

Fundamentals of Business

工商导论

英语教程

陈准民 编著

Setting up a Business

Products and Pricing

Channels of Distribution

Promotion

Money and Banking

Financing

Accounting

The Securities Market

Risk Management and

Insurance

Business Law

International Business

Managing Business Enterprises

对外经济贸易大学出版社

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1121

(京)新登字 182 号

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

工商导论英语教程:英汉对照/陈准民编著. -北京:对外经济贸易大学出版社,2000.5

ISBN 7-81000-989-3

I. 工… II. 陈… III. 工商企业-企业管理-英语-教材
IV. H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2000)第 08676 号

© 2000 年 对外经济贸易大学出版社出版发行

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责任编辑:左放军

对外经济贸易大学出版社
北京惠新东街12号 邮政编码:100029

山东省莱芜市印刷厂印刷 新华书店北京发行所发行
开本: 850×1168 1/32 8.375 印张 217 千字
2000年6月北京第1版 2000年6月第1次印刷

ISBN 7-81000-989-3/H·237

印数:0001 - 5000 册 定价:14.00 元

PREFACE

As China deepens its economic reform and opens its door wider to the outside, business English is gaining popularity rapidly. Learners of business English have been increasing in number and numerous textbooks of business English have been turned out to satisfy the learners' needs. Having been a teacher in this field for almost 2 decades, however, I have found that most of such texts are designed for learners at the beginning or intermediate level. The English they deal with is mainly for office secretaries and sales people. To meet the needs of advanced learners, particularly those who take business English not as a course but as a major, textbooks of a higher caliber should be developed.

First, the subjects covered by such textbooks should embrace all the major components of modern business, from how to establish a business to ways to change its form; from product R&D to calculation of profits or losses; from doing business in one's own country to making money abroad, etc. These subjects need not be dealt with in depth, but must be concisely covered to give learners a basic but comprehensive understanding of modern business.

Second, the English used by such texts should not be too academic or full of technical jargons. It should represent the English which is used by ordinary business people, and the newspapers and magazines they read.

Fundamentals of Business is an attempt in this direction. It is written neither as a content textbook for native speakers of English nor as a language textbook for non-native speakers. It tries to stand somewhere in between, attempting to present the fundamental elements of modern business with a controlled body of English expressions which I hope are neither too casual nor too technical for upper-division or graduate students of business English, or other types of advanced learners of business English.

Fundamentals of Business consists of 18 chapters, each covering a major issue in modern business. At the end of each chapter, there are two exercises: 1) Business Case, and 2) Translation and Discussion and 3) Run Your own Business. The second exercise is in fact a series of short stories about a garment manufacturing firm in China. Designed for students to practice business English, each story and the ensuing questions should be first translated into English. The discussion that follows should also be in English. Students do not have to do the translation in a word-for-word fashion. Rather, they are encouraged to use each story as a framework and add whatever details as they see fit so that they can practice business English in a more comprehensive way; they can also raise other questions to expand the discussion.

The whole course is designed for eighteen 3-hour sessions plus one final examination. Each session may follow the procedure below:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Lecturing
(focusing on the issue) | 1 hour |
| 2. Discussion on the issue covered
(focus shifting from issue to language) | 0.5 hour |
| 3. Business Case, Translation and Discussion | 1.5 hour |

Run Your own Business

(focusing on the use of language)

As can be seen from the above suggested procedure, a session focuses on content (the issue), and is basically teacher-centered in the first half; however, the focus shifts onto language, and the session is student-centered in the second half.

Fundamentals of Business was first written in 1996 and has since been used for several classes. Based on my classroom experience and students comments, revisions have been made in content and format. However, as a textbook of experimental nature, it must still have a lot of room for further improvement. I would appreciate, therefore, further comments and suggestions from colleagues and students.

