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Running Head: BUSINESS CHINESE TEACHING SURVEY

A Preliminary Investigation of Business Chinese Teaching among U.S. Institutions of Higher
Education

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Abstract

This study examined the current practice of college-level for-credit Business Chinese (BC) teaching in the United States (U.S.). Through Internet and manual searches, we found 21 schools offering 39 BC courses. These courses were primarily offered at the advanced level with three credits. In addition, BC teaching was more commonly conducted through a sequence of two to three BC courses than through a single course. Based on interviews with representatives of four BC-course-offering schools, the qualitative part of this study examined BC teaching from a language curriculum development perspective (Brown, 1995). The qualitative data was organized and discussed in terms of the essential elements of a BC curriculum: *needs analysis, goals and objectives, testing, materials, teaching, and evaluation.*

Keywords: Business Chinese, language for specific purposes

A Preliminary Investigation of Business Chinese Teaching among U.S. Institutions of Higher Education

Introduction

The rapid development in international economic cooperation during the past few decades has called for business professionals familiar with the language and culture of target business contexts. In response to this need, teaching language for business purposes in the U.S. started to develop in the early 1980s (Hong, 1996a). The field continues to develop with the establishment of over 30 CIBERs (Center for International Business Education and Research) across the nation. A recent survey by Long & Uscinski (2012) showed that business language courses were the most common type of foreign-language-for-specific-purpose courses offered by 108 institutions of higher education in the U.S.

Business Chinese (BC) teaching in the U.S. started with Rickett and Walton's (1982) pioneer discussion on the development of BC instructional materials. By 2009, thirty institutions of higher education in the U.S. were offering or were about to offer BC courses (Chen, 2012). While BC courses constituted 1% of all business language courses offered at the tertiary level in the U.S. in 1990, the percentage increased to 12% in 2012 (Long & Uscinski, 2012). In addition to course offering, researchers have examined a range of research topics related to BC teaching, such as BC curriculum/course development (e.g., Chen, 1998, 2012; Hong, 1996a, 1996b; Liu, 2004), pedagogy and technology use (e.g., Hsu, 1999; Wang, 2007; Yuan, 2006; Zhang, H. 2002; Zhu, 2001), BC textbook analysis (e.g., Du, 2012; Wang, 2011), needs analysis among business corporations and/or business professionals (Gao, 2006; Gao & Prime, 2010; Gao & Womack, 2007; L. Zhang, 2011), and learners' pragmatic competence in business contexts (e.g., Hong,

1998). The small but growing collection of research studies has greatly contributed to our understanding of BC teaching.

With the steady development in BC education in the U.S., what seems to be missing in research is an investigation into how BC teaching is actually conducted at various institutions of higher education. Research of this nature would allow us to learn from existing experience in BC teaching and to identify issues that need to be addressed for the future. This study is an effort in this direction. We aim to understand the current practice of BC teaching by combining online search for BC course information and in-depth interviews with BC course developers. In the next section, we briefly review the previous surveys of BC courses among U.S. universities and colleges.

Previous Surveys on BC Teaching in the U.S.

The University of Michigan conducted two surveys on BC course offerings among U.S. institutions of higher education in 2006 and 2009, respectively. The surveys focused on quantitative measures, and the combined results were briefly summarized in Chen's (2012) article. According to Chen, 27 universities/colleges were offering or were planning to offer BC courses in 2006; the number increased to 30 in 2009. The majority of the BC courses were third or fourth year courses with three credit hours. Approximately half of the BC-course-offering schools taught only one BC course and the remaining offered two BC courses over two semesters. The enrollment for each school varied between 10 and 40 without a dominant ethnic and/or academic background in the student population. The schools surveyed used 14 (series of) published textbooks. In terms of instructional foci, emphasis was placed on speaking and listening concerning generic topics (rather than business topics), on comprehending texts about general topics in business (rather than on comprehending business documents), and on listening,

speaking and reading skills (rather than writing skill).

The findings of the two surveys have provided useful information about BC teaching in U.S. institutions of higher education. Given the trend of development shown in the two surveys, it would be meaningful to revisit the topic after three years in order to obtain a more accurate picture of BC course offerings. In addition, while the two surveys documented the quantitative results of BC education, the findings can be complemented with qualitative investigations into BC instruction at the level of individual schools. In examining the similarities and differences in BC education at different schools, the qualitative approach would allow an in-depth understanding of the successes and challenges involved in BC teaching. In the following section, we outline Brown's (1995) framework to be used for the qualitative analysis of this study.

