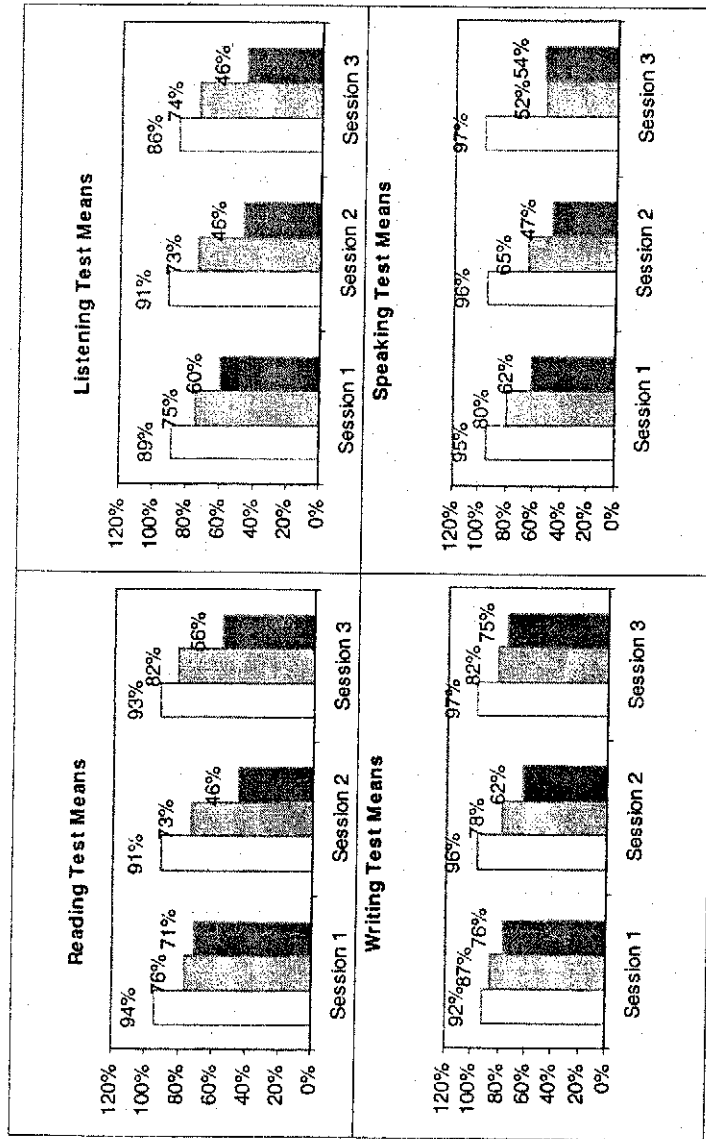


Figure 1.
Group Test Means



*White represents Group A, light gray Group B, and dark gray group C.

ceding a certain testing session. Test results in group A show that the students from that group were able to keep abreast of the increasing level of difficulty. Their test results remained stable and quite close to 100%. They even slightly improved and approached closer to 100% with the succession of tests. The only exceptions were test 2 in reading and test 3 in listening which showed slight decreases (see Fig. 1). This suggests that the development of communication skills in group A progressed steadily, never lagging behind that level of skills development which was the aim of a definite stage of learning. The pictures in groups B and C were quite different. The test results of those groups seemed to progress by fits and starts. After reaching a certain level in testing session 1, they dropped (in many cases quite low) for all the tests in testing session 2. Then they went up again in testing session 3, but not for all tests and never reaching the level of group A, nor the results of the same groups achieved in testing session 1 (see Fig. 1), which was the simplest of the three. The only exception was reading test 3 in group B which showed results slightly higher than the results of reading test 1 in the same group (see Fig. 1). It seems that the students from groups B and C, unlike group A, could not keep abreast of the increasing difficulty of tasks and teaching materials in the development of their skills in speaking, writing, listening, and reading.