Chen Zhunmin (陈准民)

Beijing

February 2000

前 言

目前的经贸英语类课程主要有两大类。一类是传统课程,如“外刊选读”、“外贸函电”和“外贸口语”,通称老三门。另一类为用英语讲授的专业课程,如“国际营销”、“国际企业管理”等。这两类课程在帮助学生了解国际经贸、熟悉有关英语词汇和用语方面具有重大作用。但是,目前这种课程体系有两个明显缺陷。第一,在传统的老三门中,“外贸函电”和“外贸口语”偏重于对外贸易,尤其是商品贸易,局限性很大;“外刊选读”在内容的丰富多样性上独树一帜,但由于其素材选自各国各类报刊,要达到很高的系统性有较大难度。第二,用英语开设的专业课起点过高。美国和其它西方国家的学生从小就生活在市场经济当中,对这种体制有着丰富的感性认识。而市场经济在中国才刚刚起步,中国学生对市场经济的了解还十分粗浅,还没有形成一个整体概念。对与市场经济有密切关系的国际经济贸易,他们的认识也是如此。在这种情况下,一开始就要学习“国际营销”等非常微观的课程,结果往往是见木不见林,只记住了支离破碎的具体细节,缺乏对整体的把握。

在党的十四大、十五大召开后,中国的经济改革开放总方向已经十分明确,那就是:建立现代化企业制度,发展社会主义市场经济,使中国的经济同世界接轨,在 21 世纪中叶成为中等发达国家。同改革开放前和改革开放初期相比,21 世纪的国际经贸工作者的工作范围要广得多,业务类型也复杂得多。他们不再局限于处理来往信函和信用证,或参加几次贸易谈判或交易会。从各方面的反馈看,他们可能从事的国际经贸活动包括:

1. 传统意义上的国际贸易;
2. 作为驻外人员参加中国企业在外国的经营管理活动;
3. 作为中方人员参加中外合资企业的经营管理活动;
4. 作为中国雇员参加外国企业在中国的经营管理活动;
5. 国际双边或多边经贸组织的协商、谈判;
6. 中国各级政府的对外经贸活动。

从以上活动可以看出,为了胜任以上各项工作,国际经贸工作者必须熟悉:

1. 经济贸易的基本理论;
2. 市场经济的运作规律;
3. 现代企业的经营管理;
4. 国际经贸活动的基本概念和程序;
5. 与以上各项有关的法律、伦理和文化知识;
6. 与以上各项有关的外语知识和技能。

从以上的讨论可以推断,经贸英语的课程体系应作重大改革。要把经贸英语看成一个有机的整体,大力加强其系统性。

在教学内容上,要着眼于以“市场导向、企业为本、内外贸不分家、产供销一条龙”为特征的大经贸以及反映这些特征的英语词汇和用语,而不能再局限于传统意义的外贸。随着教学内容的扩大和丰富,在有限的课时里要抓大放小,舍弃那些过于具体琐碎的内容(如对外贸易中的某些具体细节),确保反映大经贸特征的英语讲授。

其次,要本着“先基础、后提高,先概要、后具体”的原则,把各门课程分出层次(如基础层和提高层)、种类(如全面概要介绍类和具体领域深入讲解类)和适用对象。经贸英语的教学对象一般可分为非经贸英语本科生、经贸英语本科生和经贸英语研究生三类。在教学内容上,我认为第一类要强调基础和全面;第三类要强调层次高,重点突出;对第二类,则可以取中。

认识到以上各点后,我开设了“工商导论”这门课并编写了这

本配套教材。本课程是一门概论型基础课,其教学对象为 1)非经贸英语专业本科毕业的经贸英语研究生,2)经贸英语本科高年级学生,和 3)国际贸易经济等外向型专业的学生。它以英语为授课语言,全面、系统、概要地介绍了市场经济体制下工商企业如何运作。通过该课程的学习,学生可以对市场经济及现代工商企业的运作有一个总体印象,并熟悉同企业环境、经营管理、金融财务、法律保险等方面有关的英语词汇和用语。

