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Business Language Studies in the United States: On Nomenclature, Context, Theory, and Method

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Although it has existed for many decades in the national curriculum of U.S. higher education, the study of languages for business purposes has lacked a more serviceable and academically communal name—a more rigorous toponymic identity—by which to identify itself as a theory-based field of scholarship. The intention here is to propose for consideration a name modification for an existing field and provide some reflections regarding its evolution, theory, and method. In keeping with the rise of interdisciplines in other "studies" programs, business language's empirically definable domain of inquiry, pedagogy, and curriculum development should more appropriately be known as Business Language Studies (BLS). Further consideration of intrinsic theory is strongly encouraged to complement the extensive work already done in extrinsic and applied BLS, given that the development of methods and methodology has far outstripped theoretical considerations per se, the latter of which are now warranted to anchor the field more adequately in U.S. higher education. It is time for greater attention to be focused on the articulation of a broader, more systematic, theory-based BLS research agenda that breaks new ground and provides additional insights into the decisive roles of language and culture in a highly competitive global economy.

BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES (BLS) HAS long been evolving as an empirically definable domain of inquiry, pedagogy, and curriculum development, particularly since 1946 when business language courses became part of the tripartite, integrated curriculum—"business, language, and regional/cultural studies" (Branan, 1998, p. 3)—at the American Institute of Foreign Trade.[1] Although it has existed for many decades in the national curriculum of U.S. higher education (Doyle, 1987, 1992; Grosse, 1982, 1985; Grosse & Voght, 1990, 1991; Schorr, 2000), the study of languages for business purposes has lacked a more serviceable and academically communal name—a more rigorous toponymic identity—by which to identify itself as a theory-based field of scholarship. The intention here is to propose for consideration a name modification for an existing field and provide some reflections regarding the evolution, theory, and method in BLS.

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BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES NOMENCLATURE

Formal nomenclature for a field of study often follows, rather than precedes, substantial shared activity and evolution—the incipient formation of a "disciplinary utopia" (Holmes, 2000, p. 172)—in that particular field. Holmes defined this utopia as "a new sense of a shared interest in a common set of problems, approaches, and objectives on the part of a new grouping of researchers" (p. 172). The present article references Holmes's "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies" because it provides a recent and clear example of a theory-based nomenclature proposition for a field of interdisciplinary studies that has much

in common with major BLS considerations, such as language (discourse domains, genres, *skopos* [Vermeer's term for "aim" or "purpose," 2000, p. 221], localization, etc.) and culture (the siting and circumstance of language usage). Aside from serving to identify and territorialize, the formalization of new needed space via nomenclature is clearly a political gesture: It encapsulates and stimulates further articulation and validation of the intellectual foundations—theory, method, and methodology—upon which a discipline or subdiscipline builds itself through a pragmatic and constructivist (shared and learner-centered) epistemology. It also identifies a scholarly forum in which to explore further and refine underlying intellectual assumptions (meta-reflection) as well as principles (derived from fundamental, basic, pure, or intrinsic research) that inform and upon which pedagogy and praxis (applied or extrinsic research) may subsequently be based.

Over the past half-century, the word "studies" has increasingly been used to identify interdisciplinary humanities and social science fields such as Communication Studies, International Studies, Ethnic Studies, Gender Studies, Cultural Studies, and Translation Studies. As the global economy continues to accelerate and require increasingly effective communication, it seems warranted to follow suit and submit "Business Language Studies (BLS)" for consideration as the name for "the dominant subfield within LSP [language for specific purposes]" (Grosse & Voght, 1990, p. 45) in the foreign language curriculum of the United States. International trade and global consumption of goods and services, characterized by their need for around-the-clock communications in and across many different languages and cultures, will continue to "flatten" the world (Friedman, 2005, p. 7). BLS, based on a tripartite model of business + language + culture—which is reflective of the fact that business is always done by people who use language(s) in special ways in particular settings—constitutes a core component of this reality.

RECENT BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES CONTEXT AND EVOLUTION

In 1998, the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) sponsored the publication of *Spanish and Portuguese for Business and the Professions*, a paradigmatic volume that "provides the background necessary for the development of a course, a sequence of courses, or a complete program in Spanish and Portuguese for the professions" (Fryer & Guntermann, 1998, pp. xii–xiii). Part I, the major portion of the book, contains 17 chapters on business and international trade.[2] In his "Preface: Part I," Branan (1998), a professor of French, heralded the book as "the latest milestone in the evolution of a field" and stated that its publication "marks the end of the first cycle of the 'business foreign language movement'" (p. 3), which "consisted of curricular integration at both the baccalaureate and post-baccalaureate levels in academia and recognition and funding by the federal government" (p. 4). Furthermore,

> with the present volume, the AATSP, the largest of the AATs, joined the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) (Cothran, 1994; Keck, 1990) and the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) (Cummins, 1995; Loughrin-Sacco & Abrate, 1998) in providing a business language handbook for all its constituents, thus concluding the last major phase of this first cycle.[3] (p. 4)

Branan further indicated that the book "also marks the beginning of the second cycle," for which he set three goals:

> First, every business and every foreign language program at the post-secondary level in the United States will collaborate *as equal partners* to offer a degree track that integrates both disciplines. Second, K–12 foreign language programs will be fully articulated into this continuum. And third, the movement will spread, as it has already begun to do, to all the professions: medical and health care, social work, law, science, and technology. (p. 5, emphasis in original)

Branan's third goal of this second cycle was foreshadowed in the more abbreviated Part II of *Spanish and Portuguese for Business and the Professions* (Fryer & Guntermann, 1998), titled "Emerging Areas in Spanish and Portuguese for Special Purposes,"[4] and has since experienced considerable development in the United States, particularly in Spanish.

The publication of *Spanish and Portuguese for Business and the Professions* (Fryer & Guntermann, 1998), part of the shared curriculum development continuum indicated previously (AATG, AATF, and AATSP), represents a paradigmatic contribution to our consideration in the United States of major, non-English world languages in terms of their evolution and status as content-, language-, and culture-restricted domains within LSP. However, the rapidly emerging field of BLS is never named per se. Rather, as in the case of translation studies before it became known and widely accepted as "Translation Studies," the discipline is referred to by its subject matter (Holmes, 2000) and somewhat vaguely as a "field" or "movement" (Branan, 1998, p. 4), variously referenced by other

scholars as "Business Foreign Language" (Schorr, 2000, p. 3), "applied language studies" (Grosse & Voght, 1991, p. 183), or "language for business" (Grosse & Voght, 1990, p. 45).

