

Zhejiang Policy Language Support China

Language Policy



Good Practice Identification Data

Reference:	GPD_031001
Title:	Zhejiang Policy Language Support
Region/Country:	China
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Date of delivery:	10 Mar 2010

Good Practice Introduction, Background

& Executive Summary

Introduction:

This Good Practice focuses on both policy and implementation through training. It is therefore two elements of best practice combined, one focussed on the policy to be implemented and the other focussed on an example of a resulting training programme at Provincial level in China. Hence the title 'China Language Law and Zhejiang Policy Language Support'.

Given the scale of the necessary implementation, specific focus has been given to the programmes of government-subsidised and government-implemented support to both Chinese and overseas businesses based in Zhejiang Province. This is a wealthy province south of Shanghai which attracts a large proportion of overseas SMEs and which has a vibrant and successful business community.

The data collection for this Best Practice has taken place primarily through face-to-face in-country desk research in China. Two visits took place, one in April 2009 to Shanghai and Hangzhou (Zhejiang Province) and one in March 2010 to Beijing and Hangzhou. It was supplemented by 20 days' desk research and visits in Feb 2010 by RLN East's partner in Zhejiang Province, Mentor Education, who hold an exclusive contract for not-for-profit activity with the Zhejiang and Hangzhou Ministries of Education. It was also supported by meetings with various government agencies and government language training providers.

Background to the Policy:

China is a complex country, and to understand the reasoning behind its language policy we need to appreciate the linguistic challenges which China has faced. The information below helps to 'set the scene'. Some of this is based on desk research, in particular reference to 'Language Education in China' by Agnes Lam, 2005 (Hong Kong University Press). The remainder is based on 2 visits to China, one to Shanghai and Hangzhou in April 2009 and the other to Beijing and Hangzhou in March 2010.

China is also a multilingual and multidialectical country. The majority language group are the Han Chinese, for which there are 2 main groups of dialects, namely northern and southern. Within these 2 groups there are 7 sub-groups of northern dialects and six sub-groups of southern dialects. In addition, there

are 56 ethnic minorities (mainly located in the west and south-west) who between them speak up to 70 languages and possess 50 written languages.

The official language is Chinese, and the standard dialect is Putonghua ('common speech'), which is based on a northern dialect and which in the west is called 'Mandarin' Chinese. As part of this, and to raise the levels of literacy amongst the general population, the government decided to simplify the Chinese characters to make them easier to learn.

The most prominent foreign languages taught in China are English (ranking far above the rest), then Japanese, German & French.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) government has implemented 3 main language policies, revised in 2001:

- 1) Standardisation of Chinese
- 2) Promotion of importance of English
- 3) Development of minority languages

It is the responsibility of Provincial authorities and individual company managers to implement these policies, as outlined in the China Language Law 2001 handbook.

Although all 3 are of interest for the Lilama project, the first and third have direct bearings on the second, as learners often need to acquire both Putonghua and target foreign language skills. In other words, many non-Mandarin speakers need to learn Mandarin before they can learn a foreign language using Mandarin as a medium for communication.

The standardisation of Chinese included both the simplification of the written characters and the standardisation of the pronunciation of these characters.

It began in earnest in 1956 with the First Character Simplification Scheme, which contained 2,235 simplified characters & 14 radicals (part of a Chinese character). In that year was announced a directive that all Han Chinese schools should teach in Putonghua. To facilitate this, a standard pronunciation based on a phonetic alphabet was introduced, called 'hanyu pinyin', in 1958. Although Chinese dialects share the same written script, they vary in pronunciation. Speakers of southern dialects have a greater learning curve to cope with when learning Putonghua, as it is a northern dialect. Job recruitment in government, business or education, however, is conditional on having a level 2 or 3 qualification in Putonghua.

The rise of English as the dominant foreign language came with Deng Xiaoping's Policy of Four Modernisations (agriculture, industry, science & technology and defence), which evolved into the Reform and Open Door Policy. During this period policy direction at State level was matched with practical support from resident ELT teachers and overseas experts. Milestones included the 1979 curricula for foreign language teaching, the

1982 announcement of English as the first foreign language, the 1984 introduction of English for specific purposes (beginning with science & technology), and the 1987 introduction of standardised exams for College English.

