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SERIES OF
SPECIALIZED ENGLISH IN
ECONOMICS AND
BUSINESS

国际商务英语

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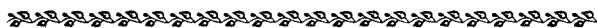
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Unit 1 The Nature of International Business



Sentence Patterns

1. International business differs from domestic business in that a firm operating across borders must deal with the forces of three kinds of environments—domestic, foreign, and international.

国际商务与国内商务的不同之处在于,进行跨境经营的公司必须处理三种不同的环境因素——本国环境、外国环境和国际环境。

2. Management has no direct control over these forces though it can exert influences by lobbying for a change in a law, heavily promoting a new product that requires a change in a cultural attitude, and so on.

虽然管理层可以对环境因素施加影响,例如,通过游说活动来修改法律,或者极力推销可以对文化取向产生影响的某种新产品等,但他们却不能直接控制这些因素。

3. For example, if the home country is suffering from a shortage of foreign currency, the government may place restrictions on overseas investment to reduce its outflow.

例如,如果本国遭受严重的外汇短缺,政府就会对海外投资进

行限制以减少外汇外流。

4. Another problem with foreign forces is that they are frequently difficult to assess, especially their legal and political elements.
伴随外国环境因素的另一问题是它们通常难以估计,尤其是法律和政治因素。

5. Those who work in the international environment find that decision making is more complex than in a purely domestic environment.

人们发现,身处国际环境中进行决策,比单纯在本国环境中决策更为复杂。

6. Another example is the interaction between physical and sociocultural forces. Barriers to the free movement of a nation's people, such as mountain ranges or deserts, help maintain pockets of distinct cultures within a country.

另一个例子是自然和社会文化之间的相互作用。山脉和沙漠等因素阻碍了一国居民间的自由流动,从而有助于在一国内部维持各种不同的文化圈。

7. Interestingly, American business moving overseas caused similar consternation among Europeans that Japanese investments in the United States cause today.

有趣的是,美国企业向海外的转移引起了欧洲人的惊恐,这好比如今日本在美国的投资所带来的恐慌一样。

8. Global communication networks enable manufacturing personnel to coordinate production and design functions worldwide so that plants in many parts of the world may be working on the same product.

全球通信网络使得生产人员能够协调全世界的生产和产品设

计,同一产品可以由分布于世界各地的工厂共同生产。

9. As a result of this expansion, foreign companys' subsidiaries have become increasingly important in the industrial and economic life of many nations, developed and developing. This situation is in sharp contrast to the one that existed when the dominant economic interests were in the hands of local citizens.

通过这种扩张,国际企业的子公司对许多国家(包括发达国家和发展中国家)的工业和经济的重要性日益增加。这与以前的状况——经济利益控制在本地居民手中——形成了鲜明的对照。

10. The expanding importance of foreign-owned firms in local economies came to be viewed by a number of governments as a threat to their autonomy. However, beginning in the 1980s, there has been a marked liberalization of government policies and attitudes toward foreign investment in both developed and developing nations.

一些政府认为,外国企业在本地经济中重要性的不断增加对其自主性构成了威胁。然而,从20世纪80年代开始,发达国家和发展中国家在对待外国投资的政策和态度方面都有了明显的松动。

Professional Terms

1. lobby 游说
2. gross national product (GNP) 国民生产总值
3. unit labor cost 单位劳动成本
4. personal consumption expenditure 个人消费支出

5. interest rate 利息率
6. inflation rate 通货膨胀率
7. topography 地形学
8. member-country 成员国
9. import duty 进口关税
10. home country 母国
11. preclude 排除
12. shortage of foreign currency 外汇短缺
13. overseas investment 海外投资
14. labor union 工会
15. affiliate 关联公司, 分公司
16. subsidiary 子公司
17. backlog order 积压订单
18. defy 不服从, 蔑视
19. pragmatic 实际的, 注重实效的
20. tip 指点, 忠告

Relevant Knowledge

Why Is International Business Different

International business differs from domestic business in that a firm operating across borders must deal with the forces of three kinds of environments—domestic, foreign, and international. In contrast, a firm whose business activities are carried out within the borders of one country needs to be concerned essentially with only the domestic environment. However, no domestic firm is entirely free from foreign or international environmental forces because the possibility of having

to face competition from foreign imports or from foreign competitors that set up operations in its own market is always present. Let us first examine these forces and then see how they operate in the three environments.