Although representative aspects of method and methodology in business language are treated via the particular case study of business Spanish in this informative volume (Fryer & Guntermann, 1998), "the *compleat* curriculum guide for the field" (Branan, 1998, p. 4, emphasis in original), noticeably absent is a clearly stated theoretical proposition that, in retrospect, would have constituted an opportune prolegomenon or opening chapter. Nonetheless, over the past 3 decades, the field has experienced extensive development of a variety of effective pedagogical methods, materials, courses, and curricula for non-English business language, based on an implicit theoretical foundation that has lacked explicit articulation and evolution.[5] Such a model—"a schematic description of a system, theory, or phenomenon that accounts for its known or inferred properties and may be used for further study of its characteristics" (*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*)—would help establish for the evolving BLS interdiscipline the intellectual space that it still needs to occupy and develop as a more fully legitimized field of inquiry in U.S. higher education, complementing its now well-established presence in the national curriculum and pedagogy at "all sizes and types of four-year institutions . . . at private and public institutions . . . fairly evenly distributed among small, medium and large institutions" (Grosse & Voght, 1990, p. 38).

The absence of a disciplinary nomenclature and an accompanying theoretical discourse has also made it unnecessarily difficult for business language specialists within foreign language departments to present their dossiers for promotion and tenure review because of lingering doubts regarding the legitimacy of business language (BL) in terms of theory, intellectual foundations,[6] and related scholarship—that is, as an unobjectionable field of inquiry, research, and publication. A similar theoretical shortcoming characterized LSP through the late 1990s, "criticized for being all practice and no theory because there has been limited concern in the literature with fundamental ideas" (Basturkmen, 2002, p. 23).

The problem, an issue of academic politics and gate-keeping, persists for non-English BLS, despite policy statements such as "The Evaluation of Nontraditional Fields" by the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA):

> The thrust toward *interdisciplinary work* and the study of new technological advances, broaden the *legitimate* areas of *both teaching and research* within a foreign language department. Department members may be involved in *disciplines* not traditionally considered integral parts of a foreign language department, such as *area studies*, creative writing, film studies, *foreign language acquisition research*, *foreign language pedagogy*, gender studies, and literary and *technical translation*.
>
> In questions of promotion, tenure, and salary, colleagues working in these fields should be evaluated using the same procedures and standards as those used for the more traditional fields but with proper consideration for the particular standards each discipline requires. (ADFL, "Evaluation," 2011, emphasis added)

It is telling that in 2011, the ADFL, which only recently validated the subdiscipline of technical translation as a legitimate area of both teaching and research within a foreign language department, does not even acknowledge an LSP such as BL as a discipline category, much less a major one. This lack of acknowledgment reflects a clear disconnection from what has actually been occurring in the national foreign language curriculum, given that: (a) national language associations such as the AATF, AATG, and AATSP have all devoted special volumes to BL; (b) specialized journals such as *Global Business Languages* and the *Journal of Language for International Business* (currently in search of a new sponsor) publish scholarly articles on BL;[7] (c) the federal government has so heavily funded curricular development and research in BL; and (d) the MLA itself issued a major report in 2007, titled *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*, calling for a reengineering of the national curriculum in foreign languages because "the two-tiered configuration [language vs. literature] has outlived its usefulness and needs to evolve" (p. 4).

The MLA report (2007), in recognition of a paradigm shift in national needs and rationale for foreign language instruction at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of learning, prescribes "an integrative approach with multiple paths to the [foreign language] major" (p. 4) that will "produce a specific outcome: educated speakers who have deep translingual and transcultural competence" (p. 3). Such a transformation, which will serve to "counter the isolation and marginalization that language and literature departments often experience on American campuses" (p. 6)—that is, strengthen their relevance and centrality—should be premised on an understanding of "cultural narratives" (p. 4) and "cultural subsystems" (p. 4) that move beyond the traditional [language and literature] curriculum to include, among others, "the legal system, the political system, the

educational system, the *economic system*, and the social welfare system" (p. 5, emphasis added), all of which inform BLS, as may literary studies, itself an example of LSP (e.g., *Visiones*, 2002, and *Temas del comercio*, 2008, by Coria & Torres). Furthermore, the most recent MLA brochures designed to promote the study of foreign languages and cultures, titled *Language Study in the Age of Globalization: The College-Level Experience* (MLA, 2008) and *Knowing Other Languages Brings Opportunities* (2008), highlight the value of being able to *use* (apply) foreign languages effectively in a global economy as well as the intrinsic study of literature per se.

The tripartite, integrated curricular structure—business, language, and regional/cultural studies—inaugurated at the American Institute of Foreign Trade in 1946 has served well as an adaptable template for similar curriculum development across the United States. Targeted federal funding, as Branan (1998) indicated, has also played a key role in the quickening of this far-reaching evolution in the teaching of foreign languages. In 1988, when Congress authorized substantial funding for the creation of the first five Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs)[8] to increase and promote "the nation's capacity for international understanding and competitiveness," the first of the six "mandatory activities" to be conducted by the CIBERs featured the same tripartite structure.[9] This prescribed structure also provides a blueprint for articulating more clearly the latent theory of BL in the United States. Again, it is not that the unnamed field has lacked theory; rather, there has been little articulation of the theory that underlies praxis and curriculum development.

The tripartite theory behind BLS is also evident in the annual BL conferences sponsored, first by Eastern Michigan University (1982–1997), then by the CIBERs (1998–2011).[10] CIBER-sponsored workshops, such as the "Annual Faculty Development in International Business: A Six-Day Workshop for Professors of Business Spanish" (offered annually by the University of South Carolina since 1990) and the "Language and Culture for International Business: A Workshop for Foreign Language Educators" (offered annually by the University of Memphis since 1995),[11] have also been premised on the implicit tripartite BLS theory.