A Framework for Examining Business Chinese Teaching

Brown (1995) proposed a framework for foreign language curriculum development. This framework consists of six elements: *needs analysis*, *goals and objectives*, *language testing*, *materials*, *teaching*, and *evaluation*. *Needs analysis* refers to the "systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to satisfy the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institution involved in the learning situation" (p. 21). It typically involves multiple parties (e.g., students, teachers, other stakeholders) in order to identify perceived problems, to set priorities, to determine the starting point based on students' initial abilities, to uncover attitudes of those involved towards the focal program, and to elicit solutions to perceived problems. Based on needs analysis, *goals* (i.e., general statements of desired learning outcome) and *objectives* (specific skills and knowledge that students need to master) of a language program can be determined. *Language testing*, then, is needed to gauge how well the goals and objectives are met. Another component, *materials*, means the "systematic

description of the techniques and exercises to be used in classroom teaching” (p.139). *Materials development*, therefore, involves determining pedagogical approaches (e.g., communicative, task-based), developing plans to organize instructional content (i.e., syllabus design), deciding techniques for presenting learning content (e.g., lecturing, discussing), and constructing exercises for students to practice what is taught. The next component, *teaching*, concerns the informational, administrative, pedagogical, and affective support that a language program should provide for maximizing instructors’ teaching performance. Finally, *evaluation* is an on-going process of systematically gathering and analyzing information about all of the previously mentioned elements so as to assess the effectiveness of a language curriculum and to improve it.

Brown’s framework can serve as a useful guideline for examining the processes involved in developing a BC curriculum. To illustrate, before conducting BC teaching, it is necessary to plan the instructional content based on an analysis of learning needs (*needs analysis*) and to determine the desired learning outcome (*goals and objectives*). In teaching BC courses, instructors should adopt appropriate pedagogical approaches and use suitable instructional resources (*materials*). They also need to develop valid and reliable assessment tools (*testing*). Meanwhile, instructors need various kinds of support to ensure smooth delivery of BC classes (*teaching*). Finally, *evaluation* needs to be conducted at various phases of BC curriculum development for improving it. Due to the above correlations, we adopted Brown’s framework to organize our qualitative data illustrating tertiary-level for-credit BC teaching practice in the U.S. The two research questions were:

RQ1: What kind of for-credit BC courses are offered at U.S. institutions of higher education?

RQ2: How do different schools understand and conduct BC teaching?

Methodology

To answer RQ1, manual search in relevant academic journals and web search were conducted to collect for-credit BC course information. Because there was no published list of BC-course-offering schools at the time of this study, this method, though not ideal, was considered as appropriate for our purpose. From May to July of 2012, we conducted online searches for BC course information using key words such as “business Chinese”, “Chinese for business purposes”, “business Chinese syllabus”, and “Chinese for business professionals”. Meanwhile, we manually searched two academic journals, *Global Business Languages* (1996-2012) and *Journal of Chinese Language Teachers Association* (1966-2012), for any information related to BC courses. The results obtained from the initial Internet and journal searches were screened to retain information of tertiary-level for-credit BC courses offered in the U.S. Non-credit courses and courses offered outside the U.S. were excluded from our analysis. After this screening process, we found 27 institutions offering 54 BC courses.¹ The status of the 54 courses was further examined through a manual check of the class schedules of the academic year (AY) 2011-2012 for the 27 institutions. Whenever possible, class schedules for AY 2010-2011 and AY 2012-2013 were also checked. A course not listed on any of the searched class schedules was further excluded from analysis. As a result, 39 BC courses offered at 21 schools remained. Appendix 1 shows the 21 schools with their respective BC course information.

To answer RQ2, we conducted in-depth interviews with BC professors. Based on information collected through the procedures conducted for RQ1, we sent out interview requests via e-mails to 10 schools in August of 2012. These schools were selected to reflect the variations in BC course offerings regarding course level (e.g., elementary, intermediate, and advanced),

¹ A business Chinese course is defined as a course with a distinct course number.

course credit hours (e.g., 3-credit, 4-credit), and curriculum design (e.g., single BC course vs. multiple BC courses). Representatives of four universities agreed to be interviewed. Table 1 shows an overview of the four schools with their BC course information. Among these schools, two have been offering BC courses since mid-1990s and the other two since the 2000s; one school offered single BC course catering to intermediate-level learners, and the remaining three offered multiple BC courses to advanced-level students. Although this sample is tilted toward the multiple-BC-course model for advanced learners, it actually reflected the focus in the field (see the results for RQ1 below). As for the interviewees, they all have served as BC course developers and instructors in their respective schools, and they all have published BC textbooks. By the time of this study, they have been teaching business Chinese with between six to over twenty years. Therefore, they were considered as experienced due to their rich instructional experience (i.e. length of BC instruction, role in BC course development) and academic expertise (i.e., BC textbook publication).

The interviews were conducted based on a pre-developed interview protocol. The interview questions (see Appendix 2) were designed to obtain information regarding the following four aspects: (a) the academic environment (e.g., department) where BC courses are offered; (b) the interviewees' conceptualization of BC teaching; (c) the design and delivery of BC courses (e.g., pedagogical approach, assessment); (d) the interviewees' reflections on BC teaching. The interviews were conducted over telephone in Chinese (as chosen by the interviewees) and typically lasted for about 40-60 minutes.

