

Book Review: Business Korean

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REVIEW

Young-Key Kim-Renaud and Miok Pak. *Business Korean 비즈니스 한국어*. The Routledge Course in Business Korean, 1st Edition. 2018. 214 pp. ISBN-10: 1138291390

The Routledge Course in *Business Korean* is a textbook for teaching Korean business language at intermediate and advanced levels. As one of the first published volumes to highlight business communication in Korean, this textbook provides readers with business-focused language and cultural learning.

The book consists of fifteen units, each of which addresses a topic that is related to the business context in everyday life in Korea, including peak season and off season, employment, job interview, housing in Korea, new employee and office life, work place etiquette, working outside of the office, happy hour with colleagues and drinking etiquette, company organization and tasks at work, marketing, business trips, customer service, and corporate social responsibility and contributions. There are review sections for every three units and business case studies with vocabulary lists for every five units. In addition, there are three additional sections, titled “Business case” in the textbook, which describe the text of an article about an authentic business experience or situation. Considering the publication year of the first edition of the book, it seems that this part may need to be updated. Also, questions or activities would make the contents more useful.

At the back of the book readers will find grammar pattern lists, Korean-English glossaries, English- Korean glossaries, and audio scripts, all of which are arranged to help learners study. The grammar pattern lists are organized by units with appropriate information that is easy to find. Every unit covers business-related topics that build understanding with key vocabulary, grammatical expressions, and Chinese characters (Hanjas) under the relevant and practical learning objectives. It contains exercises for grammar patterns and questions. A corresponding dialogue is presented in each unit, followed by several vocabulary words and four grammatical expressions. Also, example sentences of grammatical expressions are presented in English to help learners understand their meaning.

Ten letters of Hanjas are introduced and taught in each lesson according to related topics. Since this only introduces the meaning and sound of Hanjas, it would have been beneficial if the vocabulary used, or if example sentences of the corresponding Hanjas, were added. Adding Hanjas is one of the strengths of this book since there are many words composed of Chinese characters in business vocabulary in Korean. Understanding Chinese characters can help learners practice Korean business terminology, which could be improved by including usage examples.

In terms of the ease of use, logical layout, and structure across units, each unit is structured and arranged consistently so that students can read vocabulary and grammar related to business topics and then practice conversation and writing. The conversation part is included for learners to continue practicing in professional contexts, and the four skills are placed in balance in each unit. Unit 1 includes a unique start with a title of “Peak season and off season.” This is different from other business Korean textbooks, such as *Business Korean* published by Yonsei University in 2009, in that it covers useful conversation content applicable to learners studying or living abroad. In a conversation with two friends, they discuss the peak and off-peak period of booking flights. The authentic situations will be especially interesting to college students who study or live abroad.

The units of the book are arranged in order as the interlocutor arrives in Korea, has an interview for a job, and deals with workplace etiquette, dinner parties, business trips, etc.,

following necessary language skills while living as a new employee in Korea. All explanations and expressions are translated into English in order to help learners at various skills and levels of Korean understand those content better.

For practices and activities in the book, the content of the exercises is based on four language skills and consists of tasks and activities that include crossword puzzles in every unit. For interactive resources, unit 7 and unit 10 provide an image and information for the Seoul metro and some websites. It would be better if practical tasks or business project activities were organized according to the topic of each unit.

The e-book version features the same content of materials and activities compared to the hard-copy textbook. This e-book can be easily accessed and viewed with a digital device by downloading the open app provided by the publisher. Audio files are also available in the e-resource of the publisher's website.

The book contains several exercises and visual materials, and only the first cover page of each unit was introduced with an illustration. The exercises are subdivided into reading comprehension, listening, conversation, and writing, and most of them are reading-oriented, filling in the blank activities with brief answers. In the next edition, I would like to see more variety of activities. However, the crossword puzzles in the book serve as interesting exercises that allow learners to review and strengthen their vocabulary.

I would recommend revising and supplementing this book when the next edition is published. The exercises could be improved by including not only grammar exercises and open-ended questions, but also more practical media or visual materials, relevant reference websites, or more information to provide updates to the business environment for learners who potentially will work in Korean (for more information on this, please see Yoo's 2015 article titled "Analysis of Learners' Preferences and Needs in Korean Language and Culture Education Using Media: A Study Based on Business Korean Classes in the US" and published in *Korean Cultural Studies*). Also, it would be nice to add media and resources suitable for online and hybrid classes (see Yoo's 2020 article titled "Developing a Blended/Online Business Language Course for Career Readiness in the 21st Century," published in *The Proceedings* at the 5th International Symposium on Language for Specific Purposes [ISLSP] and Centers for International Business Education and Research [CIBER] Language Conference, for more information on online and hybrid classes). It is important to organize a class that combines the contents of this textbook with recent trends and current affairs in business contexts.

Taken as a whole, the book will help the learners improve their Korean in business contexts by practicing language and culture with interesting discussions and exercises. As the authors addressed in the book, it contains vocabulary and text that can enhance learners achieving an advanced level of the language by completing the book. Considering the fact that most business Korean learning-related books are published in Korea and written for Korean learners in Korea, this book is meaningful in that it was written especially for Korean learners in places other than Korea in mind.

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