Forces in the Environments

“Environment” as used here is the sum of all the forces surrounding and influencing the life and development of the firm. These forces can be classified as external or internal. Management has no direct control over them, though it can exert influences by lobbying for a change in a law, heavily promoting a new product that requires a change in a cultural attitude, and so on. The external forces are commonly called uncontrollable forces and consist of the following:

1. Competitive—kinds and numbers of competitors, their locations, and their activities.
2. Distributive—national and international agencies available for distributing goods and services.
3. Economic—variables (such as GNP, unit labor cost, and personal consumption expenditure) that influence a firm's ability to do business.
4. Socioeconomic—characteristics and distribution of the human population.
5. Financial—variables such as interest rates, inflation rates, and taxation.
6. Legal—many kinds of foreign and domestic laws by which international firms must operate.
7. Physical—elements of nature such as topography, climate, and natural resources.
8. Political—elements of nations' political climates such as

nationalism, forms of government, and international organizations.

9. Sociocultural—elements of culture (such as attitudes, beliefs, and opinions) important to international businesspeople.

10. Labor—composition, skills, and attitudes of labor.

11. Technological—the technical skills and equipment that affect how resources are converted to products.

The elements over which management does have some command are the internal forces, such as the factors of production (capital, raw material, and people) and the activities of the organization (personnel, finance, production, and marketing). These are the controllable forces management must administer in order to adapt to changes in the uncontrollable environmental variables. Look at how one change in the political force—the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement—is affecting all of the controllable forces of firms worldwide that do business in or with the three member nations, the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Suddenly these companies must examine their business practices and change those affected by this new law. For example, some American concerns and foreign subsidiaries in the United States are relocating part of their operations to Mexico to exploit the lower wages there. There are European and Asian companies setting up production in one of the member-countries to supply this giant free trade region. By doing this, they will avoid paying import duties on products coming from their home countries.

The Domestic Environment

The domestic environment is composed of all the uncontrollable forces originating in the home country that surround and influence the life and development of the firm. Obviously, these are the forces with which managers are most familiar. Being domestic forces does not

preclude their affecting foreign operations, however. For example, if the home country is suffering from a shortage of foreign currency, the government may place restrictions on overseas investment to reduce its outflow. As a result, managements of multinationals find that they cannot expand overseas facilities as they would like to do. In another instance from real life, a labor union striking home-based plants learned that management was supplying parts from its foreign subsidiaries. The strikers contacted the foreign unions, which pledged not to work overtime to supply what the struck plants could not. The impact of this domestic environmental force was felt overseas as well as at home.

The Foreign Environment

The forces in the foreign environment are the same as those in the domestic environment except that they occur in foreign nations. However, they operate differently for several reasons, including the following:

Different Force Values. Even though the kinds of forces in the two environments are identical, their values often differ widely, and at times they are completely opposed to each other. A good example of diametrically opposed political force values and the bewilderment they create for multinational managers is the case of Dresser Industries and the Soviet pipeline. When President Reagan extended the American embargo against shipments of equipment for the pipeline to include foreign companies manufacturing equipment under license from U. S. firms, the Dresser home office instructed its French subsidiary to stop work on an order for compressors. Meanwhile, the French government ordered Dresser-France to defy the embargo and begin scheduled deliveries under penalty of both civil and criminal sanctions. As a Dresser's vice president put it, "The order put Dresser between a rock

and a hard place."

Changes Difficult to Assess. Another problem with the foreign forces is that they are frequently difficult to assess, especially their legal and political elements. A highly nationalistic law may be passed to appease a section of the population. To all outward appearances, a government may appear to be against foreign investment, yet pragmatic leaders may actually encourage it. A good example is Mexico, which, until 1988, had a law prohibiting foreigners from owning a majority interest in a Mexican company. However, a clause permitted exceptions "if the investment contributes to the welfare of the nation." IBM and others were successful in obtaining permission to establish a wholly owned subsidiary under this clause.