Results and Discussions

RQ1: What kind of for-credit BC courses are offered?

As Table 2 shows, nine of the 21 schools offered one BC course, and 11 schools each offered

two or three courses over one academic year (two semesters or three quarters). One exceptional case was the BC program at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, where six BC courses were offered over three academic years. Of the 39 BC courses, 27 were 3-credit courses (69.2 %). The remaining 12 were either 4-credit courses (9, or 23.1%) or 8-credit courses (3, or 7.7 %). In terms of course levels, 33 (84.6 %) were advanced-level courses (defined as those minimally requiring the completion of second-year Chinese language courses), four (10.3 %) were intermediate level courses (defined as those minimally requiring the completion of first-year Chinese language courses), and only two (5.1 %) were elementary-level courses (defined as those with no prerequisite of Chinese language coursework). The above patterns of distribution hold for both single-BC-course-offering schools and multiple-BC-course-offering schools.

Three observations emerged in comparing our results with those of the previous surveys. First, while Chen (2012) reported 30 schools that were offering or were planning to offer BC courses in 2009, in this study we found 21 schools that were offering BC courses. However, since it was not clear how many schools were actually teaching BC courses in the 2009 survey, we cannot determine if there had been any increase (or decrease) in the number of BC-course-offering schools between 2009 and 2012. Meanwhile, we found six schools that listed BC course information on their websites but did not offer the courses for AY 2011-2012 (and in some cases not for AY 2010-2011 and AY 2012-2013 either). One of the schools shared with us that, after offering an advanced-level BC course twice since 2005, the course was discontinued due to low enrollment. Examples like this suggest that students' need for BC education at college level may be limited at least at some schools.

Second, our findings echoed previous survey results in that the majority of the BC courses were geared towards students with advanced-level proficiency (i.e., third or fourth year courses).

This trend suggests that BC teaching is generally regarded as a part of upper-division language education that can best achieve its instructional goals when students have already acquired foundational knowledge of Chinese language. Regarding the content of BC education, Chen (2012) argued that BC courses should emphasize three aspects of knowledge/skill: formal style, discipline-specific (i.e., business) words and expressions, and cultural and discipline-specific (business) knowledge. Because these three aspects are also the focal areas for learners working towards advanced-level Chinese proficiency regardless of content concentration (e.g., Chinese for science and technology, Chinese for business purposes), it is advisable for BC courses to be offered at the advanced level along with other Chinese language courses.

Finally, our results showed that BC teaching was more likely to be conducted as a sequence of courses (e.g., two courses for two consecutive semesters) than as a single course. This is somewhat different from previous survey findings (e.g., Chen, 2012), which showed that BC course sequence and single BC course were equally common. Compared with a single course, a course sequence can cover more topics and offer more focused learning opportunities to students; it can also provide course developers with more flexibility in designing and carrying out carefully staged pedagogical activities. On the other hand, the increased number of schools offering a sequence of BC courses suggests that these schools are successful in meeting the need of students and in retaining them. This trend differs with schools where BC teaching was discontinued (mentioned above). Future research should examine BC teaching conducted in both types of schools to learn about their programs' particular strengths and weaknesses.

RQ2: How do different schools understand and conduct BC teaching?

This section is organized based on Brown's (1996) framework. We report and discuss our findings regarding the six elements involved in teaching from a curriculum development

perspective: needs analysis, goals and objectives, materials, testing, teaching, and evaluation.

Needs analysis. The four interviewed professors all emphasized the importance of conducting needs analysis for BC education. Because the most important audience of BC courses are students enrolled in existing Chinese courses, a common means for conducting needs analysis among the schools was to examine these students' learning goals and desired learning content through course surveys and/or interviews. The results of the course surveys/interviews can demonstrate the students' need and thus motivate a school to start offering BC course. For example, School A decided to offer BC course because a considerable proportion of students enrolled in generic Chinese classes expressed their desire to learn more about how to do business with Chinese people.

When it comes to teaching BC courses, course developers need to decide and prioritize the specific skills and materials to be covered in class. Since many students of BC courses (typically undergraduates) usually have little experience with business (let alone experience with Chinese business) and may at best have a vague idea about what they will need for their possible business encounters in the future, the challenge for BC course developers is to identify the actual learning need, particularly the need of those who have had experience with Chinese business. School D was able to address this issue by connecting at-home BC education to overseas internship opportunities. With this focus, the school's BC courses were designed to prepare students who plan to attend its summer internship program in China. The feedback of the students who have gone through the entire process allowed the BC course developer to understand the language skills and knowledge that were actually needed for students to be successful in China. Based on the needs analysis among its study abroad students, School D's BC courses emphasized three aspects of skill/knowledge: Chinese language skills, Chinese business culture, and China's

socio-economic environment/development.