In the 1990s and early 21st century this was expanded to include syllabi for all levels of education (not just secondary), and in 1999 the Public English Test System was introduced. A key political milestone during this period was China's entry into the World Trade Organization in Dec 2001. In 2006 the latest phase of language policy implementation was announced with the introduction of a series language training and language exchange programme, including the high-profile METP (see the corresponding Dossier File of that name).

China's main approach is to increase the number of students leaving full-time education and entering the world of work with a higher level of English language competence (it is reported that currently there are more Chinese learners of English than there are English native speakers). This is complemented by a large number of working Chinese citizens taking private English language lessons and who can have their payment of fees reimbursed once they pass the examinations.

During a visit to China in Apr 2009 by RLN East, it was discovered that in general State and provincial governments are reluctant to provide large-scale funds for English language training, as younger citizens would willingly pay the fees themselves in the hope of improving their career prospects. The government will, however, fund basic skills training for companies, with training needs analyses often outsourced to third parties, including their own subsidised services.

The market for private language training on the East coast is reported to be saturated, however there is a growing emphasis on supporting graduates with internship training to gain work experience, including the placement of graduates with foreign language skills. To this end the government provides a package of support to employers.

Zhejiang Language Support



Zhejiang Province is a wealthy province in eastern China. Its main commercial centres are in Hangzhou (the provincial capital), Wenzhou, Ningbo, Jinhua and Yiwu.

Zhejiang is one of the most marketed provinces in China measured by its quantity of private enterprises, large scale manufacturing industry, the best deep water port (Ningbo Port), and the world famous commodity manufacturing center at Yiwu Small-Commodity Market (see GP 'China

Language Law'). There are eleven medium sized cities in Zhejiang, including the capital Hangzhou. Compared to many other Chinese provinces, the development of the different regions in Zhejiang is more balanced.

National policy and guidance has driven local implementation. Yet although there is no Province-wide policy for language training for employment within the business community's existing staff, there is support for this training by two government departments, namely Foreign Affairs and Commerce. These offer subsidised short-term training, both regular and intensive, for both Chinese companies involved in international trade and collaboration and for overseas companies employing Chinese staff.

Of particular interest is a combination of this subsidised scheme with the training voucher system introduced by the Ministry of Education both at city level which makes a financial contribution towards the cost of training of both company staff and individual adults. This can be used for supplementary English language training once a certificate of attainment or completion has been gained. Uptake of the voucher system, however, could be improved.

1. Reflects current EU and regional policy on multilingualism

The PRC government has implemented 3 main language policies:

- Standardisation of Chinese

- Promotion of importance of English
- Development of minority languages

This policy refers to the use of English as a dominant language for international trade and to the common use of Putonghua (Mandarin) Chinese for employment within China. Consideration is also given to other languages, in particular Japanese, due to the presence of Japanese companies in the zones of economic growth. Economic growth, enhanced education across the population and greater international trade presence are the drivers behind the policy.

At provincial level, we have taken Zhejiang Province as an example of good practice. Here the Zhejiang Foreign Service Corporation (ZFSC), part of the Department of Foreign Affairs People's Government of Zhejiang Province, has the state-run task of training both Chinese company staff and adult learners in foreign languages (in particular demand are English & German) and overseas staff Mandarin Chinese. The government is keen to upskill both Chinese managers in foreign languages and overseas managers working in Zhejiang in Mandarin Chinese.

The ZFSC was established in 1984 with affiliation to the Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Zhejiang Province in Hangzhou. It's the most influential state-owned entity in Zhejiang Province, providing comprehensive, international business related services. It is one of the pioneer companies in Zhejiang province, with government certified qualifications, to engage in international economic cooperation and management. It's also amongst China's first batch of such state-owned enterprises to be approved by the Ministry of Public Security to engage in intermediary in private overseas affairs. In addition, it has passed the scrutiny of the Chinese Ministry of Education and been granted official status to provide mediation services in international education, and to open private schools.