Therefore, it can be said that the coursebook and the method of teaching used in group A seemed to ensure rapid development and improvement of students' communication skills permitting them to increase steadily in the level of language and content difficulty of learning tasks and teaching materials. The other two coursebooks and the methods underlying them did not seem to provide the means for achieving similar outcomes.

Discussion of Test Results

All the test results given above suggest that the method and the coursebook under discussion seem to be the most effective in comparison with the typical Western Business English coursebook occupying the second place, and the typical Russian coursebook being the least effective.

It has already been mentioned that the conclusions made above cannot be considered as final and completely generalizable because of the limited pilot character of the study. But the results of this study show a clear tendency of the all-around advantages of the suggested method and coursebook Business English.

Students' Subjective Response

Those advantages were also confirmed in a different aspect - the levels of students' satisfaction and motivation. Every student from every group was asked to complete a questionnaire anonymously after his or her final

(third) testing session. The questionnaire is shown in Appendix D. The 13 questions in the questionnaires were all aimed at revealing whether the students were satisfied with different aspects of the coursebook used in their particular group during the academic year. The level of satisfaction with the coursebook naturally reflected the level of learners' satisfaction with the course organized on the basis of that coursebook and, consequently, with the method of teaching underlying both. That level of satisfaction was also a reflection of the level of motivation so that the higher level of satisfaction the students demonstrated, the higher their level of motivation was.

Satisfaction was defined as positive answers to the questions in the questionnaire by answers "yes" in questions 1, 4-9, 11-12, "better" in question 2, "fun" in question 3, "the best way" in question 10, and "just right" in question 13. All the other choices of answers were interpreted as dissatisfaction with a certain aspect.

It was decided that 12-13 positive answers out of 13 (92-100%) suggested a student's complete satisfaction; 9-11 positive answers (70-85%) were interpreted to mean that a particular student was almost satisfied with the coursebook; 6-8 positive answers (46-62%) were a sign of partial satisfaction and less than 6 positive answers (less than 40%) demonstrated dissatisfaction with the coursebook used.

The results of filling in the questionnaires by the students were as follows:

1. In group A, 13 students out of 15 (86%) demonstrated their complete satisfaction by giving 12-13 positive answers; one student (7%) was almost satisfied, and one (7%) was partially satisfied with the coursebook used. There were no dissatisfied students.
2. In group B one student out of eight (12.5%) was completely satisfied; one (12.5%) was partially satisfied, and six (75%) were dissatisfied with the coursebook used. There were no almost satisfied students.
3. In group C there were no students who were either completely satisfied or almost satisfied. Two out of eight (25%) were partially satisfied, and six (75%) were dissatisfied.

Therefore, it was the students from group A only who showed the high level of satisfaction with the coursebook used in their group (*Business Projects*) and everything that it stood for - the course organized on its basis and the method that had been laid as the foundation of the coursebook and the course. They were capable of generating and maintaining the high level of students' positive learning motivation that the other two coursebooks seemed incapable of doing (This could also be observed by the teachers in the instruction process.)

Limitations

To finish the discussion, the already mentioned limitations of the pilot study described in this article should be listed - those limitations that constrain the generalizability of the results obtained and the conclusions drawn above concerning the effectiveness of the suggested method and coursebook. Such listing is required for pinpointing the direction of future studies.

The most important limitation is the fact that in the reported study, both the method and the coursebook were tried out in one single group in one educational institution and not in different institutions. The effectiveness of the methods in coursebooks used in this study should be tested with different groups of students in different schools in order to support our findings. Another limitation is the high qualifications of teachers who were teaching in all three groups. While the teachers in our study were equally highly-qualified, it would be important to test our method using teachers of varying qualifications. The third limitation is an insufficient number of collected students' opinions and impressions concerning the coursebook. Finally, one more limitation is the absence of properly collected and processed teachers' opinions. This suggests that the results and conclusions of this study have to be considered preliminary, and only in mass teaching, which is planned as the next step, will they be finalized and become conclusive.

