## The Reading Stage

The reading stage occupies the second class in a unit and consists of:

*1. Reading by all the students* following the SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review) procedure (Dubin, 1986). This is done in the classroom only during the first 3 or 4 units so the students fully master the SQ3R procedure. (Afterwards, it is transferred to home assignments given at the end of the first class in a unit). Reading is followed by a discussion that is either teacher-fronted or conducted in small groups. The purpose of the discussion is not only to clarify some points in the text, but also to allow the teacher to check comprehension and to elicit students' personal opinions about what was read. The discussion also serves as a means of comparing what was listened to and said on the same subject matter during the preceding stage (class) with what was read in the text. Special attention is given to information that does not coincide or is in conflict with students' opinions and pre-reading guesses or their background knowledge. Thus, this phase is designed to promote oral communication on the basis of what is read (and heard from other students).

*2. In-class reading of different texts by different students*, i.e., texts different in content but dealing with the same topic (theme) as the first text. It should be noted that both the individual texts and the preceding text (same for all) are authentic ones taken from original US or British sources (e.g., The Wall Street Journal). Reading of individual texts is always timed and done in different regimes but with the emphasis on skimming and scanning, since the principle task is to teach reading of extended pieces of texts for general information—using appropriate skills and strategies.

*3. Exchanging information obtained from individual texts just read*. The work is done in small groups of 3-4 students. Every student in such a small group tells his/her partners about the content of his/her text(s), answers their questions about that content, and then information from different individual texts is compared and discussed, taking into account all the preceding information obtained while reading, listening, and speaking. In this way, speaking English and listening to what other people say are the essence of the students' activities in the third phase of the second class in a unit.

## Post-Reading Stage Structure

The final class in a unit includes:

*1. Simulations) organised and carried out* on the basis of information obtained from the preceding reading, listening, and discussing. For instance, if in the preceding two classes everything read, listened to, or discussed concentrated on financial issues, the Executive Board meeting of an imaginary firm or company may be simulated—this meeting devoted to the firm's financial situation, budget, profit and losses, etc. Different simulations usually take up to one half (45 minutes) of the third class in a unit. So, this is the phase of creative speaking, stimulated by an imaginary situation, and of listening to other students.

*2. Writing an essay of about 100-150 words* on the topic of what was read, listened to, and discussed before. For instance, if the subject matter was finances, the topic of an essay may be different ways of maintaining financial stability in a firm or company. The writing itself is done as a home assignment from the second to the third class in a unit. In class, students exchange their essays, and write a short commentary. Then (in the same class) the peer-commented essays are given back to their authors who, after reading the commentary, either correct, or modify their drafts, and rewrite them, or, in the case of disagreement with the peer-commentator, write a short response to her/his comments. The peer-commented essays, after having passed again through the hands of their authors (for correcting or leaving unchanged the first draft), are handed over to the teacher for her/his commentaries. The teacher discusses the results with his/her students at the very beginning of the first class in the following unit, and after this discussion, some or all of the essays may be rewritten and again teacher-commented. This approach approximates process-oriented writing and is linked to not only the preceding reading, but to listening and speaking as well, and serves as a kind of summing up end-piece to all the activities in the unit.

## Conclusion

As can be seen from the above description of the reading-based integrated-skills instruction programme, in every unit students proceed, following the path of listening -speaking (with listening) - reading (with speaking and listening) - reading - speaking (with listening) - speaking (with listening) - writing. In this way, reading naturally occupies the central position in the sequence, influencing and even determining both the preceding and the following activities, while allowing for the simultaneous and balanced development of listening, speaking and writing.

It should be emphasised once again that as to class-time spent, reading itself takes probably the shortest part of it, while the greatest part is allocated to speaking and listening. This does not weaken or slow down the development of reading skills (the focal ones) since a lot can be read in a short time if effective reading strategies are used and reading is done not only in class but also at home. In addition, it should not be forgotten that in integrated-skills instruction every skill being developed contributes to development of other skills since listening leads to reading and discussion, and so forth (McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

Using the suggested programme in teaching practice for more than seven years has proven its efficiency for developing not only the reading skills but the skills of listening, speaking, and writing in professional situations—especially when compared to more traditional approaches used in tertiary level educational institutions of the former USSR countries.

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*Yulia Degtyariova is an EFL instructor at Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law (Ukraine). Her research interests lie in the field of teaching reading for business purposes to EFL students. She is currently working on her Candidate of Pedagogy dissertation in EFL. E-mail: DegtyariovaYulia@ mail.ru.*

# The Internet / CD-ROM Page

Pete Sharma and Barney Barrett

This edition of the CD-ROM / Internet page focuses on vocabulary and looks at:

1. Two exciting new CD-ROM dictionaries
2. Recommended web-sites featuring a "Word of the day"
3. A new E-lesson service for Business English learners

## 1. New CD-ROM dictionaries

Do your Business English learners own an English – English CD-ROM dictionary? If not, why not? There are no excuses – many students have a desktop computer at work and / or home and prices have plummeted. Nowadays, versions of the paperback actually include the CD-ROM in the back, representing outstanding value. The new wave of dictionaries are electrifying and (dare I preach it?) essential!

The more recent the dictionary, the better; the last few months have seen the appearance of the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary and the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. This article focuses on some key features of both of these superb discs.
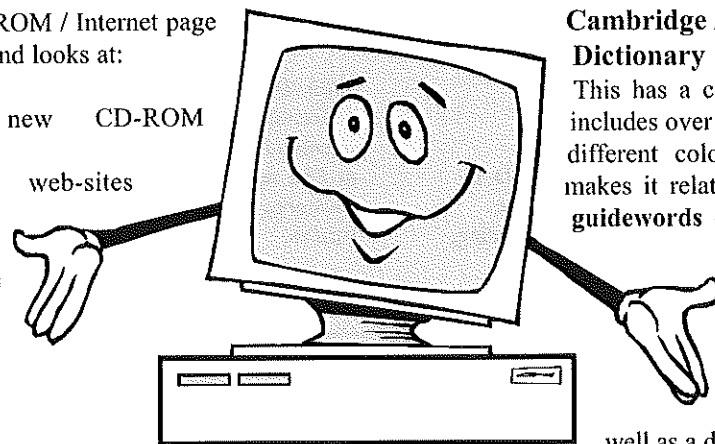
### Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary

This has a clear and aesthetic lay-out and includes over 1,000 new words. The use of a different colour, blue, for the headwords makes it relatively easy to use. The use of **guidewords** – a boxed word or phrase in capitals – helps users to locate the different meanings of a given word.

Learners appreciate sentences giving examples of use, as well as a definition and such examples are included, as well as a host of other features: examples of common learner errors, an idioms finder and an excellent list of word families, helping learners with, say, economic, economical, economist etc.

The "Smart Thesaurus" feature is outstanding and provides a bank of related words (see below). For example, clicking on "to lay off" provides related terms such as *axe, boot, fire* – 54 in total – as well as the chance to check meaning.

### Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

This is the first dictionary from Longman in full colour, which makes for improved ease-of-use. Colour is used here to identify the most frequent 3,000 words and a key
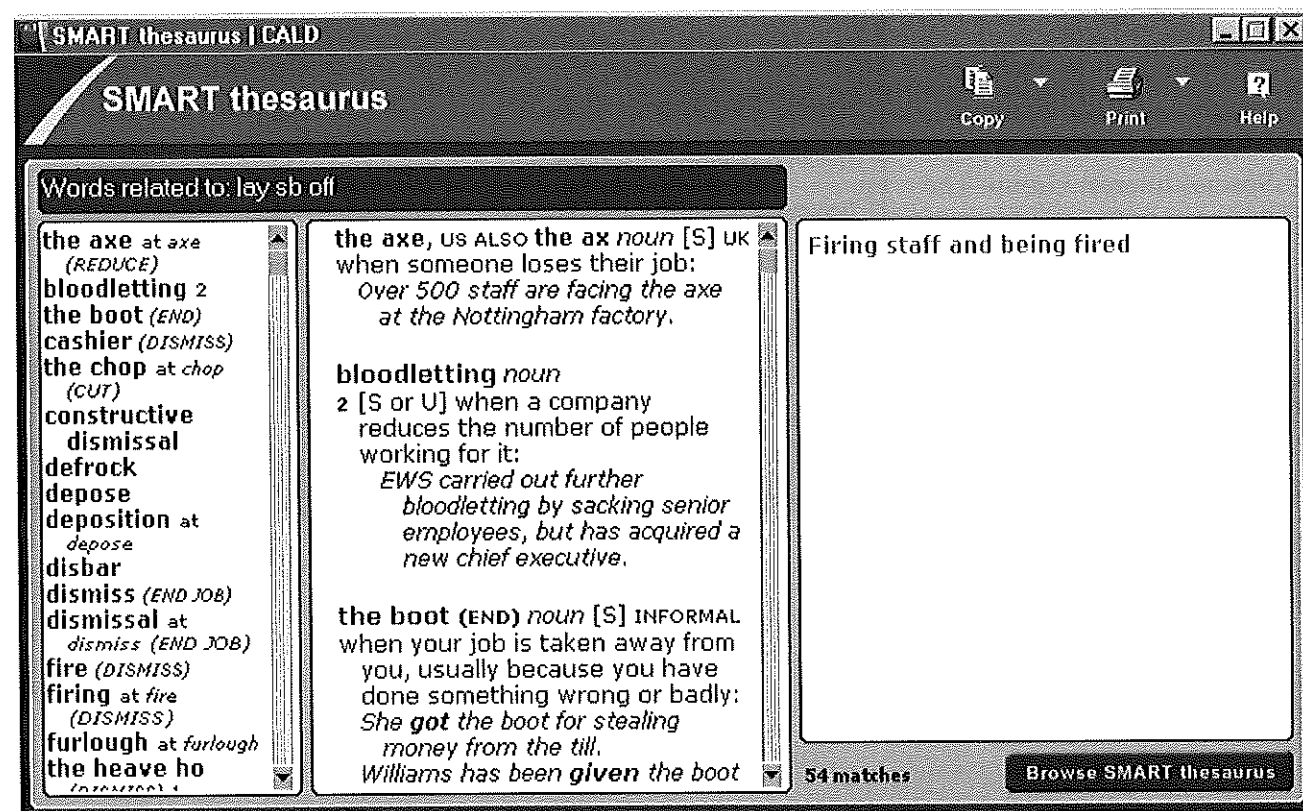
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# Reading-Focused Instruction Programme for University Students of Business English in Ukraine