The Zhejiang Foreign Service Corporation International Education & Training Center is a personal training institution funded by ZFSC. It provides international education service, and offers a range of training courses covering vocational skills, modern practical managerial theories as well as English language courses. The center conducts IELTS preparation courses, business English courses and customized training to meet the specific needs of workplace (Vocational Training). Business English courses can be offered to a wide range of organizations to assist those employees who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with their English language, literacy or numeracy needs. Through its partnership with UK English language-training institutions, the center has been gained a strong team of teachers, excellent learning circumstance and newest teaching materials. The courses include: business telephone, reception, lecture, presentation skill, business negotiation skill interview skills.

This service, recently established in 2008, links to other services related to relations with overseas business, and includes as part of its services cultural

skills training and awareness of local Zhejiang culture (for the overseas learners). All Chinese teaching staff have experience of working overseas, and the teams are complemented by the recruitment of overseas national tutors. Although the service run by government is in competition with private language schools, it is still recognition of the importance the provincial government places on the acquisition of language skills for business & employment.

Larger-scale classes are run for Chinese managers, and smaller groups for overseas learners. This reflects the different learning cultures of China & some overseas markets, as in China learning usually takes place in rote fashion, with a recent trend towards more interactive exercises. For the overseas workers. Mandarin training for overseas nationals is delivered at four levels, with the higher levels leading to the nationally-recognised qualification Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK).

The English business language training for Chinese managers is limited to either 2 or 4 months of training, with overseas national tutors undertaking the initial placement tests. The 2-month training includes 64hrs of classroom study (96 lessons of 40 minutes), and the 4-month training 128hrs of classroom study. In comparison to private sector tuition, training fees are low. More expensive one-to-one training for overseas companies whose managers wish to learn Mandarin are offered at a much higher commercial rate. Of the companies undertaking training, 70% of a headcount of less than 500 staff.

There are four reasons for limiting the training period to 2-4 months: first, it is designed as intensive short-term training; second, budget restrictions, both of the government subsidised scheme and the company's own commitment; third, there are limits to the amount of personal time an individual member of company staff can afford to give to the programme; fourth, the government agency responsible for delivery needs to evaluate the value of short-burst investment in relation to the progress of the learners.

In addition to the training for company staff, there is also support for placing graduate students in company placements, including those with language skills of use to the companies involved in international trade or belonging to overseas businesses. 1000 students were supported in this way in 2009.

Although this programme is currently (Mar 2010) only run in Hangzhou, there is a schedule of rolling it out to 5 new offices across the province. In addition to the training center in Hangzhou, there will be four branches open in 2010, three in Zhejiang & one in Shanghai. By 2012, the number of branches will be increased to eight, as the major cities in Zhejiang will be covered.

A second subsidised programme is run along similar lines by the Zhejiang Business Human Resource Exchange Service, part of the Zhejiang International Investment Promotion Centre of the People's Government of Zhejiang Province, which in turn is part of the Department of Commerce. This focuses on support to Chinese companies collaborating with overseas

businesses & overseas companies employing Chinese staff, and includes a specific programme of English language training. As 70% of these companies are SMEs, many choose to outsource their language training activity to this government programme.

The scheme is available both to existing company staff and new graduates entering the company. Two types of language training course are run. First, sector-specific language training is also provided for those going to work temporarily overseas. Secondly, general business language training. The sector-based training is an intensive course for groups of 10-12 staff over a 6-8 week period, with a requirement for possession of basic ability in English. The general business language training takes place mainly at weekends and lasts 20 weeks, with a total of 80-120hrs of tuition. These are complemented by surgery sessions where learners can communicate with their tutor to help with their progress, especially when they are falling behind.

