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21世纪大学英语专业教材

# 英语文化 **ENGLISH CULTURE**

□ 王逢鑫 编著



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# 英 语 文 化

ENGLISH CULTURE

王逢鑫 编著  
By Wang Fengxin

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- 1) 《英语意念语法》, 北京: 北京大学出版社, 1989  
《英语意念语法(修订版)》, 北京: 外文出版社, 1999
- 2) 《英语情态表达法》, 香港: 香港商务印书馆, 1990; 台北: 台湾商务印书馆, 1991; 北京: 商务印书馆国际有限公司, 1996
- 3) 《活用英语动词》, 香港: 香港商务印书馆, 1990; 台北: 台湾商务印书馆, 1991; 北京: 商务印书馆国际有限公司, 1996
- 4) 《英汉意念分类词典》, 北京: 北京大学出版社, 1991  
《常春藤 TOEFL 分类式字汇》, 台北: 台湾常春藤解析英语杂志社, 1991  
《英语词汇分类联想学习法》, 北京: 外文出版社, 2000
- 5) 《汉英口译教程》, 北京: 北京大学出版社, 1992
- 6) 《英语词汇的魅力》, 北京: 北京大学出版社, 1995  
《繁星组合英文学习法》, 台北: 台湾经典传讯, 1999  
《英语词汇的魅力(修订版)》, 北京: 外文出版社, 2003
- 7) 《英语构词的玄妙》, 北京: 北京大学出版社, 1997  
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- 8) 《汉英饮食文化词典》, 北京: 外文出版社, 1998
- 9) 《英语同义表达法》, 北京: 外文出版社, 1999
- 10) 《英语模糊语法》, 北京: 外文出版社, 2001

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- 11) 《英语比较语义学》，北京：外文出版社，2001
  - 12) 《汉英旅游文化词典》，北京：北京大学出版社，2001
  - 13) 《高级汉英口译教程》，北京：外文出版社，2004

## About the Author

Wang Fengxin, born in 1939, in Qingdao City, Shandong Province. In 1957, he was admitted to the Western Languages and Literature Department, Peking University, and majored in English language and literature. In 1962, he graduated from Peking University, and has since worked as a teacher in its English Department. He is now Professor and Ph.D. Supervisor of the English Department, College of Foreign Languages, Peking University. From 1981 to 1983, he taught Chinese literature, language and culture in the Chinese Department of Edinburgh University, U.K. He has worked for UNESCO headquarters in Paris three times, as simultaneous interpreter in 1979, as translator in 1990, and as reviser in 1999. He went to Canada to make Canadian studies in 1992. His academic areas involve linguistics, (including semantics, lexicology, lexicography, syntax, teaching methodology and language testing), English and American literature (including poetry, fiction and prose), cross-cultural studies (including British studies and Canadian studies), and translation and interpretation theory and practice. He has devoted himself to educational undertakings and cultural exchange between China and foreign countries. His principal works include:

- 1) *A Notional Grammar of English*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1989  
*A Notional Grammar of English (Revised Edition)*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1999
- 2) *English Modality*, Hong Kong: The Commercial Press(Hong Kong)LTD, 1990; Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1991; Beijing: The Commercial Press International LTD, 1996
- 3) *English Verbs*, Hong Kong: The Commercial Press(Hong Kong)LTD, 1990; Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 1991; Beijing: The Commercial Press International LTD, 1996
- 4) *A Notional English-Chinese Lexicon*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1991  
*Ivy League TOEFL Lexicon*, Taipei: Ivy League Analytical English, 1991  
*How to Study English Vocabulary by Association*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2000
- 5) *A Coursebook for Chinese-English Interpretation*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1992
- 6) *The Appeal of English Words*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1995; Taipei: Classic

Communications Co. , 1999

*The Appeal of English Words (Revised Edition)*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2003

7) *The Wonder of English Word-Making*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 1997

*The Wonder of English Word-Making (Revised Edition)*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2003

8) *A Chinese-English Lexicon of Cuisine Culture*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1998

9) *English Paraphrasing*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1999

10) *A Fuzzy Grammar of English*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2001

11) *English-Chinese Comparative Semantics*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2001

12) *A Chinese-English Lexicon of Tourism Culture*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2001