In addition, this same tripartite model of business, language, and regional/cultural studies has, of course, been woven to varying degrees into the design of many of the BL textbooks currently available at the intermediate and advanced levels of instruction. For example, the fifth edition of *Éxito comercial: Prácticas administrativas y contextos culturales* (Doyle, Fryer, & Cere, 2011), further developing its original 1991 structure,

> seeks to develop cross-cultural communicative competence for business purposes, which means that an individual is able to draw on his/her knowledge of business (concepts and practices) and culture (from geographic literacy to high "C" and low "c" culture), and apply this knowledge effectively in communicative situations. (p. iv)

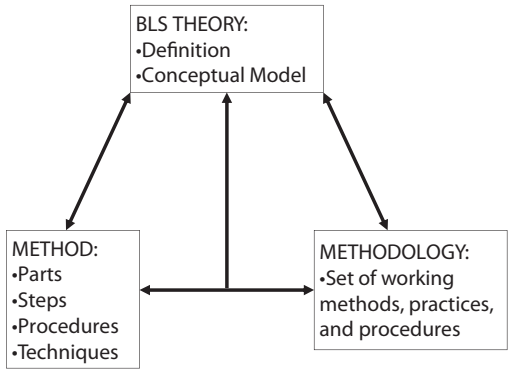
Visiones and *Temas del comercio*, two recent books that link literature and business Spanish, are also premised implicitly on the tripartite model: *Visiones* (Coria-Sánchez & Torres, 2002) emphasizes "social and economic perspectives" (p. x), and *Temas* (Coria-Sánchez & Torres, 2008) focuses "on economic and commercial concerns as they appear in Hispanic narrative" (p. vii), "with interesting, new, and perhaps unexpected perspectives on the subject of business and economic activity in Hispanic cultures" (Coria-Sánchez & Torres, 2008, p. ix).

It is in the broad context outlined in the preceding paragraphs that a belated prolegomenon to the theory and theory-based method and methodology of BL may serve as (a) a useful model for BLS in U.S. secondary and higher education at this time, and (b) a catalyst for further theoretical research[12] in this increasingly crucial field, as different nations and culturolinguistic communities seek more effective cross-cultural communication to manage better what Friedman (2005, p. 204) has referred to as "friction" in a flat world. *Friction* refers to the fact that, despite the growing use of technology to "flatten" the world in order to facilitate or streamline business and international trade in a sun-to-sun global economy, people must still interact; they must still communicate in and across different languages and cultures.[13] By definition, a prolegomenon such as this is provisional.

BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES THEORY, METHOD, AND METHODOLOGY

Theory will seek to provide a working definition and conceptual model for BLS; *method* will refer to representative constituent parts, steps, procedures, and techniques in BLS; and *methodology* will refer broadly to a set of working methods for BLS, a body of practices and procedures used by those who work and conduct research in the discipline (see Figure 1). Methods and methodology, of course, presuppose a theory,

FIGURE 1
Business Language Studies Theory, Method, and Methodology



regardless of whether it is fully developed and articulated.

This empirically based, theoretical overture to BLS, which endeavors to extract and extrapolate theory from the extensive record of BLS method and methodology, will address two fundamental questions about the discipline—(a) What is it? and (b) How is it done?—and will briefly outline descriptive, theoretical, and applied BLS, three branches of consideration whose relation is as fluidly dialogic and dialectical as the complementary symbiosis that exists among theory, method, and methodology. It will also serve as a basis for a provisional identification of major theory-based BLS research areas in which work remains to be done, both basic (intrinsic) and applied (extrinsic), the latter of which represents a movement from knowledge of and about (conceptual "know-what" and "know-how") to the instrumentality and measurability of practical problem solving and task performance ("do-what" and "do-how") for specific purposes in particular situations that relate to the conduct of business and trade as these occur in and across languages and cultures. The main focus at present will be in the applied BLS areas of content, pedagogy, course and curriculum development, and evaluation of learner outcomes, with examples drawn from business Spanish.

Borrowing from Holmes's (2000) model for Translation Studies, BLS, in turn, may be defined as a major empirical subdiscipline of LSP whose objective is to examine and predict how languages are, may, or should be used to conduct business in various communicative situations and cultural contexts. It is characterized by multitheoretical intellectual foundations derived (a) from established disciplines such as economics, linguistics (e.g., applied, comparative, psycho- and socio-), psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, philosophy, political science, language study (which dates back to the Latin *trivium*—grammar, rhetoric, and logic—of the Middle Ages), geography, business (i.e., principles of management, marketing, finance, advertising, etc.), and international business; and (b) from emerging fields such as communication studies (business communications), intercultural communications, and global studies. In today's global economy, BLS is, by nature and stage of development, an eclectic and opportunistic interdiscipline, appropriating theoretically according to its needs and circumstances. The interdisciplinary paradigm of BLS specifically builds on, combines, and applies the following fundamental areas of inquiry and pedagogy: business content (lexicon, principles, and application); cultural contextualization, geographic literacy, and culturoregional studies (the siting of where and how business is conducted); situational performance (communicative strategies, functions, and task-accomplishment activities); and measurable learner outcomes.

Cultural contextualization and geographic literacy are indispensable BLS considerations, especially in the realm of transnational business, because business is conducted by people from and in different countries with different cultural and subcultural identities and roles. As Congressman Paul Simon (1980) reminded us in *The Tongue-Tied American*, "unless complemented by academic training in the history, culture, economics and politics of a given society, the knowledge of its language alone becomes a dull instrument" (p. 59). Victor (1992) wrote that "the study of cultural differences and similarities so essential to international business success is largely inseparable from the study of international business communication" (p. xiv). In addition, Galloway (1987) warned that "to develop students' language skills and neglect a sense of cultural context in which the language is used may be simply to provide students with the illusion that they are communicating" (p. 69).

Adapting Holmes's (2000) mapping of Translation Studies, an interdisciplinary language–culture field that serves as a rigorous and adaptable model, three major branches of the Business Language Studies interdiscipline are: (a) descriptive BLS, (b) theoretical BLS, and (c) applied BLS.

Descriptive BLS analyzes and describes the various phenomena of BLS "as they manifest

themselves in the world of our experience" (Holmes, 2000, p. 176). Thus, it may range from the macro analysis and description of BL used in actually conducting business in different situations and contexts (e.g., countries, languages, cultures, subcultures, historical periods, genders) to the micro manifestation or use of BL in different discourse domains, texts, and genres and according to different functional areas or genres of business (e.g., management, marketing, advertising, sales, import–export). Descriptive BLS may be (a) product-oriented (e.g., it describes or compares, diachronically as well as synchronically, existing or past BL texts and scenarios, including realia); (b) function-oriented (how BL works "in the recipient socio-cultural situation" [Holmes, 2000, p. 177], as opposed to simply describing BL texts and situations); or (c) process-oriented (which focuses on "the process or act" [Holmes, 2000, p. 177] of BL itself).

