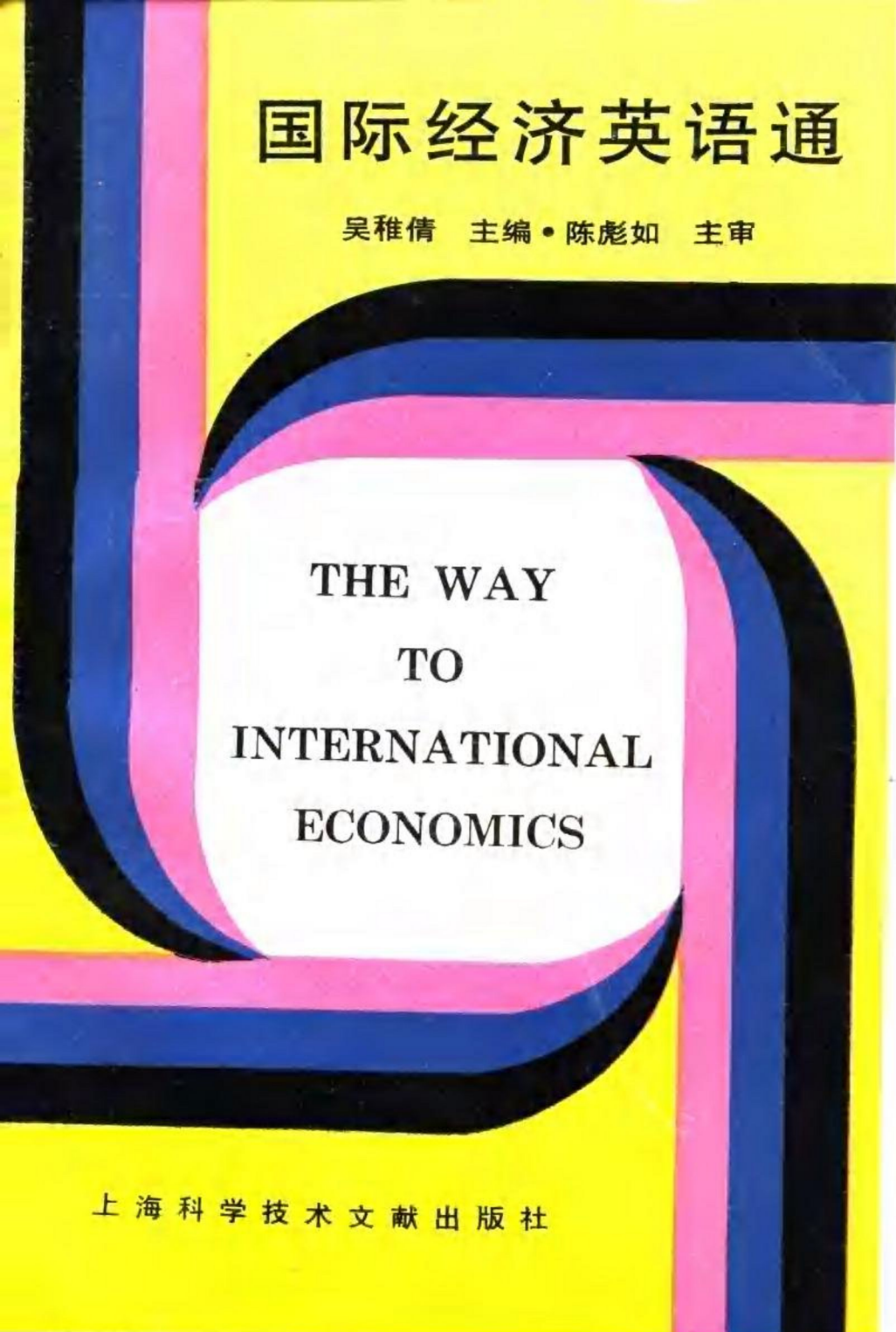


国际经济英语通

吴稚倩 主编 • 陈彪如 主审



THE WAY
TO
INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMICS

上海科学技术文献出版社

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THE WAY TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS

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上海科学技术文献出版社

(沪)新登字 301 号

责任编辑: 杨浩明

封面设计: 何永平

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上海科学技术文献出版社出版发行

(上海市武康路 2 号 邮政编码: 200031)

