Pedagogical Materials for Students in International Business Spanish: Developing Competent Interlocutors for the Latin America's Sustainability-Oriented Business Community

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Project Summary

Latin America is a resource-rich region that wants to advance an ambitious and comprehensive green agenda and many US businesses want to invest in its climate-focused economic transition. As this region seeks to attract foreign investment, the US Chamber of Commerce calls this "a unique opportunity for the region to work with the US and exercise global leadership in critical areas." In conducting international business with this region, constructive dialogues are needed to establish relations and exchange ideas. Such dialogues can be more effective if the US business community has interlocutors that possess (a) cultural understanding, (b) awareness and knowledge of the commitment of the region's businesses to the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and (c) ability to discuss business' sustainability matters in the area's language: Spanish (UNESCO, 2017; Simon, 1980). Language barriers are an obstacle that US companies face when establishing trading partnerships and expanding business activities across borders. Communication costs (such as translators and interpreters) and a lack of linguistic and cross-cultural knowledge—including the business culture—can hinder activities. Research on the influence of language in international trade shows that there is a causality relation between trade and language proficiency. Proficiency in Spanish, the most used language in the western hemisphere, is a strategic asset that will grow in importance as the international market shifts its focus away from English as the lingua franca of business. As for the UN's Agenda for Sustainable Development, Latin America is strongly committed to its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a means to change modern development patterns that have had a devastating impact on its social development and natural environment. Many Latin American countries recognize the need for the business sector to participate in these efforts and an overwhelming majority of companies in the region (80%) report that they are acting on the Agenda's SDSs, the highest anywhere in the world (UN Global Compact, 2018).

In US higher learning institutions, existing international business majors prepare students to understand and apply business skills in cross-cultural and global contexts. Most of these majors require an equivalent of an intermediate level of a foreign language, and many incorporate at least one sustainability course. However, very few emphasize the centrality of cultural and linguistic competency to the business sector or favor a truly integrative education in language and business. How can we prepare these students so they can effectively establish business relations with a Latin American business sector driven by the UN's 2030 agenda? Currently, there is a lack of content-based language courses and pedagogical materials that can simultaneously raise international business students' awareness and engagement with sustainable development issues and make them competent interlocutors in the Latin America's business community.

This project helps fill that void by providing the Business Languages teaching community with pedagogically appropriate materials that can help prepare business students interested in Latin America for sustainable competitiveness, so they can face the challenges of the future. Making available these materials to instructors teaching Business Spanish courses has the potential to benefit a large population of students, improve their Business Spanish proficiency and allow them to engage in conversations regarding sustainable development goals for the business sector while preparing them to build relationships

with this region's business community. At the same time, then materials address CIBER's mandate of promoting sustainable competitiveness, which is closely related to the social context in which businesses operate. This means that linguistic and cultural understanding are strategic assets to give US businesses a competitive edge in Latin America. Therefore, investing in the language skills of the US business community is an asset to improve the US competitiveness in the region.

The materials use problem-based pedagogy, a learner-centered approach where students evaluate and find solutions to real sustainability issues of the target societies and cultures in which they occur. As a result, students gain an understanding of Latin America's business sustainability values, perspectives, needs, and actions. Each unit contains a *case study* directly related to one or more social and environmental (SDGs). The analysis of sustainability problems or *cases* is an effective strategy for college students to develop higher-level competencies as advanced bilinguals (or multilinguals) with sustainability awareness and knowledge.

Pedagogical materials

Two pedagogical units that address important social and environmental sustainability issues that are central to the region's business community. Each of the units includes, among other materials, an authentic case study that students analyze and negotiate using Spanish as the language of communication. The materials target the development of *post-intermediate Spanish language proficiency*, and therefore are written in the target language.

1. **UNIT 1: Forced Labor in Latin America and Its Impact on Sustainable Development**. The unit contains audio and video materials, activities, and collaborative tasks. It also includes links to several additional sources of information.

   UNIT 1 Pedagogical Guide for Instructors. Located at end of the unit, it includes pedagogical goals for each section, activity, and task; content explanations where needed, especially those referred to business content and sustainability; and the target Spanish language structures required for students to develop advanced language capabilities.

