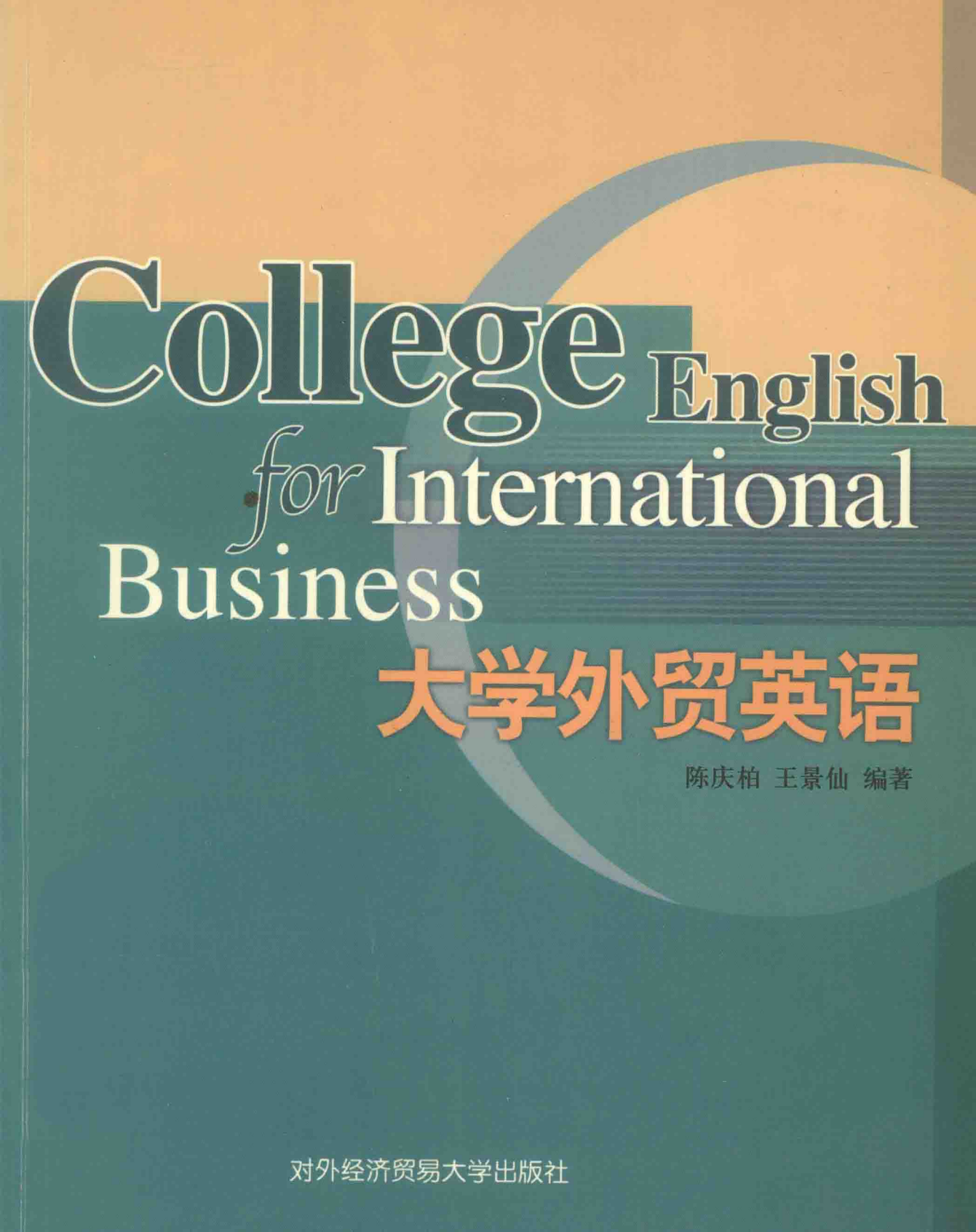




College English *for* International Business

大学外贸英语

陈庆柏 王景仙 编著

对外经济贸易大学出版社

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Preface

Strive for a New Breakthrough in Teaching Business English

Definition and Importance

Traditionally, it seems to me, the term of business English was and perhaps is still used to mean the English language relating to trade across the national border in goods or commodities. But this definition is a bit too narrow, because in today's world of commodity-economies, business involves not just buying and selling of goods, but also financing instruments like securities, and all sorts of services such as banking, consulting, insurance, accounting, auditing, training and counseling. Therefore, today, when we say business English it refers to a variety of specialized English or English for special purposes (ESPs). There are foreign trade English, banking English, insurance English, securities English, scientific and technological English, and English of law or more precisely the English language of law, to name just a few. With China's entry into WTO and globalization of world's economies, business English of these types is getting increasingly important and useful to us. Lacking a mastery of them, it will be extremely difficult if not totally impossible for our college and university graduates to play a good role in the unprecedentedly competitive business world and international cooperation.

