

探索人类文明， 学地道英语

英汉对照
(插图本)

[英] 保罗·奥黑根 (Paul O'Hagan) 编著 罗慕谦 译



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· 北京 ·

本书精选出世界上 12 项伟大的发明,介绍其独特性、重要性,以及它们跨时代的影响力。读者能从其中了解到古人的智慧、毅力和勇气,可以为世人带来崭新的面貌,进而改善全世界的生活。

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前 言

语言学习者应注意,很多语法规则都有例外,不能一味地用规则去硬套,得遵守惯用法,而掌握语法规则及惯用法的最佳途径就是大量阅读,这一点需要牢记。美国著名语言教育家斯蒂芬·克拉申(Stephen D. Krashen)博士研究得出的结论是,趣味阅读能有效地扩大词汇量,提高拼写能力、阅读理解能力、写作能力,有助于更有效地运用语法,扩大知识面。

本书就是基于“大量趣味阅读”的理论编写的。以简单生动的英语文章,介绍了世界上12项伟大发明的独特性、重要性,以及它们跨时代的影响力。其目的是让读者看到古代的发明对我们的生活产生了哪些正面的影响。有时候我们会忘了古人有多聪明。本书想让读者了解古人的智慧、毅力和在某些情况下表现出来的勇气,为我们带来了多大的福利。其中有些发明是实物,如轮子和各种工具。但此外也有抽象的发明,比如语言和哲学,这些对我们来说也非常重要。发明也可以是一种发展上的进步,不一定非得是实物。甚至可以说,以长远来看,抽象的发明更为重要,因为思想观念会推动改变,而这些改变中有许多就会改变我们的生活。

本书的每个单元包括文章阅读、模拟会话和测验练习,并配有插图,增加全书阅读的趣味性,让读者在吸收知识之外,也能使用地道的英语,和他人讨论各种深具影响力的发明,兼收英语学习与知识阅读之效。专业录制的纯正美式录音,更是使读者一看就懂、一听就会。边听边读边说,酣畅淋漓地享受英语阅读之乐。

编著者

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Unit 1

Language

语言

Passage 1

MP3 1

As with many of the inventions from ancient times, where language came from is a mystery. It was probably an accidental invention which gradually developed from a few simple sounds. However, just like art, music and other abstract inventions which probably came about by accident, we do not know how it was created.

Did its development continue **purely**¹ by accident? Did a person or a group of people, once they discovered how useful it was, **deliberately**² make up words in order to say what they wanted to say?

Conversation 1

MP3 2

P: Professor (Prof.)

P: [*In a seminar*³] Today we are going to discuss language and how it began. We do not know how it was created. Was it purely by accident just like art, music and other abstract inventions? Did a group of people deliberately make up words to say what they wanted to say? Any ideas anyone?

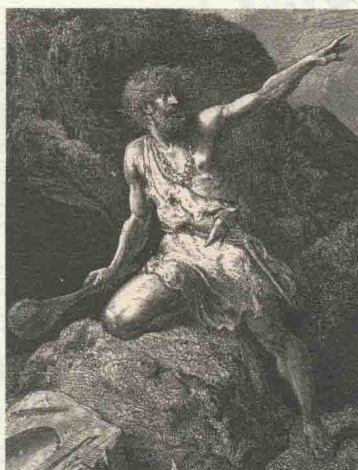
Word Bank

1. **purely** ['pjʊəli] **ad.** solely or simply 仅仅; 只不过
2. **deliberately** [dɪ'lɪbəreɪtli] **ad.** with intention; in an intentional manner 故意地; 蓄意地
3. **seminar** ['semɪnɑ:(r)] **n.** an occasion when a teacher or expert and a group of people meet to study and discuss something (大学里由教师带领的)研讨课

Passage 2

MP3 3

How much of the original language came about through copying the sound something made, for example, we could imagine some group deciding to call a bee a **buzz**⁴? Could singing have come first and then language? Is that why some languages are **tonal**⁵? When did humans develop the **vocal**⁶ equipment to allow them to speak?