Admittedly, few schools can have the luxury of establishing overseas internship programs with ties to at-home BC education. This is why needs analysis involving course developers and host institutions is also critical in shaping BC teaching in various aspects such as course content and course level. For example, the BC courses offered at School C mainly focused on China's macro economic development (e.g., the influence of the Reform and Opening-up Policy). This approach was considered by the course developer as the most appropriate for her students after reviewing other instructional approaches (e.g., the case study approach) and topics (e.g., exploring how to conduct foreign trade). Facing a different set of considerations, the BC course offered at School A was made possible by replacing one existing fourth semester generic Chinese class with a BC class. This decision was made in consideration of budget availability (i.e., the school does not offer additional funding for the BC course) and student enrollment (i.e., offering BC course at the advanced level may reduce the enrollment in generic Chinese classes).

The interviewed schools also conducted, albeit on a less consistent basis, needs analysis involving outside stakeholders by utilizing the resources at their disposal. For example, through its internship program in China, School D was able to acquire feedback from participating companies/organizations on their students' performance every year. The BC course developer of the school often discussed the feedback with the employers for information about necessary changes in the BC curriculum. The effectiveness of the curriculum changes was then evaluated by reviewing students' internship performance in the following year. Through these cyclical procedures, School D gradually refined their original curriculum, which had an exclusive focus on language skills, by adding two additional components: China's business culture and its macro socio-economic environment/development.

While needs analysis involving outside stakeholders may not be readily accessible to BC course developers, one may turn to the research literature for information. Several empirical studies have been conducted to understand the linguistic and cultural obstacles that business professionals face in doing business with Chinese counterparts (e.g., Gao, 2006; Gao & Prime, 2010; Gao & Womack, 2007; Wang, 2011; L. Zhang, 2011). These studies typically targeted participants with a wide range of business background, age, Chinese language proficiency, job responsibility, and amount of contact with Chinese companies. This line of research has revealed a variety of topics that can potentially be addressed in BC instruction (e.g., culturally specific communication style, non-verbal communication skills, and knowledge of Chinese socio-economic system). Therefore, making connections between BC education and needs analysis among outside stakeholders would be an interesting research topic for the future.

Goals and objectives. Regarding the nature of BC teaching, our interviewees unanimously considered BC course as a course of Chinese language rather than a course of Chinese business. They also agreed that a BC course differed from a generic Chinese course in its business features. These features include, for example, business-related words and expressions, an emphasis on communicative competence in business contexts, and knowledge about Chinese business culture and/or China's socio-economic environment/development. For example, the professor from School B said: "Business Chinese teaching is a kind of Chinese language teaching with business content... it aims to increase [students'] language competence... [it] puts emphasis on applied language use in contemporary business world". Similarly, the professor from School A commented: "Business Chinese differs from generic Chinese in its emphasis on communication in business contexts... in addition to linguistic accuracy, cultural appropriateness is also critical". Clearly, these comments echoed the existing understanding of the overarching goal of BC

education, that is, to develop students' ability to conduct appropriate communication with Chinese business professionals in business contexts (e.g., Chen, 1998, 2012; Hong, 1996a; Rickett & Walton, 1982; Yang & Chen, 2008).

Our interviewees seemed to have different opinions towards the role of business content in BC teaching. To some professors, it is the business content that best prepares students for their future business encounters. Therefore, business content is one of the major learning objectives of BC courses, and the selection of what constitutes the core content for BC classes is of primary importance. Other professors, however, considered business content as a means to help students develop advanced-level Chinese proficiency. To them, advanced-level proficiency is characterized by the mastery of formal speech, an expanded vocabulary and expressions, and refined cultural knowledge. They believed that these three aspects could be cultivated through the learning of language materials with business content, just as it can be done through the learning of language materials with other content (e.g., science and technology, literature, etc.). Following this rationale, selecting what business content to teach becomes a less critical issue than selecting the language materials that can reflect the defining characteristics of advanced-level Chinese proficiency. Clearly, these two lines of thinking differ in the weights assigned to the business elements in BC teaching. Together, they reflect the ongoing discussion in the field on how to strike a balance between business and language in BC teaching to serve the needs of different programs (e.g., Chen, 1998, 2012; Liu, 2004).

Another comment concerning the goal of BC education focused on the necessity of developing students' autonomous learning ability. Because there is always a limit for what classroom teaching can do to develop students' language competence, and because it is impossible to prepare students for all business encounters, it is critical that the students are able

to support their self-learning effort to meet their need in business communication. As the professor from School B said: “We cannot bring students to an end point [of language learning], we should focus on bringing them to a starting point from which they are able to develop their own [language] competence to meet their need without [the help of] teachers”. This is an insightful suggestion since BC practitioners have primarily focused on how to develop students’ skills in business Chinese *per se*, rather than on how to help students sustain their self-learning efforts for the future. It would be interesting for future research to explore the ways through which this goal can be realized through BC teaching.