全国新华书店经销

上海科技文献出版社昆山联营厂印刷

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开本 850×1168 1/32 印张 17.25 字数 479,000

1994 年 5 月第 1 版 1994 年 5 月第 1 次印刷

印数: 1—2,000

ISBN 7-5439-0295-8/Z·576

定价: 16.50 元

JM59/02

前 言

《国际经济英语通》(THE WAY TO INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS)是为高等学校经济学专业高年级学生及从事经济理论研究和实际工作的同志编写的英语阅读书籍。本书不仅能帮助读者提高英语阅读水平,而且能使读者通过英语学到有关国际经济方面的基本常识。

本书涉及国际经济的五个方面,即经济学概论、货币银行、国际金融、国际贸易和经济管理。全书共有28个单元。每一单元由正文及注释、经济术语、练习、补充读物及注释六部分组成。注释尽量用浅近的英语,说明一些语言难点及特殊现象,帮助读者理解文章;经济术语为读者理解专业文章提供方便;练习每个单元配两个:第一是选择题,旨在测试读者阅读理解和运用阅读技能的能力,第二是其他不同形式的练习,旨在让读者在理解文章的基础上进一步进行语言实践。每一篇正文有一篇配套文章,并做了注释,主要为读者多提供同类题目的阅读材料,以便进一步巩固所学知识。本书最后附有练习答案,以方便读者自学时参考。

本书由我国著名经济学家、华东师范大学国际金融研究所所长陈彪如教授担任主审;大学外语教学部吴稚倩副教授担任主编;唐永华、邵志明、张颖、谢佩苓同志参加编写。本书承加拿大籍专家 Zannetta Varley 协助审阅。

在编写过程中,大学外语教学部领导、经济系领导及部分教师提出了宝贵的意见。在此特表示衷心的感谢。

由于我们缺乏经验,本书不足之处在所难免,敬请国内同行和读者不吝赐教。

编 者

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Unit 1

Text

What Is Economics About?¹

Economics is about people and the choices they make. The unit of analysis in economics is the individual. Of course, individuals group together to form collective organizations such as corporations, labor unions, and governments. However, the choices of individuals still underlie and direct these organizations. Thus, even when we study collective organizations, we will focus on the ways in which their operation is affected by the choices of individuals.

Economic theory is developed from fundamental postulates about how individual human beings behave, struggle with the problem of scarcity, and respond to change. The reality of life on our planet is that productive resources — resources used to produce goods — are limited. Therefore, goods and services are also limited. In contrast, the desires of human beings are virtually unlimited. These facts confront us with the two basic ingredients of an economic topic — scarcity and choice. Scarcity is the term used by economists to indicate that man's desire for a "thing" exceeds the amount of it that is freely available from Nature. Nature has always dealt grudgingly with man; the Garden of Eden² has continually eluded man's grasp.

A good that is scarce is an economic good. An economic good includes food, clothing, and many of the items that all of

us commonly recognize as material goods. But it also includes some items that may surprise you. Is leisure a good? Would you like to have more leisure time than is currently available to you? Most of us would. Therefore, leisure is a scarce good. What about clean air? A few years ago many economics texts classified clean air as a free good, made available by nature in such abundant supply that everybody could have all of it they wanted³. This is no longer true. Our utilization of air for the purpose of waste disposal has created a scarcity of clean air. Many of the residents of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and other large cities would like to have more clean air.

Few of us usually think of such environmental conditions as economic goods. However, if you are someone who would like more open spaces, green areas, or dogwood trees, you will recognize that these things are scarce. They, too, are economic goods.

Time is also an economic good. Most of us would like to have more time to watch TV, take a walk in the woods, do our schoolwork, or sleep, but we each have only 24 hours in a day. The scarcity of time imposes a definite limitation on our ability to do many of the things we would like to do.

Since scarcity of productive resources, time, and income limit the alternatives available to us, we must make choices. Choice is the act of selecting among restricted alternatives. A great deal of economics is about how people choose when the alternatives open to them are restricted. The choices of the family shopper are restricted by the household budget. The choices of the business decision-maker are restricted by competition from other firms, the cost of productive resources, and technology. The spending choices of the political decision-maker are restric-

ted by the taxable income of the citizenry and voter opposition to taxes.