There are far more questions than answers in connection with the subject of language. But it is fascinating to think about it.

Conversation 2

MP3 4

G: George P: Prof. J: Judy

G: Maybe it came about through copying the sound something made?

P: Such as? Give me an example.

G: You could imagine maybe someone calling a bee a “buzz” or a horse a “**neigh**⁷”. Then maybe some verbs could be created from them.

P: OK, that could explain how it started. But of course, not everything can be named that way. Any other possibilities?

J: Well, maybe they enjoyed singing and then, from the meaningless **humming**⁸ or whatever, they developed words and gave them meanings.

P: Excellent. In fact I think that is more likely than the first idea.

Word Bank

4. **buzz** [bʌz] *n.* a continuous low sound 嗡嗡声
5. **tonal** [ˈtəʊnl] *a.* relating to tone or tonality 音调的
6. **vocal** [ˈvəʊkl] *a.* of, pertaining to, or uttered with the voice 声音的
7. **neigh** [nei] *n.* a long loud high call that is produced by a horse when

it is excited or frightened 马嘶声

8. **humming** ['hʌmɪŋ] *n.* the act of singing with closed lips 哼唱

Passage 3

MP3 5

It is not certain when language began. Obviously, spoken language could not have started until humans developed **voice boxes**⁹ or **larynxes**¹⁰.

It used to be thought that **Neanderthal**¹¹ people could not have developed languages because they did not seem to have possessed larynxes. However, evidence has recently been found that shows that their society was more complex than was thought and so they must have had some kind of language, though it may have been simpler than most languages today.

On the other hand, it may have been more complex because ancient languages tend to be more complex than modern ones. This is because as time goes on, people **simplify**¹² the way they speak as they come into contact with other people.

A simpler language is easier to learn and to understand and so makes communication with foreigners easier.

Conversation 3

MP3 6

P: Prof. G: George J: Judy M: Mike

M: When did language begin, Professor?

P: We are not certain when it began. It used to be thought that Neanderthals did not have larynxes and so could not speak. Why has that idea changed? Anyone?

G: Did they find a Neanderthal with a voice box?

P: They did not. Judy?

J: I think I read somewhere that Neanderthal society was much more complex than previously thought so they must have used language.

P: That's correct. The Neanderthals must have used language in order to organize their society. We don't know if their languages were simpler or more complex than our modern ones, but we know that languages tend to simplify as time passes.

Word Bank

9. **voice box** the larynx 喉头
10. **larynx** ['læriŋks] *n.* a muscular hollow organ between the nose and the lungs which contains the tissue that moves very quickly to create the human voice and many animal sounds 喉头
11. **Neanderthal** [ni'ændəʊtəl] *n.* a type of primitive people who lived in Europe and Asia from about 150,000 to 30,000 years ago 尼安德特人
12. **simplify** ['simplifai] *v.* to make less complex or complicated 简化;精简

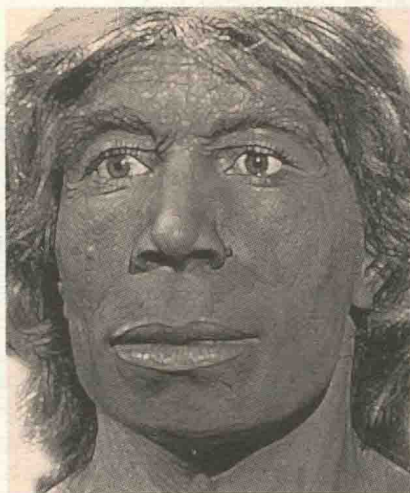
Passage 4

MP3 7

However, in the beginning language did not help a great deal in communication. There were two reasons for this: firstly Neanderthals moved about in small groups and secondly, it took thousands of years for writing to appear.

It is believed that there were only about 250,000 Neanderthals in the cold Europe of the time. They moved about in family groups of about seven to ten individuals and each group had its own language. The language of each group was totally different to each other group, which means there were thousands of languages.