These training courses are seen as a value-added benefit to companies engaging in international trade, and the cost of training to companies makes the scheme a not-for-profit activity. The training vouchers will cover the cost of approx 40% of the intensive course fees. The remainder of the course fees are paid by individual company staff from their own personal budgets, although in many cases these are reimbursed by their companies on completion of the programme. Some companies operate an Education Fund which amounts to 1.5%-2% of company turnover, and trade unions also make a contribution to training costs.

Since its conception in 2003, the scheme has trained 3500 company staff & graduates. Due to its success it is being rolled out to the 11 administrative centres outside Hangzhou. Placement testing is done in-house by tutors, and includes a verbal assessment and elements of past exam papers. Information is also gathered of previous qualifications.

Although not subject to the Lisbon Strategy (as per the methodology guidelines) as China lies outside the EU, it nonetheless implements Lisbon principles. Lifelong learning is encouraged at all ages, including subsidised universities. Together the Departments of Commerce and Foreign Affairs are responsible for oversight of the programmes, with delivery responsibility held by the respective Business Human Resource and Foreign Services. Although the programme is not sector-driven by nature, in reality intensive training is organised for some technical job roles (see above regarding the short courses). The impact of the programme is measured by feedback from the companies.

2. Includes incentives to enhance and sustain language learner motivation and employment benefits

The Zhejiang Province programme of the Foreign Affairs Department receives information from the companies in advance relating to the business language needs of the learners. This is then fed into the training courses.

The programme is disseminated through the various government departments. A training voucher system has been introduced to encourage company staff to take additional training. The voucher, worth 500RMB, covers the cost of the first 14hrs of training, and is cashed in on completion of the training. This voucher system is promoted via the Ministry of Education website and in local newspapers. This scheme is also open to students who wish to take language (and other) training, and vouchers are easily obtained from university teaching staff. The voucher system favours the government-subsidised language training programmes, as the proportion of grant to total course cost is higher when compared to the more expensive training provided by private training companies.

For Hangzhou residents with a low education (defined as under senior school level), adult residents with skill certificates given by the Hangzhou Labor and Security Bureau receive a larger grant of 1200RMB. Graduates of full-time universities and colleges receive the usual 500RMB, but full-time university students and senior career schools possessing a Low Income Family Certificate receive 1200RMB. Employees of low profit enterprises receive 500RMB, provided this grant does not exceed 50% of the course fees.

In addition, the Zhejiang Foreign Service Corporation run an intern grant system to support students on work placement in enterprises. The internship funding source. It is a co-operative scheme between the ZFSC and the Hangzhou Labor and Social Security Bureau. Every intern whose work placement is arranged by the ZFSC is entitled to receive 400RMB per month from the Hangzhou Labor Social Security Bureau. There is no limit to the number of participating interns.

The system for release of vouchers, together with the total budget allocated to each category of learner is as follows:

- Standard residents & company staff: Hangzhou Labor and Security Bureau and Hangzhou Education Bureau.
- Low educated: Hangzhou Education Bureau, and universities in Hangzhou; total budget RMB 50 million.
- Graduates: Hangzhou Education Bureau, and Education Departments in different districts; total budget RMB 6 million.
- Full-time students: Hangzhou Civil Affairs Bureau; total budget RMB 900,000.

- Employees of low profit enterprises: Hangzhou Labor and Security Bureau.

There is some argument in favour of increasing the voucher value to encourage greater uptake by company staff, who are also not always clear of where they may collect the vouchers. Equally, as the voucher is only payable on receipt of certificate of attainment, some company staff less confident in their ability opt not to take up the offer in the event that they fail the exam at the end of the course. This would not apply to training where certificates are for completion and not attainment.

Learners from poorer backgrounds and communities (especially rural) receive a larger grant of 1500RMB towards the cost of tuition fees, including language training within the traditional university system.

Companies in Zhejiang Province, and particularly in Hangzhou, require graduates with language skills and place these skills as highly desirable during the recruitment process. This is well known to the student community and remains a strong motivational force behind the large numbers of students wishing to improve their English. Examinations for promotion to senior management in state-run companies now also contain questions of foreign language ability, mostly in relation to English but also to a certain extent Japanese. Larger Chinese companies may also refund language (and other) training for companies with 3 years or more service.