2. **UNIT 2: Natural Resource Exploitation in Latin America and Its Impact on Sustainable Development**. The unit contains audio and video materials, activities, and collaborative tasks. It also includes links to several additional sources of information.

   UNIT 2 Pedagogical Guide for Instructors. Located at end of the unit, it includes pedagogical goals for each section, activity, and task; content explanations where needed, especially those referred to business content and sustainability; and the target Spanish language structures required for students to develop advanced language capabilities.

Each unit is divided in four sections as follows:

Parts	Description

▪ **Context**
  ○ Text 1: *Introduction*
  ○ Text 2: *Title*
  ○ Text 3: *Title*
  ○ Text 4: *Title*
	This section presents four informational texts (with links to additional materials) that provide students with the necessary context to understand and contextualize the sustainability case integrated in the unit.

▪ **Sustainable Development Goal**
 	
    ○ Learning objectives
    ○ Text 1: *About the SDG*
    ○ Text 2: *Title*
	In this section students learn about one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they relate to the business world. The learning objectives have been selected from the "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives" document published by UNESCO in 2017. These objectives constitute the knowledge and competencies related to the SDG that students will develop throughout the rest of the unit.

▪ **Case** (title)
 	
    ○ Learning objectives: Sustainability competencies
    ○ *The case*
    ○ Additional information
    ○ Analysis
    ○ Decision-making
	This is the final section of the learning sequence. A text introduces an authentic case that exemplifies unsustainable practices and activities, followed by a section with additional information. After identifying the specific sustainability problems, students will (a) analyze the case and (b) make decisions and come up with sustainable solutions that prevent the problems caused by unsustainable practices.
	
	Sustainability Competencies
	Through working on the case, students are expected to develop sustainability competencies. These are necessary for students to understand sustainability issues and, as a result, contribute as informed, constructive, and responsible citizens to the resolution of these problems and the achievement of a more sustainable world. The development of these competencies, which are relevant to all SDGs, is gradual and occurs through learning opportunities over several years. Therefore, the pedagogical objective is not to achieve the competencies but to continuously develop them. The overarching competence targeted is developing the ability to solve problems, facilitated by the of six specific capacities. All collaborative tasks presented throughout the case study promote one or more of these competencies. The competences have been adapted from Wiek *et al,* 2011 and 2016.[1]
	These are marked with codes in each unit: PS (Systemic Thinking), CN (Normative Competence), CE (Strategic Competence), CA (Anticipatory Competence), and CG (Global Citizenship).

▪ **Self-assessment of learning**
 	
    ○ Use of Spanish
    ○ Knowledge about SSG
    ○ Sustainability competencies
	Students complete a self-assessment of learning objectives (see last three pages of each unit).

Pages four and five below offer a more detailed description of one unit.

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[1] Wiek, A. et al., (2016). Operationalizing competencies in higher education for sustainable development. In M. Barth, G. Michelsen, M. Rieckmann & I. Thomas (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of higher education for sustainable development*. London and New York: Routledge.

UNIT 1: Forced Labor in Latin America and Its Impact on Sustainable Development

CONTEXT

Text 1. Introduction
A brief text with a general overview of labor in the region. The text contains two links to two charts with data on informal labor and projections on unemployment in several countries.

- Activity 1. Target vocabulary comprehension
- Activity 2. Use of target vocabulary
- Activity 3. Text comprehension

Text 2. Forced Labor in Latin America
It presents the global problem of forced labor, a type of modern slavery: figures, characteristics, victims, causes and consequences, and its presence in the Americas. The text contains three links two global data—global figures of victims and the broader context of modern slavery in the world—and figures for five Latin American countries. A final link leads to a brief article by the World Bank. It is important to note that the Global Slavery Index page provides data on modern slavery, within which forced labor is a subcategory.

