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Reviews

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REVIEWS

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Felices, Ángel, María Ángeles Calderón, Emilio Iriarte, and Emilia Núñez. (2003). *Cultura y negocios: El español de la economía española y latinoamericana*. Rpt. 2010. Madrid: Edinumen; *Libro de claves*, 2010.

Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Teaching culture has long been a neglected area in the business language curriculum. Given corporate America's demand for cross-cultural communication, business language teachers may soon be devoting more attention to cross-cultural training. This neglected Culture is emphasized in *Cultura y negocios: El español de la economía española y latinoamericana*.

Published originally in 2003 by the Spanish publishing house Edinumen, this book was reprinted in 2010. Despite claiming that the book had been changed, the 2010 edition duplicated word for word many of the essays in the original text. The authors missed the opportunity to update their text, particularly in light of the economic crisis in Spain and the economic changes in Argentina during the last five years. A close examination of the 2003 and 2010 texts shows that despite the fact that some changes were made in the table of contents, it was mainly data regarding population and GNP that were updated in the main text.

Written completely in Spanish, *Cultura y negocios: El español de la economía española y latinoamericana* appeals to a wide audience, ranging from high school instructors who may have never taught a Spanish for Business course, to university professors who have taught such courses many times. It deals with a subject matter extensively examined in books on second language methodology in the US and Europe, but not usually examined from the perspective of teaching Spanish for Business: teaching culture in the Spanish for Business course. In this book the culture taught is not Culture with a large "C" as in films, literature, and cinema, but culture with a small "c" as in the ways and mores of different companies in the Spanish-speaking world. In addition, *Cultura y negocios* goes one step further and tries to introduce some of the main ideas of G. Hofstede's *Culturas y organizaciones*, published in 1999 in Madrid, by presenting its concepts in the Introduction, but there

is no attempt to change the structure of the book to relate these ideas to the cultural components.

The book is divided into ten units that each feature a different country in Latin America, including Brazil. Each unit is subdivided into several sections that include a section called “Así nos ven, así nos vemos” that deals with the business culture of business men and women in various Latin American countries and Spain. In each case an article from a magazine dealing with an aspect of business culture in the country to be studied is presented, followed by discussion questions. Matters such as punctuality, business versus family relations, and class differences are discussed in this section. As interesting and useful as it is, the book omits important aspects of intercultural awareness. Published originally in 2003, the 2010 *Libro de claves* begins with an Introduction followed by answers to the exercises in the ten Unidades and the four Appendices in the main text.

Since many teachers of Spanish for Business in the United States may not have a background in business nor its specialized vocabulary, the book provides useful information for teachers using it as a supplement to their other texts for Spanish for Business as well as for teachers at the intermediate level who want to gain some knowledge about the Spanish and Latin American corporate world and at the same time improve their Spanish business vocabulary.

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Iriarte, Emilio, and Emilia Núñez Pérez. (2009). *Empresa siglo XXI: El español en el ámbito profesional*. Madrid: Edinumen. *Libro de claves*, 2009.

Level: Intermediate/Advanced

This text forms part of a series of pedagogical materials to teach Languages for Specific Purposes developed in Spain during the past ten years, in this case Spanish for Business. As stated in the Introduction to the text, the goal is to provide the student with the tools to develop the five skills called for in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: pragmatic, linguistic, socio-linguistic, sociocultural, and intercultural knowledge of a foreign language. With this in mind, the eight chapters of the book are subdivided into five sections with the headings listed above serving as the

organizational structure of each chapter. In addition, a listening comprehension section is presented in the form of a DVD with questions included in the main textbook and the text of the DVD reproduced in the *Libro de claves*.

The selection of the main topics for each chapter are in some cases similar to the divisions of Language for Business textbooks for other languages, but with particular emphasis on the aspects of the business world in Spain and with a heavily legalistic slant. The chapter subjects are: types of corporations, the creation of a company, work contracts, the world of work, business, marketing, banking, and human resources. Sometimes the titles of the chapters do not clearly indicate their content. For example, chapter 4, “The World of Work,” is really about job hunting. Chapter 5, “El Comercio,” is really about international business and the kind of documents needed to carry out transactions involving importing and exporting.

Although the exercises on intercultural competence are not always very explicit, their perspective is more than the mere Spanish or Hispanic point of view used in other texts published in Spain. They are written from the point of view of a foreigner or an intercultural mediator. Each chapter concludes with a role play that calls for putting into practice a management competence.

One of the main goals of this text is to provide intermediate-level students a tool to learn business Spanish from a cultural perspective, and it achieves this goal. The key features of this book are that it presents a variety of materials related to specific contexts of business and thus provides the opportunity to use it in different courses, such as international business, Spanish conversation, and any course on Spanish for Specific Purposes.

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