

時代英語叢書

# 現代英語表現法

錢歌川編著

香港 中外出版社 出版

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## 出版說明

一、我們收到了錢歌川教授從美國寄來的一套他自己編寫的英語叢書，並答應交給本社出版，我們對錢教授的熱情支持，謹此表示謝忱！本社已決定將錢教授所著這套叢書，定名為《時代英語叢書》，並將陸續付印問世。

二、錢教授從事大學教學及翻譯工作多年，學識淵博，經驗豐富。我們出版的這套《時代英語叢書》，無論從選題到內容，都是華人學習英語及翻譯工作所急待解決者，深信本叢書的出版，將受到讀者的熱烈歡迎。

三、這本《現代英語表現法》係《時代英語叢書》之一。錢教授在本書中論述了古代英語和現代英語，書面英語和口頭英語的區別，解釋了現代英語的組織現象和表現方法。書中《現代英語的文白分野》、《英語中常用的明喻》、《英美人用些什麼比喻》和《英文混成字研究》諸文對這些問題作了精辟的分析，讀者閱後，對理解、掌握現代英語，大有茅塞頓開之感。誠大中學校師生及英語翻譯工作者之良好參考書。

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## 現代英語的文白分野

以前研究語言學的人都是以文字爲對象，如中國所謂形聲義，即指文字，聲韻，訓詁三者而言，其中的聲韻也是以廣韻等書爲依據來作研究的，因爲文字及訓詁都是古文，所以聲韻也是限於古音。外國的情形亦復如此，人們都是拿書本上的文字來研究語言的。英文的「語言學」是 philology，實則譯成「語文學」才對。本世紀以來中外才有真正的「語言學」(linguistics)的發生。這是以現在的人口頭所說的語言爲依據來作研究的。如趙元任著的「中國話的文法」(A Grammar of Spoken Chinese)一九六五年美國加州大學出版，便是一部描述現代中國話的鉅著。歐美所倡導的結構語言學(structural linguistics)，乃至一九五〇年以後美國新興的轉換語言學(transformational linguistics)，都是拿現代人說的話爲對象，不再在故紙堆中去找生活了。

東方人如中國人和日本人學英文，也是偏重文字的，因爲目的在求得新的知識學問，所以只重視書本上的文字，而不大注意口頭說的話語。甚至對於會說英語的買辦(comprador)階級，不免要存幾分輕視之心，認爲他沒有書卷氣。嚴復諸人譯介了西洋的學術思想，使閉關自守的中國大開風氣，日本人由書本上獲得的西洋新知，促成了它的明治維新，一躍而躋於世界強國之一。

但現在反過來側重說話，第一是因爲這是活的語言，可從

音位學(phonemics)的研究而獲得更翔實的紀錄，即是那些沒有文字的語言也可以紀錄下來。語言的單位不是字而是句，他們要用轉換的分析(transformational analysis)研究出句子構造的核心句法(kernel sentence)，而求出一個公式及其變形來。再將名詞，動詞分類，加上一般不變的成分(constants)，即字形上的構成要素(morpheme)，就可找出有無利用電腦(computer)來處理語言的可能了。

我們要明白口頭說的話，並不是從筆下的文字分化出來的。白話不但不是發生於文言，而文言原是以白話為母體而產生的。目下全世界有三千多種語言，其中有文字的佔極少數，可見口語(spoken language)是任何語言的先聲，文言(written language)是很遲才進化成功的。一國的國語稱為母舌(mother tongue)，可知「舌」是含有「語言」的意味的。人要有舌方能說話，人說的話就是語言的基礎。中國古語說：「言之無文，行之不遠」，意指在單有口語而無文言的時候，是不能傳到遠地，傳諸後世的。「文」將「言」記錄下來，才能「行遠」，言文在當時是一致的。

丹麥的英文權威學者葉斯柏生(Otto Jespersen, 1860-1943)在他的名著「英文文法要義」的導言中說：「在我們所謂文明生活中，印刷物佔着非常重要的地位，致使一般受過教育的人，每每忘記了語文原來就是說話，即主要是會話(對話)，而寫的(印刷的)文字，只是一種說出的和聽到的話語的代用品，

註：這裏說的「文」「白」，和中國一般通用的含義有所不同，中國說的「文言」是指古文而言，「白話」則是說的口語，而英文的白話固然也是指的口語(colloquial)，但文言却不是說的古文(archaic)，而是說的現代書寫的語文(literary)。簡單地說，「文」是指的 written English，「白」是指的 spoken English，二者都是現代英語。