13) *An Advanced Coursebook for Chinese-English Interpretation*, Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2004

# 前 言

英语学习的重要性越来越显著。在英语教学改革中,人们越来越认识到语言教学必须与文化背景知识教学相结合。学习英语不仅要语法正确,而且要语用得体的。学习英语国家文化知识与学习英语语言是同等重要的。掌握好相关文化背景知识既有利于语言学习,又有利于开阔视野,加深对世界的了解。在英语教学改革中加强文化知识教学,符合形势发展的需要,也符合英语教学自身的规律,并且促进学科建设和学科发展。

笔者自1983年起在北京大学英语系讲授英国概况、英语文化和希腊罗马神话等涉及英语文化知识的课程。二十余年来,撰写论文,编写教材,不断丰富、充实、调整和更新教学内容和方法,以适应社会发展和满足学生需求。教学效果良好,受到学生欢迎。这种将语言学习与文化学习结合的做法,对英语学习者是必不可少的启蒙教育和基础教育,使他们通过系统的学习,打下坚实的英语语言和文化知识基本功,有助于将来学习、工作和研究进一步发展。

本教材是笔者二十余年讲授英语文化知识课程心得、体会和经验的总结;也是笔者二十余年从事英国研究、美国研究和加拿大研究的成果体现。这门“英语文化”课的教学对象既包括英语专业学生,也包括大学英语通过六级考试的学生。笔者在长期教学过程中,为适应形势发展和满足学生需求,为促进学科建设和学科发展,不断丰富、充实、调整和更新教学内容和方法,对教材反复实践,反复修改,使之臻于完善。与国内同类教材相比较,本教材具有以下特点和创新:

1. 国内现有同类教材,多是“拿来主义”,直接选用外国教材、书籍或报刊文章,没有经过加工或修改。许多文章原本不是为教学目的而撰写的,这样凑成的教材从严格意义上讲,不能算是教材,因为它们没有考虑我国英语教学规律,也没有考虑我国学生实际需求。而本教材是笔者根据语言教学规律和社会实际需求用英语撰写的,内容循序渐进,难易程度恰当,注意科学性和实用性的结合。

2. 国内现有同类教材,大多内容陈旧,资料过时,甚至有时传达了错误信息。编写者只是将仅能收集到的资料拼凑在一起,没有经过去伪存真、去粗存精的加工过程,也没有经过实际教学的检验。本教材作者在编写过程中,收集了大量资料,阅读了大量文献,从中精选材料,认真写作,又在二十余年教学过程中反复实践,反复揣摩,反复思索,反复修改,精益求精



精,使之成为一本像样的教材。

3. 国内现有同类教材,内容大多是资料的堆积,没有注意语言教学与文化教学的结合,更没有注意语言学习内容与语言学习方法的结合。本教材是与基础阶段英语学习相配套的,可对初级或中级英语学习者进行启蒙教育和基本功训练。不但通过语言学习,让学生学习文化知识,而且通过传授文化知识,让学生学习语言。

4. 国内现有同类教材,内容大多是拼凑堆积而成,支离破碎,缺乏内在联系,不能进行系统的文化知识传授。本教材将我国英语学习者最需要掌握的文化背景知识,按照一定体系编写,让学生得到的是系统的、最必需的文化知识,为以后的学习、工作和研究奠定基础,铺平道路。

5. 国内现有的同类教材,内容大多没有考虑我国英语学习者的实际需求。本教材作者有四十多年丰富教学经验,有在国外大学教学和国际组织工作的经验,有在国外生活的经验,还有在国内担任笔译和口译工作的经验,深知涉外工作和文化交流中对英语语言和英语文化的需求,这样编写的教材有的放矢,针对性强。学生学习以后可以学以致用,理论联系实际。

6. 本教材作者多年从事英国研究、美国研究和加拿大研究,熟悉主要英语国家的历史与现状,在编写教材过程中,根据轻重缓急,能够选择对我国英语学习者最迫切需要掌握的英语文化知识,在有限的时间和有限的空间内教给学生尽量多的、有用的文化背景知识。

7. 本教材作者多年从事汉英两种语言的比较研究,并长期从事中国文化与西方文化的比较研究,熟悉汉英两种语言的异同之处,熟悉中西两种文化的异同之处。本教材引导学生注意英语文化与中国文化的差异,知己知彼,这将使他们在未来的学习和工作中,能够应付各种复杂多变的情况。