Materials. In this section, we report findings based on two categories, namely, teaching materials and instructional approaches. Our interviewees have all published BC textbooks. In discussing the development of BC teaching materials, an important consideration is how to make the instructional content up-to-date so as to reflect the latest development in the business world, while at the same time to ensure a certain degree of stability so that the content covered in BC classes will not become outdated shortly after the students complete the class. In this regard, we found that the instructional materials adopted by the focal schools mainly reflected typical business encounters and/or knowledge and information needed for performing common business activities. For example, the textbook used at School B included ten chapters covering a variety of topics (e.g., stock market, real estate market, foreign exchange market, marketing, international trade, transnational operations, ownership and modes of operation, business administration, economic recession and inflation, taxation, and personal finance management and insurance). A review of the contents showed that these chapters all consisted of less-specialized materials. For instance, the chapter on stock market did not discuss the tactics for succeeding in China’s stock market (which is more specialized content); instead, it included

an introduction to China's stock market with a focus on its history and current status (which is less-specialized content). These practices are in line with the Wide-Angle Approach for developing BC instructional materials as recently discussed in the field (e.g., Chen, 2012; Guan, 2006).

In terms of instructional approaches, the focal schools adopted a broadly defined task-based approach. This approach was favored for two reasons. First, by setting up tasks to simulate real-world situations, it can help create an authentic communicative environment to better engage students, especially in a foreign language learning environment. Second, because a task-based approach involves several stages of activities, namely, pre-task planning, task execution, and post-task evaluation, it can provide multiple opportunities for instructors to assist students to learn as well as for students to engage in collaborative learning activities. For example, one such task asked each student to make an in-class report on an international trade dispute involving China (or the U.S.). Before doing their presentations, the students were required to search for and synthesize the relevant information (e.g., in newspaper, online materials) within the past six months for their chosen topic; they were also asked to prepare presentation outlines according to the guidelines (detailing specific requirement in language and content) prepared by their instructor. The instructor also provided feedback to students after their presentations. Clearly, in carrying out this task, each student had several opportunities to interact with the instructor to discuss, revise, and improve their performance. The rationale of such task-based instruction is captured in the following comment by the professor from School B: "Regarding task-based instruction, we focus on the teacher-student interaction in the process of carrying out a learning task. The teachers guide and help the students, and they also receive feedback from the students. Meanwhile, the students can also understand the requirements of the

teachers and make improvement. The key to task-based instruction is to enable students to learn and improve gradually”.

Testing. As far as testing is concerned, a unique challenge that BC instructors face is to develop assessment tools to gauge the students’ mastery of the business content that characterizes BC courses. The business content typically falls into three categories: linguistic knowledge and skills (e.g., vocabulary, expressions, formal style), business culture (e.g., etiquette), and information about China’s socio-economic environment/development. In this regard, the focal schools adopted both summative assessments in order to evaluate students’ learning outcome against course objectives as well as formative assessments to understand students’ learning progress in order to inform teaching.

The summative assessments carried out by the focal schools typically took the form of paper-and-pencil tests and term projects. Paper-and-pencil tests can be used to assess students’ linguistic and cultural knowledge in business contexts. For example, the final course exam used by School A included cartoons that depicted business interactions (e.g., purchasing goods, doing advertisements) and typical phenomena in Chinese business culture (e.g., many small businesses in China tend to exaggerate their achievement and scale of operation). Based on the cartoons, the students’ were asked: (a) to create a written dialogue in Chinese with words and expressions learnt in class, and (b) to write a short “cultural observation” in English to demonstrate their understanding of a particular aspect of Chinese business culture. In addition to paper-and-pencil tests, term project was another commonly used method to assess students’ learning outcome. For instance, the students at School D were asked to write analytical essays based on business cases. The essays were expected to present an effective argument and were evaluated by examining the extent to which the students were able to use topic-appropriate words and expressions, to employ

appropriate style, to refer to appropriate business cases discussed in the class, and to demonstrate an understanding of Chinese business culture and China's general socio-economic environment.

In addition to summative assessments, formative assessments were also used by the focal schools to check students' learning progress. This typically involved providing qualitative feedback to students' performance on assignments, tests, and various stages of executing a learning task. The purpose is to provide information for teachers to modify instructional activities as well as to create incentives for students to improve. One professor expressed the importance of incorporating formative assessments in BC teaching: "Assessments [for BC courses] cannot be purely quantitative. The key is to develop an assessment mechanism that can provide opportunities for students to improve [their performance] gradually". With this understanding, the formative assessments of the focal schools followed a diachronic perspective in order to encourage students to monitor their own learning progress. For instance, the professor from School C shared: "In my BC courses, I work with each student to set his/her own learning objectives. I ask them to compare his [or her] own performance over time, rather than comparing themselves with other students".