這種代用品在多方面是非常有價值的，但在另外一些方面，却是粗劣的。」他這一番話道出了語言的本質，值得我們注意。

人類的語言是天天在變的，時間愈久，變化愈大，例如聖經詩經都是當時的白話，現在都變得非常難懂的古文了。莎士比亞的劇本也是用當時的白話寫的，現在也變成了古文。口語是活的，所以必然有變動，文字記在書上就不可能再有變動了。現代英語或中國的白話，一度用文字記錄下來，就每天在變陳腐，試看五四運動時代新文人的白話作品，我們在今日看來，已然覺得是古董了。何況在寫作的當時，由於修辭的關係，已和當時口頭說的話多少有些距離呢。

我還歷歷在目地記得一九三六年倫敦的情形，年初老王喬治五世駕崩，當時已是四十二歲的皇太子繼位為愛德華八世，他因為愛上了一個美國女人，又是離過婚的辛樸生太太，所以遭內閣和教會的反對，他終於不愛江山愛美人，讓位給他的弟弟（喬治六世，即現英女王依麗薩伯二世的父親），帶着愛人出國，度他們的情侶生活去了。在一九三六年十二月十一日禪位當時，他曾向全國人民廣播，筆者恭逢其盛，一字一句都聽得非常令人感動。一開頭他就說：

At long last I am able to say a few words of my own. I never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak.

談到他寧要美人而放棄王位時，他說：

But you must believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I

would wish to do, without the help and support of the woman I love. And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine, and mine alone.

這篇廣播詞可說是完全用的口語，可是到了第二天早上報紙上刊出的禪位詔書中，這兩段話就變成了經過潤色的文字：

The moment seems ultimately to have arrived when the undersigned, on his own initiative, may issue a statement. At no time have I been inclined to secretiveness, but until now I have been constrained by the Constitution from expressing myself before the forum of public opinion.

But you must accord me credence when I state to you that I found it impossible to endure the heavy burden of responsibility and to consummate the fulfillment of my stewardship as King without the assistance and co-operation of the lady upon whom I have bestowed my affection.

我們把這同一內容的一白一文兩種表現法研讀一下便很容易看出其間的差異何等的大，難怪 The Use of English 的作者 Evans 要說：I would only say that written and spoken English are in the modern periods so far apart that they almost constitute two different languages. (我只想說，寫的英語和說的英語，到了近代有如兩種不同的語言一樣發生很大的差異了)。在同一書中他也提及在會話中所用的口語(the spoken word) 研究英語的人差不多都不去研究。可見在歐美，



過去也是只研究文字，而不關心說話的。

我在前面已經說過，最初記錄下來的文字，原是當時的白話，例如詩經便是周朝初期的白話，從前並無所謂文白之分。Evans 也說這是到了近代才發生的歧異。正好像古代堯舜之世人人平等，社會上的階級制度是後來才形成的一樣，語言層次(speech levels)也是近代的產物。Charles C. Fries 在他著的 *American English Grammar* 上說：「所謂口頭的英語是指與正式的 literary style 的英語相對的，一般慣用的 colloquial style 的英語而言。」我們知道一般大眾所用的字當然使用的頻度很高，決非裝腔作勢的那些使用頻度很少的 big words 可比。英國有名的小品文作者 A. G. Gardiner 曾寫過一篇題名為 *On Big Words* 的文章，其中的「我」正在籬笆旁邊拔除蓴蕪，a small man with spectacles, a straw hat, a white alpaca jacket, and a book under his arm (一位個子矮小的戴着眼鏡的人，頭戴草帽，身着毛衣，手臂下挾着一本書)走過來，兩人發生如下的交談：

He & I: Good evening.

He: You find the nettles very difficult to eradicate?

I: I find them hard to keep down.

He: They disseminate themselves most luxuriantly.

I: They spread like the Dickens.

He: But they have their utility in the economy of nature.

I: Nature is welcome to them as far as I am concerned.

He: It is most salubrious weather.

I: It was a fine day.

He: I am afraid that the aridity of the season is deleterious to the crops.

I: My potatoes are doing badly.

He & I: Good evening.

這個 I 和 He 所說的話，屬於兩個完全不同的語言層次。那個臂下挾着書本的學者模樣的人，說話不免裝腔作勢，可稱為 literary, pedantic, bookish 的階層，而老農老圃以主人自命的人所說的話，就是 familiar, colloquial, popular 的，有時也可以達到 vulgar 的程度，總之是一般大眾日常的用語。我們還記得 Charles Dickens 在他著的 David Copperfield 中，出現的一位不斷在期待着好運到來的樂天派的人物 Wilkins Micawber，有時說話也是蠻神氣的，但不免要露點馬脚。例如在該書第十一章上，他說了這樣的一段話：

“Under the impression,” said Mr. Micawber, “that your peregrinations in this metropolis have not as yet been extensive, and that you might have some difficulty in penetrating the arcana of the Modern Babylon in the direction of the City Road — in short,” said Mr. Micawber in another burst of confidence, “that you might lose yourself — I shall be happy to call this evening, and instal you in the knowledge of the nearest way.”