Informal learning is recognised through both on-the-job experience of communicating with overseas contacts and through exercises based, for instance, on the use of BBC media and up-to-date newspaper articles. The notion of employers v employees determining work-based needs does not exist in Chinese corporate society, as company staff culture is one of obedience to management decisions. However, it is also Chinese company culture that decisions taken into account grass-root level opinion through the work unit system. There are no government targets for the programme, rather the amount of training delivered and the number of companies supported depends on the relationship between demand and supply (mainly budget). However, the programme has seen year-on-year growth as an increasing number of companies take up the offer.

As both Services offer broader business support to the participating companies (legal, staff recruitment, location management etc) there is a good understanding of the wider business need of their clients, and this helps to set the context for any language training. Motivation amongst Chinese learners of English is high, as career progression and enhanced job opportunities are a reality with the possession of language skills.

3. Reflects regional strategy for employability and intercultural benefits

China's main approach is to increase the number of students leaving full-time education and entering the world of work with a higher level of English language competence (it is reported that currently there are more Chinese learners of English than there are English native speakers). This is complemented by a large number of working Chinese citizens taking private English language lessons and who can have their payment of fees reimbursed once they pass the examinations.

Zhejiang provincial economic strategy strongly promotes economic growth & wealth generation through investment in skills, including languages. English is the dominant language, however Japanese, German & Korean are also offered where needed. These messages are promoted by a range of government departments, whose messages are closely aligned.

Geographical-based priorities are given to economic development zones which are based both in Hangzhou and in outlying districts, such as Yiwu, a growing overseas investment area. Prominence is also given to cities such as Ningbo and Wenzhou. As a result of its economic policy, Zhejiang is one of the wealthiest provinces in China and has a strong proactive international development policy which recognises the importance of languages and supports this policy through delivery of language programmes by government and in academia. It is particularly supportive of university initiatives which provide students with internships in companies, including those requiring language skills which participate in its language programmes.

Due to the affiliation to the Foreign Affairs Office of the People's Government of Zhejiang Province, ZFSC receives lots of supports from the government. The center has been asked to anticipate numbers of foreign transactions, overseas research of the Zhejiang government, including vocational language training for government officers, translation services and so on. ZFSC also takes the initiative in young people's vocational training. It was selected by the Hangzhou city council as one of "the work placement centre for youth recruitment and entrepreneurship".

The ZFSC language training centre is open to both individuals and group learners. In the early years, the centre focussed on IELTS training for young students. However, with more and more branches of overseas enterprises and associations settled in Hangzhou, as well as some local enterprises developing into large scale ventures (especially those related to trade & manufacturing), the language skills needs from both individuals & companies grow at a high speed.

Below is a summary of the courses offered:

Courses List for Individual Study

Program Categories	
1.	VIP Course (One to One)
2.	Practical Spoken English
3.	Industry Spoken English
4.	Western Culture
5.	Business English Spoken
6.	Business English Writing
7.	Business English Negotiation
8.	The International Conference on Exchange
9.	Training Course for Spoken English Certification Exam
10.	English Certification Exam Preparation Course
11.	Tourist /Hotel Service Industry Language Training
12.	Preparation Course for Business/Service Industry English Exam
13.	Language Training for short term business trip

The ZFSC uses a customized training method for the enterprises by considering of their requirements (time, location etc.). A unique training plan is implemented through professional research, which includes a teacher visit, communications, discussions and tests. For companies located on the outskirts of the city, the ZFSC sends the training group to the company to deliver training. The ZFSC also creates a profile document for every trained company to facilitate the transition from training to the workplace. As a result, for the company which has had previous vocational training from the ZFSC, the new training plan is combined with its past training record.

The training process follows a series of stages as outlined below:

A. Information Gathering

The enterprise provides its training requirements in details, including training type, time, quantity of attendees, and any special request to the teachers. The supervisor develops a training draft based on the data gathered.

B. Personal Consultation

Meeting with the HR and the employees to improve the draft, and make the final plan.