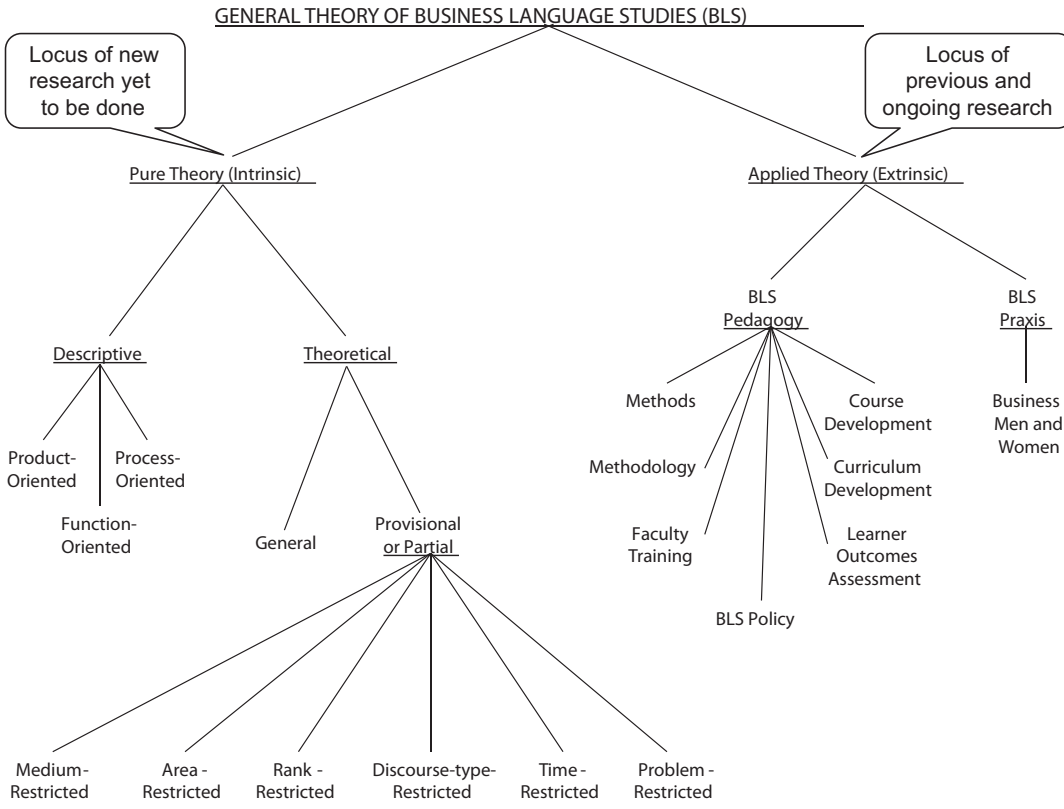
Theoretical BLS, or BLS theory, in contrast, does not concern itself with describing existing BL, its observed functions, or processes; rather, it employs or anticipates the results of descriptive BLS, which draws from the many disciplines that inform it, to "evolve principles, theories, and models which will serve to explain and predict" what BL "is and will be" (Holmes, 2000, p. 178). BLS theory may be classified initially with rubrics, adopted and adapted from Holmes, such as the following: (a) *medium-restricted* (performed by humans, machines, or both in conjunction); (b) *area-restricted* (delimited by the language[s] and culture[s] involved, e.g., Spanish as used in Panama in the tourism sector, as compared to how it is used in the same sector in Cuba, Colombia, Argentina, or Spain); (c) *rank-restricted* (e.g., by semiotic unit of BL analysis and performance, such as word, sentence, paragraph, text, image, logo, sound, individual department, company [micro, small, medium, large], industry, sector of the economy, national economy, common market or regional economy, global economy); (d) *discourse-type-restricted* (different genres of BL communication—e.g., annual reports, contracts, advertisements, warning labels, business correspondence, email, text-messaging, Web page localization, Facebook, Twitter, crowd-sourced or smart-mob translation); (e) *time-restricted* (the evolution of BL, e.g., the increasing use of English-language business terminology that is embedding itself within the non-English language, e.g., in banking, advertising, or office and communication systems lexicon, when compared to the paucity of such loan words several decades ago); (f) *problem-restricted* (which may focus on specific issues such as ethics, fair trade, sustainable development, or localization, i.e., the cultural adaptation aspect of advertising, translation, product placement, etc.). Such restricted theoretical considerations inform what would comprise an intrinsic general theory of BLS.

Applied BLS, a third major branch of consideration, is an extrinsic consideration that extends beyond descriptive and theoretical concerns to BLS utility, that is, as in pedagogy, course and curriculum development, assessment of learning outcomes, and BLS policy (e.g., which BL curricula should be funded at the macro level by the federal or state government or, at the micro level, by individual institutions—should it be BLS–Spanish, –French, –Japanese, –Chinese, –Arabic, –Swahili, –Creole, –Catalan?).

Figure 2 provides a schematic summary and represents an adapted provisional cartography of BLS at this time, bearing in mind Pym's (1998) caveat that such maps tend to direct our eyes in certain directions while overlooking others. Also consistent with Pym's concerns, the map in Figure 2 should be considered as one in which human agents and historiography are always key factors.[14]

The definition of BLS and a general mapping of the major theoretical branches of this interdiscipline suggest fruitful possibilities for both basic and applied research, which Washington, D.C. has been willing to fund in recent decades via the CIBERs and various U.S. Department of Education Title VI grants. Suggestions such as the following renew and extend the Final Report Prepared by the University of California, Los Angeles Language Resource Program for the Business Language Research Priorities Conference (Feb. 8–9, 2002), which concluded that "the research questions that appear in this report indicate that there is still a need for basic research in most aspects of business language education" (Campbell & Bauckus, 2002, p. 23). In terms of basic research today, for example, BLS warrants further study of its own particular nature as a major category of LSP, and how, when, and to what extent it draws from and blends with other fields—from intercultural communication to discourse and genre studies, translation studies, linguistics, psychology, history, sociology, and so forth—as it develops and sharpens its own meta-critical and meta-theoretical discourse. Further exploration of BL "archaeology" is of interest—who, what, how, where, when, for whom, and to what effect (Pym, 1998, p. 5)—as well as how BL relates to and reflects power and hegemony in diachronic and synchronic shifts as different languages reposition themselves in terms of ascendancy for purposes of