Yulia Degtyariova

Reading for business purposes still remains the focal point of teaching Business English to university students in Eastern Europe since reading is the skill that can most often be used in day-to-day business activities outside an English-speaking country. But focusing on reading must be combined with teaching procedures that effectively develop speaking, listening, and writing. If reading is to remain a focal skill and a focal point in teaching, speaking, listening and writing skills may and should be developed on the basis of and in inextricable connection with it, i.e., in the process of reading-based integrated-skills instruction. It requires a specific teaching programme, and what follows is the description of an attempt to develop such a programme for Ukraine.

## Reading-Based Integrated-Skills Instruction Programme

A programme of reading-based integrated-skills instruction in Business English was developed by me for second-year students of Dnipropetrovsk State Technical University of Railway Transport majoring in Transport Economics and Management.

Though this programme was concentrated on reading as the focal point, reading did not take the greatest part of class time (reading occupied only about one fifth or less of it). In fact, speaking, listening, and writing were given the greatest amount of time (especially the first two) with topics, content of communication and language material coming from assigned reading. In the programme, all the classes in a semester were divided into units (three 90-minute classes in one unit), each unit having a unifying theme (e.g., business contracts and agreements, standard structure and hierarchy of a firm or company, etc.). Classes in a unit were divided into the pre-reading stage, reading stage, and post-reading stage with specific learning activities for each.

### The Pre-Reading Stage

This stage (the first 90-minutes in a unit) includes:

*1. Introducing learners to the topic* (theme) of one or several texts to be read, i.e., introducing them to the subject-matter to make it easier for comprehension, as recommended in a sheltered English approach (Freeman & Freeman, 1991). Such a preview is done in an oral presentation by the teacher, followed by students listening either to a tape-recorded business lecture or conversation

dealing with the same content or, more often, by their watching a short video on the same topic (recordings and videos used are taken from US or British Business English teaching materials). Videos are preferred to tape-recordings and are used whenever possible since they give a unique opportunity of demonstrating complete communicative situations and visualising them, as well as the objects of discourse. Thus, this phase of the pre-reading stage is totally devoted to listening (and viewing—with videos).

*2. Discussing what was heard and sharing views.* At first, the discussion is teacher-fronted and is used as a comprehension check and as a means of clarifying to some of the students what they have failed to understand when listening (key words and structures from the teacher's oral presentation and the other listening materials are also discussed in this phase). The usual continuation is further discussion of the information obtained while listening in small groups of 3-4 students. Participants are asked to exchange opinions on what they have just heard and share their own background information and knowledge of the subject matter. As a final stage, short presentations are made by representatives of every small group for all the students to hear. Such presentations sum up the results of small group discussions and serve as a basis for a new teacher-fronted discussion. In this way, the second phase of the pre-reading stage is focused on speaking English (and listening to what other students have to say). This stage, as a whole, makes it possible for students not only to guess fairly accurately the content of the texts to be read in the next stage and articulate their background knowledge as to that content, but also to make future reading a reasoning task.



*"Boy, THESE ARE REALLY OVERDUE!"*

A "I will not show they have hurt or insulted me because that may show weakness and make me more vulnerable in the future."

B "I will show clearly that I am insulted so they get the message. If business partners do not behave properly, there are consequences."

The discussion here could focus on the different shades of reaction, the role of language ("softeners" in British English: e.g., quite, maybe, perhaps…), humour, pace, and negotiation strategy.

## Specific versus diffuse

In a specific, low context relationship the focus would be on the product. In a diffuse, high context interaction the focus is on the relationship.

Here the writers tell the story of one US company trying to win a contract with a South American customer. The US company gave a slick presentation emphasising the product quality specification and the lower price. Its Swedish competitor took a week to get to know the customer, talking about anything except the product until the final day. Who won the contract?

*To discuss further:* A boss asks a subordinate to help him or her paint the house. The subordinate discusses the situation with a colleague. The colleague says: "you don't have to paint it if you don't want to. The boss has no authority outside work."

In this category, specific versus diffuse, there are many issues to develop, including private space, losing face. If someone calls your idea "crazy" are they calling you crazy?

## Achievement versus ascription

Achievement means you are judged on your track record. Ascription places emphasis on the status that is attributed to you – birth, age, education, formal qualifications and titles, connections…

*To discuss*
- Status should not change according to occasion or recent successes. It reflects intrinsic worth not your last innings.
- Achievement or success is the only legitimate source of status in business, and the more recent the achievement the more relevant it is to current challenges.

## Attitudes to time

*Discuss this quote from the book*: "the American dream is the French nightmare." Americans generally start from zero and what matters is their present performance and plans to "make it" in the future. The French have an "enormous sense of the past."
In British English the expressions "arriviste" and "nouveau riche" may express disdain.

Ask students to draw time lines. Is time perceived as a circle, fusing the past, present and future or a straight line sequence of events? In addition, ask students to think of the past, present and future and draw three circles representing this, noting and comparing the size and arrangement of these circles (Cottle 1967).

## Attitudes to the environment

*To discuss*: In Tokyo in winter you see many people wearing surgical-style face masks because if they have a cold or virus they do not "pollute" or affect other people by breathing on them. In London cyclists often wear these masks because they do not want to be polluted by the environment.

## Conclusion

This overview of the Trompenaars / Hamden Turner book aims to provide a way into a key text and extrapolate examples for training in the expanding field of Intercultural Competence.

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www.dialogin.com
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*John F King is a freelance trainer in business English. He works with York Associates and York University, UK. John has wide experience of working with students from Europe and Asia, across a range of sectors and professional areas including banking, telecoms, politics and journalism. He completed his Certificate in Teaching English for Business in 1998. E-mail: jf.york@virgin.net.*

feature is the information regarding spoken and written English. Is "let" or "allow" more frequent in spoken or written English? The dictionary contains frequency graphs showing answers to these type of questions. Additional information identifies if the word is in the first one, two or three thousand of spoken and written English.

The CD-Rom contains an extra 80,000 examples to the dictionary. Teachers especially will enjoy the "etymology" button, with information on when certain words entered the language, and their origins. There is a wealth of research skills behind the production of this dictionary. *The Longman Language Activator* is included on the CD-ROM, so learners can check words and expressions related to concepts such as "business" and "money".

Both dictionaries allow users to check meaning or spelling while browsing a web-page or composing a document, which makes these dictionaries so useful for Business English students who write emails, documents and prepare presentations. Equipping students with these invaluable tools is, in my opinion, an essential part of learner training on any and every Business English course.

## 2. Recommended web-sites: word of the day

The recommended web-site feature looks at the "Word of the Day" which is a very popular feature on many dictionary and glossary websites. The words are often selected at random from a database and displayed with various pieces of information such as pronunciation, meaning, use and etymology. Many of these website also offer to put you on a list to receive a daily emailed item of vocabulary.

### Cobuild Idiom of the Day
*http://titania.cobuild.collins.co.uk/Idiom.html*
Gives a number of idioms based on a word from the dictionary. Idioms that are particularly frequent in the Bank of English corpus are marked with a star symbol.

### Dictionary.com
*http://dictionary.reference.com/wordoftheday*
Not designed specifically for language learners but the type of words that come up might be useful for advanced learners wishing to expand their vocabulary, especially for writing. The examples of usage are usually literary and often with a hyperlink to the on-line publication from which they were taken. You can join the mailing list and receive each day's word in your email in-box.

### Investor Words
*http://www.investorwords.com/*
Glossary website dedicated to investor education. The term for the day is displayed on the homepage and can be emailed to you each day. Some of the terms are incredibly obscure but great for those learners working in the financial sector.

### Words@EnglishOnLine.Net
*http://www.englishonline.net/word.html*
The word of the day webpage is minimal: word, definition and example. You can sign up for their email and every two weeks you will receive a message that includes a phrasal verbs focus, functional language such as writing tips, vocabulary and idioms exercises, the answers to which can be found on the englishonline website.

### Cambridge Dictionaries On-line
*http://dictionary.cambridge.org/wordoftheday.asp*
A very straightforward word for the day webpage with all the words drawn from their recent publication: The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

Barney Barrett has researched and provided these web-site addresses. If you have any ideas for future pages of BESIG Issues, please contact Barney on: barneybarrett@linguarama.com

## 3. A new E-lesson for Business English learners   ·

Readers of *BESIG Issues* wishing to subscribe to a regular, free e-lesson should visit:

*http://www.businessenglishonline.net/profile/emailservice.asp*
This service, from Macmillan, is part of the Business English Resource site supporting, among other publications, the in company course-book. The topical e-lesson is emailed to your computer, and is of interest to Business English teachers wishing for a short ready-made activity for Intermediate learners. Teacher's notes accompany each lesson, as well as suggested related web-sites.

