

咖啡屋美语丛书

当代美国 大众话题 50例

肖恩·霍利 著
隋刚

外文出版社

50

Conversations about
Current Topics in America Today

当代美国大众话题 50 例

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外 文 出 版 社

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

当代美国大众话题 50 例

霍利(Holley, S.)著;隋刚著

北京:外文出版社,1997.8

ISBN 7-119-02082-X

I. 当… II. ①霍… ②隋… III. 社会问题-英语-口语-美国 IV. H319.9

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(97)第 15260 号

当代美国大众话题 50 例

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责任编辑 蔡 管

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外文出版社出版

(中国北京百万庄大街 24 号)

邮政编码 100037

煤炭工业出版社印刷厂印刷

1999 年(36 开)第 1 版第 3 次印刷

ISBN 7-119-02082-X/G·144(外)

著作权合同登记图字:01-97-0965

定价:10.90 元

前 言

《当代美国大众话题 50 例》是一本很好看的对话汇编,是一本有趣的、有用的、有益的书。本书是用地道的美国英语写成的,文字清通,富有可读性和知识性,既可用作美语会话教材,也有助于真真切切地了解当代美国大众文化。

本书的编写以普通美国人的日常生活和 90 年代美国社会的真实事件为依据,含有 50 段语言生动、文化内涵丰富的对话。这些对话从不同的侧面表现了 20 世纪末美国大众的思维方式、生存状态、生活习惯和语言特色,揭示了美国社会特有的问题和全人类共有的问题。作为作者,我们试图弘扬历史感、独立意识和全球意识,试图用简短的对话阐明不同的思想观点,试图举重若轻地用轻松的笔调写重大的题材,用讽刺与幽默的手法寓教于乐。

书中某个人物或某些人物的思想观点不一定代表作者的思想观点,这是一个基本的读书常识。然而,从本书的整个内容编排可以看出,我们作者的思想主张是不言而喻的:应进行多层次的有成效的对话,以增进人与人之间、人与社会之间、不同民族之间和不同国家之间的理解,携手迎接 21 世纪的挑战,共同处理各种全新的复杂问题。本书试图体现

对普通人衣食住行的世俗关怀,试图体现对人的精神生命的真诚的终极关怀。我们作者并没有代替读者思考,而是激励读者思考;不让读者只做各类英语对话的听众,而是让他们参照实例积极开口练习,进而扩大知识面和交际面,用英语充满自信地发表自己的独到见解,表达自己的真实思想感情。

如上所述,本书共有 50 段对话。每段对话的后面都附有英汉对照词汇表、语言注释和文化背景注释。语言注释包括疑难词句、词组、语法、口语表达法、俚语表达法、委婉语、合成词、新造词语、缩写词语,等等。

无论如何,《当代美国大众话题 50 例》这本书值得一读。从容地步入他人的思维空间,潇洒地游览他人的文化领地,开阔眼界,启迪智慧,知彼知己,快哉!努力培养自己的英语口语文体意识,逐步提高英语口语熟练程度,循序渐进,积累谈资,自由对话,快哉!

隋 刚

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1

Coffee Talk^①
咖啡聊天

Junko: How about a cup of coffee?

Mike: No thanks. I don't drink coffee.

Junko: Why not? Are you Mormon?^②

Mike: No. But I am trying to cut down on my *caffeine consumption*.

Junko: Caffeine consumption? I can't do a thing until I've had my morning cup of coffee.^③

Mike: Caffeine is just the beginning. I used to drink coffee until I read that it contains 393 chemicals, including *tannins*, *caramelized sugar* and *carbon dioxide*.

Junko: No way. You're pulling my leg.^④

Mike: I'm dead serious.^⑤

Junko: I think I'm going to switch to^⑥ *decaf*.^⑦

Mike: Even decaf contains a small amount of caffeine. A recent article in *USA Today* has linked heavy coffee drinking with *heart trouble*. It said that persons who drink more than five cups a day have an increased risk of heart attack and death.

Junko: But I thought Americans love their coffee and *cappuccino*.

Mike: We do. The USA drinks more coffee than any other country and Americans love their caffeine. But most people don't realize how addictive and dangerous it can be. Caffeine is rapidly absorbed in the body, appearing in all tissues and organs within about five minutes. By the way, how many cups do you drink a day?

Junko: Okay, okay. I'm swearing off coffee.^⑧ So how about a Coke?

Mike: Are you kidding?^⑨ Coke has twice as much caffeine as coffee.

Junko: All right. Forget that. You're turning into a real health fanatic, you know.

Mike: I just want to take care of myself. Maybe you should start being more *health-conscious*.

Junko: You're right. How about a walk in the park?

Mike: I thought you'd never ask.