FIGURE 2
Provisional Map of Business Language Studies



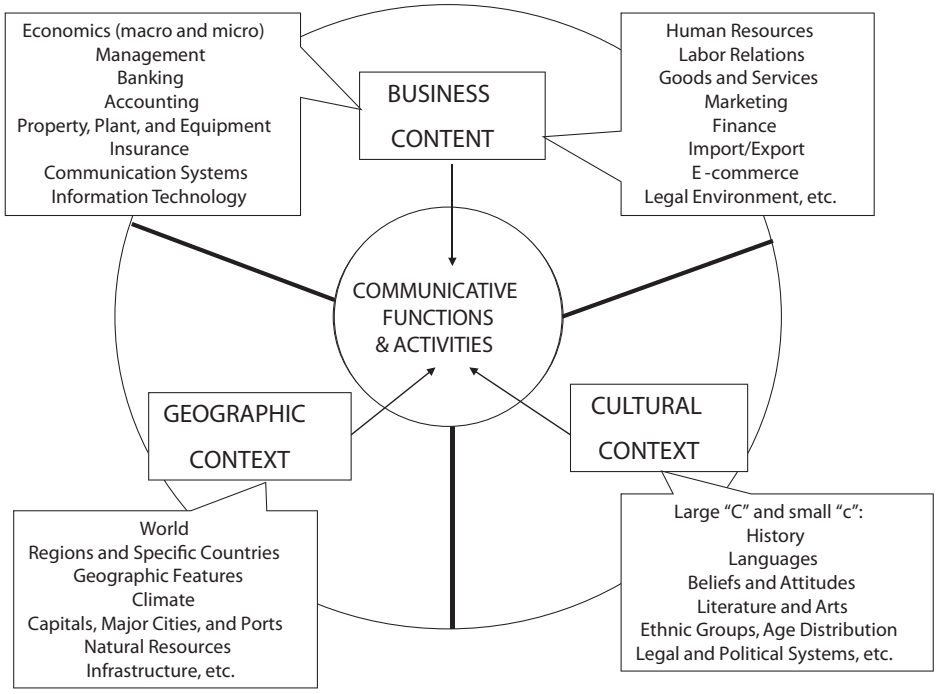
competitiveness in business and trade. In the applied area, where most of the research has actually been funded, numerous issues still require fuller and better answers to the questions they pose regarding such concerns as teaching methods (in-class, on-site, experiential, virtual, online, the use of technology); course and curriculum development (from transnational and technologically facilitated modules to virtual, online curricula); development and refinement of pedagogical materials (including BL games); assessment of learner outcomes (in language and cultural proficiency, the latter of which might particularly benefit from comparative corpus-based research and analysis); continuing education; faculty training; and local, regional, and national BLS policy.

APPLIED BUSINESS LANGUAGE STUDIES

Thus defined and situated, applied BLS stipulates a framework for intercultural communication and cross-cultural literacy, which comprehends language (e.g., discourse domains, rhetoric, pragmatics, skopos, localization, and genre studies, register, style, tone), demographics (who, how many, where), geography, history, trade, values, beliefs, customs, and conduct. In terms of pedagogy, BLS is concerned with the movement of learners from theory and cognition to praxis (theory applied) and the measurable ability to conduct business successfully in another language and culture. A tripartite pedagogical model for BLS, the principal components of which—business content, cultural context, and geographic setting (area or regional studies)—are anchored together via communicative activities that draw from and ideally synthesize the three constituent parts, is represented in Figure 3.

The three major components, as well as their respective subcomponents (partially outlined here), may range from greater or lesser degrees of coverage that, at the extremes, may be either complete (exclusive) or noncoverage, depending on the emphasis accorded to each and the blending of the components into a whole. For

FIGURE 3
Tripartite Pedagogical Model for Business Language Studies



example, a BL course may focus exclusively on business content and vocabulary to the exclusion of the cultural and geographical contexts, or it may distribute the three components in a balanced manner (one third for each). A variable matrix, as illustrated in Table 1, suggests a fluid and organic adaptability with many permutations for research, needs assessment, course and curriculum development, development of pedagogical materials, and formats for learner outcomes assessment.

When the model is applied to the example of business Spanish, the geographic context, on the one hand, may specify components, clusters, or aggregates such as Spain (Europe), the Hispanic or Spanish-speaking Caribbean, Hispanic or Spanish-speaking Central America, the Andean region, the Southern Cone region, Equatorial Guinea (Africa), and Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish-speaking United States. On the other hand, geoeconomic configurations may be given priority: for example, AC, CARICOM, DR–CAFTA, the EU, LAIA, Mercosur, or NAFTA,[15] or geodemographic subcategories may be emphasized, such as urban versus rural, capital versus province, or coastal versus inland. The cultural contexts will largely be determined by the geographic setting in which BL will be used (e.g., the history, ethnic groups, languages). Similarly, business practices in the functional areas will be considered in light of how the Mexicans, Venezuelans, Peruvians, and so forth, each nationality aggregated and disaggregated, actually conduct business within and beyond their respective cultural parameters.

A theoretical application of this model, in terms of pedagogical methodology, allows a critical and timely content (business), embedded within variable geographicocultural contexts (both heuristic, as designed for purposes of instruction, and authentic, the use of realia, and experiential learning), to be combined with comprehensive, multiskill, communicative development in speaking, listening comprehension, interpreting, reading, writing, translating, and paralingual expression (kinesics and proxemics). In the communicative activities component of the model, which is where the BL is embedded in targeted geographicocultural contexts as the three parts of the model are variably prioritized or synthesized, the focus is on developing critical thinking, problem solving, and a variety of real-world communicative

TABLE 1
Variable Matrix for Tripartite Business Language Course Coverage

Component	Degree (%) of Inclusion/Coverage									
Business Content	100.0	0.0	0.0	75.0	12.5	12.5	50.0	25.0	25.0	33.0 Other
Cultural Context	0.0	100.0	0.0	12.5	75.0	12.5	25.0	50.0	25.0	33.0 Other
Geographic Context (area or region)	0.0	0.0	100.0	12.5	12.5	75.0	25.0	25.0	50.0	33.0 Other

functions commonly used to perform myriad tasks in business: for example, to inform, describe, announce, solicit, compare, contrast, analyze, calculate, measure, summarize, persuade, respond, present, congratulate, complain, hire, fire, buy, sell, and negotiate.