Conclusion

The method discussed in this article is based on six original characteristics that have been fully embodied in the coursebook *Business Projects*. These features have never before been used in such a combination in any other coursebook for Business English studies. They include (a) the use of continuous simulation as the principal learning activity that creates a quasi-natural business environment and makes learning fun for students; (b) the use of project work as the activity accompanying and reinforcing continuous simulation; (c) learners' autonomy; (d) the introduction of a fictitious setting that allows students to use their imagination freely, enhances learning motivation, and stimulates relaxed anxiety-free attitudes to learning; (e) organization of classroom activities on the basis of cooperative learning; and (f) the integrated-skills approach so that speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills are developed interdependently supporting and reinforcing each other.

The pilot study of the coursebook in question in comparison with one typical Western and one typical Russian Business English coursebook has suggested its advantages and higher effectiveness both in developing learners' communicative skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading in English and in enhancing the students' positive learning motiva-

tion and their satisfaction with how their learning was organized. It has also been found that using the coursebook *Business Projects* ensured the accelerated development of learners' Business English communication skills, permitting rapid increases in the level of language and content difficulty of learning tasks and teaching materials. The other two coursebooks showed the opposite results in that respect. This suggests the overall effectiveness of the method employed for the given conditions of learning Business English. Though such results and conclusions can be considered only as preliminary, they are still very hopeful and promising.

Oleg Tarnopolsky (Doctor of Pedagogy) is Full Professor at Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law (Ukraine) where he chairs the Department of Methods, Pedagogical Communication, and New Technologies in Foreign Language Teaching. His research interests are focused on EFL teaching. He has published books and articles on EFL in Ukraine, Russia, the USA, France, Great Britain, Spain, and China. He has also made numerous presentations at professional conferences in Ukraine, Russia, the USA, Great Britain, France, Spain, Poland, Finland, Switzerland, Greece. In 1999 Oleg Tarnopolsky worked as a visiting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education.

E-mail: olegtarn@fregat.com

Svitlana Kozhushko (Candidate of Philology) is Associate Professor at Dnipropetrovsk University of Economics and Law (Ukraine) where she chairs the Foreign Language Department. Her scholarly interests are focused on developing course materials for EFL teaching (especially Business English). She is the author of a number of articles published in professional journals in Ukraine and Russia and has made presentations at professional conferences in those countries, as well as in the UK, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, and Greece.

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Appendix A

Examples of tasks used in the course of Business English for organizing continuous simulation in the classroom. The examples are taken from the coursebook *Business Projects* by Tarnopolsky et al. (2002).

1. Conduct a discussion with the whole class. Suppose that your class has decided to start a business. You cannot all be sole proprietors, because those of you who have money do not have managerial talents, specific skills, and so on. Those who have skills do not have money. So, you have to choose between a partnership and a corporation. Decide which you will have, and why. Then discuss what you will do, who will invest what, what the name of your partnership or corporation will be, whether it will be located in Ukraine or some other country. You can choose freely. Give reasons for all your decisions (Unit 1, p. 18-19).
2. (Pair work). In the last class (on Unit 1, class 5) your group founded your own business (a partnership or a corporation). In the last class on this unit you will hold a meeting to decide what job in the business each of you will do and what position everyone will hold. You need to do a lot of preparation for that meeting. Now you need to ask your partner a number of questions to find out:

- a. In which department or body of your company he or she would prefer to work, and why.
- b. Which job he or she would prefer to do there, and why.
- c. Which position he or she would prefer to occupy (a superior or a subordinate), and why.

You should try to get your partner to give reasons for every choice. Then change roles and let your partner find out the same information about you. Report your findings to the class (Unit 2, p. 29).