From the linguistic point of view, the teaching of business English (not teaching business in English) has some other important roles to perform, such as helping the students to review and consolidate their basic English and preparing them for taking professional English courses when they enter their third or fourth academic year.

Overview of China's Business English Teaching

The development of China's business English teaching has undergone basically

two stages. The first stage began immediately after 1949 when New China was founded and ended in 1979. During this period, very little business English was taught at colleges or universities. The second stage started in the 1980's. During these two decades or so, especially in the last few years, more and more colleges and universities started to compile business English textbooks and to teach their students different kinds of business English, including foreign trade English, scientific and technological English, and banking English or financial English, and the English language of law etc.

What is even more inspiring is the fact that a few better-known universities in China, on the basis of teaching business English, have added to their curriculum professional English courses like economics, accounting, international trade, business law, chemistry, physics, etc. As a result, university students' general level of business English has been considerably heightened. Such progress is attributable to the efforts mainly made by reform-minded teachers who went to American and Britain universities for further study and then returned to China in the early 1980's to render better services to their motherland.

Despite such fast advances made over the years, frankly speaking, our universities remain less advanced or even backward in terms of business English teaching performance as compared with other non-English speaking countries in continental Europe and in Asia. I was told in Thailand there is a university where all core business courses are taught in English.

Further examples revealing our backwardness in teaching business English can easily be given:

(1) The overwhelming majority of high-level Chinese officials and CEOs bring interpreters with them when visiting abroad or receiving and talking with foreign guests at home.

(2) Chinese world-class athletes have tremendous trouble in communicating with their foreign counterparts either orally or in written English.

(3) A large number of university's professional schools or departments have found themselves unable to offer various kinds of business English, and only teach public English courses to their students whose major is not English.

(4) In some universities that are able to offer business English courses, the total time (36hrs) set aside for teaching business English is too little or insufficient.

(5) In many a university, including those few prestigious ones with ambition to become first-rate universities in the world, the proportion of professional courses taught in English to their curriculums is insignificantly small as compared with the advanced norm of 20% for non-English speaking countries.

(6) Over 90% of textbooks on business-related subjects such as international trade, money & banking, international finance, insurance, economics, law, etc. designed for undergraduates in Chinese universities are written in Chinese, often with a big amount of translation of things discussed in the imported textbooks from either the U. S. or the U. K. or both of them.

All in all, Chinese universities have lagged behind in the field of teaching business English, lagged behind in turning out competent graduates for participation in international competition, and lagged behind in producing English professional course-textbooks for undergraduates, let alone MBA or PhD students.

A number of factors can account for the backwardness mentioned above. First and foremost, we lack a brigade of qualified teaching staff who are both strong in professional subjects and their corresponding English. A large number of professors are nationally well-known, being tutors for MBA and PhD students and have had a lot of academic papers and books published, but they are all written in Chinese. Undoubtedly, in China, there are some professors who can teach business English and professional courses in English, yet they are very few in number, unable to meet the growing demands arising from today's increasingly competitive business world where the world economies and regional economies are getting increasingly integrated with and interdependent on one another. Besides, from 1949 to 2000, little emphasis had been put by the relative authority on teaching business English for students of professional schools or departments. What is emphasized was and still is public English. For example, a student majoring in economics, law or medicine must pass level-4 and level-6 public English tests without being required to take exams in English relating to their majors. Consequently these graduates often find themselves unable to carry out business negotiations. Finally, English learning is a continuous process and more time-consuming task for Chinese students, because their mother-tongue bears very little or no resemblance to the English language in terms of pronunciation and intonation, syntax, sentence structure, and grammar.