The selection of one alternative generally necessitates the foregoing of others. If you choose to spend \$10 going to a football game, you will have \$10 less to spend on other things. Similarly, if you choose to spend an evening watching a movie, you must forego spending the evening playing Ping-Pong (or participating in some other activity). You cannot eat your cake and have it, too.⁴

Each day, we all make hundreds of economic choices, although we are not normally aware of doing so. The choices of when to get up in the morning, what to eat for breakfast, how to travel to work, what television program to watch — all of these decisions are economic. They are economic because they involve the utilization of scarce resources (for example, time and income). We all are constantly involved in making choices that relate to economics.

Scarcity restricts us. How can we overcome it? Resources, including our own skills, can be used to produce economic goods. Human effort and ingenuity can be combined with machines, land, natural resources, and other productive factors to increase the availability of economic goods. These are our “tools” in our struggle with scarcity. It is important to note that most economic goods are not like manna from heaven⁵. Human energy is nearly always an ingredient in the production of economic goods.

The lessons of history confirm that our desire for economic goods far outstrips our resources to produce them. Are we destined to lead hopeless lives of misery and drudgery because we are involved in a losing battle with scarcity? Some might answer

this question in the affirmative, pointing out that a substantial proportion of the world's population go to bed hungry each night. The annual income of a typical worker in such countries as Pakistan and India is less than \$ 200. And the population in these and other areas is increasing almost as rapidly as their output of material goods.

Yet the grip of scarcity has been loosened in most of North America, Western Europe, Japan, and the Soviet Union. Most Americans, Japanese, and Europeans have an adequate calorie intake and sufficient housing and clothing. Many own luxuries such as automatic dishwashers, home video games, and electric carving knives. Over the last century, the average number of hours worked per week has fallen from 60 to about 40 in most Western nations. From a material viewpoint, life is certainly more pleasant for those people than it was for their forefathers 250 years ago. However, despite this progress, scarcity is still a fact of life, even in relatively affluent countries. Most of us have substantially fewer goods and resources and less time than we would like to have. It should be noted that scarcity and poverty are not the same thing. Poverty implies some basic level of need, other in absolute or relative terms. Absence of poverty means that the basic level has been attained. In contrast, the absence of scarcity means that we have not merely attained some basic level but have acquired as much of all goods as we desire. Poverty is at least partially subjective, but there is an objective test to determine whether a good is scarce. If people are willing to pay — give up something — for a good, that good is scarce. Although the battle against poverty may ultimately be won, the outcome of the battle against scarcity is already painfully obvious. Our productive capabilities and material desires are such that goods and

services will always be scarce.

Notes

1. This text is selected from Microeconomics by James D. Gwartney and Richard Stroup (1982).

2. ... the Garden of Eden has continually eluded man's grasp.

Man has been making continual effort, trying to find or create paradisaical places of plentifulness, but he has not had any success yet.

the Garden of Eden

A biblical term. In the Old Testament, it is the location of paradise, in which Adam and Eve were created and lived until they were expelled from paradise because of disobedience.

3. ... everybody could have all of it they wanted.

... everybody could have as much clean air as he or she wanted.

4. You cannot eat your cake and have it, too.

A proverb, meaning: You have to choose between alternatives.

5. manna from heaven

A biblical term. (In the Bible) the miraculous food that fell with the dew to sustain the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness (Exodus 16. 14-15;) any needed sustenance that seems miraculously supplied

Technical Terms of Economics

labour union 工会

scarcity 短缺

productive resources 生产资源

an economic good 经济物品, 经济商品

a free good 自由可得的商品

tariff 关税, 关税税率

Exercises

1. *Directions:* Choose the best alternative to complete each of the following statements.