3. In whole-group discussion discuss the results of interviewing students about their preferences for some definite job in your company or partnership (see activity Lead-in 8). Discuss what you have discovered about the types of intelligence that different students have (see activities III d.2, 3). Each student should report his/her results and conclusions made when doing activities Lead-in 8 and III d.2, 3. He or she should recommend which position in the company (or partnership) best suits his or her former partner, according to his/her type of intelligence and personal wishes. In each recommendation, include your reasons. All the recommendations should be discussed and alternative candidates may be nominated for every position. After discussing all the candidates for each position, elections are to be held. Elect the President, the Vice-Presidents, the Chief Executive Officer, and members of the Executive Board. Finally appointments are made by the Chief Executive Officer for the positions of directors, managers, heads of departments, etc. (Unit 2, p. 43-44).
4. Working in pairs, exchange with your partner the application letters and CVs that you wrote as Project Work in the preceding unit. Study your partner's application letter and CV very carefully. After you have finished, do job interviews. First you interview your partner, trying to decide whether he or she is suited to a certain position in your company (partnership). Then he or she should interview you with the same purpose (Unit 4, p. 78).
5. You will have a new Executive Board meeting now. Its aim is to listen to the presentations about your company (partnership's) position in Ukraine. After the second class on this unit you were to prepare presentations (as project work) stating your opinions on: a) how you see the place of your company (partnership) fitting into the economy of Ukraine, and b) how your company (partnership) can help in developing the economy of Ukraine

and in improving the economic situation as a whole. Each participant has about 2 minutes to make his or her presentation, and about 1 minute to answer possible questions (Unit 5, p. 98).

6. Work in the same small groups to develop a promotional campaign plan for a specific product or service in your company. Use the same product or service that you discussed when choosing target market and pricing. From your plan it should be clear which forms of promotion you will use for this specific product or service, and in what order. You will have to decide what forms of advertising will be used and why. Will these forms of advertising be used all at once, or one after the other? Why? (Unit 7, p. 126).
7. While working on Unit 7, you discussed how to promote some product(s) or service(s) of your company (partnership). If you selected a product, discuss in groups of three or four what materials and machinery you will need to manufacture it. What kind of instructions would you give to use this product? If you selected a service, discuss what product(s) your company (partnership) should manufacture, and what materials or machinery will be needed to produce it. Then list your instructions for using this product, and prepare appropriate recommendations to give your company (partnership) (Unit 8, p. 139).
8. Pair work. Student A in the pair is a representative of your company (partnership). Student B is a representative of a bank. A is talking to B about getting a loan for your company (partnership).
Before starting, A should decide and make notes about the following issues:
 - a) for what project of your company (partnership) the loan is requested;
 - b) what profits are expected and when;
 - c) what sum of money will be requested;
 - d) what the possible time of repayment is;
 - e) what interest rate your company (partnership) can afford to pay.
 B should decide and make notes about the following issues:
 - a) what information will be requested from the applicant;
 - b) what estimates and documents the applicant will be requested to submit;
 - c) what conditions of the loan will be offered (Unit 9, p. 159).

Appendix B

Examples of project tasks used in the course of Business English (taken from the coursebook *Business Projects* by Tarnopolsky et al. (2002).

1. The group is divided into 4 small groups (with 3 to 4 students per group). Two of the small groups have to write minutes of the meeting just held, including what issues were discussed, who spoke, and what decisions were taken. Two of the small groups should list characteristics of the company's (partnership's) top executives, to be included into the prospectus (Unit 2, p. 44).
2. Every applicant is required to write a letter of application for the job for which he or she is applying (following the results of the discussion above – see lb. 4). Your application letters do not need to be truthful; use your imagination. Application letters should follow the format of the letter in the text that is used as a sample one. They may be started in class and finished as the home assignment for the next class. At the beginning of the next class, they should be handed in to the teacher for correcting and commenting (Unit 3, p. 55).
3. On the basis of what you have heard during the meeting, write an essay of 100-150 words giving your recommendations to your company (partnership) about trying to start a business in one of the four English-speaking countries. Give your reasons for choosing that country over the other. Specify what kind of cooperation may be possible (exports, imports, joint projects, etc.). List practical ways of starting the cooperation you envision. Your essay should be finished before the next class (Unit 5, p. 97).
4. (individual, pair-work, or small-group work – as the class decides). Design the logo of your company or partnership, and explain why you think that your logo would best represent it. You will have to design your logo before the last class on the next unit where all the suggested logos will be presented (Unit 7, p. 130).
5. Based on the discussion above (IIla. 1 and 2) the next section of your company's (partnership's) prospectus should be written. This section describes production in the company (partnership) – the factory/factories and its/their structure, what goods are manufactured and how, how the Production Department functions, etc. The work should be done in small groups of 3 or 4 stu-

dents and completed before the last class of the next unit (Unit 8, p. 145).