*Pete Sharma is a business English teacher and teacher trainer based in Stratford-upon-Avon, UK. He reviews software, and is a regular conference presenter at BESIG events. He is the author of CD-ROM: A Teacher's Handbook (1998, Summertown Publishing) and runs training seminars on integrating technology in language teaching. He can be contacted through: www.petesharma.com.*

*Barney Barrett has worked for Linguarama since 1994, teaching in Spain and the UK. He has extensive experience using the Internet in teaching, and is co-author of "The Internet and Business English", Summertown 2003. E-mail: barneybarrett@linguarama.com.*

# Rehearsed oral L2 output and reactive focus on form

As a person who is mostly involved in one-to-one teaching I am in a situation where it is possible to give a lot of individual attention to language errors. Of course, I balance this against the other requirements of the learner for communicative competence and fluency but one-to-one learners often have a strong wish to improve their accuracy. Therefore, I am keen to find new ways to help them in this. One technique which I know some colleagues use but which I have been a bit reluctant to try is recording the students and then letting them listen to their own performance. My hesitancy stemmed from a fear that students might be over-critical of their own performance and thus damage their self-confidence in their language ability. Since I believe that bolstering a student's self-confidence is very important in language learning my reluctance is understandable. For, unlike teacher feedback on error which can be 'filtered' to make it less threatening, with a tape recording the student is faced with all his/her faults simultaneously.

In the light of these doubts the study under review goes some way to assuaging them. The author of this study was involved in teaching a four-class per week oral presentation course in Japan, each course of which lasted 25 weeks. Mennim wished to see whether rehearsal of their final oral presentation resulted in improvements to the students' output. This was in line with Skeham's (1996) belief that learners' attention to form could be aided by not having to prepare the content and the form of utterances simultaneously. Bygate's (1996) focus on 'task repetition' was also a background factor in Mennim's study. This latter involved each group of three students (the presentations were done in threes) performing a private rehearsal with the teacher only. The rehearsals lasted about 20 minutes and were tape-recorded. Afterwards the students transcribed a five-minute segment of the tape which contained equal contributions from each. The students attempted to identify and correct all the errors. The teacher then looked at their corrected version and indicated any corrections or improvements they had missed. This final 'perfect' version was then returned to the individuals in the group one week before they made their final presentation to the whole class. Mennin then recorded this final presentation and transcribed the relevant bit from it to compare with the rehearsed version.

Mennim focused his analysis of the two transcripts on one group of students (i.e., students M, Y and A) who spoke about the history of Malaysia. The focus of his corrections had been pronunciation, grammatical forms (articles, prepositions and passive forms) and content. Although the latter is not strictly linguistic this could be an element in improving an oral presentation.

In regard to grammar Mennim noted 37 occasions when articles had not been used or used incorrectly but which were not corrected by the group on their initial transcript. In the final presentation the group repaired 24 of these (although six were incorrect repairs). In regard to prepositions the group failed to note ten instances of incorrect usage. In the final presentation 9 of these errors were repaired successfully. Finally, five errors in the use of passives were made in the initial 'practice' presentation of which two were self-corrected and three corrected by Mennim. All were correct in the final presentation. Mennim's description of the corrections of pronunciation errors which were performed better in the final presentation is more impressionistic but he feels there was a definite improvement. The students themselves by and large made alterations to content on the basis of transcribing and analysing the rehearsal transcript and Mennim sees this as 'a more unexpected aspect of student focus'. However, in terms of helping students to produce a more polished final product this is surely an additional point in favour of the approach outlined in this study.

Mennim concluded that his attempt to see whether or not the transcription task would direct the students' attention to form had been taken seriously by them and had succeeded in its aim. The connected question of whether making corrections to the transcript would encourage students to modify and improve their L2 output also seems to have been answered positively. In the final presentation, done two weeks after the correction task, the improvements in grammar and pronunciation noted above were incorporated. Mennim feels that the teacher's role in this process is important. He was able to spot many more errors than the students (73 compared to 49) and he could particularly point out one area where they had failed to spot many errors, i.e., articles, which was understandable given the students' nationality.

That Mennim's study is very small scale is clear. Why, in fact, he only gives us the results of one group when clearly there was a number is not apparent. Also he acknowledges that it is difficult to know from his study whether the

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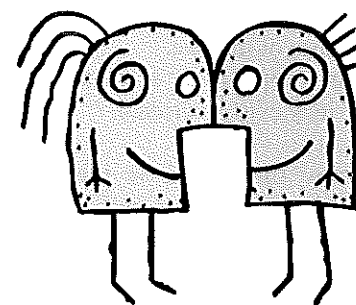
# Surfing the Waves of Culture

John F King

**DEBATABLE POINTS**

One of the main founders of the European Union, Frenchman Jean Monnet, observed:

"if I were again facing the challenge to integrate Europe, I would probably start with culture."

This is quoted at the beginning of Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner's seminal book *"Riding the Waves of Culture"* (1993). There are other writers, gurus even, in the field of understanding cultural diversity in business, notably Hofstede (1997). Inter Cultural Competence is becoming more central to our work as teachers of Business English. My objective here is to summarise *"Riding the Waves of Culture"* as a working source document and one way into facilitating the subject Inter Cultural Competence in our training rooms.

I intend to give an overview of the introduction "the basis of Cultural Differences" and take from each section an example. These examples act as a "springboard" for discussion and amplification in the classroom. Trainers and students can add their own examples and discuss ideas of Inter Cultural Competence and allied spheres such as conflict resolution and team building.

As a methodology here each of the examples could be used after showing the categories of the basis of cultural differences or the process could be reversed: show the examples and discuss back to principles. If the group agrees, the views of individual responses to each example could be plotted to discover if a pattern emerges.

Our starting point is Trompenaars and Hampden – Turner's opening:

"every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems which reveal themselves as dilemmas."

The authors look at these problems under three headings: those which arise from our relationships with other people; those which come from the passage of time and those which relate to the environment.

In their first dimension of culture, relationships with people, they focus on five orientations (Parsons, 1951). We will summarise these with a *"springboard"* for each.

### Universalism versus particularism.

The universalist view is what is good and right can be defined and always applies.

The writers give an example of universalist behaviour with an observation that if you cross the street when the pedestrian light is red, even if there is no traffic, in a rule-based society like Germany or Switzerland, you will be frowned at. The particularist view is that relationships, e.g., friendships, have special obligations and may come ahead of abstract societal codes.

*To discuss*: You are a professional journalist who writes a restaurant review column for a major newspaper. A close friend of yours has invested all her savings in her new restaurant. You have dined there and think the restaurant is not much good. The friend has some right to expect you to "hedge" your review or your friend has no right to expect this at all.

### Individualism versus communitarianism

Do people regard themselves primarily as individuals or primarily as part of a group?

*To discuss*: Two people are debating ways in which individuals could improve the quality of life. Which way of reasoning do you generally think best?

A "It is obvious that if individuals have as much freedom as possible and maximum opportunity to develop themselves - the quality of life will improve as a result."

B "If individuals continuously take care of their fellow human beings the quality of life will improve for all, even if there is some obstruction of individual freedom or development.'

There are clearly connections here to political theory, team working and time management.

### Neutral versus emotional

Should our interactions be objective and detached or is expressing emotion acceptable?

*To discuss:* In a business meeting you feel insulted because your counterpart openly says your proposal is crazy. What is your response?

For higher-level students more detail could be given, for example, adding the market share figures on the Market Share axis and/or causes/effect arrows showing the reason for certain stages of the PLC (high investment ⇨ growth).

## 1 b. PLC description

In this exercise, 3 products are represented in visual PLC form and have to be described. Again, for lower level students the language needs to be kept to its minimum, focusing on: *to be introduced, to experience growth, to enter into the maturity stage, to start to decline, to be withdrawn.*



Product x          Product y          Product z
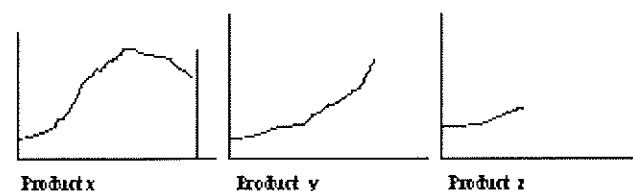
## 1 c. Comparing rival products

In this reinforcing exercise I intentionally want the students to compare similar products by rival companies. This moves them to use language of comparison as well as that of the PLC basics covered so far.
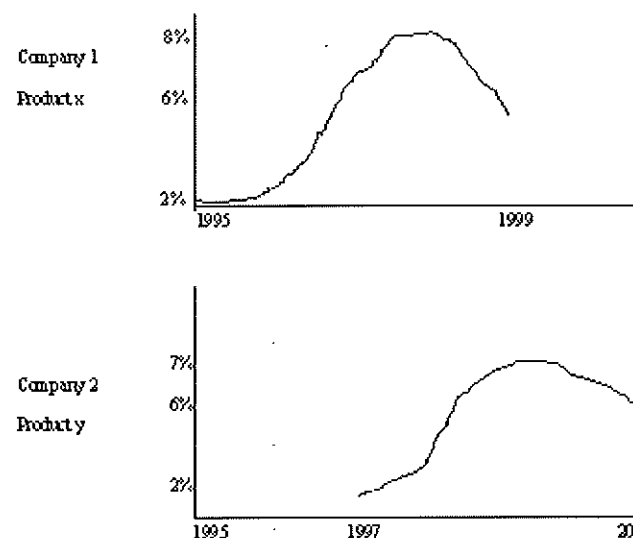


In **stage 2**, after these three small exercises, the students should have some suitable models to talk about their own products, and those of their rivals. To achieve this student-focused purpose, I employ two mini topics for discussion, PLC representation and writing.