Forces Interrelated. The forces are often interrelated. This in itself is no novelty, because the same situation confronts the domestic manager. Often different, however, are the types and degrees of interaction that occur. For instance, the combination of high-cost capital and an abundance of unskilled labor in many developing countries may lead to the use of a lower level of technology than would be employed in the more industrialized nations. In other words, given a choice between installing costly, specialized machinery needing few workers or less expensive, general-purpose machinery requiring a larger labor force, management will frequently choose the latter when faced with high interest rates and a large pool of available workers. Another example is the interaction between physical and sociocultural forces. Barriers to the free movement of a nation's people, such as mountain ranges or deserts, help maintain pockets of distinct cultures within a country.

The International Environment

The international environment is the interactions (1) between the

domestic environmental forces and the foreign environmental forces and (2) between the foreign environmental forces of two countries when an affiliate in one country does business with customers in another. This agrees with the definition of international business—business that involves the crossing of national borders.

For example, personnel at the headquarters of a multinational or global company work in the international environment if they are involved in any way with another nation, whereas those in a foreign subsidiary do not unless they too are engaged in international business through exporting or management of other foreign affiliates. In other words, the sales manager of Goodyear-Chile does not work in the international environment if he or she sells tires only in Chile. Should Goodyear-Chile export tires to Bolivia, then the sales manager is affected by forces of both the domestic environment of Chile and the foreign environment of Bolivia and therefore is working in the international environment. International organizations whose actions affect the international environment are also part of it. These organizations include (1) worldwide bodies (e. g. , World Bank), (2) regional economic groupings of nations (e. g. , North American Free Trade Agreement), and (3) organizations bound by industry agreements (e. g. , Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries).

国际商务为何不同于国内商务

国际商务与国内商务的不同之处在于,进行跨境经营的公司必须要处理三种不同的环境因素——本国环境、外国环境和国际环境。与此相反,只在本国境内开展业务活动的公司则基本上只需关注本国环境。然而,任何一个国内公司都不可能完全脱离外国或国际环境因素,因为,企业面对竞争的可能性一直存在。这种竞争或来自外国的进口商品,或来自在本土进行产品生产的外国

竞争者。我们首先分析这些因素,再看它们是如何在三种不同环境中产生作用的。

环境因素

这里所说的环境是指伴随并影响企业生存、发展的所有因素的总和。这些因素本身又可分为内部因素和外部因素。此外,虽然管理层可以对环境因素施加影响,例如通过游说活动来修改法律,或者推销可以对文化取向产生影响的新产品等,但他们却不能直接控制这些因素。外部因素通常被称为不可控制因素,它包括如下内容:

1. 竞争因素——竞争对手的种类和数量,他们的所在地及业务活动;
2. 分销因素——可以分销产品或服务的国内外代理机构;
3. 经济因素——影响公司业务能力的各种变量(例如,GNP、单位劳动成本和个人消费支出);
4. 社会经济因素——人口的特征及分布状况;
5. 金融因素——利率、通货膨胀率和税收等变量;
6. 法律因素——国际公司开展业务时必须遵守的各种本国和外国法律;
7. 自然因素——地形、气候和自然资源等自然要素;
8. 政治因素——民族主义、政府形态和国际组织等政治环境;
9. 社会文化因素——对国际经营者非常重要的文化因素(例如,态度、信仰和观念);
10. 劳动力因素——劳动者的构成、技能和态度;
11. 技术因素——影响生产过程的工艺技术和设备。

管理者可以控制的是内部因素,例如,生产要素(资本、原材料和劳动力)和组织活动(人事、财务、生产和营销)。为了适应不可控制环境因素的变化,管理层必须掌管好这些可控制环境因素。我们可以观察政治因素的变化——北美自由贸易协定的通过——是如何影响全球某些公司(它们在美国、加拿大和墨西哥这三个