How To Catch Up

In order to cope with the new situation where China is further open to the outside world, we must carry out reforms in and follow new strategy for the teaching of business English. The reforms and strategy should consist of two steps aimed at improving the performance of our business English teaching and catching up with the world's advanced level. The first step is to extend the business-related English teaching project to every professional schools or departments of the existing universities, such as finance schools or departments, business schools, international economics departments, legal departments or law schools, management departments, insurance departments, accounting departments, etc. The second step is to offer core professional courses in English to the undergraduates of the aforesaid professional schools or departments, and the more the better. To teach professional English courses is a more sophisticated stage of business English teaching although at this stage the stress is put on imparting or disseminating professional knowledge to the students in a systematic manner. The day when the two steps are successfully taken will be the day come when China comes to the forefront of non-English speaking countries in the field of teaching business English and other professional English courses.

Carrying out the above 2-step strategy is no easy task, because we need a whole and complete safeguard system which must consist of the following:

(1) A large batch of qualified university teachers equipped with both rich professional knowledge and a good command of basic and business English. To achieve this goal China should keep sending university teachers of English, esp. younger ones to study at universities in Britain, America or other English-speaking countries and set up special training centers to train them to teach business English and other professional English courses. Qualified teachers are the key to success in pushing China to the ranks of advanced countries in teaching business English and other professional English courses.

(2) A whole set of English teaching materials suitable for Chinese students and situation. In this respect, we cannot totally depend on imported textbooks. We must compile them ourselves. Everything is divided into two. In spite of their advantages

(more matured , idiomatic and sophisticated English) , imported textbooks or teaching materials have disadvantages as well. First , they are very expensive ; second , the language is a bit too tough for our students whose mother tongue is Chinese ; third , there is no Chinese equivalent of difficult terms and concepts ; finally , those textbooks have little association with conditions existing in China. For the above reasons I am supportive of compiling our own English textbooks on the basis of imported teaching materials. By so doing , Chinese teachers not only can learn a great deal more and get themselves far more familiar with what they are going to teach , they also can help to avoid those disadvantages of imported textbooks.

(3) A considerably high English level of the students. Many professional schools or departments somewhat fear that their students might have tremendous difficulties in fully understanding professional English courses. To a large extent their fears are justified , because since 1949 , all professional courses in our country have been taught in Chinese by Chinese teachers. To overcome such obstacles , some measures listed below can be taken.

- Intensify English training for those first-and second-year students of professional schools or departments. Such intensified training can take two forms. One is to train them as if they are students of English in their first two years , and then to give extra coaching to them on public English. The other form is to enable them to master public English first and then learn more business English. Business English teaching can serve the purposes of both paving the way for the students to follow professional English courses and brushing up their basic English.

- A stimulus or reward mechanism for improving our business English teaching performance. By “stimulus” I mean teachers who teach business English , especially those teaching professional English courses must be paid much more for the dual roles they perform : improving the students’ business English and at the same time imparting professional knowledge to the students. After all , as English is not their mother tongue , they must make greater efforts and spend much more time performing such an important task.

- A correct policy guarantee. Then there must be a mandate from the Ministry of Education to the effect that all students of professional schools or departments must pass a business English test in connection with their majors other than basic English.

• A modern library or at least a good reading room. Such a library or reading room should be filled mainly with contemporary English professional business textbooks, key English magazines, newspapers such as the Economist, Business Week, Banker, Euro Currency, Financial Times, etc. Without making plentiful modern English textbooks and periodicals available to the students and teachers, it is hard for them to improve their learning or teaching performance. Reading widely in English is definitely an important means of enriching one's knowledge, and an indispensable channel through which the students and teachers get to know the world. In addition, a modern library or good reading room mentioned above can also assist the students and teachers in their scientific research and paper writing work.

Conclusion

Yes, for the time being, China is less advanced in teaching business English and English professional courses. Yes, quite a few universities are under great pressure in reaching the goal set by the Ministry of Education for teaching professional courses in bilingual languages, and meeting the challenges posed by the globalization of world economy, regional economic integration and China's accession to the WTO. But we Chinese teachers are intelligent people and hard-working people. So long as our determination is strong, our will is not shaken and our policy remains correct, we will be able to catch up with more advanced non-English speaking countries in the area of teaching business English and professional English courses. With persevering efforts, our goal will be attained and must be attained!