## 2 a. Your company's products

Name 2 or 3 products in your own company's product range. Discuss and draw their PLCs. Where are they positioned now? How long do you think this stage will continue? Why?

## 2 b. Your rival's products compared to your product

Now think of a rival company's product to one of your own. Draw its PLC compared to yours. When was it introduced on to the market? And how long will that stage last? Why?

Following these two stages is not a prescription in terms of lesson procedure. It does, however, even for the higher level students ensure that the basic language required for PLC discussion is covered. As seen in the stages I propose, spiralling up can involve the use of more language of cause and effect and comparison and contrast. For all levels some work on tense is also required with the use of simple past, present perfect simple/continuous, past perfect simple/continuous, as well as the present continuous which is of particular importance.

In conclusion, as previously argued, the use of PLCs is not only a convenient means to practice essential areas of language, but also is a means to enable a relatively large amount of language production with simply constructed visuals.

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*John Adamson has worked for 17 years in TEFL in the UK, Germany, Thailand and Japan. He holds degrees in European Business Adminstration in the UK and Germany (Betriebswirt FH), a RSA Dip. TEFLA, a MA in Applied Linguistics & TESOL and a Doctorate of Education in Applied Linguistics. He teaches Business English to pre-experience students and company employees. E-mail: johnadamson253@hotmail.com.*

language corrections would be permanently absorbed by the students once they had done their final presentation. Indeed, he himself was working on a longer-term study which was intended to explore the evidence of long-term gain.

However, despite these minor caveats, Mennim's study is useful both from a methodological and a pedagogical point of view. Pedagogically it suggests a useful technique for getting students to focus on their mistakes and a procedure for helping them to absorb the correct forms. By allowing the students to first correct the mistakes themselves from their own performance it gives them a 'space' to deal with these mistakes. In some ways this is less direct than suddenly being confronted with their errors just after 'performing'. So although they might be faced with a greater quantity of errors compared to when a listening teacher 'filters', these are encountered privately and thus can be adjusted to gradually. This point goes a long way to answering the worry I outlined at the beginning of this article.
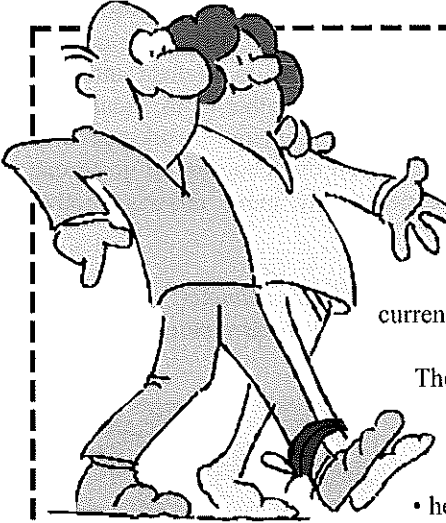
On the basis of Mennim's study I am definitely going to use the technique of recording my one-to-one students and asking them to transcribe at least sections of their oral output. It will be interesting to see whether the results I achieve match his.

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*Michael Sneyd*

*Michael R. Sneyd, who lives near Cambridge, England, is a freelance ELT teacher, teacher trainer, consultant, materials writer and examiner. His special fields of interest are business English, one-to-one teaching and examinations. E-mail: msneyd1@compuserve.com.*

# 16th BESIG conference – Rotterdam 2003

Anneke Kistemaker and Jan Roel van Zuilen

To use an old cliché: By the time you will be reading this… the programme of the Rotterdam Conference will be posted on the BESIG website (www.besig.org) and hopefully lots of you will have already registered or are shortly going to do so. In the meantime we have been very busy putting the programme together to make sure you will have a worthwhile conference to come to.

It sounded easy enough: Just put a flyer together and ask for papers and the speaker proposal forms will come rolling in. In a way they did, but not at the rate predicted. Now over here in Rotterdam we counted on the fact that busy people will leave it rather late before they do submit and that proved to be a correct assumption. Goes to show, we think, that things are the same everywhere in our line of work (lecturing, marking, developing new material and so on).

The next step was to read through all the proposals and list them according to requested time slots (45,50,90 minutes) and send them all on to the BESIG committee for their opinion. In the meantime we started drafting the programme.

We had a lot to pick from: Old hands and new speakers, subjects ranging from materials presentations to the new technology and its use in our classrooms, the intercultural elements - which we definitely wanted to pay attention to - and subjects like "Wordmapping", "blended learning", "business ethics", " technical English", "learner autonomy", successful seminars", to name a few. Speakers include: Paul Emmerson, Maurice and Ann Claypole, Nick Brieger, Jeremy Comfort, Vicky Hollett, Mark Waistell, Adrian Philbeam, James Schofield, Michael Williams, Evan Frendo, Oleg Tarnopolsky, Colin Benn, Charles la Fond and many, many more. For a full list just go to the website mentioned above and see what we have to offer.

The Friday evening will be devoted to the intercultural communication theme that we based our conference on. Speakers come from our own college, The Rotterdam Business School (www.RotterdamBusinessSchool.nl), and will talk from their experience in dealing with different cultures while running a business school. As our college is part of the International cluster of The Hogeschool Rotterdam and trains students from all over the world, we felt it was only appropriate to pick an intercultural theme. Our students will help us host the event, so chances are that our guests will run into young people from their own country who are currently studying in Rotterdam.

This year, we will not ask you to choose a "red or blue stream", the only thing we want to know is which presentation/workshop you prefer so we can make sure the rooms we use will be big enough to cater for all those interested. The programme on the website is of course a provisional one, as we can only definitely guarantee a workshop/presentation on the day itself. Additional presentations will also be posted if or when we get any more offers that we would like to include into our programme. Feel free to contact either of us should you have any questions. Several presentations/workshops will be given more than once, so that choosing to go to one workshop does not necessarily mean missing another interesting one.

*Anneke Kistemaker, Conference coordinator*
*Jan Roel van Zuilen, Programme Coordinator*
*BESIG2003@besig.org*
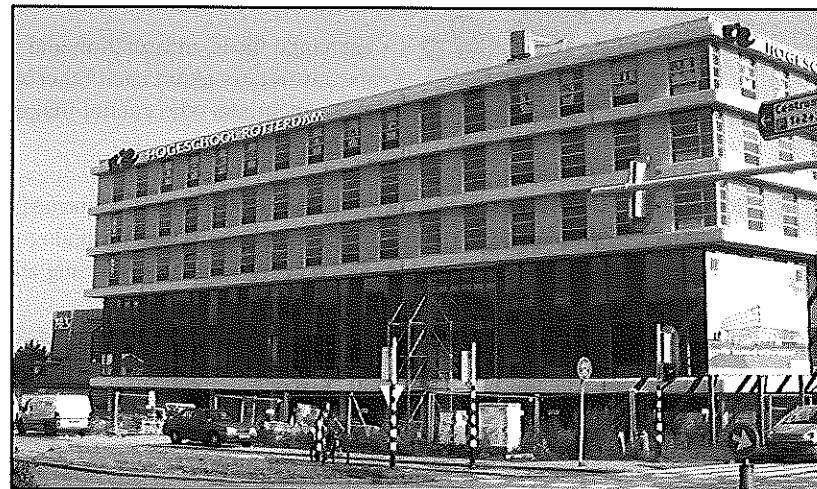


*Rotterdam Business School/Hogeschool Rotterdam*

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# Product Life Cycles: Exploiting Minimalist Visuals for Maximum Production

John Adamson

I would like to give an overview of an area of a Business English teaching I have been developing recently whilst working in the Japanese corporate EFL context. Having taught at various companies in the area over the last year, one requirement often stressed by my students is that of being able to make product presentations which not only give technical descriptions but also look at product histories. What has been mostly lacking in textbooks employed is the ability to provide an effective framework for describing and comparing product histories. For this purpose I have supplemented course books with the following lesson plan focusing on Product Life Cycles (PLCs). I have chosen PLCs as they seem to conveniently possess a minimalist visuality and are able to draw out a surprising amount of language from students of various levels. This strikes, I would argue, parallels with the concept of "frameworking" as outlined in Ellis and Johnson (1992) where simple visual displays can be eventually created by students to produce as much, or as little, language as required, i.e. spiralling up and down seem to be methodologically suitable with students of various levels of communicative competence. In researching the relatively simple content background I have referred to the well-known marketing text by Kotler and Armstrong (2002).