（我覺得在這個大都會中你的遍歷不夠廣泛，你在探索向城市路那一方面這個近代巴比倫的秘奧時，也許還

有點困難，總之，你可能要迷失路途的——今天晚上讓我來指示你一條最近的路線吧。)

這位米先生既用了 peregrinations, metropolis, penetrating, arcana 一類的 big words，可是不知不覺間又說出屬於另一個 speech level 的 that you might lose yourself 一句話來。

我們也常有「掉書袋」的說法，讀書人說的話總是文縷縷的，英文中用 big words 也不外是表示書卷氣 (bookish)，不問這種深奧的字眼是從書本得來，還是專為寫書而造，我們都可以說它是 literary style (文言體裁)，也就是 written English 的資料。上面引用的愛德華八世 (後來的溫莎公爵) 的遜位辭，本可以說得更加高深一點，以達到 kingly 的 speech level (英文最高的標準不是所謂 King's English 嗎？) 不過這位不留戀王位的人，思想是很平民化的，他沒有那種英國紳士的臭架子，所以他的廣播詞也是極為大衆化的。到了形諸筆墨時，就不得不維持王室的尊嚴，要把 speech level 提高起來，last 就得改為 final，而 duty 也要寫成 obligation。至於 the woman I love，竟被修飾為 the lady upon whom I have bestowed my affection. 了。

這種書寫體有些當然是古文的遺留，有些就是逐漸失去生命的陳言，還有就是已經產生出淺易的字來取代的原本正義的字。不但單字如此，表現法亦復如此。口頭的英語是活生生的，表現力極強的現代英語。我們外國人學英語，尤其在學習寫作時，往往要考究文法，用字力求正確，寫出來的英文總不免有生硬 (stiff) 之感。例如我們想到「確知」，「決心」，「通知」，「放棄」等意思時，我們便立刻要說 ascertain, determine,

inform, abandon 一類的字眼，而不會像英美人使用口頭慣用的 make sure, make up my mind, let me know, give up 的表現法。這樣的慣用字句，才是他們使用得最多的活生生的英語，作為 communication 的手段，英語的用途日大，範圍日廣，我們口耳的接觸比閱讀或寫作的機會更多，自不能忽視口語。以前動輒要有書面，現在只是一個電話就把問題解決了。報上天天登載的都是會談，會議之類，公文的來往逐漸減少，你要聽不懂別人說的話，或自己不能說得別人了解你的意思，就要失去許多的機會了。你如果說的都是一些古字，或一些過時的表現法，你便要給人一種時代落伍的印象。問題是那些字眼或表現法是過了氣的，字典上並未註明，我們怎樣來分辨呢？唯一的辦法，就是細心揣摩現代作家的作品，尤其是劇本之類，另外就得聽電影上的對話。我想分兩個步驟來討論。第一用文白對照來舉例，其次採用戲劇，電影的實例來說明。

1. commoner, oftener, pleasanter 的比較級已經古老，現在宜用 more common, more often, more pleasant

2. he who 已經古老，現在說 a man (person) who.

3. lest it should be 早變成古文，宜改用 in case it is.

4. Will you not.....? 是文言，口語說 Won't you.....?

5. Were I a bird 也太文，宜說 If I were a bird.

6. of a Sunday 應改說 on Sundays.

7. be blind of one eye 應改說 be blind in one eye.

8. This morning I overslept myself 的反身動詞，現在也不用了，而說成 This morning I overslept.

9. School being over, he went home. 及 Far from being perfect, it has something to be desired. 等句中的

being 一字都不說了。

10. He seems to be honest 句中的 to be 也不說了。  
現就詞性來分別舉例如下：

(1) 代名詞

- ① It is I. That's he (she, they) (文)  
It's me. That's him (her, them) (白)
- ② Is she as tall as I? (文)  
Is she as tall as me? (白)
- ③ I am older than he. (文)  
I'm older than him. (白)
- ④ Whom is that picture by? (文)  
Who's that picture by? (白)
- ⑤ Whom did you meet at the party. (文)  
Who did you meet at the party. (白)