6. In the next class you will simulate your company's (partnership's) participation in an international exhibition or fair, based on your decision when preparing a catalogue for it. You will need to make two slightly different presentations at the exhibition (fair). If your company (partnership) is engaged both in manufacturing some goods and in some type of public service, a separate presentation will be needed to focus on each of those aspects. If your company (partnership) is only involved in one of these, the two presentations should focus on different aspects of product/service.

Now divide the class into two equal groups, each of which should brainstorm, prepare its presentation speech, and appoint a student to give it. All the graphs, charts, and schemes should also be prepared for the presentation. You should also decide: who the presenter's assistants will be to join him/her in answering questions; who the stand attendants will be to demonstrate particular products and services to visitors and answer their questions, etc. Prepare carefully for a good presentation because the reputation of your company (partnership) depends on it (Unit 11, p. 191).

7. During and after the preceding class you wrote contracts to sell some of your company's (partnership's) products. Exchange those contracts (pair A with pair B, and pair C with pair D, etc.). Each pair attentively reads and brainstorms the text of the contract written by the other pair, and then decides what improvements could be made in it. You should also identify the strong points of the contracts, and after class, write an essay concerning your suggestions (100 words). Prepare to use this essay as a basis for your presentation in the last class of this unit (Unit 12, p. 204).

Appendix C

Samples of Materials for Listening and Reading Tests

Sample 1. Tapescript of the text for listening in listening test 1 (The source of the tape-recorded audio text was the class cassette that was a part of teaching materials developed by the first author. The materials were designed for the course of oral business communication Starting

Business Relations.)

A. Come in!

B. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

A. Oh, here you are! Sylvia, I would like you to meet Mr. Schevchuk. Mr. Schevchuk, that's Miss Sylvia Peters, our Public Relations manager.

B. Glad to meet you, Mr. Schevchuk.

C. How do you do. Nice to meet you.

A. How about a drink, guys? Something refreshing, eh?

B. It would be nice. Coca-Cola is just what I need.

C. And the same for me, please.

A. Well, here you are. And now I'm leaving you alone. I must be off. See you soon.

B. Well, Mr. Schevchuk, Jack has informed me about your problem. I'm ready to answer all your questions about the structure of our company.

C. Miss Peters, first of all I would like to know about the functions of departments which are under the Managing director.

B. I think that the functions of the Sales and Production departments are quite clear. As to the Human Resources department, it takes care of the personnel, its recruitment, and training. The Finance department is responsible for finance and accounting, and the Management Services department is in charge of rationalization throughout the company. Finally, the R&D department works on new products development. It works in close contact with the Regions. Each department has its own manager or director.

C. And what about the Regions?

B. Well, Regions, or regional departments, are under direct control of

the Managing Director, as you probably know. They report to him. But Regional Managers are supported by two Sections - Marketing and Technical Services. The Section Heads, or Leaders, are accountable to Regional Managers. They work with the Regions on the marketing and technical problems.

C. I see that the Managing Director is the key figure in the company. He is in charge of everything and everybody is accountable to him.

B. You are right in principle. But you must remember that a big company, such as ours, can have its subsidiaries abroad. For example, we have three subsidiaries: Rutland Canada, Rutland Australia and Rutland Greece. The subsidiaries report their activities to the Export Sales department of the parent company, i.e., to our offices here in London. The Export Sales department, in its turn, is accountable directly to the Board of Directors and not to the Managing Director. Well, that's a brief survey of the management of our company.