C. Placement Test

The test is divided into two parts, given by Chinese and English teachers of ZFSC. The first part contains Listening, Reading and Grammar tests which may take 45 minutes. After the first part of the test is finished, there is a 10-minute one-to-one test for the speaking level. Based on the test results, students with different language levels are placed in different groups.

D. Result Analysis and Advices

After the test results are known, the grades will be sent to the company's HR department for reference. The final training plan will be generated on the basis of learner needs analysis, test results analysis, and the company's training needs analysis.

E. Contract Signing

F. Teacher Selection

The teachers of the ZFSC come from the UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. There are 30 full time teachers, and over 20 people teach part-time. All of them have TESOL training certificates. The company could select the teachers based on the training needs. For example, if the company wants its staff to be familiar with Scottish accent and British culture, they could ask for the Scottish teachers to do the training.

G. Meet Selected Teachers

Once the company selects the teachers, the training information is sent to them for preparation.

H. Course Preparation

I. Commence Course

The teachers from the ZFSC are not only TESOL certificated, but also possess different academic and business backgrounds. The training content is designed to be related to the industry in which the students work. Besides traditional class-based teaching, the training method is innovative from a number of perspectives, such as use of games, role playing, competition, debates and outdoor activities. The whole training process is monitored by centre staff, as is the learner attendance rates, study progress and feedback. The centre holds competitions and salon events to further motivate learners.

J. Immediate Feedback

The Chinese tutors are in charge of tracking the student's learning progress, receiving the feedback from both teachers and learners, as well as communicating with the learner when necessary. Every week, the tutor will send a training progress report to the company's HR department to make sure the company is kept up to date.

K. Teaching Supervision

After the first two courses of the new training programme, the centre will invite the HR manager to visit their in-train staffs and attend one class together.

L. Course Evaluation

After the eighth lesson, the centre will start the evaluation work, including asking the student to score the teachers, collecting the suggestions. All the information will help the centre in adjusting and improving the training courses for the remaining period.

M. Mid-term Assessment

Where the course duration is longer than 72 hours, the learner has a mid-term assessment which is combined with single student assessment and the whole class assessment. The result will be made into three copies, one for archive, one for the company, and one for the student.

N. Final Assessment and Graduating

When the training finishes, there will be a final examination and the graduation ceremony. Every student who passes the exam will receive a ZFSC training certificate. The training information will be saved in the ZFSC archive system.

The target groups of ZFSC include four types: students intending to study abroad, graduates and employees who are looking for professional self-improvements, enterprises with skilled employee training needs, and overseas people with Chinese language learning needs.

Around 2,000 people from different industries attend the various training courses at the ZFSC training every year. In recent years, compared to the small and medium sized manufacturing companies which are still using cheap and lower educated labour, the companies in the estate and IT sectors realized the importance of employee training and became more willing to fund vocational and language training. Pie chart 1 shows the sector breakdown of the companies trained in 2009. Pie chart 2 shows the breakdown of companies by size, and pie chart 3 shows that there is still room to stimulate the training needs among the local enterprises.

Chart 1.

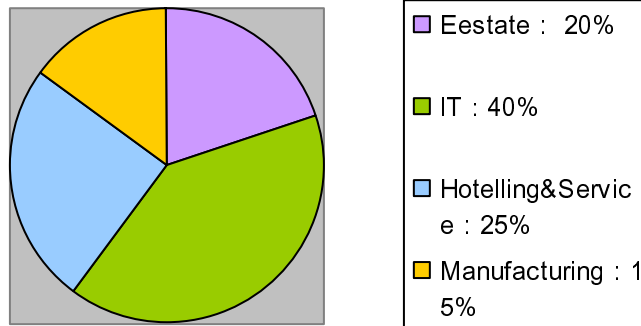


Chart 2.