成员国进行经营,或与这三国进行着交易)的所有可控制环境因素的。协议的通过,使得这些公司需要重新审视其商业行为,并对那些受到新法律影响的行为进行修正。例如,一些美国公司和外国公司在美国的子公司将部分业务转移到墨西哥,以利用墨西哥的低工资水平。而一些欧洲和亚洲的公司则在北美贸易区的某个成员国建立了工厂,以便向这个巨大的自由贸易区供应产品。这样,他们可避免支付从母国进口产品需缴纳的关税。

国内环境

国内环境由产生于本国的所有不可控制因素构成,它们伴随并影响着企业的生存和发展。显然,经理人员对这些因素非常熟悉。然而,虽说是国内环境因素,却并不排除会对海外经营产生影响。例如,如果本国遭受严重的外汇短缺,政府就会对海外投资进行限制,以减少外汇外流。结果,跨国公司的管理者发现,他们不能如愿地发展海外机构。现实生活中的另一个例子是,正在国内罢工的工会组织发现管理层正在通过国外子公司来供应零部件后,罢工者与国外工会进行联络,后者保证不再加班生产罢工工厂所需产品。因此,此种国内环境因素不仅对国内有影响,而且对国外市场也产生了影响。

外国环境

外国环境因素与本国的一样,只不过发生在国外而已。然而,由于某些原因,它们起着不同的作用。这些原因包括:

环境因素的影响不同。尽管国内外两种环境中的因素是相同的,但影响却相差甚远,有时甚至是相互矛盾的。德莱塞工业公司和前苏联管道公司之间的案例就是一个很好的例子,它说明了完全矛盾的政治因素给跨国经理带来的困惑。当美国总统里根将对管道设备运输的禁运扩大到那些经美国公司授权后生产设备的外国公司时,德莱塞总公司指示其法国子公司停止压缩机订单的生产。同时,法国政府却命令法国的德莱塞公司不用服从这一禁运命令,继续按期交货,否则就会受到民事及刑事制裁。德莱塞公司

的一个副总裁说：“这个命令使德莱塞公司进退两难”。

难以估计的变化。外国环境因素带来的另一个问题是它们通常难以估计,尤其是法律和政治因素。为了安抚一部分人群,可能会通过一个具有很强民族主义倾向的法律。从表面上看,政府显示出反对外国投资,然而,务实的领导人实际上会对外国投资给予鼓励。墨西哥就是一个很好的例子。直到1988年,墨西哥都禁止外国人在墨西哥的公司拥有多数股权。然而,却有一个允许例外存在的条款,即“如果投资有利于国家福利的改善”。依据这一条款,IBM和其他公司都成功地获准建立了独资企业。

因素间的相互关联。各种环境因素经常是相互联系的。这本身并不是新鲜事,因为国内的经理人员也会遇到同样情况。然而,它们相互作用的形式和程度是不同的。例如,由于资本的成本较高,同时拥有大量的非熟练劳动力,因此许多发展中国家所使用的技术水平比工业化程度较高的国家要低。换句话说,假如要在造价昂贵、需要少量工人的专用机械和较为便宜、需要大量劳动力的通用机械之间做出选择的话,面对高利息率以及存在大量可用劳动力状况的经理通常会选择后者。另一个例子是自然和社会文化之间的相互作用。山脉和沙漠等因素阻碍了一国居民间的自由流动,从而有助于在一国内部维持各种不同的文化圈。

国际环境

国际环境包括:(1)本国环境因素与外国环境因素的相互作用;(2)当一国的分公司与另一国的顾客进行交易时,两国环境因素之间的相互作用。这符合国际商务的定义——国际商务是跨越国界的商务活动。

例如,在跨国公司或国际公司总部工作的员工只要以任何方式与其他国家发生联系,他们就会处于国际环境中;反之,在国外子公司中工作的员工却不会处于国际环境中,除非他们也通过产品出口或管理海外关联公司来从事国际商务活动。换句话说,智利固特异轮胎公司的销售经理如果只在智利销售轮胎,他就不是