While the focal schools adopted formative and summative assessments for their BC courses, the specific content and format of assessment varied according to their respective instructional objectives. Interestingly, although the standardized Business Chinese Test (BCT) is available since 2006, none of our interviewees referred to it in discussing testing for BC courses. A possible reason is that the BCT is designed as a proficiency test for assessing the overall Chinese language skills in business contexts. The purpose of the test is to understand an individual student's business Chinese competence in comparison with a group of test takers. As such, the foci of the BCT may not fully correspond to the learning objectives of individual BC courses.

Nevertheless, the standardized BCT could serve as an option for summative assessment for BC courses.

Teaching. Brown defines *teaching* as the various informational, administrative, academic, and affective supports that can enable instructors to carry out effective teaching. Commenting on the supports required for conducting effective BC teaching, our interviewees mentioned the need for academic research on various topics related to BC education. One such topic is the knowledge structure of qualified BC instructors. Because a defining feature of BC courses is the business content, a shortage of appropriate knowledge in and experience with Chinese business can pose a big challenge in teaching BC courses. In our study, three of the four interviewees were trained as applied linguists and/or Chinese language teaching professionals, and they all had to gradually accumulate the relevant business knowledge through personal efforts. However, obtaining an appropriate knowledge base for BC teaching does not mean that one has to become an expert in Chinese business before one can serve as a BC instructor. As one professor argued: “BC instructors do not necessarily need a profound knowledge in business. They can learn and improve along with their students. The purpose of equipping the instructors with appropriate knowledge in business is to enable them to better help students to develop language competence rather than knowledge in business”. Nevertheless, the issue remains as there has been little discussion on the knowledge structure for a qualified BC instructor. Research of this kind would be highly useful for BC teacher education because it can provide guidance for new and in-service teachers to direct their professional development efforts.

Another research topic closely related to BC education is the scientific development of BC textbooks. Being BC textbook writers themselves, what our interviewees mean by “scientific BC textbook development” is textbook development based on empirical research findings. For

example, one professor mentioned the necessity of conducting needs analysis among professionals doing business with Chinese companies to understand the necessary language skills and cultural knowledge that should be emphasized in BC textbooks. Another professor, arguing for the importance of developing students' autonomous learning ability, called for more research on how to help develop students' self-learning ability for BC learning and on finding ways to incorporate that into textbook development. Yet another professor mentioned the need to refine the foundational research necessary for writing BC textbooks. The example he mentioned was the Vocabulary List for Business Chinese Test. According to this professor, the problem of the current list is that all words are lumped together and not graded according to any operational criterion (e.g., frequency, difficulty). The list is thus not very useful for textbook development because textbook writers still have to come up with their own vocabulary hierarchy. The professor suggested developing a refined BC vocabulary list with levels determined based on empirical research (e.g., corpus analysis of authentic business interactions). Clearly, the research topics mentioned by our interviewees suggest that BC education is more than teaching BC courses. Effective BC teaching relies on solid research of multiple aspects before, during, and after the actual teaching effort.

Evaluation. In evaluating BC teaching, the focal schools seemed to be primarily concerned about the effectiveness of BC education against the generally agreed goal of helping students to develop their ability to conduct appropriate communication with Chinese business professionals in business encounters. The evaluation practice of School D for its at-home BC curriculum is a good example. By eliciting feedback from the students who participated in the affiliated internship program in China as well as from the institutions offering internship opportunities, the school was able to evaluate the extent to which the originally identified learning needs reflected

the actual student needs in the workplace. It also allowed the school to evaluate whether the instructional goals and objectives of at-home BC courses reflected the students' needs in authentic business encounters. A result of this evaluation process was the gradual incorporation of business culture and information about China's socio-economic environment/development into BC courses (as mentioned above). Moreover, the updated instructional objectives in turn motivated the school to evaluate the appropriateness of instructional materials and teaching methods for BC courses. Consequently, two new textbooks were developed by the school's BC faculty, and instruction was staged to progress from dealing with typical business encounters (for the first semester) to examining authentic business cases (for the second semester). Finally, in reflecting upon the effectiveness of assessment tools, the school adopted a combination of paper-and-pencil tests and term project (i.e., analytical essay writing based on business cases) to better measure the students' progress and learning outcome. Clearly, it was the continuous examination of the effectiveness of each component of BC education that contributed to the gradual improvement of the effectiveness of BC curriculum at School D.