If a person moved (or was taken) from one group into another, they would have to try to learn the language of their new group. So this was not a situation where different groups could communicate easily.



Neanderthal man

Conversation 4

MP3 8

G: George P: Prof. J: Judy M: Mike

G: Did their language help much in communication, Professor?

P: We don't think so because they moved about in small groups, each with

its own separate language.

J: So there might have been thousands of totally different languages?

P: That's right.

M: So if a person married into another group, he or she would have to learn a completely new language.

P: Correct. Furthermore, because no group could communicate with another, there was no use for writing.

G: Therefore, there was no way they could use language to discuss ideas or hear new information. They couldn't develop into countries or create **national**¹³ cultures.

P: They couldn't even create **tribes**¹⁴. All they could do was passing information down through the generations.

J: It's not surprising it took hundreds of thousands of years for the first civilizations to appear.

Word Bank

13. **national** ['næʃənəl] *a.* relating to or affecting a nation, especially a nation as a whole rather than a part of it or section of its territory 民族的
14. **tribe** [traɪb] *n.* a group of people, often of related families, who live together, sharing the same language, culture and history, especially those who do not live in towns or cities 部落

Passage 5

MP3 9

Of course as we shall see in unit 3, writing was very helpful to the development of a sophisticated society. Without a common language or writing system, it was impossible to communicate information and develop further.

As the centuries passed and family groups became **clans**¹⁵ which gathered into tribes and tribes transformed themselves into states, the number of languages became fewer. Life became more complex and the languages that survived had to develop ways of communicating more complicated ideas.

So while many languages simplified their grammar, there was

probably a big **increase**¹⁶ in their vocabulary. For example, simple tribes did not need to worry about **taxation**¹⁷. However, as states grew, taxation systems developed and new words had to be made for new concepts such as **accounts**¹⁸, debts, **treasury**¹⁹, etc.



pictographic writing

Conversation 5

MP3 10

P: Prof. M: Mike G: George

P: Yes, to develop civilization you need, at least a large number of people speaking the same language.

M: But if you want to build an empire, you need writing.

P: I think that's correct. To communicate over large distances, you need to write letters to your **commanders**²⁰. It is not a good idea to rely on a **messenger's**²¹ memory.

G: I suppose when you develop a big civilization, you have to make new words for new ideas.

P: Taxation, for example. Simple tribes do not need to worry about taxing people. However, a big state has to get money from somewhere and then you need new words for accounts, debts, etc.

Word Bank

15. **clan** [klæn] *n.* a group of families, especially in Scotland, who originate from the same family and have the same name 宗族
16. **increase** ['ɪnkriːs] *n.* growth or augmentation in numbers, size, strength, quality, etc. 增加
17. **taxation** [tæk'seɪʃn] *n.* the system whereby taxes are levied on some types of income, earnings, or purchases 课税; 征税

18. **account** [ə'kaʊnt] *n.* an arrangement with a bank to keep your money there and to allow you to take it out when you need to 账目
19. **treasury** ['treʒəri] *n.* the funds or revenues of a government, organization, or corporation, or the place in which they are deposited and disbursed 国库
20. **commander** [kə'mɑ:ndə(r)] *n.* an officer who is in charge of a military operation 指挥官
21. **messenger** ['mesɪndʒə(r)] *n.* somebody who carries messages between people 使者; 送信人

Passage 6

MP3 11

In addition to this, some languages became important while others had little **prestige**²². The former would become the official languages of states while the latter had no status and were often associated with poor, uneducated and powerless people. So we can see there is a certain connection with the success of a language, its social status and its political power.

Conversation 6

MP3 12

M: Mike P: Prof.

- M: Of course that has other **implications**²³. If you have more than one large state then you have political conflicts.
- P: Which of course, lead to wars. And in wars, there are winners and losers.

Word Bank

22. **prestige** [pre'sti:ʒ] *n.* respect and admiration given to someone or something, usually because of a reputation for high quality, success or social influence 名望; 声望
23. **implication** [ɪmplɪ'keɪʃn] *n.* something that is implied or involved as a natural consequence of something else 含意; 暗示

Passage 1

MP3 13

This has other effects on languages. We can see this in the case of English itself.