本教材涉及英语国家的政治、经济、法律、教育、媒体、宗教、社会、家庭等方面的文化背景知识。这是供普通高等教育和成人高等教育使用的基础阶段英语教材。用英语撰写,主要目的是让学习者通过简单、通俗易懂的英语,学习英语文化背景知识;面面俱到,点到为止,仅了解概况即可,并不深入展开。同时,还让学习者通过英语文化知识学习英语,提高学生的理解和表达能力。这不是一门涉及某一学科的专业课,它不同于用汉语讲授英语国家的政治、经济、法律、教育、媒体、宗教、社会、家庭等领域的内容。这门课涉及范围有一定的广度,但不要求有太专门的深度。

本教材共有 18 课,主要包括:

1. 英语语言 (the English Language)——介绍作为国际语言的英语的历史与现状、使用范围,以及第一语言与第二语言、母语与外语。

2. 英语国家 (the English-Speaking Countries)——介绍英国和美国等主要英语国家的概况,包括地理环境、名称、民族等基本情况。还介绍与英语国家关系密切的欧洲国家的概况。

3. 英语人名 (the English Names)——介绍英语姓名的构成、命名的方法、姓氏的来历、姓名的含义、绰号以及称谓的方式。

4. 社会与家庭 (Society and Family)——介绍英国和美国等主要英语国家的社会结构、家庭结构、亲属关系等内容。

5. 君主制度 (the Monarchical System)——介绍以英国为代表的君主制政治特点、君主的权力、王室的构成、贵族制度等。比较君主制、君主立宪制、共和制和联邦制。

6. 议会制度 (the Parliamentary System)——介绍西方议会与两院制,着重介绍英国议会和美国国会的选举、构成、权力与功能。

7. 选举制度 (the Electoral System)——介绍西方的两党制,分析英国的工党与保守党,美国的共和党与民主党的轮流执政。着重介绍英国的大选和补缺选举,以及美国的总统选举。

8. 政府制度 (the Governmental System)——介绍西方政府制度以及立法、行政与司法的三权分立。着重介绍英国内阁的产生与组成、首相的职能,以及公务员制度。并着重介绍美国联邦政府和州政府的组成和职能。还介绍其他政府形式,包括平民政府与军政府、临时政府以及联合政府。

9. 法律制度 (the Legal System)——介绍英国宪法和美国宪法以及刑法、民法。介绍法庭以及诉讼、审讯、陪审、判决和徒刑等过程。

10. 经济制度 (the Economic System)——介绍不同类型的经济,比较计划经济与市场经济;叙述经济发展的过程,分析传统经济与知识经济;介绍主要经济部门:生产部门与服务部门。

11. 收入与支出 (Income and Expenditure)——介绍货币形式与支付手段,国家收入(税收)、公司收入(利润)与个人收入(工资),各种费用支出,以及各种社会福利。

12. 商业与投资 (Commerce and Investment)——介绍商业活动形式,银行投资,以及其他投资活动,包括期货交易、房地产交易、股票与证券交易、彩票等。

13. 知识产权 (Intellectual Property)——介绍知识产权,包括专利、注册商标和版权,培养保护知识产权意识,反对侵权、盗版、剽窃等行为。

14. 教育制度 (the Educational System)——介绍教育制度,包括正规教育:初等教育、中等教育和高等教育;终身教育:成人教育、继续教育、学习化社会。

15. 大众传媒 (Mass Media)——介绍大众传媒的相关知识,包括报刊、广播、电视等,还介绍互联网的相关知识。

16. 宗教 (Religion)——介绍宗教的起源,特别是佛教、基督教和伊斯兰教的起源;着重介绍基督教的相关知识:耶稣基督,重大事件(耶稣蒙难和耶稣升天),圣诞节和复活节等宗教节日,天主教与新教,英国国教,神职人员,教堂等。结合中国实际,介绍佛教和道教的相关知识和说法。