VOCABULARY

heart trouble	心脏病
consumption	消费
carbon dioxide	二氧化碳
caffeine	咖啡因
tannins	丹宁酸
caramelized sugar	焦糖
decaf	已除去大部分咖啡因的咖啡
cappuccino	加牛奶的咖啡
health-conscious	有保健意识的

NOTES

- ① **Coffee Talk**: 喝咖啡, 侃大山。1990 年, 一位名叫韦恩·格雷戈里(Wayne Gregori)的美国电脑专家设计制作了一种配有嵌入式联网电脑的咖啡桌。当时, 美国加利福尼亚州旧金山市的一些咖啡馆首次试用了这种咖啡桌, 生意兴隆。顾客们可以在这些咖啡馆里通过当地的“旧金山网络”(SF Net)与素不相识的人交谈。今天, 美国东西海岸的很多咖啡馆都已联网, 设立了 **Coffee Talk** 这一服务项目。横跨美国大陆的 **Coffee Talk** 已成时尚。**Coffee Talk** 在本书中有两个含义——第一: 面对面交谈; 第二: 通过电脑网络交谈。**Coffee Talk** 属非正式交谈, 其话题无所不包, 有鲜明的通俗口语的特点和自由交流信

息的功能。

- ② **Mormon**: 摩门教徒。摩门教是基督教的一个宗派, 1830 年创建于美国。其教徒崇尚俭朴, 拒绝现代生活方式, 不吸烟、不喝酒、不饮咖啡。

- ③ **I can't do a thing until I've had my morning cup of coffee.** 我早上要是不喝一杯咖啡, 什么事儿都干不了。

- ④ **No way. You're pulling my leg.** 得了吧。你是在拿我开心呀。

pull someone's leg: 为寻开心骗某人; 开某人的玩笑。**put someone on** 和 **take someone for a ride** 是意思相近的表达法。另外, **leg-puller** 一词出自 **pull someone's leg** 这一习语, 意为: 爱拿别人开心的人。

- ⑤ **I'm dead serious.** 我绝对不是在开玩笑。**dead** 一词在此是副词。它的意思是“绝对地、完全地”。**dead broke** 表明某人囊空如洗。**dead tired** 表明某人精疲力竭。

- ⑥ **switch to ...**: 转向……; 变换……。例如:

It's time to switch to a different topic.

现在该换个话题了。

- ⑦ **decaf** 是 **decaffeinated coffee** 或 **decaffeinated coffee** 的缩写形式。它所指的是一种已除去大部分咖啡因的咖啡。

- ⑧ **I'm swearing off coffee.** 我发誓戒咖啡。这句话在此纯属戏言。

- ⑨ **Are you kidding?** 你这话不是当真吧? 或: 你在

开玩笑吧？

意思相近的表达法有：

No kidding. 别骗人啦。

You've got to be kidding. 你肯定是在瞎扯。

2

Techno-chat 网上闲谈

Dave: So how did you meet Linda?

Phil: I met her through *a computer bulletin board*.

Dave: Oh really? What bulletin board?

Phil: It was one I used down at the local coffee house called the San Francisco Net. It's been around^① since about 1991.

Dave: I've heard about that, but I've never tried it.

Phil: You ought to. One dollar buys you 15 minutes of computer time.^② A "chat session"^③ links you with *cappuccino sippers* in other cafes and at home computers on the network.

Dave: I have no desire to talk on a network with a bunch of strangers.

Phil: That's the whole point. All your *inhibitions* disappear because you can't see the other person. This network allows you to talk to people whom you normally wouldn't talk to.

Dave: I just want a private conversation with one

other person.

Phil: You can do that. A private session lets two talk alone. This techno-chat program lets you talk with about anything with everyone, without prejudice because you can't see them.

Dave: Well, maybe I'll tag along^④ and watch how you talk.

Phil: That's fine with me. But we'll have to get there early, because after 8 p.m. there's always a long waiting line.

Dave: It's that popular?^⑤

Phil: Welcome to the 90s!

Dave: Okay, okay. We're there tonight. So what does it cost?

Phil: One dollar buys 15 minutes of computer time. This talk ain't cheap.^⑥

Dave: I don't know. I'll feel funny talking through a computer.

Phil: Remember, that's how I met Linda. I *guarantee* you can talk to girls who would never talk to you if they saw your face.

Dave: What's that supposed to mean?

Phil: Look in the mirror, man. ⑦

VOCABULARY

computer bulletin board

电脑告示板

cappuccino sippers

喝加牛奶的咖啡的人

inhibitions

顾虑;约束

guarantee

担保

NOTES

① **be around:** 受欢迎;流行。例:

That song has been around for many years.

那支歌已流行多年。

② **One dollar buys you 15 minutes of computer time.** 你花一美元,可以通过电脑谈十五分钟。

③ **“chat session”:** 咖啡馆里的联网电脑服务项目——“上网聊一会儿”

④ **tag along:** 跟着某人学样;紧跟在某人的后面。
tag behind 是意思相近的表达法。

⑤ **It's that popular?** 真是那么红火吗? that 在此是副词,意为:那么、那样。

⑥ **This talk ain't cheap.** 这种网上闲聊的费用不算低。ain't 是 is not, am not, are not 的口语表达法,同时也是 has not, have not 的俗语表达法。

⑦ **Look in the mirror, man.** 老兄,照照镜子去吧。

这句玩笑话的含义是：你该知道你长得挺难看。

3 The Average American Woman

美 国 妇 女

Smith Sensei: In today's English class, we'll be talking about the average American. To begin with, the average U.S. citizen is a married woman age 32. That's because about 51.2% of the population are women and 32 is the *median age*.

Yamada: Interesting. And how many children does the "average" woman have?

Smith: She has 2.1 children.

Yamada: How do you get the "point one?"

Smith: Very funny.

Yamada: Just kidding. So how tall is the average woman?

Smith: She is 5 feet 4 inches. I don't know what that is in centimeters. ①

Yamada: That's okay. I can figure it out. ② So what else can you tell me about the average American "woman"?

Smith: She is slightly *overweight*, about 143 pounds and *dieting*. Her dress size is size 10 or 12.