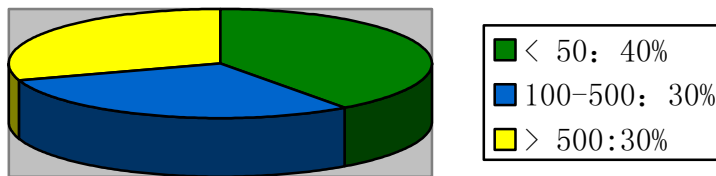
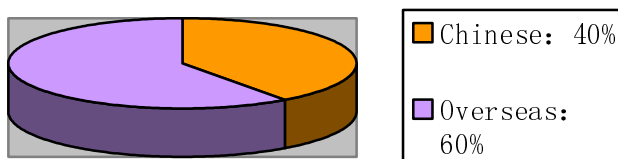
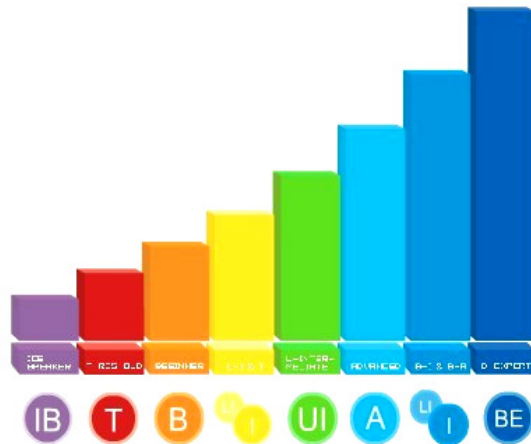


Chart 3.



Targetted Levels & Competencies



1) Icebreaker

To be able to use some words and grammar to have simple conversations.

2) Threshold

To be able to learn some English language patterns, to talk about daily activities.

3) Beginner

To be able to give personal information with the past, present and future tense. Basic language ability of living abroad.

4) Lower Intermediate

To be able to describe daily life with simple sentences and to talk freely with English speakers about daily activities.

5) Intermediate

To be familiar with the language structure and to be able to use English competently in a number of different situations.

6) Upper-Intermediate

To be able to use English accurately to describe things and to be able to discuss the world news.

7) Advanced

To be able to talk about all daily activities as well as academic subjects.
To achieve almost native speaker-like fluency.

8) Business-intermediate

To enlarge business vocabulary, and to be able to communicate in English in typical business situations, such as meetings, negotiation and interviews. Other areas include: customer service, manufacturing, marketing, finance, and so on.

9) Business-Advanced

To be able to use complicated and analytical expressions, focused on topics such as business negotiations, policy making, and activity design, business writing is also emphasized.

10) Business-Expert

To be able to use more complicated and more logical sentences flexibly, and for business negotiations, planning activities, drafting a business plan etc. with higher business writing skills. Specially designed for business elites.

With regard to the language training of overseas businesspeople, there are more than 10,000 foreigners from more than 30 countries currently working or studying all over the province. The Chinese Learning Project was started in 2000, and involves training in Mandarin Chinese for everyday use, for business use, and for preparation for the HSK examination.

Course Name	Information
General Mandarin Course	10-20 people/class
VIP General Mandarin Course	Customized course for 1to1,1to2,1to3
Combination of Mandarin Courses	General + VIP
Business Mandarin Course	For whom with intermediate level above
Spoken Mandarin Course	For short term visitors
HSK Intensive	Test preparation

The economy of Zhejiang relies on two main industries: manufacturing and trade. Although it has occupied a position in the Top Three most developed regions of China since the 1980s, the contradiction between the increasing needs for skilled employees, the large number of untrained graduates and in particular the untrained labour force from the countryside has become a bottleneck to further development. Therefore, stimulating the vocational training to raise the numbers of skilled workers has been written into the government's working frame.

The capital city of Zhejiang, Hangzhou, which is also known as one of the most famous tourist cities in China, now aims to develop its outsourcing industry. Based on this strategy, the Hangzhou government released a stimulating plan for increasing the outsourcing labour force in 2007. In this

project, there will be at least 30,000 workers targetted for vocational training from 2008 to 2010.