- Activity 1. Target vocabulary comprehension
- Activity 2. Target vocabulary comprehension
- Activity 3. Use of target vocabulary
- Activity 4. Text comprehension
- Activity 5. Collaborative Task: examining a supply chain and Anticipating Forced Labor
- Activity 6. Collaborative Task: identifying forced labor in points of a supply chain
- Activity 7. Collaborative Task: creating questions to investigate presence of forced labor in a company's supply chain

Text 3. Peru: Political-Economic-Social Context
A brief chronological summary of the main political, economic, and social events in Peru over the past decades. The text and the activity allow students to familiarize themselves with the country that the case they will analyze later focuses on. The aim of the two tasks in this section is for students to identify some political, social, and economic characteristics that define the period from 1990 to 2023. This way, they can better understand the high level of informal labor in Peru. The text also contains three links that show historical rates of unemployment, poverty, and informal employment in the country.

- Activity 1. Collaborative Task: (a) identifying true or false information in a text and (b) selecting the most relevant information to establish connections with informal work
- Activity 2. Gathering information from a public opinion survey in Peru

Text 4. Forced Labor in Peru and Illegal Wood Extraction
It provides information about informal work in Peru, specifically forced labor: the figures, causes, and the profile of victims. The last two paragraphs focus on the wood industry in Peru, where forced labor is a common phenomenon. The text contains three links: the first is a poster from a campaign against forced labor, describing the areas and work environments where it has been identified. The second is also a campaign poster offering specific data about this phenomenon in the country. In the final paragraph, there is a map showing the presence of illegal logging in the Peruvian Amazon rainforest.

- Activity 1. Target vocabulary comprehension
- Activity 2. Target vocabulary comprehension
- Activity 3. Use of target vocabulary
- Activity 4. Understanding of a text and synthesis of graphic materials
- Activity 5. Identifying consequences of forced labor from a text and from a map
- Activity 6. Understanding a video about forced labor in the illegal wood industry in Peru
- Activity 7. Collaborative Task: learning to identify the characteristics of forced labor
- Activity 8. Collaborative Task: identifying characteristics of forced labor from real testimonies

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 8	
Learning Objectives	▪ Understand the value of full employment, fair wages, and decent (inclusive) work and their relationship with sustainable economic growth. ▪ Know the unemployment rates, informal employment, and forced labor in a country or region and which social groups are most affected. ▪ Grasp how low wages, informal employment, and forced labor lead to inequality, poverty, civil unrest, etc. ▪ Understand that decent work is a human right. ▪ Be able to identify conditions of informal labor, forced labor, and slavery. ▪ Understand how personal consumption affects the working conditions of others in the global economy.
Text 1. SDG 8: Decent Work for all	• Activity 1. Target vocabulary comprehension • Activity 2. Use of target vocabulary • Activity 3. Understanding SDG 8 targets • Activity 4. Understanding the interrelation between various SDGs and targets • Activity 5. Learning about the Protocol on Forced Labor of the International Labour Organization (ILO), linked to SDG 8 • Activity 6. Collaborative task: linking areas of action to combat forced labor to specific actions.
Text 2: The Global Compact: companies and SDGs A brief text about the United Nations Global Compact, an initiative to promote the SDGs in the corporate world. It contains a link to the Spanish page about the Global Compact, and another link to the official page, particularly to the area where organizations and corporations that have signed the Global Compact in each country can be seen.	• Activity 1. Target vocabulary comprehension • Activity 2. Use of target vocabulary • Activity 3. Text comprehension. Question 2: understanding the relationship between SDG 8 and the United Nations Global Compact. • Activity 4. Collaborative task: understanding the relationship between the business world and the SDGs by applying knowledge of the principles of the Global Compact to cases • Activity 5. Examining the specific case of a company that signed the Global Compact, how they apply the principles of the Global Compact, and what their commitment to the SDGs is. • Activity 6. Collaborative Task: exploring a Company's commitment (or lack thereof) to SDG 8 (Forced Labor) by deciding on demonstrative actions or efforts