Learner development is generated through a variety of pedagogical situations and texts, which for listening comprehension may include phone conversations, role plays (of meetings, negotiations, sales, and purchases, etc.), interviews, CDs and DVDs, radio, television, videos, movies, Internet, presentations (either as the presenter or as a member of the audience who asks questions and makes observations about the topics of the presentation), interpreting, sight translation, field trips, or other ethnographic, experiential, and autobiographically inscribed (see Doyle, 2008) learning opportunities, including service learning and internships. For writing, the activities may typically range from responses to questions and case studies, to writing or editing business letters, memoranda, emails, messages (phone, texting, tweets, sticky notes, etc.), filling in documents (checks, orders, invoices, contracts), producing reports, executive summaries, advertisements and public relations texts, brochures, flyers, newsletters, translations (including the use and back-translation and postediting of machine translation and computer-assisted translation),[16] and creating Web pages. For the development of reading skills, the texts may include books (embracing, as we have seen earlier, literary works that allow for the mining of business and socioeconomic themes or portraits), newspapers, magazines, Web pages, articles, correspondence and documents (letters, memoranda, etc.), advertisements and public relations texts, warning labels, summaries and annual reports, case studies, graphics (e.g., line, bar, pie, flow charts), tables, brochures, newsletters, flyers, manuals, user guides, and so forth.

Course and curriculum development represent another methodological core component of applied BLS. Appendix A summarizes the eight most common types of BL courses in U.S. higher education, as currently taught at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of instruction, with their relative advantages and disadvantages. These courses range from generic courses that cover the waterfront in terms of business content, to regional or prevailing industry-specific, functional area-specific, hybrid, and business and culture courses taught in English rather than in the target foreign language.

In another methodological consideration, the different course types are included in U.S. higher education in a variety of ways that represent different levels of commitment and investment by the various institutions. Appendix B outlines 11 types of existing curriculum design in a progression from the more simple and limited program (testing the waters with modules) to the more complex and vastly more rewarding transnational degree program.

Methodologically, in BLS, the tripartite content of business + language + culture is delivered via courses that constitute a curriculum characterized by content-based, skills development instruction in BL. The continuum of content/skills development → course design → curriculum design → methods of instruction is completed by learner outcomes assessment. Although actual evaluation necessarily occurs after course and curriculum development, after syllabus design, and after the teaching and learning have taken place, learner evaluation should serve as the conceptual starting point: to have a clear vision of the desired BL learner outcomes so that the instructional methodology will lead the learners to what they should know and know how to do, which, one presumes, is what they will later be tested on. In this sense, the clear place to begin is at the end. Appendix C illustrates the methodological sequence of steps for this crucial part of applied BLS, in which Step 6, Course Revision and Feedback, informs Step 1, Envisioning Desired Learning Outcomes, in a cycle of continuous improvement each time the BL course is taught.

In terms of testing what BL learners have assimilated, both as achievement (mastery of content) and proficiency (what the learner can do with the content), the model presented in Appendix D

accounts for the course design inventory presented earlier.[17] Table 1 of Appendix D provides an example of a comprehensive master grid where a global assessment would, in principle, cover representative core functional areas of business (e.g., economics, management, human resources, banking and accounting, real estate, goods and services, insurance, marketing, finance, import–export), as well as eight communicative skills. The selection of functional areas, of course, is variable and may range from traditional macro and micro economics to e-commerce, risk management, sustainable green trade, cross-cultural business ethics, and so forth. Table 2 of Appendix D represents the traditional written examination format, which ignores the time-consuming assessment of speaking ability, via a reconfiguration of the sample master grid such that it now corresponds to the generic BL course described earlier. Finally, Table 3 of Appendix D adapts the master grid to show how the assessment corresponds to the functional area-specific type of course that restricts business vocabulary coverage to allow for more in-depth study of isolated key topics such as BL for marketing, finance, management, and so forth. For the BL student, the evaluation of learner outcomes (the final exam in a BL course) is the culminating step in a classroom learning process. For those who teach and conduct research in BLS, the methodology of outcomes assessment is but a part of the applied branch of the field of BLS.

CONCLUSION

The study of languages for business purposes would benefit from a more serviceable and academically communal name—a more adequate toponymic identity—by which to identify itself as a theory-based field of scholarship. In keeping with the rise of other interdisciplines in other "studies" programs in U.S. higher education, its empirically definable domain of inquiry, pedagogy, and curriculum development should more appropriately be known as Business Language Studies (BLS). Further consideration of intrinsic theory is strongly encouraged in order to complement the extensive work already done in extrinsic and applied BLS, given that the development of methods and methodology has far outstripped theoretical considerations per se, the latter of which are now warranted to anchor the field more adequately in U.S. higher education. It is time for greater attention to be focused on the articulation of a broader, more systematic, theory-based BLS research agenda that breaks new ground and provides additional insights into the decisive roles of language and culture in a highly competitive global economy. This future work in the interdisciplinary utopia that has been evolving for many decades into Business Language Studies can certainly be conducted within national associations such as the AATs, the MLA, the American Association for Applied Linguistics, and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, which, in turn, should formally acknowledge the rightful place of BLS within academia, both in theory and in practice.

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NOTES

[1]Presently the Thunderbird School of Global Management: http://www.thunderbird.edu/.

[2]The Fryer and Guntermann (1998) volume provides an overview of the history and development of non-English business language in U.S. higher education (Voght & Grosse, 1998), and addresses topics ranging from models for initial needs analysis in program development (Cowles, 1998) to curricular connections (Galloway, 1998), international business content (Arpan, 1998), cross-cultural communication training (Cere, 1998), Hispanic technical and cultural content (Labarca, 1998), literature in the international business classroom (Vega Carney, 1998), development of oral skills (Guntermann, 1998), business communications (Valdivieso & Valdivieso, 1998), evaluation of learner outcomes (Campbell, 1998; Christensen, 1998; Doyle, 1998), multimedia (Kelm, 1998), public outreach (Bender, 1998), internships (Suárez, 1998), faculty training opportunities (Fryer & Tissera, 1998), and resource materials for business Spanish (Lapuente, 1998).