The Outsourcing Vocational Training Project provides four types of courses: IT academic implemental course for IT graduates and college students, vocational training for non-IT workers and graduates, post-training and further education courses for outsourcing enterprises' employees, and customized courses for outsourcing employees working overseas. To each graduate who takes the training courses in any of the governmental certificated training institution, the government would subsidize 4,000 RMB per person; to the service outsourcing enterprises in Hangzhou, they could receive 4, 500 RMB per person from the government for the new employees post-training; to each qualified training institution, the government would reward 500 RMB for training one person. Moreover, the government also encourages the colleges to cooperate with the training institutions, practising the credits-tuition exchange plan, in order to benefit more students.

The financial crisis hit the economy of Zhejiang badly in 2009. Not only did thousands workers in trade and manufacturing lose their jobs, there were also over 6 million graduates nation-wide facing a historical low employment rate caused by the crisis. As the result, the Hangzhou government released the Education Voucher Programme (see above) in Jan 2009. The target groups included local residents, urban unemployed people, migrant workers with social insurance, and graduates, who could apply for between 500 RMB and 1700 RMB value education coupons to use in further education (vocational training, language training) in the qualified training institutions and schools. Up to April 2009, the Hangzhou government has distributed vouchers to the value of 1.2 billion RMB.

4. Addresses local language minority and migrant community language resources

There are over 100 million ethnic minorities in China, or around 8.4% of the population. These live in the west and south-west regions which account for approx 64% of China's total area. Therefore only a small percentage of these minority groups live in Zhejiang Province. Migration to cities from poor rural communities is supported by government. For instance, a voucher system for students from poor backgrounds in place and is worth 3000RMB, payable by the Ministry of Education.

In 2001 the policy of the promotion of Putonghua has encouraged minorities to learn Putonghua whilst maintaining their own language. Job recruitment in government, business or education, however, is conditional on having a level 2 or 3 qualification in Putonghua. Although Chinese dialects share the same written script, they vary in pronunciation. Speakers of southern dialects have a greater learning curve to cope with when learning Putonghua, as it is a northern dialect.

Some of these minorities have not only their own dialect but also their own language, often with a different script to Chinese. Uyghur (based on Arabic script) and Tibetan are two clear examples. The definition of ‘migrant’ in the title above is based on an European employment environment, yet mobility in China is two-way, with first the repopulation of traditionally non-Han geographical areas (such as Xinjiang Province) with Han Chinese citizens, and secondly with minority citizens moving to the cities in search of employment, particularly in the construction sector.

It is frequent practice to attend formal meetings held in Putonghua and then for breakout groups or smaller meetings to take place in local dialect, such as Ningbohua. Many business meetings between Chinese also switch between Putonghua and local dialects, depending on the background of those involved.

The proliferation of Putonghua is targetted for local economic growth.

5. Provides for international networking and/or mobility

There is no international mobility envisaged as part of the programme. However, given the size of Zhejiang Province (approx the size of France) there is frequent mobility both between cities and between cities and rural areas.

6. Incorporates the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) with transparent validation/ credits

Within the training programmes of the Zhejiang Foreign Service Centre certificates of completion are provided at the end of training which confirm the level of attainment learners have achieved. Mandarin training for overseas nationals is delivered at our levels, with the higher levels leading to the nationally-recognised qualification Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK). Upon entry, learners are subject to an in-house placement test to confirm their level.

7. Can be readily & usefully implemented

The dossier file should capture data on whether the policy can be realistically implemented, and should show linkages between recent employer surveys and planned implementation of activity. Intelligence from the business community comes from the strong relationship between the Services and the companies who outsource their Human Resource services to government departments.

The Chinese system of close linkages between national and provincial policy help to ensure that training meets economic objectives. The strong role played by the Party ensures that government institutions across the provincial spectrum know of the requirements for supporting local business. As there is healthy competition in China for attracting foreign investment, provincial districts place effort into upskilling their workforces to meet the demand for skilled labour by companies trading internationally.

8. Transferability

The programme is highly transferable in that a voucher system can constitute a form of government funding, and government agencies in other Chinese provinces or EU regions can outsource training on contract basis to professional providers such as government-controlled adult education authorities.