C. Thank you very much. You helped me a lot. I still have many questions, but don't want to take too much of your time. But can we meet again?

B. Yes, sure. It would be nice. Let me look into my diary. Will tomorrow at 10 a.m. do for you? I'll have a full hour to answer all your questions.

C. Wonderful. Thank you. I'll be on the spot at 10 sharp. Good-bye.

B. So long. See you tomorrow.

Sample 2. Comprehension questions for listening test 1.

(1)What departments are under the Managing Director? (2)What is the function of the Human Resources department? (3)What is the Management Services department in charge of? (4)What does the R&D department work on? (5)Who directly controls Regional departments?, (6)What two sections support Regional Managers?, (7)Who are Section Heads accountable to?, (8)Who is the key figure in a company?, (9)Whom do the subsidiaries report to?, (10)What body is the Export Sales department accountable to?

Sample 3. Text for reading in reading test 2 (retrieved from the Internet in a slightly adapted and abridged version:
<http://www.wikipedia.com/wiki/Japan/Economy>).

Japan's Economics

Japans industrialized, free-market economy is the second-largest in the world after the United States. Its economy is highly efficient and competitive in areas linked to international trade, but productivity is far lower in areas such as agriculture, distribution, and services. After achieving one of the highest economic growth rates in the world from the 1960s through the 1980s, the Japanese economy slowed dramatically in the early 1990s, when the "bubble economy" collapsed. Its reservoir of industrial leadership and technicians, well-educated and industrious work force, high savings and investment rates, and intensive promotion of industrial development and foreign trade have produced a mature industrial economy. Japan has few natural resources, and trade helps it earn the foreign exchange needed to purchase raw materials for its economy.

While Japan's long-term economic prospects are considered good, Japan is currently in its worst recession since World War II. Plummeting stock and real estate prices marked the end of the "bubble economy" of the late 1980s. The impact of the Asian financial crisis also has been substantial. Real GDP in Japan grew at an average of roughly 1% yearly between 1991-98, compared to growth in the 1980s of about 4% per year. Growth in Japan in this decade has been slower than growth in other major industrial nations. The Government of Japan has forecast growth in Japan fiscal year 2001 at 1.7%. A number of economic indicators remain in negative territory, and growth for first quarter 2001 was 0.2%.

Agriculture, Energy, and Minerals

Only 15% of Japan's land is suitable for cultivation. The agricultural economy is highly subsidized and protected. With per hectare crop yields among the highest in the world, Japan maintains an overall agricultural self-sufficiency rate of about 50% on fewer than 5.6 million cultivated hectares (14 million acres). Japan normally produces a slight surplus of rice but imports large quantities of wheat, sorghum, and soybeans, primarily from the United States. Japan is the largest market for U.S. agricultural exports.

Given its heavy dependence on imported energy, Japan has aimed to diversify its sources. Since the oil shocks of the 1970s, Japan has reduced dependence on petroleum as a source of energy from more than 75% in 1973 to about 57% at present. Other important energy sources are coal,

liquefied natural gas, nuclear power, and hydropower.

Deposits of gold, magnesium, and silver meet current industrial demands, but Japan is dependent on foreign sources for many of the minerals essential to modern industry. Iron ore, coke, copper, and bauxite must be imported, as must many forest products.

Labor

Japan's labor force consists of some 64 million workers, 40% of whom are women. Labor union membership is about 12 million. The unemployment rate is currently 4.9% - a post-war high. In 1989, the predominantly public sector union confederation, SOHYO (General Council of Trade Unions of Japan), merged with RENGO (Japanese Private Sector Trade Union Confederation) to form the Japanese Trade Union Confederation.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$2.95 trillion (1999 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 0.3% (1999 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$23,400 (1999 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: agriculture: 2%, industry: 35%, services: 63% (1999 est.)

Population below poverty line: NA%

Household income or consumption by percentage share: lowest 10%:

NA%, highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices): -0.8% (1999 est.)