Chen Qingbai

前 言

我国综合国力的日益增强和未来国内市场的更加开放,为中国今后的对外经贸大发展提供了难得的机遇与更加广阔的空间。可以肯定,在未来的岁月里,将有越来越多的外国企业来中国经商,投资办厂,中国也会有越来越多的企业(其中包括民营私人企业)走出国门开展更多的涉外经贸活动,参与更多的国际合作。

为适应这一咄咄逼人的形势,中国经贸院校的教学模式必须有一个根本的改变。传统的“两张皮分家”(知识传授与相应外语相分离)的教学方法必须尽快结束,否则我们会落后,就难以培养出能在我国外贸企业日趋激烈的国际合作与竞争中发挥推动作用的能“两条腿”走路的高素质国际复合型人才。

数十年来,作为一名高校教师,我为实现上述目标花费了很大心血。1981年从美国斯坦福大学学习归来后,我就顶着各种压力率先用英文讲授“国际商法”并在此后的若干年内用英文编写并翻译了多本能用于英语教学的经济法律教科书。(详见作者简介)。这本最近完成并出版的《大学外贸英语》就是其中的一本。

本书分为两大部分:一是国际贸易理论与实务,共十九讲。所覆盖的核心内容有:最新世界经济前景展望,中美经济,主要国际贸易理论,政府对国际贸易的干预,贸易政策及其使用的工具,地区经济一体化,汇率与国际贸易,国际收支,国际投资与跨国公司,关贸总协定与WTO,多哈回合的任务与前景,贸易融资方式,常用贸易形式与国际贸易术语解释通则;第二部分为近30篇的经贸文章选读,全部精选于英美著名报刊,出于既有深厚英语文字功底又懂国经贸易的各种专家学者之手。它们的收入可帮助读者更好理解有关的专业知识和提高他们的英语水平(包括基础英语的水平)。

本书具有以下三个特点:

一、新颖性

本教材不仅有对传统贸易理论(重商主义,绝对优势,相对优势,赫-俄原理,里昂诺夫反论,产品周期说)的系统介绍与比较,还有对最新贸易理论——贸易万有引力模式的论述。另外,每一讲后的辅助阅读材料大都从2003年英美报刊中选取。它们所报道的都是当代经贸的热点问题,如:通货紧缩,弱势美元,新贸易保护

主义,多哈回合,坎昆会议,大陆与香港的 CEPA, SARS 对经济的影响,地区经济一体化,人民币是否升值,美与欧盟贸易争端等。

二、复合性

要培养国际性复合型外贸人才,就必须有一套适合此目的复合型教材——将国际贸易知识传授与相应专业英语有机结合,有机融为一体的教材。在本书中作者就是这样安排的。它不仅包括重点放在系统介绍国际贸易理论与实务的 19 个讲座,还配有语言练习和以提高学生相应专业英语为目的的经贸文章。这些报刊经贸文章因语言点多,文体生动、自然,涉及经贸领域内容广泛,分析问题透彻,加上许多重要经贸术语的双解,完全可当精读材料处理。学生只要认真学习最终一定会获得“双赢”的效果——既丰富与国际贸易相关的知识又提高英文水平。

三、前瞻性

该书的前瞻性体现在两方面。其一,从编写目的上讲,它的出现是以促进我国国际经贸专业院校的双语教学为出发点,不单纯是为了学习经贸英语;其二,此书无论从深度和广度上讲,都更加切合中国高校目前的教学特点和要求。

用英语讲专业课是新中国高教史上的一个新生事物。朝此目标迈进的适合中国国情(英语是非母语)的此类教材也是一个新生事物。刚开始,困难一定不少,尤其是语言上的困难在所难免,但随着我国英语总体水平的与时俱进(现在幼儿园、中小学开始教英语),只要有百折不挠的精神,用英语教授与国际经贸、国际法律有关课程的美好愿望终有一天会实现。

由于水平所限,书中缺点错误肯定会有。恳请使用者多提宝贵意见,以使之日臻完善。

陈庆柏

2004 年 1 月于北京

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Part 1

Global Economic Picture

Chapter 1

The World Economic Outlook

Definition of Outlook

Here in our context, “outlook” is used to mean “reviewing the past and forecasting the future, or expectation or prospect of the future”. So when talking about the world economic outlook we try to tell in what direction the world economy will go or what the future global economy will look like in the foreseeable future.

Rationale for Paying Attention First to the World Outlook

Now that international trade and its theories are important parts of the world economy and international economics, we must first of all view the global economy as a whole before starting to explore the various specific aspects of international trade. This is what we call “look at the forest first and then its trees”.

How to Produce A Piece of Writing on the World Economic Outlook

In doing forecasting for the world economy two things are essential: first we must make use of leading economic indicators like GDP, real GDP, personal consumption or consumer spending, investment or capital spending, consumer prices, industrial