If you look at a text of English before 1066, you see a very different language to **Modern English**²⁴. In fact, it is a very different language called Anglo-Saxon (or **Old English**²⁵).

[illegible]

Anglo-Saxon

modern English, however, the grammar was quite different. As well using words from other languages for example, they would put words together. They would also change the endings of words to change the meaning of the sentence.

Then when the French
invaded England, the
language was completely

changed. As well as many new words coming into English from French, the grammar was also greatly changed (as mentioned above, it became simpler).

However, for about 300 years, French had a much higher social status than English. So French affected English much more than English affected French. In fact some historians argue that if the Kings of England had not started to break away from France and **promote**²⁶ English, the English language would have **died out**²⁷ completely.

Conversation 7

MP3 14

J: Judy P: Prof. M: Mike

J: I heard something about that. It was to do with English.

P: Good, young lady. Tell us more.

J: When the French invaded England in 1066, their language became **dominant**²⁸ there.

P: That is true. But it didn't last, did it?

J: English rose again in the next 400 years. However, it was completely changed. Now, because of the British Empire and the US, it is probably going to become the main international language.

P: Very probably. What effect do you think that will have?

M: In the same way that French almost destroyed it, English will probably help to destroy many weaker languages and cultures.

Word Bank

24. **Modern English** the English language from about 1500, when it began to develop a more standardized form compared with the dialects of Middle English 现代英语;近代英语
25. **Old English** the earliest form of the English language, used up to about AD 1150 古英语
26. **promote** [prə'məʊt] *v.* to encourage the popularity, sale, development or existence of something 发扬;促进
27. **die out** to cease to exist; become extinct 逐渐消失;灭绝
28. **dominant** ['dɒmɪnənt] *a.* more important, strong or noticeable than anything else of the same type 占优势的;支配的

Practice 请观察根据句子提问

A1 Language was probably an accidental invention.

⇒ Q What was probably an accidental invention?

A2 It used to be thought that Neanderthal people could not have developed languages because they did not seem to have possessed larynxes.

⇒ Q *Why did it use to be thought that Neanderthal people could not have developed languages?*

.....

A3 Neanderthal language may have been more complex because ancient languages tend to be more complex than modern ones.

⇒ Q *For what reason may Neanderthal language have been more complex?*

.....

A4 As time goes on, people simplify the way they speak as they come into contact with other people.

⇒ Q *Why do people simplify the way they speak as time goes on?*

.....

A5 There are far more questions than answers as regards language.

⇒ Q *How many more questions than answers are there as regards language?*

.....

Quiz I 根据课文的内容,对下面的句子提问

1. It is a mystery.
2. Neanderthals moved about in small groups.
3. It took thousands of years for writing to appear.
4. Each group had its own language.
5. There were thousands of languages.
6. If a person moved (or was taken) from one group into another, they would have to try to learn the language of their new group.
7. Because family groups became clans which gathered into tribes and tribes transformed themselves into states.
8. Because some languages became important while others had little prestige.

Quiz II

- ___ 1. What did clans gather into?
 - a. families
 - b. dance groups
 - c. tribes
 - d. states
- ___ 2. How did life become while language became more complicated?
 - a. more complex
 - b. more simple
 - c. more short
 - d. more stupid
- ___ 3. However, as states grew, what kind of systems developed?
 - a. education
 - b. technical
 - c. taxation
 - d. religious
- ___ 4. What happened to some languages, while others had little prestige?
 - a. They became important.
 - b. They became unimportant.
 - c. They became impotent.
 - d. They became potential.
- ___ 5. What about the other languages?
 - a. They had no states.
 - b. They had no study.
 - c. They had no students.
 - d. They had no status.
- ___ 6. If you look at a text of English before 1066 what do you see?
 - a. A very diffident language.
 - b. A very different language.
 - c. A very difficult language.
 - d. A very deficient language.