The following represents an abridged version of my recent development of the use of PLCs as a supplement to course materials. I divide the lesson, or supplementary session if not addressed sufficiently in texts, into two stages:

## Stage 1: PLC concept check and application
## Stage 2: Extension into discussion and written production

In **Stage 1** I attempt to elicit the concept of Product Life Cycles (or what I term as SLCs: Service Life Cycles, if the company or department is offering a support service such as After Sales Support or Maintenance). The following representation is drawn for elicitation purposes:
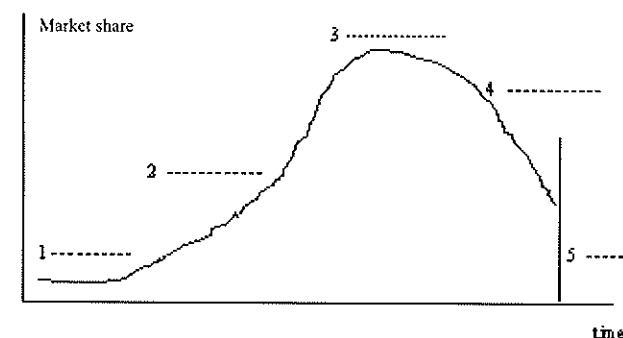
Students are asked to try to identify what stages or phases of the history of a product are represented from 1 to 5 and label the graph accordingly. The vocabulary I seek to elicit is:
1. *Introductory stage*
2. *Growth*
3. *Maturity*
4. *Decline*
5. *Withdrawal*
This can be supplemented by the appropriate verb forms (*to introduce, to grow, to mature, to decline* and *to withdraw*).

This is clearly the essence of the concept of the lesson itself and should be recognizable to most Business English students with some experience. If not, as has occasionally been the case, then I believe that the concept itself can be regarded as the teacher's chance to introduce a useful concept.

After this first introductory elicitation and labelling of the basic visual, I move on to three short reinforcing exercises, as follows:

## 1 a.  Text to written production of a PLC

Here I give a short text which requires the students to skim through to identify which parts can be interpreted in terms of the stages of a PLC. A recent example is: "Product X was introduced on to the market in 1983 and experienced high sales from 1984 to 1986, moving from a market share of 3% to 7%. In 1987, as a result of heaver investment in sales promotion, sales peaked and market share rose to 8% during 1989. This share was maintained throughout the early 90s to 1993, after which there was some steady deterioration of sales. As the market share was gradually eroded down to 2%, the product was withdrawn from the market in 1996."

The PLC in its simplest form for lower level students can be represented as follows:
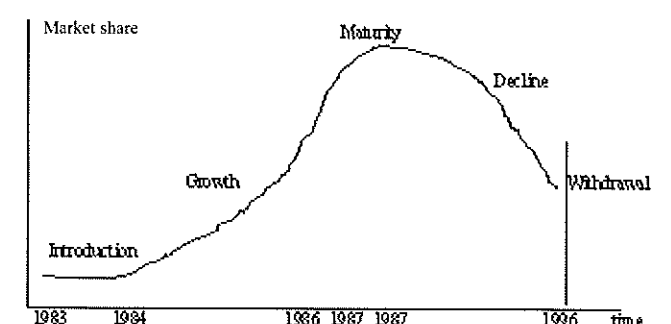
## Vocabulary

The web of course provides a wealth of specialist texts which often contain the exact pieces of language required by ESP learners, such as the collocations they need to give a presentation.

We often ask students to select their own text from the Internet. This they submit to the teacher in advance of the lesson. The teacher and student can work together to highlight the relevant expressions. The teacher's role is to help the student to record the vocabulary in such a way as to retrieve it, perhaps using grids (such as a 1-5 box in *Implementing the Lexical Approach*) or a card-index system – a box containing blank cards for students to store key words and phrases in ways that they can retrieve them. It is not essential to know the exact collocations the learner needs – these can often be discovered by the students themselves. The wealth of texts on the Web has helped ESP teachers immeasurably.

## Listening

Using streaming audio and video on the BBC has enabled us to incorporate current listening material into our courses. There are certainly a number of benefits from using the Web for listening practice, alongside CD-audio and cassettes from publishers, authentic videos, CD-ROMs etc.

The learner can be in charge of the controls, e.g., on the BBC news site, there is a slider below the recording of the news, allowing the learner to move through the clip, pause and repeat certain sections at will. The length of the clip is displayed, and this clock is useful in helping learners locate a specific point in the clip.

According to research findings, one of the "best aid(s) to comprehension is to use normal speaking speed with extra pauses inserted". News clips can be authentic, interesting and challenging. Moreover, learners can access the Web as a source of listening at any time in his / her office, or at home, and introducing them to this service increases the chance that they use it post-course.

Learners can first listen to a news clip and then read the related article. Our learners really appreciate this follow-up activity, and the chance to see the recently-heard lexical items in context.

The World Wide Web has greatly changed the way we teach languages. We now teach, but search engines, digital listening and CD-ROM software provide a raft of tools which enable us to facilitate learning through technology. Perhaps both teaching and learning have never been so enriching.

The practical teaching ideas in this article are taken from The *Internet and Business English* (Summertown 2003) by Barney Barrett and Pete Sharma. Framework worksheets are available to download in ·PDF format on the Summertown web-site: www.summertown.co.uk.

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*Pete Sharma is a business English teacher and teacher trainer based in Stratford-upon-Avon, UK. He reviews software, and is a regular conference presenter at BESIG events. He is the author of CD-ROM: A Teacher's Handbook (1998, Summertown Publishing) and runs training seminars on integrating technology in language teaching. He can be contacted through: www.petesharma.com.*
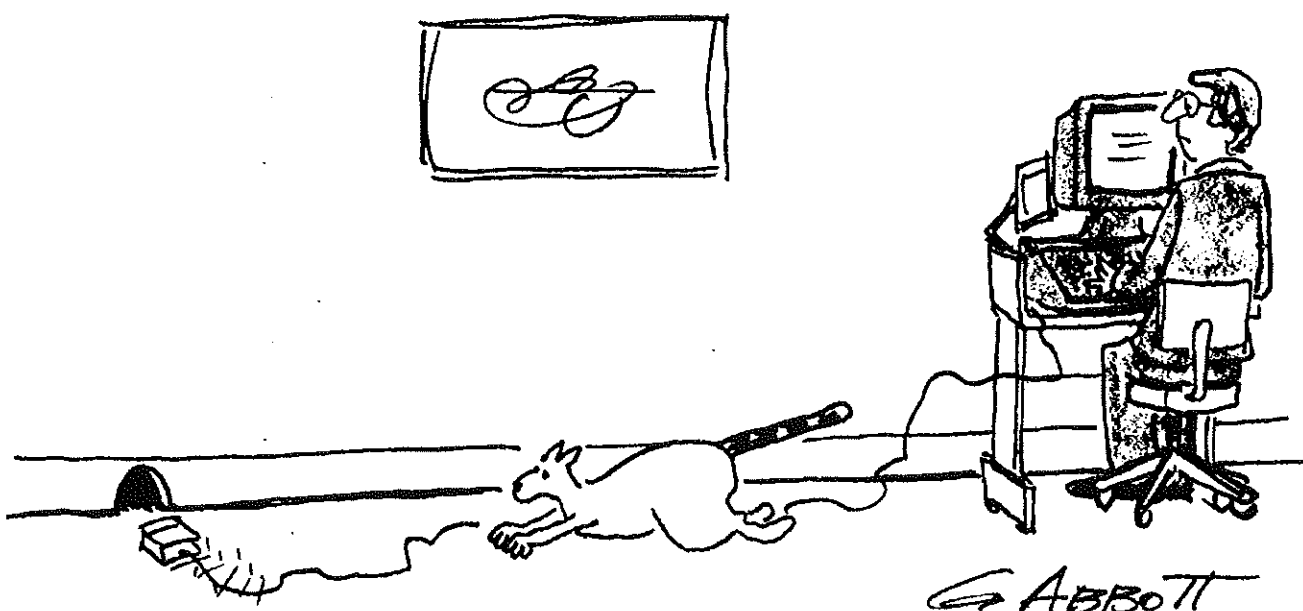


# BESig→  2003

## 16th IATEFL/BESIG International Conference Rotterdam

### Business English Special Interest Group

Hosted by Rotterdam Business School / Hogeschool Rotterdam

## Friday 14 -  Sunday 16 November 2003

Venue: Hogeschool Rotterdam, locatie HES, Kralingse Zoom 91, Rotterdam, The Netherlands



Contact address for all enquiries:
BESIG 2003 Rotterdam
Anneke Kistemaker, Conference Coordinator
Hogeschool Rotterdam, locatie HES
Kralingse Zoom 91
PO box 4030
3006 AA Rotterdam
Tel: +31 10 4400844 (until 1 August 2003)/+31 10 4526663 (from 1 August 2003)
Fax: +31 10 2420183(until 1 August 2003)/+31 10 4527051 (from 1 August 2003)
E-mail: A.M.Kistemaker-Hartog@hro.nl

## UNIT 8 – THE BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHER

This unit deals with the profession of Business English teacher. As well as the inherent fascination of this profession, most students will be able to readily relate to the subject matter. Business English teachers are familiar figures in almost all companies these days, and many of your students will have encountered Business English teachers at first hand. In addition, dealing successfully with Business English teachers is an important skill for many students – this unit will help them to prepare for their next encounter.

**Culture tip**
Becoming a Business English teacher is now the career of choice for many young (and not-so-young) Britons and Americans, whether for reasons of unemployability in their home country, suspect mental health, or inability to get a proper job in a foreign country. Understanding this phenomenon is an important part of your students' awareness of British and American culture.

