

British & American Culture

英语时文阅读(中)

主编：张晓辉 赵华 刘婧

黑龙江美术出版社

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主 编：張曉輝 趙 華 劉 婧

编 者：劉 巍

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作 者 张晓辉 赵 华 刘 婧

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前言

现代科技的发展,多媒体的诞生,互联网的普及以及经济的高度全球化发展,使得人们渴望了解他国风俗习惯及文化特点,以达到互相交流的目的。因此,文化与交际不仅成为人们的热门话题,而且潜移默化地影响着对外语教学观念的改变,越来越多的外语教育工作者意识到在传授语言知识的同时,应加强文化知识的渗透。

但是在实际授课的过程中,由于受学生、教材、教学内容、教学计划等具体因素的制约,课堂上往往没有大量的时间来介绍、解释和分析语言文化现象和文化背景方面知识。

针对这种情况,《英语时文阅读》应运而生。本书选用了现代英语阅读材料,其中大部分摘自近年来的国内外报纸、期刊及网络。这些文章题材广泛、内容丰富、风格迥异、语言环境真实、文化信息量大,反映了欧美各国多姿多彩的生活侧面和风土人情。使学生在阅读过程中一举两得,不仅能够提高英语的阅读能力,而且可以从中获得大量有价值的信息,丰富他们的英美文化知识,进而扫清语言学习中遇到的文化障碍。

本书主编和其他编者一直工作在外语教育的最前线,有着多年的外语教学经验,并试图在阅读教学中锐意创新,尝试各种先进的文化导入方法。本书经过编者的精心选材和试题设计,设计了大量的热门话题和文化背景知识,使文章难易适中、长短搭配、语言规范、内容与现代生活密切相关,力争将语言学习与文化学习有机地结合起来,引导学生从被动地接受信息到主动地思维求索。书中各篇文章附有生词及含义,供读者阅读时参考。

由于编者水平有限,编译过程中难免有疏漏之处,敬请广大师生批评指正。

——编者

2005年于哈尔滨

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CHAPTER 1 COMMUNICATION STYLES

Reading one

Disappearing Smiles

Information taken from "Smiles Take a Turn", *Mainichi Daily News*

Nearly all the popular magazines in Japan have beautiful faces on the covers—but few of them are smiling anymore. Nor are the readers. It seems that carefree smiling is no longer in fashion. For most of its 45-year history, the Japanese teen's magazine "Myojo" used smiling beauties for the monthly cover. After about 1990, though, the smiles have changed to a closed-mouth sullenness. The stars themselves say they cannot smile, and the readers don't relate to the smiling-face message anymore. Young Japanese smiles are disappearing.

It is not only the amount of smiling that has changed, but also, the way of smiling. Free-lance writer Hiromi Imura teaches at an Osaka vocational school. It saddens her that students smile so rarely when greeting or talking. They only do it, she said, in self-congratulation, as when they get a good test score. There are two basic types of smiles. Passive smiles are an automatic response to something funny, or pleasant. Then there are active smiles, which people usually beam at each other to show affection, friendliness, or to make others feel easy. It is these active smiles that are fading, says Hiroto Murasawa, director of the Japan Academy of Facial Studies and research manager at Pola Research Institute of Beauty and Culture. She says that one way to explain this is to regard the disappearing smile as a refusal by teenagers to be associated with the people around them. (Word count = 239)

Reading Two

Silent Language

Information taken from: *Everybody's Guide to People Watching*
by Dr. Aaron Wolfgang. Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press

Cross-cultural Language

We communicate and reveal things about ourselves all the time through body language whether or not any words are coming out of our mouths. The body, the face, the eyes are always “speaking”. Non-verbal communication are: facial expressions, touch, gaze, hand gestures, posture, tone and loudness of voice. Different cultures show big differences in what this “silent language” expresses. Non-verbal communication varies from country to country. However, there are universal facial expressions that show the basic emotions of fear, happiness and sadness.

Cross-cultural Differences

What are some of the cultural differences in body language? In some cultures, such as Japanese and Korean, laughter does not always mean a person is happy. It sometimes means that he or she is embarrassed or anxious. Neither does a kiss indicate romantic feeling in every country: kissing is a greeting behavior between men and women in many Latin cultures. In Brazil, the exchange of three kisses on the cheeks is a common sign of friendship, not love. How about men and women’s emotions? In the West, men are expected to hide or control their emotions, but in Iran, men are expected to show their emotions. If they appear too cool and logical, they are seen as being undependable and inhuman. And even the way of showing appreciation for a performance can vary culturally. In Russia, receiving a very slow applause indicates great appreciation, but in many countries this would show lack of appreciation. Finally, surely the signal for “No!”, shaking one’s head from side to side, is the same in every country? False! In Bulgaria, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey and Iran, tilting the head from side to side, means yes!! (Word count = 289)

Reading Three

To Tell the Truth

Adapted from “The Truth about Telling Lies”

by Richard Morin, *Washington Post*

What a strange world this would be if everyone told the truth! Even though all world religions caution against lying, it seems that lying is a universal communication style. Most of us get angry at big lies—especially those in government, business, and the social world. But how about truth-telling in our private life? Should we always tell the truth to husbands,

wives, mothers, fathers, children? Do we?