Labor force: 67.76 million (November 1999)

Labor force - by occupation: trade and services 65%, industry 30%, agriculture, forestry and fishing 5%

Unemployment rate: 4.7% (1999 est.)

Budget: revenues: \$463 billion expenditures: \$809, including capital expenditures (public works only) of about \$94 billion

Industries: among world's largest and technologically advanced producers of motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, processed foods

Industrial production growth rate: -0.1% (1999 est.)

Electricity - production: 995,982 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - production by source: fossil fuel: 56.68%, hydro: 8.99%, nuclear: 31.93% other: 2.4% (1998)

Electricity: consumption: 926,263 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (1998)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (1998)

Agriculture - products: rice, sugar beets, vegetables, fruit, pork, poultry, dairy products, eggs, fish

Exports: \$413 billion (f.o.b., 1999 est.)

Exports: commodities: motor vehicles, semiconductors, office machinery, chemicals

Exports: partners: US 31%, Taiwan 7%, China 5.5%, South Korea 5.4%
 Hong Kong 5.2% (1999)
 Imports: \$306 billion (c.i.f., 1999 est.)
 Imports: commodities: fuels, foodstuffs, chemicals, textiles, office
 machinery
 Imports: partners: US 22%, China 4%, South Korea 5.1%, Australia 4.2%,
 Taiwan 4.1% (1999)
 Debt - external: \$NA
 Economic aid - donor: \$9,1 billion (1999)
 Currency: yen
 Exchange rates: yen per US\$1 - 105.16 (January 2000), 113.91 (1999),
 130.91 (1998), 120.99 (1997), 108.78 (1996), 94.06 (1995)
 Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March

Sample 4. Comprehension questions for reading test 2.

- 1)What place does the economy of Japan occupy in the world?;
- 2)What can you say about the economic situation in Japan now?;
- 3)What is the situation in Japan's agriculture?;
- 4)What are the principal sources of energy used in Japan?;
- 5)What can you say about the labor resources of the country?;
- 6)What was Japan's budget in 2000/2001 fiscal year?;
- 7)What branches of industry are most developed in Japan?;
- 8)What does Japan export, and what countries were its principal
 export partners in 1999?;
- 9)What does Japan import, and what countries were its principal
 import partners in 1999?;
- 10)What are the dates of fiscal year in Japan?

Appendix D

Questionnaire For Students' Evaluation of the Coursebook and Methods Used

Please help us to know your opinion of the coursebook that you have
 been using this academic year.

1. Do you like the coursebook that you have been using (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

2. If you compare this coursebook with those that you have used before,
 is it better, worse, or just similar (circle better, worse, or just similar)?
 better worse just similar

3. Do you think that assignments in the coursebook were fun or that they
 were boring (circle fun or boring)?
 fun boring

4. Did you enjoy your classes of Business English when this coursebook
 was being used (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

5. Do you believe that the assignments in the coursebook were creative
 and helped you demonstrate your creative potential, imagination, fanta-
 sy, inventiveness, your personality, and resources (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

6. Do you believe that the assignments in the coursebook gave you as
 much autonomy (independence) for doing them as you would like to
 have (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

7. Did you get sufficient help for doing such assignments (circle yes or
 no)?
 yes no

8. Were the materials and assignments in the coursebook interesting,
 attractive, and useful for you personally (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

9. Did the way of learning Business English suggested in the coursebook
 suit you personally (circle yes or no)?
 yes no

10. Do you think it is the best, most efficient, and useful way of learning
 Business English or would you prefer something different (circle the best
 way or something different)?
 the best way something different

11. Did you feel that your personal command of Business English was growing from class to class when you were using this coursebook (circle yes or no)?

yes no

12. Did the coursebook, the assignments in it, the course organised on the basis of this coursebook help you feel relaxed, anxiety-free, interested, and active in class (circle yes or no)?

yes no

13. Were the assignments in the coursebook too difficult for you, too easy for you, just right as to difficulty (circle too difficult, too easy, or just right)?

too difficult too easy just right

Thank you for your help!