《工商导论》的原型来自于美国等西方国家,英语一般叫做 Introduction to Business, Business Essentials 或 Fundamentals of Business。在那些国家里,这是一门为本科生开设的经济类基础课,全面概括地介绍市场经济以及在这种体制下工商企业如何经营管理的基本知识,是每一个经贸类学生的必修课和很多其它专业学生的选修课。

前面已经讲到,我国正在进行社会主义市场经济建设,并逐步与世界接轨。对于我国的国际经贸工作者来讲,市场经济和工商企业经营管理也是两个必须熟悉的领域。因此,开设类似《工商导论》的基础课程也很有必要。

《工商导论》对市场经济及工商企业的经营管理的描述以国际上的通行定义为基础,但尽量结合中国的对外经贸实际。在案例分析和讨论时,也尽量使用与中国对外经贸有关的题目和素材。

通过学习《工商导论》,学生可以对市场经济及工商企业的经营管理形成一个总体印象,并熟悉有关的英语词汇和用语,为下一步学习更微观、更具体的课程打下基础。

需要强调的是,本课程是英语课,不是专业课。因此教学重点在经贸英语,而不是专业知识。因此,学生对专业知识只要理解就行,不需钻研过深。对于所学的经贸英语,则不仅要理解,而且要抓紧一切机会加以运用。

因此,我一般只使用三分之一的课堂时间讲解有关专业知识,而用大部分时间培养学生使用经贸英语的能力。我设计了 Busi-

ness Case, Translation and Discussion 和 Run Your Own Business 三种练习。Business Case 要求学生对所给案例用英语进行分析、讨论并作出决策。Translation and Discussion 同 Business Case 有些类似,也是案例分析,但有两个不同之处。一是所有的案例都围绕两个中国年青人的创业史展开;二是案例全部用中文写成。学生必须先 will 案例翻译成英文,再用英语进行分析、讨论和决策。我还鼓励学生充分运用所学知识,并发挥自己的想象力,为案例设计更为丰富的内容。所有这一切,当然还是为了让学生有更多运用英语的机会。Run Your Own Business 给了学生更大的自由度。从第二周开始,要求每个学生“创建”一个自己的企业,并随着课程的进展,运用所学知识就如何管理该企业进行分析、决策并向全班报告。当然,所有这一切也都用英语进行。

虽然《工商导论》已经使用了三年,在正式出版前,也由美国专家 Bill Linn 先生做了文字审核,但作为一本经贸英语领域的探索性教材,不足之处在所难免。恳求各位专家和读者不吝赐教,使它日益完善。

陈准民

2000 年 2 月于北京

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Chapter One

SETTING UP A BUSINESS

When asked what they want to do in the future, most aspiring students of business would answer, "Set up a business and be my own boss." What, then, are the major forms of business in a market economy? There are four, namely, sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation and franchise.

Sole Proprietorship

A sole proprietorship is a business owned and controlled by one person. In the United States, quite contrary to the general impression that it is a country made up of giant corporations, sole proprietorships account for about three-quarters of all businesses. They concentrate in restaurants, street corner grocery stores, florists, beauty saloons, drug stores, farms and similar businesses.

Advantages

The advantages of sole proprietorships are many fold. The following are their major appeals.

1. *Simple to Establish*

In the United States, it often takes just a few minutes to set up a new sole proprietorship. Just pay a small fee, get the necessary

state and local licenses or permits, and you are the owner and boss of a new business. The procedures for setting up a sole proprietorship in China have also been simplified a great deal in recent years.

2. *Freer in Decision-Making*

Compared with other types of business, a sole proprietorship has greater freedom in deciding on business policies and operations. As a sole proprietor, you make your own decisions on the type of goods (or services) you want to offer at the price you feel appropriate. You don't have to consult with anyone else on when to open and close, whom to employ as your assistant, and when to take a week off for a holiday in Greece.