### 1 Warm-up

This activity introduces the topic of being a Business English teacher. Students work in small groups to rank the reasons for becoming a Business English teacher in order of importance. While there is no one correct answer, statements B (*not knowing what to do after finishing Humanities degree*) and F (*something to do in a foreign country while spouse pursues proper career*) should come near the top of the list. Similarly, statements C (*genuine interest in the world of business*) and E (*desire to help professional people improve their communication skills*) should be ranked "of minimal importance" or "not important".

As an alternative fun warm-up, you could do this variation on "Find someone who". Photocopy the worksheet below and give it to your students. Students mill around and find a person for each of the characteristics.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF A BUSINESS ENGLISH TEACHER

| Find someone who: | NAME OF STUDENT |
|---|---|
| has never worked for a real company | |
| doesn't understand a balance sheet | |
| has an advanced degree in Ethnomusicology | |
| feels he/she doesn't get paid enough | |
| moved to his/her present country of residence because of romance | |
| looks down on his/her colleagues who teach General English | |
| thinks "trainer" sounds cooler than "teacher" | |
| (for men) often wears a tie in an attempt to be taken seriously by business people | |
| believes business people sit around discussing globalisation all day | |

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• As a follow-up, ask students how many of the characteristics they possess. Give a small prize to the person with the most characteristics – they are ideal candidates for teaching Business English.

### "LET ME WRITE IT ON YOUR PROGRAMME – I DON'T HAVE ANY CARDS LEFT":
### at a Business English conference

To really understand the world of Business English teaching, students need to be familiar with the idiosyncrasies of the Business English conference. This activity will furnish them with useful insights into the Business English teacher mentality, while giving them an opportunity to improve their own networking skills.

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# Integrating the World Wide Web into Language Courses

Pete Sharma

This article looks at some ways in which we have used the World Wide Web to help our students study grammar and vocabulary, and improve their listening skills. It argues that when used as part of an integrated approach involving both face-to-face teaching and learners using the web, technology can be used in exciting ways which can enhance language learning.

In the Executive Language school where I work, we can take our students into our self access centre at any time during a lesson, and let them access the Internet on individual computers using a fast (ADSL) connection. We therefore teach, and integrate technology into courses as and when appropriate.

## What is on the Web?

One of my favourite answers to this question is: "What isn't!" Of importance to Business English teachers are of course company sites and annual reports. These often contain product descriptions, pictures, graphs and diagrams. There is a wealth of financial data on the Web, as well as specialist dictionaries and of course, much much more. The interactive nature of such material is what makes the Web an exciting environment. Material can be authentic, current, relevant and motivating.

## Grammar

In all our courses, we review grammar usually through the use of language tasks and framework materials. David Eastment et al (*The Internet*, OUP) suggest using the power of search engines for enriching grammar practice. In a "Grammar search" activity, learners use this search facility on the Web in order to explore meanings of a grammatical item in context, such as the use of modal verbs.

First, the teacher brainstorms uses of the target structure, capitalising on any disagreement. Any such ambiguity about usage can be used to create questions, to be answered by the activity. At the computer, the learners use www.google.com to search for phrases, such as: "*Euro will rise*"; "*Euro might rise*"; "*Euro may rise*" etc. They analyse the results to determine the context in which the chosen modal verbs have been used.

The learners report back to the group and decide whether the differences of opinion which emerged before the search have been resolved. This exercise can be performed using any area of language in which 'real-world' examples can help to clarify apparent inconsistency in usage.

The nature of electronic text means teachers can clip a piece from the web and customise it. Teachers can select a short paragraph from a suitable site on the Web, then cut and paste the article into a *Word* document. They then delete the articles (*a / an / the*) and ask learners to reconstruct the text. Students work together to decide where and whether to insert them. Finally, the learners read their text aloud and justify the inclusion of any article.

Clearly there will be situations which are not clear cut, but then this activity, similarly, is excellent for awareness-raising.

Much web-based grammar material views grammar as "product". This can sometimes be disappointing for teachers, who may espouse more communicative approaches. The activities above, however, focus on grammar as process, and accord with Scott Thornbury's central argument in his superb "*Uncovering Grammar*".

aimed at UK businessmen, provides an introduction to this area, and this would be an excellent addition to any BE teachers' bookshelf. To give a flavour of how academics have typically analyzed national culture, here are Mattock's 18 'polarities' that can be used to model a national culture:

**Perception and Cognition**
Decisive vs. Submissive
Theoretical vs. Pragmatic
Universal vs. Circumstantial
Loose time vs. Tight time
Multiple event vs. Single event
Quick results vs. Big picture
**Self and Society**
Outgoing/Informal vs. Private/Reserved
Personal fulfilment vs. Loyalty to the tribe
Prescriptive vs. Flexible
Doing and measuring vs. Being and feeling
Relationship vs. Task
Cooperation/Consensus vs. Competition/Conflict
**Decisions and Communication**
Suggestion vs. Statement
Contextual vs. Direct
Emotional vs. Contained
Avoiding risk vs. Embracing risk
Hierarchical vs. Democratic
Merit vs. Standing

When we build these considerations of national culture into communicative competence we get back to cross-cultural pragmatics. Clyne reviews research that shows, for example, how in the same company the French make requests using the future, imperatives and *il faut*, whereas Anglo-Australians use conventionalized phrases like *Would you mind ...?* or softeners. One consequence is that the French strategies convey to Anglo-Australian ears the impression of authoritarianism, impatience and assertiveness. There may be underlying cultural values at work here: the French believe that all people have strong egos while the Australians believe that all people are vulnerable.

## Breakdown in intercultural communication

How important are pragmatic issues in intercultural miscommunication? Scollon and Scollon are in no doubt:

> In over twenty years of research on intercultural intra-organizational communication in North America as well as in Taiwan and in Korea, we have seen that most miscommunication does not arise through mispronunciations or through poor uses of grammar, as important as those aspects of language learning are. The major sources of miscommunication in intercultural contexts lie in differences in patterns of discourse.

And Clyne agrees:

> Inter-cultural communication breakdown in our corpus ... is generally due to pragmatic and discourse issues, and not to matters of morphosyntax, phonology or the lexicon.

Before throwing away our coursebooks, we ought to remember that successful communication presumably involves morphosyntax, phonology and the lexicon.

When communication does break down, interlocutors have to deal with it. Scollon and Scollon write:

> Successful conversational discourse requires that the participants not only maintain cohesion or relevance, but that where there are breaks in the cohesion they go back and repair them. Cohesion in discourse is not only a convenience or even a simple communicative necessity, it is also a social and interpersonal obligation.

Intercultural communication breakdown can be prevented or repaired by using strategies such as making comments about the intention of the interaction; repetition; reformulation; comprehension checks; use of pauses; and strategies that make new topics salient. These are all pragmatic strategies, and would fall under Canale and Swain's 'strategic competence'.

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*Paul Emmerson works as a writer, teacher and teacher trainer. He is the author of Business Builder and Business Grammar Builder (Macmillan) and Business English Frameworks (CUP). He teaches at the International House Executive Centre, London. He has also worked as a teacher trainer in the UK, Germany, Poland, Hungary and Malta. He is a regular conference presenter on all aspects of Business English methodology. E-mail: paulemmerson@lineone.net.*

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Introduce the topic by asking students if they have ever been to a conference, and what their experiences were. Have they ever chosen to attend a conference in Switzerland over a weekend at their own expense? Have they ever met a Business English teacher infiltrating a real conference?

### Background information
- Unlike other professional conferences where delegates assemble to exchange knowledge and keep up to date with the latest developments in their field, **Business English conferences** are all to do with getting free books and drinking with friends who normally live in different countries.
- **Michael Lewis** is regarded as a demi-god within the field of Business English. He is generally conspicuous by his absence at Business English conferences.

## 2   Listening
Explain to students they are going to listen to a dialogue between two Business English trainers at a conference. On the first listening, students should decide if the statements on page 56 are true or false.

- You may wish to point out that the grammatical mistakes John makes in his speech are a result of his having lived abroad for 20 years. Stuart's slurring is alcohol-induced.

### Answers
1   True. Stuart says he hasn't been to any sessions yet.
2   False. **Both** participants have blinding hangovers.
3   True. Stuart says he has been talking to publishers all morning.
4   False. **None** of the publishers are interested in Stuart's book proposal.
5   False. The pub they arrange to go to is in King Street.

Students now listen to the audio script again and fill in the missing phrases in the dialogue.

### Answers
a   I feel like death warmed up.
b   He was better last year, wasn't he?
c   What's Michael Lewis doing these days anyway?
d   There's nothing new this year.
e   I'm just going to get the free book.
f   Fancy a pint?

- Encourage your students to write down these key sentences in their vocabulary notebooks. You may also want to draw students' attention to other useful phrases and collocations in the dialogue, such as sore head, boring presentation, go for a drink etc.

Grammar focus
This dialogue presents an opportunity to focus on the present perfect and present perfect continuous tenses. Draw students' attention to how the tenses are used in the dialogue in the following sentences: I've given away all my business cards already. I haven't been to any sessions yet. I've picked up five free books already. I've been trying to talk to publishers since 9 a.m.. (You may wish to contrast these tenses with the past simple tense, featured in the dialogue in sentences such as I drank 10 pints last night. I didn't get to bed until 4 a.m.)

## 3   Grammar practice
Students complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb given. All the sentences are authentic Business English teacher utterances. (Note that sentence number 5 uses the passive.)