While the primary concern of our interviewed schools was evaluating the *effectiveness* of BC curriculum, few seemed to evaluate their BC curriculum from the *efficiency* dimension and from the *attitudinal* dimension. These two additional dimensions were from the evaluation component of Brown's (1995) model. Results of RQ1 showed that BC teaching was typically delivered through one or two courses in most schools. With this limited amount of time for instruction, the issue of efficiency of BC curriculum becomes critical. On the other hand, understanding the *attitude* of those involved in BC teaching (e.g., students, teachers, administrators), particularly from the perspective of attitude changes (if any) before and after BC instruction, is also critical for a sustainable BC curriculum. After all, it is easier to continue an

educational effort that is perceived positively rather than negatively. Therefore, it would be advisable for BC practitioners to employ a multidimensional approach (consisting of effectiveness, efficiency, and attitude perspectives) for evaluating BC curriculum in the future.

Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

This study set out to understand the current practice of BC teaching conducted at U.S. institutions of higher education. The quantitative results showed that there were 21 schools offering 39 BC courses. These BC courses were typically geared towards students with advance-level Chinese proficiency. In addition, BC teaching was more commonly conducted through a sequence of courses than through a single course. The qualitative part of this study examined the experience of four schools in conducting BC teaching from a curriculum development perspective. The results showed that BC courses were unanimously conceptualized as Chinese language courses for business purposes (rather than courses for Chinese business), with the goal of enhancing students' Chinese competence for conducting appropriate communication in business contexts. In addition, the focal schools adopted various methods to conduct needs analysis and testing for BC education. They also focused on evaluating the effectiveness of their BC curricula (though less focused on the efficiency and attitudinal dimensions). Finally, the focal schools called for more research on BC instructional material development and teacher education. These findings complemented the results of previous surveys on BC teaching and offered new insights into the current practice of for-credit BC education from a curriculum development perspective.

We are aware that this study is limited in several ways. First, concerning RQ1 (i.e., what kind of BC courses are offered), although multiple methods were employed to locate relevant BC course information, some BC courses were inevitably left unanalyzed. Nevertheless, the list of

schools (Appendix 1) can serve as a reference point for future research of similar kind. Second, regarding RQ2 (i.e., how BC teaching is understood and conducted), we conducted in-depth interviews with four highly experienced BC course developers/instructors and BC textbook writers from representative schools. Although the qualitative results reported here can likely inform BC practitioners, the small sample size did not allow generalization to the entire field. We therefore agree with one of the reviewers and suggest future researchers to combine large-scale survey (quantitative) with in-depth interviews (qualitative) in order to gain a fuller picture of how tertiary-level BC teaching is conceptualized and conducted in the U.S. Third, this study aimed to understand the current practice of BC teaching from the perspective of BC educators. It would be helpful to further examine the impact of BC education from the perspectives of students and employers. Finally, the current study has an exclusive focus on BC education conducted at institutions of higher education. Considering the strong applied orientation of BC education, it would be important to examine BC teaching conducted at various companies and organizations that have established business relations with China.

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Table 1.

Overview of interviewed schools

School	BC course since	BC course information	Annual enrollment	Interviewee's role	Textbook
A (Public)	1997	One fourth semester level course (3 credits)	About 20	Course developer, instructor	Hong, W. (2007) <i>Practical Business Chinese</i> . China Books Periodical Inc.
B (Public)	1996	Two advanced level courses in one-year sequence (3 credits)	About 60	Course developer, instructor	Chen, et al. (2012). <i>The Routledge Course in Business Chinese</i> . Routledge.
C (Public)	2000	Three advanced level courses in one-year sequence (3 credits)	About 70	Course developer, instructor	Kuo, J. (2003) <i>Open for Business: Lessons in Chinese Commerce for the New Millennium</i> Vol. 1. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company. Kuo, J. (2007) <i>Open for Business: Lessons in Chinese Commerce for the New Millennium</i> Vol. 2. 2nd ed. Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company
D (Private)	2006	Two advanced level courses in one-year sequence (3 credits)	About 30	Course developer, instructor	Shi, Z., Hu, L., & Wang, X. (2010). <i>Excellent Chinese: Business Practice</i> . Foreign Language Teaching & Research Press. Shi, Z., Hu, L., & Wang, X. (Unpublished). <i>Excellent Chinese: Case Studies</i> .

Table 2.

Overview of current for-credit BC courses

		Single BC course offering	Multiple BC course offering
Institutions ($N=21$)		9	12
BC courses ($N=39$)		9	30
BC course hours	3 credits ($n=27$)	7	20
	4 credits ($n=9$)	2	7
	8 credits ($n=3$)	0	3
BC course levels *	Elementary * ($n=2$)	0	2
	Intermediate * ($n=4$)	3	1
	Advanced * ($n=33$)	6	27

*Elementary: no prerequisite; Intermediate: minimally completion of first year Chinese courses (or equivalent) as prerequisite; Advanced: minimally completion of second year Chinese courses (or equivalent) as prerequisite.