自1983年以来,笔者一直坚持每年给北京大学英语系一年级本科生开设这门“英语文化”课程,从未间断。这门课程还曾经作为北京大学全校公共选修课,面对通过大学英语六级的学生,均收到良好效果。1999年,这门“英语文化”课程列为北京大学课程建设项目。2002年,本教材又列入北京市高等教育精品教材建设工程项目。

笔者愿将这本积累我二十余年心血的教材,奉献给学习英语的广大读者。笔者更衷心地希望专家、学者以及使用本教材的教师和同学批评指正。

王逢鑫

2004年3月28日于北京海淀区蓝旗营小区

## Abbreviations Used in This Book

<i>a.</i>	adjective
<i>abbrev.</i>	abbreviation
<i>ad.</i>	adverb
<i>AmE.</i>	American English
<i>BrE.</i>	British English
<i>conj.</i>	conjunction
<i>e. g.</i>	for example
<i>esp.</i>	especially
<i>etc.</i>	et cetera
<i>n.</i>	noun
<i>prep.</i>	preposition
<i>prep. phrase</i>	prepositional phrase
<i>sb</i>	somebody; someone
<i>sth</i>	something
<i>syn.</i>	synonym
<i>usu.</i>	usually
<i>v.</i>	verb
<i>v. phrase</i>	verb phrase

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## Lesson One

### The English Language

A language is a system of communication used by the people of a particular country or a region for talking or writing purposes. A language system consists of a set of codes that are sounds and written symbols. People in one country or region may speak a different language from those in another country or region. We often have the difficulty of communicating with people who speak a different language. This forms the language barrier. That's why we have to learn a foreign language that is spoken by the people from another country.

Most languages have both oral or spoken, and written forms. Take English for example. Oral English is its spoken form while written English is its written form. But a few languages have only spoken forms, but lack written ones.

A modern language is a language that is still spoken today while a dead language is a language that is no longer spoken. Latin is a dead language, which is the language of the ancient Romans.

English is spoken by the English-speaking people or by the English-speaking population as their mother tongue. When we say mother tongue, we refer it to the language that we learned from our parents when we were children. Mother tongue is in contrast to foreign language. It can also be called native tongue or native language. Native language is in contrast to non-native language. When you speak more than one language, there is a difference between your first language and second language. Your first language, or L1 for short, is the language you first learned as a child. First language is another way of saying mother tongue or native language. In contrast to your first language, your second language or L2 for short, is not the language you first learned when you were a child, but the language you learned later, and you use at work, at school or for business purposes. A second language is not a native language in a country, but it is widely used as a medium of communication, for instance, in education and in government. It is usually used alongside another language or other languages.

English-speaking countries include Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, South Africa and several Caribbean countries. The English-speaking population or the English-speaking people are called native speakers of English. They have learned English as their first language, rather than a foreign language. They think in English

and use it naturally. The English language used in the English-speaking countries varies as to its pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. So there are different types of regional English like British English and American English. They are the two most popular kinds of English in the world.

British English (BrE., for short) is the English language used in Britain. It consists of many regional kinds of English. For example, people in London, Newcastle, Glasgow and Manchester speak English in different ways. American English (AmE., for short) is the English language used in the United States. It consists of many regional kinds of English. For example, people in New England, New York City and the South of the United States speak English in different ways. An Americanism is a word, phrase, sound or expression, which is characteristic of and typical of American English.

In areas where English is not the only language spoken, the people speak English as Anglophone. Canada is a bilingual country. The Canadian people consist of the Anglophone people who speak Canadian English and the Francophone people who speak Canadian French. Both English and French are official languages of Canada.

Official language refers to the language that is used in the formal situations such as government, law courts, newspapers, TV programmes, broadcasting, etc. However, there may be more than one official language in a multilingual country. For example, the Republic of Singapore has four official languages: English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Usually, the national language, which is the main language and standard language of a country, is also the official language.

English is spoken by people as their second language in some Commonwealth countries, which were former British colonies such as Fiji, Singapore, India and Nigeria. They teach English as a second language at school. The course of Teaching English as a Second Language is simply called TESL. English used to be the official language in some countries or regions such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong in Asia, and Nigeria, Zambia, Uganda and the Sudan in Africa.