### Answers
1   **I've been living** in this damn country for God knows how long.
2   **I've taught** this lesson a hundred times already.
3   My wife **has been supporting** me financially for the last three years.
4   **I've never paid tax** on my earnings.
5   My book proposal **has been rejected** by eight different publishers.

## 4 Conference role-play

This activity is intended to give students the chance to practise the language presented in the listening text. Photocopy the role cards below onto thick card, cut up, and give one to each student. Students mingle and make conversation, as at a real conference. To add authenticity, you may wish to supply students with glasses of warm white wine and stale snacks. Give delayed feedback.

### CONFERENCE ROLE-PLAY ROLE CARDS

| Giles Smug | Maria Voluptuous | Felicity Eager |
|---|---|---|
| You are a successful and well-known Business English coursebook author. Accordingly, everyone else at the conference wants to speak to you. However the only person you wish to talk to is Maria Voluptuous, due to your fetish for young exotic women. Try to corner Maria for an intimate conversation, while fending off other delegates by speaking about your latest book project in excruciating detail. | You are a professor at a Brazilian university, which has paid for you to attend the conference in order for you to publicise the important research you have been doing on business communication. You are desperate to speak to native speakers in order to practise your English. Unfortunately the native speakers all seem to know each other already and only want to chat among themselves. Try to break into their circle. | You are a newcomer to the Business English profession, attending your first conference. You are terribly excited about seeing delegates whose names you know from the covers of your Business English coursebooks. You are keen to meet Giles Smug, whose book *Market Saturation* you have been using with your first in-company class. Try to get Giles' autograph. |
| **Vince Sketchy** | **Heather Wishful** | **Martin Desperate** |
| You run a small language school (or "professional communication consultancy", as you prefer to call it) in Germany. Try to convince as many delegates as possible of your own importance by talking about your fantastic (albeit fictitious) client list and the incredible projects you have "in the pipeline". Be deliberately vague about details in the unlikely event that anyone should ask. | You have written an epic poem based on Homer's *Odyssey* which aims to entertain students while teaching them the fundamentals of the English tense system. The conference is your chance to get your self-published poem and accompanying workbook known. Try to sell your books (you have several copies in your rucksack) to anyone who will listen to you for more than ten seconds. | You are a middle-aged alcoholic trapped in a loveless marriage. The conference is your only chance in the year to escape from the misery of your existence teaching English to prison inmates in Moldova. Try to seduce one of the women at the conference (it doesn't matter which one) while drinking as much free wine as possible. Remember this is your only chance to have sex for the next year. |

## "OF COURSE WE'LL PUT YOUR NAME ON THE COVER": the world of Business English publishing

The unit concludes with a look at the world of Business English publishing.

### Background information

All Business English teachers want to become coursebook authors to escape from the tedium of actual teaching.

## 5 Brainstorming

This activity introduces the theme of Business English publishing with a fun brainstorming activity. Divide the class into teams. Students have two minutes to come up with as many titles for Business English coursebooks as they can. Each title must incorporate at least one of the following words: business market company. At the end of the two minutes, teams read out their titles. Give points for each grammatically correct suggestion.

• You may wish to award extra points for punning titles, or titles which have connotations of success and power.

(e.g., Jewish, Black American), or in cultures that value saying little to avoid causing conflict (e.g., Vietnamese, Japanese). Equally, the 'quality' (truthfulness) maxim might lose out in South-East Asian cultures if it comes into conflict with values like harmony or respect. On the basis of such criticisms and his own research Clyne then 'revisits' Grice. He proposes a more culturally sensitive, revised set of maxims. So, for example, the 'quality' maxim becomes "Try to make your contribution one for which you can take responsibility within your own cultural norms", and 'manner' includes the maxim "Avoid ambiguity unless it is in the interests of politeness or of maintaining a dignity-driven cultural core value, such as harmony, charity or respect."

Two of the best recent examples of cross-cultural pragmatics are monographs that look at the use of English as a lingua franca in the workplace (making them of especial interest to BE). One is by Clyne himself, who looks at communication in the Australian workplace between people from European and Asian backgrounds, and the other is by Scollon and Scollon (2001) who look at intercultural professional communication between westerners and East Asians, especially Chinese. These two books are essential reading for anyone interested in the theoretical background to intercultural communication.

## Politeness

Many linguists have extended Grice's framework to include a politeness principle. Lakoff formulated three maxims for politeness: don't impose, give options and make the receiver feel good. Leech suggested the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, modesty, agreement and sympathy. Under 'tact', Leech developed the notion of solidarity and social distance (the more solid the relationship or the less the social distance, the less the need for politeness). Brown and Levinson developed the idea of politeness by drawing on the notion of 'face' (the positive image or impression of oneself that one shows to other participants in communication) first put forward by the sociologist Goffman. 'Face' includes both the want not to be imposed on and the want to be approved, and speakers employ a range of politeness strategies to avoid or minimize face-threatening situations.

Clyne reviews criticism that these models are anglocentric, for example Japanese researchers have indicated that in their culture language is predetermined by the person's place in society, and honorific systems do not permit interactional choice.

In BE materials, language work in the area of 'politeness' is sometimes labeled as 'indirect language'. Indirectness is the more general term, and most authors agree that indirectness is a universal phenomenon. It occurs when there is a mismatch between the expressed meaning and the implied meaning. Politeness is one particular functional expression of indirect language use. We can define politeness as "an utterance level reluctance to be critical, suggestive or over-explicit".

## Communicative competence

The term 'communicative competence' refers to the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom. The key ideas here were developed by Canale and Swain, and their framework has been much used in the literature. They identify four components to communicative competence:

• Grammatical competence (as it sounds, but with a particular emphasis on cohesion)
• Sociolinguistic competence (knowing how to use language appropriately according to social conventions, the relationship with the other person, the level of directness appropriate to a particular occasion etc.)
• Discourse competence (understanding text types/genres in their widest sense, so not only knowing how to write and structure a report as compared to an email, but also knowing how to use and respond to speech acts such as requests or apologies, knowing how to begin and end a conversation etc.)
• Strategic competence (the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to improve its effectiveness)

Scollon and Scollon point out that much work on communicative competence lacks an intercultural dimension. It can account for the success or otherwise of communication between individuals and even across different discourse systems such as professional, generational, gender or region, but it lacks a way of accounting for intercultural (mis)communication, and for this we need to add the element of national culture.
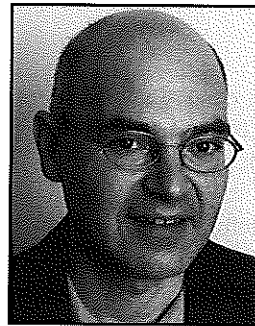
So what is national culture? This is a vast literature. For Scollon and Scollon culture comprises: ideology, socialization, forms of discourse and face systems. Clyne takes a different, values-based approach to national culture, and uses the sociologist Hofstede's well-known study of 116,000 employees in a large multinational corporation in forty countries. Hofstede identified four dimensions to characterize a national culture: power distance, individualism (vs. collectivism), masculinity (vs. femininity) and uncertainty avoidance. Closely related to the idea of cultural values is the idea of cross-cultural intellectual styles, and Clyne reviews Galtung's identification of Saxonic, Gallic, Teutonic and Nipponic styles of thinking.

From outside the field of sociolinguistics many books analyzing cultural differences have been published. They come from two fields, the new academic field of 'International and Intercultural Communication', for which Gudykunst and Mody's (2002) title provides a collection of key texts, and books aimed at native speaker business people who need cultural sensitizing while away on trips. Mattock (1999), in a 'management pocketbook'

# Sociolinguistics and Business English Part 1

### Paul Emmerson

This is the first part of a two-part article, with the second to follow in the next Business Issues. It is based on an assignment I recently wrote as part of an MA in Applied Linguistics. This first part is an introduction to the field and quite academic, but the second will relate the ideas directly to Business English (BE). The references at the end are not comprehensive, but instead have been carefully selected to provide a few pointers for anyone wishing to take the subject further.

The impact of sociolinguistics on BE is already strongly felt and its influence is likely to grow. This is clear from a report on a BESIG conference in Barcelona in a *Business Issues* from last year:

> The main message to come across from all three plenary speakers was the aspect of how language is really being used in business and how we should critically inspect whether our teaching reflects these realities. These speakers made it quite apparent that *the sociolinguistic element of language is gaining more influence in business English* as a result of the intercultural effects of using language in a globalised economy. (Mallon-Gerland 2002 emphasis my own)

So what do academics actually mean by the term 'sociolinguistics'? The field is very broad, but typically includes:
* Language variation, language change and language death
* Language and speech communities, including dialects, varieties, pidgins and creoles
* Critical approaches, looking at language and inequality, language and power
* Cross-cultural pragmatics, including politeness and communicative competence
* Language and culture, including ethnography (the personal observation and description of naturally occurring language in particular groups in society) and exploration of the 'Sapir-Whorf hypothesis' (named after two anthropological linguists who believed that our view of the world is determined by the structure of our language)
* World Englishes

Every area has potential relevance for ELT, but in this article (and I think for BE generally), the most interesting areas are cross-cultural pragmatics, including both politeness and communicative competence, and World Englishes (which I will leave entirely until Part 2).

## Pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics

Pragmatics is defined in the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching* as: "the study of the use of language in communication, particularly the relationships between sentences and the contexts and situations in which they are used". This makes it similar to discourse analysis. However, there is a difference, which Cutting (2002) clarifies:

> "Where discourse analysis differs from pragmatics is in its emphasis on the structure of text. Discourse analysis studies how large chunks of language beyond the sentence level are organized, how the social transaction imposes a framework on discourse. ... Pragmatics takes a social-cultural perspective on language use ... It describes the unwritten maxims of conversation that speakers follow in order to cooperate and be socially acceptable to each other."

And how does pragmatics relate to sociolinguistics? The two fields have a lot of overlap, but sociolinguistics is more static, telling us what linguistic resources a particular speech community has at a particular moment in time, while pragmatics is more dynamic, describing how a speaker from that community negotiates and interprets meaning in context in real time using background knowledge.

Why do academics distinguish 'cross-cultural pragmatics' as an area within pragmatics? The answer is that nearly all the early work on pragmatics was done by Anglo-American academics on anglo-saxon culture. Principal amongst these was the philosopher Grice, who tried to account for the high degree of implicitness in conversation and the relation between intended meaning and the 'illocutionary force' of the utterance (the actual effect that is has on the listener). He put forward a Cooperative Principle whereby discourse is governed by four maxims – unwritten rules about conversation which people know and which influence the form of the exchange. These were: quantity (give as much information as is needed), quality (speak truthfully), relation (say things that are relevant) and manner (say things clearly and briefly).

Grice's maxims were criticized as being middle-class and anglocentric. Clyne (1994) reviews this literature and notes how, for example, the notion of quantity might be different in cultures that value contrariness or saying a lot

## 6 Meeting simulation

This activity gives students the opportunity to practise taking part in a meeting, while also experiencing the world of Business English publishing from the inside. Tell the students they work for a major publishing company. They are meeting to choose the author for a forthcoming Business English coursebook. There are four candidates from which to choose.

1. Students prepare for the meeting by reading the descriptions of the different potential authors (reproduced below for convenience).
2. Students work in small groups to hold the meeting. They should debate the relative merits of each candidate and try to come to a decision.

* Encourage the students to use the meeting phrases in the box on page 58.

### Background information
Due to a secret agreement established between the major publishers, all Business English coursebook authors must be named David.

## CANDIDATE DESCRIPTIONS

**David Marx** *suffers from persistent feelings of guilt, believing he has sold out on the far-left political principles he cherished as an undergraduate by becoming embroiled in the sordid world of business. Accordingly he will try to incorporate anti-globalisation texts and debates on business ethics into the coursebook at every opportunity, in spite of the fact no-one in the world of business actually cares about these things. This will cost the coursebook editor many hours of extra work as she tries to weed out the anti-capitalist rhetoric.*

**David Samey** *has been writing the same coursebook over and over again for the last twenty years. Although he is well-known, sales have been slowly decreasing as teachers realise there is no need to buy a new version of the same book. In addition, he will insist on following a grammar syllabus focussing on the English tense system, despite the fact no-one in business gives a hoot which tense they use.*

**David Clueless** *has never set foot in a company. His entire knowledge of the world of business is gleaned from American films (quotations from which he will include in the text at every opportunity, in an effort to make the book more "sexy"). His glaring factual inaccuracies will cause the coursebook to lose credibility when people who actually work in companies realise he doesn't know what he is talking about.*

**David Keen** *is a new, unproven author. Although he will undoubtedly be cheap compared to the other candidates (he will do anything to get his name in print), he will want to include radical new methodologies in the book and completely exclude any grammar activities. This will alienate the 99 per cent of teachers who instinctively distrust anything new. His naïve earnestness and habit of saying "lexical chunk" every two minutes will also quickly become irritating during project meetings.*

- Ask each group to report back on what they decided. Give delayed feedback on language points which arose during the simulation. As a possible follow-up activity, you could get students to write an email to the successful candidate informing him of their decision and proposing a fee for the project. (To make the fee realistic, tell students to think of a number and then halve it.)

**If you're short of time**
Skip this unit.



**"I MARRIED A MATH TEACHER. ALL HE WANTS TO DO IS MULTIPLY."**

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# Letter from the Co-ordinator

As I write this letter in mid June, memories of the IATEFL conference in Brighton are already beginning to fade.

But some things will remain for a while.

Like the bizarre hotel I stayed in. The problem wasn't the discos opposite. Or the police sirens at 2am when the disco was beginning to empty itself. Nor was it leaking pipes in the bathroom. The problem had to do with remote control batteries and sink plugs. Let me explain.

On the first night I noticed that my remote control needed new batteries. So I reported this to reception the next morning. When I got back to my room I found that the old batteries had been removed. As requested. But there were no new batteries. I also noticed that the plug from my sink had been removed.

I reported this to reception the next morning. That evening I found that the batteries in my remote control had been replaced. With duds. But there was a plug in my sink.

I duly reported this to the receptionist the next morning, who duly wrote it all down. That evening I found I had a set of new batteries. But the remote control was missing. As was my plug.

The next morning the receptionist greeted me like a long lost friend. I found I was unable to show the same enthusiasm as I explained my latest problem. That evening (my last in the hotel) I was pleased to find a new remote control complete with new batteries, and a plug. But someone had removed the input cable from the TV.

I put it down to cultural differences ...

But of course the conference itself was excellent. Great networking, a fantastic range of plenaries, workshops and presentations, all the latest from the publishers, (including an internet cafe), and several social events, including receptions offering free booze and lots of give-aways. Traditionally the IATEFL conference does not seem to attract that many business English teachers, (there were about 50 at our open forum), but I'm not really sure why. After all, business English teachers are all in the game of teaching people to speak English, and that is what everyone at the conference does too. Most of the main issues relevant to BESIG members were represented, including recent research, testing, evaluation, assessment, management, ESP, intercultural training, teacher training and teacher development. If you can't get to the BESIG conference in November, maybe you should consider the next IATEFL conference - I can assure you it's well worth it.

But beware of the hotels!

Best wishes

*Evan*

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# Change of copy dates for articles and advertisements

*Business Issues* is published three times a year - in mid-February, mid-June and mid-September. The copy dates for articles and advertisements are now: 10 December (for mid-February issue), 10 April (for mid-June issue) and 10 June (for mid-September issue). Please send all items to the newsletter editor, Oleg Tarnopolsky (see opposite).

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## CONTRIBUTING TO BUSINESS ISSUES

*Business Issues*, the publication of BESIG - the Business English Special Interest Group of IATEFL - the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language - is published three times a year, in spring, summer and winter.

**Copy dates for articles and advertisements are 10 December (for mid-February issue), 10 April (for mid-June issue) and 10 June (for mid-September issue).**

Although every effort will be made to include articles accepted for publication in the next issue, BESIG reserves the right to postpone publication if necessary. BESIG also reserves the right to refuse any article.

Copy should be sent on a 3.5 inch IBM or MAC compatible disc and accompanied by a proof read, marked-up hard copy. The preferred format is Word in 12pt Times New Roman. Photographs and graphics should be saved separately as .jpg files (not embedded in Word documents).

Please e-mail your article and attachments, or send discs and hard copy, to the Newsletter Editor, as above.

When you write an article for Business Issues, please enclose your name, address and, if possible, a b/w passport-sized photo, and some biographical details - maximum 100 words - so we can tell our readers who you are - they are interested.

Advertising is also very welcome. Please contact the Newsletter Editor for details of requirements.

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# Editorial

Sociolingustics and its impact on Business English, using the Internet in a Business English classroom, teaching how to present products in English, cultural aspects of Business English, teaching reading for business purposes – all this and more in *Business Issues* which you are holding in your hands.

The opening article **Sociolinguistics and Business English Part 1** is written by Paul Emmerson. This is quite an academic paper introducing the reader to the field of sociolinguistics in relation to Business English. Part 2 of the article is to follow soon. There the implications of sociolinguistic theory for practical teaching of Business English will be looked at more closely.

The next article **Integrating the World Wide Web into Language Courses** is by Pete Sharma. Pete, our regular author, discusses the issue which is very important for a lot of Business English teachers: how to use the Internet resources in teaching practice to enhance learning. Pete and Barney Barrett were so good as to supply the regular **Internet/CD-ROM Page** to this issue too.

John Adamson in his article **Product Life Cycles: Exploiting Minimalist Visuals for Maximum Production** discusses one of the 'eternal questions' facing the teachers of Business English – how to train our students for giving presentations in English. But he discusses quite a specific area: making product presentations which not only give technical descriptions but also look at product histories. I believe John's insightful article will benefit a lot of practical teachers.

In **Surfing the Waves of Culture** John F King analyses one of the key issues in teaching Business English. His subject is developing students' intercultural competence when training them for doing business in English.

**Reading-Focused Instruction Programme For University Students of Business English in Ukraine** is an article by Yulia Degtyariova. She discusses an original integrated-skills instruction programme elaborated by her. The focus of the programme is developing students' skills in reading for business purposes.

I have already mentioned that our regular feature **The Internet/CD-ROM Page** by Pete Sharma and Barney Barrett is there as always. So is the **Research Review** by Michael R. Sneyd who gives us the latest in research related to Business English. And who can imagine Business Issues without **The Column** by David Smith? Don't worry, he has written it for us again.

And don't miss a short article **16th BESIG conference – Rotterdam 2003** by Anneke Kistemaker and Jan Roel van Zuilen. It gives you the latest on our forthcoming conference and after reading it, you are sure to wish to be there as soon as possible.

You have got quite a lot of exciting reading under this cover. Enjoy it!

*Oleg Tarnopolsky*

# CONTENTS