[3]The AATG (http://www.aatg.org/) volumes are *Handbook on Business German: A Practical Guide to Business German as an Academic Discipline* (Keck, 1990) and *Handbook for German and Technology* (Cothran, 1994). The AATF (http://www.frenchteachers.org/) volumes are *Making Business French Work: Modes, Materials, Methodologies* (Loughrin-Sacco & Abrate, 1998) and

Issues and Methods in French for Business and Economic Purposes (Cummins, 1995).

[4]The topics covered in Part II, Chapters 18–24, include business Portuguese, medical Spanish, Spanish for social work, legal interpreting, law enforcement, translation and international business, and science and technology.

[5]Grosse and Voght (1991) assessed the research base for LSP in more than 200 publications, which they grouped into the following seven categories: "vocabularies and glossaries, career education, curriculum development, integration of language and culture, the proficiency movement, methods and materials, and discourse analysis" (p. 185). The authors explained that "many of the articles covered are predominantly descriptive rather than analytical, a tendency which reflects the relative youth of the field and the widespread search for LSP course and program models" (p. 185). Toward the end of the article, they proposed a research agenda for LSP that contained 13 areas of inquiry, but no mention of theory or theoretical considerations per se (p. 188).

[6]Vega Carney (2004) raised the troubling concern about the lack of an articulated intellectual foundation for business Spanish but did not develop a response.

[7]Grosse and Voght (1991) indicated that in the foreign language curriculum, "eight professional journals (six American, one French, and one Canadian) had published the majority of research (134 articles) on LSP-related subjects" (p. 185).

[8]Today there are 33 CIBERs housed at major U.S. research universities (http://ciberweb.msu.edu/).

[9]The CIBER mandate reads as follows: "interdisciplinary programs which incorporate foreign language and international studies training into business, finance, management, communications systems, and other professional training for foreign language and international studies training into business, finance, management, communications systems, and other professional curricula" (CIBERWEB, Michigan State University, Legislative section, 2009).

[10]For example, session topics at the 2008 CIBER Business Language Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida (April 9–11, 2008), whose overall theme was "Preparing Global Business Leaders," ranged from "Teaching Culture in Business Spanish Classes" to "Exploring French Culture Through Advertising," "The Business of Language and the Language of Business Across the Curriculum," "The Use of Podcasts and Video-on-Demand in Business German Courses," to "A Corpus-Based Investigation of Business Chinese Textbooks and Pedagogy in Use," and sessions on Business Arabic, Business Hindi, and Business Japanese. A single session, "Theory and Method in Teaching Business Spanish: Successful Pedagogical Techniques," explicitly addressed theoretical concerns. The Plenary Panel at the 2011 CIBER Business Language Conference in Charleston, South Carolina (March 24–26, 2011) featured a "Prolegomenon to a General Theory of Business Language Studies (BLS) and a Call for Additional Research in Intrinsic Theory" (Doyle, 2011).

[11]See http://moorecms.graysail.com/moore/dmc/focused/fdib-spanish.html and https://umdrive.memphis.edu/g-wangcenter/www/pages/for_lang_wksp.htm.

[12]Grosse (2002) presented "an overview of past and current research priorities in languages for specific purposes (LSP)" (p. 11) from 1960 to 1990 and 1997 to 2001. In that article, the comprehensive "Bibliography of LSP-Related Articles Published from 1997–2001" included "172 articles that were published between 1997–2001 in six journals and two dedicated volumes," which "almost equals the 200 publications from the thirty years between 1960–1990" (p. 13). The author identified trends that "show a need for research into areas such as educational program effectiveness, cultural and FL needs of business people, actual language and cultural knowledge use by professionals, and defining business culture" (p. 23), but there was no mention of theory or theoretical considerations per se.

[13]Friedman (2005) wrote that "from the first stirrings of capitalism, people have imagined the possibility of the world as a perfect market . . . But this vision has always bumped up against the world as it actually is—full of sources of friction and inefficiency . . . habits, cultures, and traditions that people cherish precisely because they reflect nonmarket values like social cohesion, religious faith, and national pride" (p. 204).

[14]Pym (1998) used the work of Holmes (in Venuti, 2000) as a constructive point of departure for refining the cartography of Translation Studies.

[15]AC is the Andean Community; CARICOM, the Caribbean Common Market; DR–CAFTA, the Dominican Republic–Central American Free Trade Agreement; EU, the European Union; LAIA, the Latin American Integration Association; Mercosur, the Southern Cone Common Market; and NAFTA is the North American Free Trade Agreement.

[16]*Back-translation* is a retranslation of the translation itself (the target language text) back into the source language from which it was first translated for purposes of quality assurance. For example, an English-language annual report is translated into Spanish, and then that same Spanish translation is translated by another translator back into English so that the two English-language texts can be compared for accuracy of content (the American Translators Association [www.atanet.org] rubric for standard error marking, such as additions, omissions, etc.) and consistency of style.

[17]An earlier, more primitive version of this table appeared in "Evaluating Learner Outcomes in Business Spanish: An Inventory of Testing Exercise Typologies" (Doyle, 1998, p. 183).