3. *Easy to Keep Operational and Financial Secrecy*

Like successes in battle fields, successes in business are sometimes based on secrecy. If you work as a company manager, however, you can hardly keep your business strategies secret. But if you are a sole proprietor, you don't have to report to shareholders or board directors. Nobody can discover the operational or financial information of your business unless you have an incurable urge to impress others.

4. *Less Tax Burden*

Compared with other forms of business, sole proprietors are the luckiest businessmen in terms of tax burden. In the US, for example, the tax rates for sole proprietors are often only half of those for corporations.

5. *Exclusive Use of Profits*

Employees, be they general managers or blue-collar workers, often have the feeling of "making bridal dresses for others." This is why so many people choose to be their own boss. As a sole proprietor, if you work hard and make a small fortune, you can take all

the profits and don't have to share them with anyone else. This is perhaps the most appealing feature of being a sole proprietor.

Disadvantages

Being a sole proprietor does not mean you are free from problems. The following are some of the disadvantages.

1. *Unlimited Liability*

This is the worst nightmare for every sole proprietor. Liability here means obligation to pay one's debts. A sole proprietor has, by law, unlimited liability, which means if he goes bankrupt, he may, in order to pay his debt, lose not only his business but part or all of his personal properties.

2. *Limited Access to Capital*

It might be easier for a sole proprietor to get a bank loan, because he has personal as well as business assets behind him. But compared with corporations, which can get financing not only from banks but also from shareholders, sole proprietorships' access to capital is rather limited and therefore it is more difficult to secure additional capital.

3. *Limited Managerial Expertise*

Many sole proprietors may be experts in one field or another, but seldom have the expertise in every aspect of managing a modern business, which involves at least marketing, financing and human resources management. Therefore, sole proprietors have to make extra efforts in order to run their business well and often spend longer hours on work.

Partnership

Those who believe that "two heads are better than one" often choose

working in a partnership rather than running their business alone. A partnership, as defined by the US Uniform Partnership Act, is “an association of two or more persons to carry on as co-owners of a business for profit.” Although partnerships can be formed upon oral agreement, most partnerships have a written contract which stipulates the duties of each partner, the way to share profits and losses, and in case of dissolution, the method to divide assets and / or liabilities.

Partnerships are typically found in businesses such as law firms, accounting firms, and dental clinics which provide professional services in specialized areas. Insurance firms (e. g. Lloyd's of London), advertising firms, real estate firms, and management consulting firms are also common examples of partnerships.

Although all these are called partners, some members of a partnership may be very active in the management of the firm and therefore take unlimited liability, while others choose to stay away from management and assume only limited liability. The former are referred to as *general partners* and the latter as *limited partners*. In each partnership, however, there must be at least one general partner.

Advantages

Running a partnership has several advantages.

1. *Improved Access to Capital and Credit*

Compared with a sole proprietorship, a partnership has more sources of capital and credit. First of all, more capital is contributed by the partners and more funds can be obtained from friends and investors. Secondly, suppliers are more likely to extend credit because most partnerships have more than just one general partner, which

means more people are personally responsible for the debts.

2. Greater Possibility for Good Management

Partners may bring to the firm different talents and expertise and can therefore make better decisions and manage the firm on a sounder basis.

3. Definite Legal Framework

Over the past few centuries, a definite legal framework has developed for partnerships and, therefore, settling legal problems concerning partnerships is relatively simpler than solving problems of other forms of business.

4. Better Prospects for Growth

With increased capital and credit, better management and a more definite legal framework, a partnership stands a better chance to survive possible setbacks and has better prospects to expand and grow.

Disadvantages

The major disadvantages of a partnership are as follows.

1. Unlimited Liability

Like sole proprietors, general partners are personally responsible for any debt they owe and may lose all their personal property if the partnership goes broke.

2. Internal Conflicts

Two heads are commonly believed to be better than one, but unfortunately it is not always true in reality. As the saying goes, "too many cooks spoil the broth." The partners may have differences in opinion or run into serious conflict of interest. This will surely hurt the operation and well-being of the firm.