THE YACU-KALLPA CASE IN PERU (2015-PRESENT) The importation of wood carried out by a U.S. company, obtained from the illegal logging market in Peru, an industry where forced labor is common. **Objectives: Sustainability Competencies** **The case** A text that presents the case. Accompanying the text are two links: the first contains more information about the Lacey Act of 2008; the second leads students to explore the Loreto region on Google Earth. It's a good idea to let students explore the map. The case relates to what students have learned in the section about companies and the Global Compact, and the activities related to corporate responsibility in the supply chain. **Additional Information** This section allows students to delve into the case in more detail, explore new dimensions, and establish connections with SDG 8 and other specific goals and targets of sustainable development.	See Unit 2 for the list Activity 1. Text comprehension • Activity 1. Video comprehension to obtain information about one of the stakeholders • Activity 2. Reading comprehension about NGO Transparency International-Peru's Report on the Yacu-Kallpa case to obtain information • Activity 3. Reading comprehension of two texts to obtain contextual information about the case • Activity 4. Collaborative task: identifying the impacts on sustainable development of illegal operations in Loreto (Peru) and in Global Plywood's supply chain • Activity 5. Comprehension of two lists to learn about mechanisms that countries can adopt to combat forced labor within and outside borders • Activity 6: Establishing connections between the case and some of the targets of SDG 8, SDG 15, and SDG 16, and understanding how the same case has impacts on multiple SDGs
Case Analysis Working with sustainability case pedagogy requires the use of a research-based pedagogical approach, or Problem-Based Learning. Once the case or problem has been presented to the students, they should analyze it in detail and attempt to solve it, which means making decisions and proposing a sustainable solution. The analysis and decision-making (this section and the next) constitute the fundamental parts of working with a case. All the prior work in this unit will serve students well in successfully completing the tasks. The collaborative tasks in this section promote the development of collaborative competence in a broad sense. Through them, students also develop specific sustainability competencies: PS (Systemic Thinking), CN (Normative Competence), CA (Anticipatory Competence), and CC (Collaborative Competency).	• Activity 1. Identifying and synthesizing the negative impact of this case on the three spheres of sustainable development • Activity 2. Identifying and understanding how sustainability dimensions interact and explain the causes of the unsustainability of an activity LR: using connectors to express causes or reasons • Activity 3. Collaborative task: identifying the risks and possible impacts of inaction in sustainability LR: expressing conditions that introduce events in the future; expressing the possibility of future events (using the subjunctive) • Activity 4. Collaborative task: identifying the stakeholders in a sustainability case and hypothesizing their interests, and responsibilities

LR = linguistic resources	• Activity 5. Collaborative task: articulating the values and principles of sustainable development of different actors involved in a sustainability case LR: expressing the cause or effect of an action; expressing concessions and refutations • Activity 6. Collaborative task: developing one stakeholder's arguments to defend their viewpoint using data, examples, and references to sources. This task constitutes the necessary preparation for students to begin the decision-making phase where they will have to defend their viewpoint using sustainable development arguments. LR: referring to a specific aspect of a topic; explaining data and statistics; providing examples; providing reference sources
Decision-Making Decision-making is a fundamental component of working with a case. Through these tasks, students develop specific sustainability skills. The tasks in this section particularly promote the development of four competencies: CE (Strategic Competency), CA (Anticipatory Competency), CG (Global Citizenship), and CC (Collaborative Competency).	• Activity 1. Presenting sustainability-based arguments to support a position on a topic. Preparing a written rebuttal for three arguments. LR: repeat others' words; introduce counterarguments (rebuttals) • Activity 2. Collaborative Task: participating in a debate; defending and refuting viewpoints and evaluating and adopting different perspectives LR: expressing agreement or disagreement; expressing the cause or effect of an action; expressing personal opinions • Activity 3. Collaborative Task: preparing a sustainable strategy or action plan for a new company LR: expressing needs; making proposals; expressing priorities • Activity 4. Evaluating an action plan using ethical sustainability criteria • Activity 5. Presenting the sustainable strategy or action plan for the new company; evaluating a plan using sustainability criteria • Activity 6. Collaborative Task: deciding on the limitations and possible risks of a plan and devise strategies to address or prevent them. LR: expressing the possibility of something happening; expressing hypothetical needs; expressing hypothetical proposals; expressing future needs; expressing the purpose or intent of an action.
SELF-ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING Use of Spanish Knowledge of SDG 8 development of Sustainability Competencies	*See Unit 1, last two pages.