English is not only spoken by native speakers of English as their first language and by the above-mentioned people who speak English as their second language, but also spoken by the people of other parts of the world as a foreign language. A foreign language is a language, which is not a native language in a country. It is taught as a school subject but not used as a medium of instruction in schools, or as a language of communication within a country, for example, in government, business or industry. English is described as a foreign language in France, Germany, Spain, China, Japan, etc.

There are different varieties of English. For instance, Japan English includes expressions

for things and concepts that are unique in Japan. They are mainly found in tourism, trade and commerce. Japan English is understood and accepted by the native speakers of English, for it is appropriate in its use. Japan English is generally realized at the lexical level. The Chinese people have to introduce to the world the special things and concepts found only in China with the help of China English. As a new variety of English, China English has become more and more intelligible and acceptable to the native speakers of English, for it is used appropriately. China English is also realized mainly at the lexical level. And it is restricted to such areas of political affairs, economy, tourism and traditional culture. But when some Chinese first learn English, they tend to speak Chinese English or Chinglish which is not accepted by the native speakers of English, for it is not appropriate in its use. As Chinglish is uneducated and error-inflicted, it has a derogatory sense.

Some uneducated workers, visiting seamen and traders in Western African and Southeast Asian countries speak in Pidgin English when they communicate with English-speaking people. A pidgin is a language that is a mixture of two other languages. It is not usually anyone's native language, but is used when people from two different countries do business with each other. So, Pidgin English is a language containing elements of English and the local languages used in these areas. A local language exists in or belongs to a particular area or district.

Diplomats, businessmen and scholars all over the world use English as an international language for communication. The English language is widely used in commercial and tourist centres, banks, stock exchanges, airports, and hotels in most countries and at international meetings, gatherings and conferences.

The history of English is conventionally divided into three periods usually called Old English or Anglo-Saxon, Middle English and Modern English. The earliest period began with the migration of certain Germanic tribes from the European Continent to Britain in the 5th century A.D., and it continued until the end of the 11th century or a bit later. The period of Middle English lasted roughly from the 12th through the 15th century. The period of Modern English extended from the 16th century to our present day. English is considered as the first international language for historical reasons. The expansion of English to other countries began in earnest in the 17th century, with the successful colonization of the eastern seaboard of North America, later spread by colonization both directly from Britain and from the United States. So the wide use of English in the world is a result of the great impact of the United Kingdom in the 19th century and that of the United States in the 20th century.

English, as an international language, or a world language, or even a global language, no longer belongs only to the native speakers of English. English has several dialects due to geographical reasons, for example, American English, British English, Australian English,



Indian English, etc. There has appeared such a word as *english*, which implies it is a common language universally used. English can also be in the plural form. So the word “*Englishes*” implies the variety and diversity of the English language.

English, as an international language, is widely used in global trade market and world cultural circles. English has also shown its importance in the following four areas:

- 1) the global audio-visual market and especially satellite TV;
- 2) the Internet and computer-based communication, including language-related and document handling software;
- 3) technology transfers and associated processes in economic globalization; and
- 4) English language-study industry.

Together with French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Chinese, English is used as one of the six working languages in the United Nations and its subordinate organizations such as UNESCO, which stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

English, as a natural language used by many people in the world, is different from Esperanto that is an artificial international language. It was invented by a Polish doctor, Ludovic Zamenhof (1859 – 1917). This invented language consists of parts of several languages, and was designed to help people from different countries communicate easily with one another. However, as it is an artificial language without culture and literature as its foundation, it falls short of the original expectations, and is seldom adopted in practical use.

Many non-native speakers of English study English as a foreign language. For instance, there are many Chinese students who are learning English. Chinese as their mother tongue is their source language, while English as their foreign language is their target language. In doing translation, *source language* refers to the language from which one translates, whereas *target language* refers to the language into which one translates. If a person translates a book from English into Chinese, English is the source language of the book and Chinese is its target language. A language may take a word from another and changes it into a part of its vocabulary. The words borrowed from other languages are called *loanwords*. The language from which a word is borrowed may also be referred to as the source language of the loanword. Sometimes, people study a third language by means of a second language or *foreign language*, which forms a medium language. For instance, if a Chinese student learns Swahili, an African language, by means of English, then English is his medium language while Swahili is his target language.

Some language students major or specialize in English. So English is their major or speciality. People learn English for Special Purposes (ESP, for short), for instance, some