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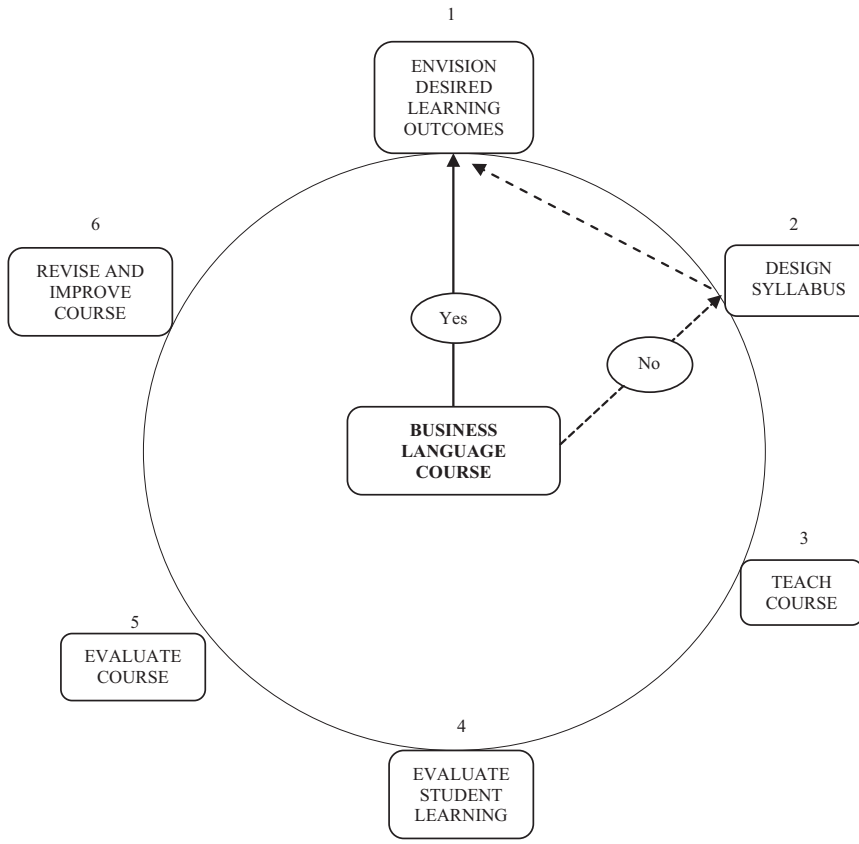
APPENDIX A
Eight Most Common Types of Business Language Courses in U.S. Higher Education

TYPE	DESCRIPTION	+ ADVANTAGES − DISADVANTAGES
Generic	Covers the waterfront: includes general functional areas of business (e.g., economics, management, human resources, banking and accounting, real estate, goods and services, insurance, marketing, finance, import–export)	+ Broad coverage of relevant business vocabulary − Comparatively superficial by definition; no great depth in any functional area
Regional or Prevailing Industry-Specific	Matches business language content and coverage to prevailing local, state, or regional needs in business and trade (e.g., agriculture, textiles, banking, automotive, tourism)	+ Responds to reality of particular job markets; local employability − Job market specialization may not be portable
Functional Area-Specific	Restricts business vocabulary coverage to allow for more in-depth study of key topics such as French, German, Japanese, or Spanish for marketing, finance, etc.	+ Greater depth in selected functional business vocabulary − Does not cover all areas; neglects important functional business vocabulary
Secretarial	Emphasizes correspondence and other forms of written communication; may (should) include translation	+ Develops reading, writing, proofreading, editing, and translation skills − Neglects development of other language skills
Examination (Teaching to a Test)	Prepares learner to take a specific business language test, such as the Paris or Madrid Chamber of Commerce Examinations	+ Learner is well prepared to take and pass test − Examination format and content dictate curriculum
Special Topics	Business in Literature; Spain (France, Germany) in the European Union; NAFTA; The Andean Region and the Southern Cone; Prosperity and Poverty; Development and Sustainability; The Many Faces of Tourism, etc.	+ Flexibility in responding to instructor training and preferences and to student interests or program emphases − Does not cover a broad inventory of basic functional areas of business
Hybrid	Combines elements of two or more of the course types above	+ Flexibility in responding to learner needs − Course design requires more thought and preparation on part of instructor; insufficient pedagogical materials available
Business and Culture (Taught in English)	Provides broad cultural overview (large and small C), to include geographic literacy, demographics (ethnic groups, age distribution, religion, language varieties, general attitudes), historical highlights, customs and courtesies, lifestyle, society, work environment (business travel, business customs, managerial protocol and practice, negotiating, and the use of translators and interpreters), etc.	+ Serves needs of broad range of affiliated programs and students − The course is taught in English; does not develop foreign language skills

APPENDIX B
Eleven Types of Existing Curriculum Design: From Simple to More Complex

The foreign language course includes one or more business language modules—testing the waters.
The foreign language curriculum includes a single business language course.
The foreign language curriculum includes more than one business language course or an articulated sequence of two or more courses (greater commitment, coverage, depth).
The certificate in business language (coherence and articulation; attractive option for nondegree students; highly flexible).
The minor in business language (for degree-seeking students).
The major in business language or in foreign language for the professions (which includes substantial course work in business language).
The major in a functional business area or in international business + the certificate in business language or the minor in foreign language or in business language (the business core plus the add-on, which may include business language courses).
The major in foreign language or in business language + a minor in a functional area or in international business (the foreign language core plus the business add-on).
The double major in business (or international business) and foreign language (which may include business language courses).
The integrated interdisciplinary major in international business, which includes substantial foreign language (with business language courses) and cultural or area studies, or both.
The transnational degree program in which students earn international business degrees from two or more institutions in two or more countries.

APPENDIX C
Sequencing in Business Language Instructional Methodology



APPENDIX D

Business Language Assessment

Table 1

Master Grid or Menu for Comprehensive Business Language Examination

Language Skills: Testing for Proficiency, Competency, or Performative Ability	Core Business (Functional Areas) and Business Language Culture Content						
	Economics	Accounting	Management	Marketing	Finance	Import–Export	Culture
Speaking	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Listening Comprehension	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Interpreting	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reading	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Writing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Translating	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Paralingual Expression (Kinesics and Proxemics)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cultural and Cross-Cultural Competency	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

Table 2

Subtest Grid or Menu for Achievement Testing in All Functional Business Areas and Proficiency or Competency Testing in Listening Comprehension, Reading, Writing, and Translation (the Traditional Written Examination Format)

Language Skills: Testing for Proficiency, Competency, or Performative Ability	Core Business (Functional Areas) and Business Language Culture Content						
	Economics	Accounting	Management	Marketing	Finance	Import–Export	Culture
Speaking							
Listening Comprehension	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Interpreting	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reading	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Writing	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Translating	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Paralingual Expression (Kinesics and Proxemics)							
Cultural and Cross-Cultural Competency							

Table 3
Subtest Grid or Menu for Achievement Testing in Marketing with Proficiency or Competency Testing in All Language Skills

Language Skills: Testing for Proficiency, Competency, or Performative Ability	Core Business (Functional Areas) and Business Language Culture Content						
	Economics	Accounting	Management	Marketing	Finance	Import–Export	Culture
Speaking				•			
Listening Comprehension				•			
Interpreting				•			
Reading				•			
Writing				•			
Translating				•			
Paralingual Espression (Kinesics and Proxemics)				•			
Cultural and Cross-Cultural Competency				•			