(2) 冠詞, 代名形容詞

- ① The cow is a useful animal. (文)  
Cows are useful animals. (白)
- ② All things have an end. (文)  
Everything comes to an end. (白)
- ③ All were not saved. (文)  
All of them weren't saved. 或  
They weren't all saved. 或  
Everyone wasn't saved. (白)
- ④ He was satisfied with neither. (文)  
He wasn't satisfied with either. (白)
- ⑤ I have no money. (文)

I haven't any money. (白)

- ⑥ I had done nothing. (文)

I hadn't done anything. (白)

- ⑦ It is no use. (文)

It isn't any use. (白)

- ⑧ I have many friends. (文)

I have a lot of (lots of) friends. (白)

- ⑨ He drinks much wine. (文)

He drinks a lot of (lots of, a large quantity of) wine. (白)

(註) 在英國口語中 many, much 現限於用在肯定句中, 且有不用於主語以外的傾向, 如 Many people die of cancer. Much of what you say is true, 又在否定句, 問句, 以及 how, too, so, as 之後還是可以接 many, much 的, 如 Do you need so many? There isn't much food in the house. He gave me one too many.

### (3) 關係詞

- ① Whatever it may be, I'll just take it. (文)

Well, I'll just take it. whatever it is. (白)

- ② Whoever else may do, I will have nothing to do with it. (文)

I won't have anything to do with it, whoever else does. (白)

(註) 同義的 no matter who(which, what, etc) 也是文言, 而且近乎浮誇 (pompous), 所以口語中是避免不用的。

- ③ He said he saw me there, which was a lie. (文)

He said he saw me there, but it was a lie. (白)

- ④ Wait till six, when he will be back. (文)

Wait till six, and then he will be back. (白)

(4) 動詞

- ① It is said that he is German. (文)

Everybody says (that) he is German. (白)

- ② He was operated upon. (文)

He had an operation. (白)

- ③ Take an umbrella in case it should rain. (文)

Take an umbrella in case it rains. (白)

(註) 用 lest it should rain 不但是文言, 而且是古語 (archaic) 了。

- ④ He acted as if he were losing his temper. (文)

He acted as if he was losing his temper. (白)

- ⑤ What would he do if I were ill?

What would he do if I was ill?

- ⑥ Bid him go. (文)

Tell him to go. (白)

(5) 分詞

- ① Being poor, he could not afford to buy books. (文)

As he was poor, he could not afford to buy books.  
(白)

- ② The rain having ruined her hat, she had to buy a new one. (文)

As the rain had ruined her hat, she had to buy a new one. (白)

- ③ I saw all the temples while staying in Han Chow. (文)

I saw all the temples while I was staying in Han Chow. (白)

## (6) 不定詞

- ① There are many things to be seen at Peking. (文)

There's lots of things to see at Peking. (白)

- ② He is known to be dishonest. (文)

Everyone knows he's dishonest. (白)

(註) 在口語中避免用 know, say, perceive, etc. 的被動形加上 to be 的構造。

## (7) 助動詞

- ① May I go for a swim this afternoon? — No, you may not. (文)

Can I go for a swim this afternoon? — No, you can't. (白)

- ② Might (May) I speak to Mr. Wong? (文)

Could (Can) I speak to Mr. Wong? (白)

- ③ Tie him up so that he may not escape. (文)

Tie him up so that he can't escape. (白)

(註) 如說 in order that he may not escape 則更要 formal, 而是帶有 pompous 的說法。

- ④ I seem (to be) unable to find it. (文)

I can't seem to find it. (白)

- ⑤ I see the moon. (文)

I can see the moon. (白)

- ⑥ I saw the moon last night. (文)

I could see the moon last night. (白)

- ⑦ May you have a good time! (文)

Well, have a good time! (白)



- ⑧ May you enjoy yourselves! (文)

Enjoy yourselves! (白)

- ⑨ I hope he may succeed. (文)

I hope he succeeds (will succeed). (白)

(8) 副 詞

- ① He promised to do so. (文)

He promised to do it. (白)

- ② We were also caught in the rain. (文)

We got caught in the rain too (as well). (白)

(9) 連 詞

- ① He is not going, nor am I. (文)

He's not going, neither am I. (白)

- ② Neither he nor I am going. (文)

He's not going, and I'm not going either. (白)

- ③ I was so cold that I could hardly keep still. (文)

I was so cold I could hardly keep still. (白)

- ④ I hope that you will call on us. (文)

I hope you'll come and see us. (白)

- ⑤ It is not so bad as I thought. (文)

It's not as bad as I thought. (白)

- ⑥ Because (如用 Since 則更爲 formal) you are sorry.

I will forgive you. (文)

As you are sorry, I'll forgive you. (白)

- ⑦ Do it as I do. (文)

Do it just as I do 或 Do it the same way as I do. (白)