

INTRODUCTION

In 1979, after three decades of isolation, China instituted an open-door policy and launched the economic reforms that led from a centralized planned economy to a market-oriented one. Since then, China's economy has developed rapidly, and remarkable changes have taken place in other areas. It is anticipated that China will become one of the two or three leading economic powers in the world in the coming decades. Attracted by its vast market and great potential, most multinational corporations and many medium and small companies have started operations or investments in this most populous country. The trend accelerated with China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December 2001, which signaled the opening of more sectors to foreign investment, greater deregulation, and the use of a fully convertible currency. Now the question for most businesses is not "Should we move into China?" but "Can we afford *not* to go to China?" (Alan Donald, foreword to *Doing Business in China*, by Tim Ambler and Morgen Witzel [Routledge: London, 2000]). In these circumstances, it is no wonder that teaching and learning business Chinese at the advanced level is booming.

The choice of business Chinese textbooks at the college level is limited, however. Those available are either out of date or too narrowly focused (predominantly on international trade), or they are designed in a traditional way, with a concentration on lexical and grammatical explanation and reinforcement—an approach perhaps more suitable for the teaching of intermediate students. An advanced business-Chinese textbook that is both linguistically challenging and intellectually stimulating, with a pedagogic balance between linguistic forms and business content and with a wide range of topics, would meet an urgent need.

Advanced Business Chinese: Economy and Commerce in a Changing China and the Changing World was developed to meet that need. The purpose of this textbook is twofold. First, it aims to enhance the linguistic skills of advanced learners of Chinese as specified in the guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) — that is, to help them use the target language in a comfortable manner in a professional context. Second, it aims to help students gain a better understanding of modern China by reading and using Chinese, which will help prepare them for business careers in China or in China-related environments.

The readings were selected with those ends in mind, from newspapers, academic journals, and the Internet. They range from factual articles about the WTO, to descriptions of management reforms in China, to discussions of such controversial issues as layoffs, corruption, and globalization. Through these readings about contemporary concerns the students are introduced both to the terminology used in international trade and finance, management, marketing, the stock market, and economic law and to the formal written discourse used in the business world. The follow-up exercises give practice and reinforcement through column matching, paraphrasing, and other form-focused work and offer ways to adopt the vocabulary and discourse in meaning-focused, task-based activities, such as class debate, case studies, and guided essay writing. By reading and discussing the main text, case studies, and supplementary readings and performing the exercises, students not only explore the issues in depth but have the opportunity to actively use the language. They can thus develop their language skills in a dynamic and communicative context, promote their understanding of modern China and the world from multiple perspectives, and develop their critical-thinking abilities.

Target Students

Advanced Business Chinese is designed for advanced business-Chinese courses offered at the fourth-year level or higher in colleges and universities and for other advanced Chinese courses in which instructors wish to incorporate some readings on China's economy. Ideally, students will have some knowledge of economics either through courses or work experience and will possess advanced Chinese-language proficiency as specified in the ACTFL guidelines.

The Text

There are nineteen chapters grouped into five units, plus a conclusion; each unit contains three or four chapters on a thematic topic from different perspectives. This structure gives students a better understanding of the topic, on the one hand, and the opportunity to come across repeatedly and learn to use the terminology common to the selections, on the other hand.

Most readings are published articles modified to suit the purposes of this textbook; the rest were written by myself based on published materials. In some chapters cases are provided as part of the exercises so that students can apply the general idea introduced in the text. In other chapters supplementary readings are provided to give students further information on aspects of the topic.

Organization of the Chapters

Each chapter has pre-reading questions, a reading, glossaries, and exercises.

Pre-reading questions. These questions aim to activate students' background knowledge and vocabulary relevant to the topic of the chapter. Through the pre-reading questions instructors can also learn how much the students already know in order to adjust the teaching plan.

Readings. Most of the readings are two to four pages long and contain fifteen hundred to two thousand Chinese characters. Each of the main readings is in both simplified and traditional characters.

Glossaries. All the readings, including case studies and supplementary readings, are glossed. Each vocabulary entry includes both simplified and traditional characters, the Pinyin romanization, and a brief definition in English. A guide to all the glossed words appears in an index at the end of the book.

Exercises. Each chapter contains from five to seven exercises, including case studies and supplementary readings; some exercises are controlled, and some are task based. Only simplified Chinese characters are used in the exercises. Keys to some of the exercises are at the end of the book.

The whole book is constructed in a cumulative manner. However, since the chapters are not ordered by level of difficulty, instructors do not have to work through the book from the beginning but are free to proceed in whatever order suits their needs.

Web Page and Contact Information

For the convenience of the users of this textbook, a website is being developed to provide the Pinyin version and English translation of each main reading, along with

relevant background information and samples of student work. The address is provided below.

Comments and suggestions about this textbook are welcome. My contact information is as follows:

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