including business. Spain ranks as the third most popular destination for students from the United States, and his article “Cross-Cultural Knowledge, Business Practices, and Student Learning via Study Abroad” presents survey results of study abroad students in Spain reporting perceptions of their learning. The article concludes by stressing the need for more language and culture training prior to such a program. Michael Doyle’s article “Autobiographic Inscription and Experiential Pedagogy in Business Language: The Panama Canal and Ground Transportation in Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic” describes the importance of experiential pedagogy. In order to understand a foreign culture effectively, it is essential for instructors and

students to live in that culture so that the people, their language, and customs become real. Professor Doyle presents several instances for which solely a bookish, academic knowledge of a culture is insufficient.

An effective method used for teaching business Japanese that is both cultural and linguistic is examined in detail in “Employing International Business Cases for Business Language Instruction.” Tomoko Takami developed five case studies involving Japanese companies with operations in America, or American companies with facilities in Japan. The theoretical framework of the case study approach is explored, as are the aspects of structuring the units, implementing in the class, and finally assessment of the materials. Professor Marjorie Lynne Gerber’s study, entitled “Taking the Global Plunge: Using In-country Language Immersion as a Holistic Professional Development Tool,” examines how adults are especially well suited to take advantage of immersion programs. Professor Gerber also uses a multiple-case study approach, and she shows that learning using this approach is effective because it is holistic. The guidelines she describes are particularly useful.

Another example of incorporating authentic teaching materials into the business language classroom is provided in Min Zhou’s article “Teaching Chinese Language and Culture through Chinese Commercials.” Uses of denotative and connotative levels of language are examined in a Coca-Cola commercial, and nuances of cultural coding are explained in a commercial for a popular Chinese supplement. Professor Zhou gives several useful principles to follow when using commercials for pedagogical purposes. Videos form the basis for classroom activities examined by Judith Ainsworth in her article “Video Excerpts, Classroom Games, and an Online Double Auction Experiment: Integrating ‘Supply and Demand’ in the Business Language Classroom.” In order to teach supply and demand concepts in an advanced Business French course, Professor Ainsworth suggests using an online double auction experiment. Even instructors not familiar with trading games will find the task is made simpler by a number of websites and software products that are described. And in the final article, “Developing Cultural Competency in the Business Language Class,” Professor Gay Rawson examines how cultural competency can be taught by using materials that stress student interaction, especially in team work. Her French business students strive to develop greater cultural awareness of different cultures in ways that will minimize stereotypes and misunderstandings.

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at <http://www.mgmt.purdue.edu/centers/ciber/publications/gbl/gbl-main.htm>. We hope that this will help facilitate your access to our journal, provide information on subscriptions, and disseminate the call for new articles.

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