Appendix One
For-credit business Chinese course offerings in U.S. institutions of higher education

	#	Institutions	Course title	Hours	Level *
Single business Chinese course offerings	1	Brigham Young Univ.	CHIN 347 : Business Chinese	3	IN
	2	George Mason Univ.	CHIN 305-001: Chinese for the Business World	3	AD
	3	Iowa State Univ.	CHIN 304. Chinese for Business and Professions	4	AD
	4	Northeastern Univ.	CHNS 2151 Intermediate Chinese for Business Purposes	4	IN
	5	Purdue Univ.	CHIN 224 Chinese for Business Purpose	3	IN
	6	Saint Joseph Univ.	CHN 330 Chinese for Business	3	AD
	7	Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison	E ASIAN 411: Introduction to Business Chinese	3	AD
	8	Univ. of Wyoming	3055. Business Chinese	3	AD
	9	Utah State Univ.	CHIN 3510 Chinese Business Language	3	AD
Sequential business Chinese course offerings	10	Baylor College	3305 Chinese for Business I	3	AD
			3306 Chinese for Business II	3	AD
	11	Bryant Univ.	Chinese for Business - 3552 - ML CH404 - A	3	AD
			Chinese for Business II - 1046 - ML CH405 - A	3	AD
	12	Columbia Univ.	Business Chinese (First semester of one-year sequence)	4	AD
			Business Chinese (Second semester of one-year sequence)	4	AD
	13	Cornell Univ.	CHIN 3309 / 5509 Business Chinese in Cultural Context I	4	AD
			CHIN 3310 / 5510 Business Chinese in Cultural Context II	4	AD
	13	Florida State Univ.	CHI 3440 Business Chinese I	3	AD
			CHI 3440 Business Chinese II	3	AD
	14	Rutgers Univ.	361 Business Chinese I	3	AD
			362 Business Chinese II	3	AD
	15	Stanford Univ.	CHINLANG 131 / 251 Business Chinese - Quarter 1	3	AD
			CHINLANG 132 / 252 Business Chinese - Quarter 2	3	AD
			CHINLANG 133 / 253 Business Chinese - Quarter 3	3	AD

Sequential business Chinese course offerings (continued)	#	Institutions	Course title	Hours	Level *
	16	Univ. of California - San Diego	CHIN 165A Business Chinese	4	AD
			CHIN 165B Business Chinese	4	AD
			CHIN 165C Business Chinese	4	AD
	17	Univ. of Hawai'i - Manoa	CHIN 105 First-Year Chinese for Business Professionals	8	EL
			CHIN 205 Second-Year Chinese for Business Professionals	8	IN
			CHIN 305 Third-Year Chinese for Business Professionals	8	AD
	20	Univ. of Michigan	ASIANLAN 405 Chinese for Professions I	3	AD
			ASIANLAN 406 Chinese for the Professions II	3	AD
	21	Univ. of Pennsylvania	081 Beginning Business Chinese I	3	EL
			381 Business Chinese I. (A)	3	AD
			382 Business Chinese II. (B)	3	AD
			481 Advanced Business Chinese I. (A)	3	AD
			482 Advanced Business Chinese I. (B)	3	AD
	19	Univ. of Southern California	Business Chinese 412A	3	AD
			Business Chinese 412B	3	AD

*EL: elementary level, no prerequisite for enrollment; IN: intermediate level, minimally one-year (or two-semester) of Chinese study required for enrollment; AD: advanced level, minimally two-year (or four-semester) of Chinese study required.

Appendix Two

Business Chinese Teaching Interview Questions

1. Fundamentals

- (a) Please briefly describe the program/department wherein your business Chinese course(s) are offered.
- (b) How long has your program/department been offering Business Chinese course(s)?
- (c) What has motivated your program/department to offer the Business Chinese courses(s)?
What is your role in developing and/or teaching the course(s)?
- (d) (This is a somewhat broad question) How would you define the goal of “business Chinese teaching”?

2. Current practice

- (a) Please let us know about the business Chinese (language and culture) courses that are offered through your program/department? Please comment on:
 - Course level
 - Textbooks
 - Frequency of offering
 - Approximate enrollment (if possible)
 - For-credit or non-credit
 - Pedagogical foci.
- (b) How would you describe the background of the students enrolled in these courses?

- (c) What specific curricular goals does your program/department intend to achieve by offering the business Chinese course(s)?
- (d) How does your pedagogical approach(s) help achieve the intended curricular goals?
- (e) How does your (course/program) assessment mechanism(s) help determine if the intended curricular goals are achieved?
- (f) How would you describe the main concern with developing business Chinese curriculum AND delivering business Chinese course(s)? Do you have any suggestion(s) on these issues?

3. Prospect

- (a) Would you make any changes/improvements to your current business Chinese curriculum and/or course(s)?
- (b) As a professional in business Chinese teaching/research, what kind of research findings would be most use and/or important to you?