1. According to the passage, the study of _____ is most fundamental in the field of economics.
 - a. organizational behavior
 - b. governmental behavior
 - c. group behavior
 - d. individual behavior
2. The author tells us that a scarcity occurs when _____.
 - a. a thing is scarcely wanted by people
 - b. a thing is wanted by everybody
 - c. a thing that scarcely exists
 - d. the desire for a thing is greater than the amount available
3. One learns in the passage that an economic good is something _____.
 - a. that has an economic value
 - b. good from an economic point of view
 - c. that will do good to a country's economy
 - d. for which the demand exceeds the amount available
4. The author argues that _____ is also an economic good.
 - a. clear air
 - b. open space
 - c. leisure
 - d. all a. , b. , and c.
5. Economics has much to do with _____.
 - a. our everyday life choices
 - b. hidden resources
 - c. materials used
 - d. money spent
6. Resources to produce economic goods include _____.
 - a. machines and land
 - b. natural resources
 - c. human skills and energy
 - d. all of the above
7. According to the passage, the problem of scarcity _____ in North America and some other parts of the world.
 - a. has become less serious

- b. has become more serious
 - c. no longer exists
 - d. remains the same as it was 250 years ago
8. When talking about man's battle with scarcity, the author sounds _____.
a. optimistic b. pessimistic
c. indifferent d. anxious
9. The author states that poverty and scarcity are _____.
a. inevitably related
b. virtually the same thing
c. two different concepts
d. different terms for the same thing
10. The passage deals chiefly with _____.
a. the importance of economics
b. the very beginning of the study of economics
c. what the study of economics concerns
d. why people cannot always have what they want
- I. *Directions:* Answer the following questions according to the information given in the passage.
- 1. Why do we say that the study of individual behavior is most fundamental in the field of economics?
 - 2. What is the causal relationship between people's understanding of individual behavior and economic theories?
 - 3. In what sense are clear air, leisure, open spaces, and other environmental factors economic goods?
 - 4. Why do we say that our daily choices are all related to economics?
 - 5. How would you explain the difference between poverty and scarcity?
 - 6. What are man's means in his struggle with scarcity according to the passage?
 - 7. Why does the author think that man is not likely to win the battle against scarcity?

Supplementary Reading

Introduction: Micro - Versus Macro - Economics¹

For many years after the Second World War, in most capitalist economies macro-economics tended to dominate public policy. This is not to imply that micro-economic policies were totally neglected. Typical examples included agricultural price support schemes, monopoly policy, regional development, rent control, and tariffs. Nevertheless, Keynesian macro-economics had emerged and it appeared to be a well-established and agreed part of economic theory. It had obvious appeals to economists interested in manipulating the system and to policy-makers seeking to avoid a repetition of the large-scale unemployment of the 1930s. Macro-economics was attractive for two reasons. First, it seemed to be relatively simple, enabling the economy to be described with a few straightforward equations. Second, it gave policy-makers the opportunity of controlling the economy through the management of aggregate demand. But, in the 1970s macro-economics became more controversial. Governments in capitalist economies were confronted with greater policy problems, particularly "stagflation" associated with high and rising rates of both unemployment and inflation. Economists became more worried about describing complex economies with a few simple equations, especially since the relationships ignored the underlying behaviour of economic agents. For example, where does the individual firm trying to maximize profits, sales, or utility "fit" into macro-economics? Nor does it follow that government actions to regulate aggregate demand will be motivated solely by a concern for society's welfare. Votes might not be ir-

relevant to democratic governments². In other words, questions were being asked about the micro-foundations of macro-economics. At the same time, governments have increasingly intervened at the micro-economic level. Subsidies have been used for regional developments and for the support of “lame duck” and “key” firms and industries. In some cases, the subsidies have been designed to preserve jobs, especially among large employer who would otherwise go out of business, with major multiplier effects. Elsewhere, subsidies might be used to promote the development of high technology industries such as aerospace, electronics, and nuclear power. Governments have also intervened to change industrial structure through mergers and the nationalization of private firms and industries. Large firms, obtaining scale economies in research and production, are often believed to be “essential” to compete in world markets. An alternative view believes that “small is beautiful”. These are all examples of state intervention concerned with the supply side of the economy compared with the traditional Keynesian emphasis on aggregate demand management³.

Increasingly, governments have recognized the potential contribution of micro-economics to “solving” some of the major policy problems. Policies to control inflation involve the regulation of banks and the money supply or, more directly, prices and incomes controls on firms and trade unions. Either way, governments need to understand the banks and the market environment in which they operate⁴; they need to know what motivates firms and unions and what determines their product prices and wage bids, respectively. They also need to know how firms (including banks) might respond to state regulation and controls and whether the results are in the “public interest”. In this context,