- **WE ALL LIE.** National public opinion polls find that only about one in 10 Americans say they never tell a lie. One study of college student found that each student told about two lies a day. Half of all adults interviewed in a CBS News Poll last year admitted they've told a lie they regretted, and nearly as many said they had been deeply hurt by a lie someone told them.

- **WE ALL LIE ABOUT LIES.** Researchers asked subjects to describe the lies they told over a period of weeks. Subjects over-reported "white lies"(harmless lies--- I really like your dress) and under-reported serious lies (I graduated with honors).

- **WE LIE DIFFERENTLY TO DIFFERENT TYUPES OF PEOPLE.** We tell different lies to men than to women. Men and women tell more lies about themselves when talking to men, but more lies about others when talking to women. Men are particularly likely to lie about themselves. Women tell more lies than men, but only because women tell white lies in order to flatter or avoid confrontation.

- **LIES ARE HARD TO DETECT.** Surveys show that nearly everyone believes most people are truthful. That's why people are so bad at detecting lies. Psychologists have even tested the lie-detecting ability of police officers, judges, customs inspectors and others whose job includes needing to detect lies. In these studies, these people were no better at identifying lies than control groups of college students. (Word count = 312)

Reading Four

Communication and Gender in Business

Information taken from: *Talking from 9 to 5: Women and Men in the Workplace*

by Deborah Tannen, Avon Books

According to popular American linguist, Deborah Tannen, communication habits vary depending on individual personality, culture, and among other factors, gender. Since made ways of communicating are standard in business, women's ways of talking are often ignored or misunderstood in the workplace. Tannen emphasizes that female and male styles are both valid. Here are some of Tannen's main points:

- Conversational styles in boys and girls show up early. Even 5-year-old boys care about their rank in the group, while 5-year-old girls care more about

being in or out of the group. Therefore, men's conversational styles often use *competition*, while women try to keep the appearance of *equality*.

- Women tend to apologize more than men, as an attempt to restore the power balance in conversation. When men simply accept the apology rather than part of the responsibility, women feel unjustly blamed.

- Western women favor indirect ways of speaking, which is interpreted by Western men as showing insecurity and lack of confidence. However, this gender difference is also a cultural difference: Japanese business culture demands indirectness, and the direct approach used by Western businessmen is often seen as rude by the Japanese.

- In business, women are often blamed if they "talk like a woman"(soft, indirect, cautious), but are also blamed if they "talk like a man"(bossy, aggressive).

- We have strong negative images of women in authority: Wicked Witch and Mother, so women bosses are judged not as bosses but as women.

- Gender differences show most strongly not in individuals but in group settings. In a group of men and women, women tend to become silent bystanders while men are active participants.

- Males and females in Western culture speak different body languages. Men often spread out their limbs, taking up a lot of space, gesture widely, speak in loud tones, and engage in direct eye contact. These behaviors communicate power and high status. Women hold in their limbs, take up little space, make small gestures, speak in soft voices, and lower their eyes frequently. These behaviors give away power and announce low status.

- Males interrupt females much more than they interrupt other males, and more often than females interrupt either males or females.

Research has shown that there is nothing "natural" about male or female language, but that these gender habits simply show the stereotyped role in which society puts men and women.

(word count = 403)

CHAPTER 2 GENDER ROLES

Reading One

Gender differences

Information taken from “Males and Females and what you may not know about them”,

Changing Times Magazine, September 1981 and “Gray Matters”

By Sharon Begley, *Newsweek*

Girls play with dolls. Boys play with toy cars. Girls are soft and sensitive. Boys are rough and noisy. Women are good at taking care of people. Men are good at taking care of an office. These of course are gender stereotypes—commonly accepted beliefs about humans based on their gender—and vary depending on the individual. Most scientists believe that both nature (physical body) and nurture (environment) are responsible for gender differences. That is, Nature creates some differences, and Society creates others.

Body

Boys are born bigger than girls, but are less developed at birth. Girls mature more quickly. Boys and girls start out about equal in aerobic power but a Swedish study showed that by 15 years old, women's aerobic power was 25% less than men's. men have more muscular strength in the upper body but the legs and stomach muscles are about the same, potentially, as women's.

Health

Girl babies are stronger than boys: although at least 120 boys are conceived for every 100 girls, the stillbirths of male babies is so much higher that at birth the ratio is 105 to 100. as adults, the recovery rate of women from most diseases is better than that of men.

The way we act

From as early as age 2, males are more aggressive, readier to fight and hurt one another. Both boys and girls express anger before age 2, but after that age, the expression of anger decreases in girls.

The way we feel

Both men and women suffer from mental illness, but one difference is that

marriage protects men from mental illness but increases the risk for women.

Our brains

New research shows that men and women have different brains. For example, women tend to use both sides of the brain for language, and thus have a great verbal ability. Men use only the left brain for language, leaving the right brain for non-verbal tasks. This may explain why males appear to be better at math and other non-verbal tasks. With new technologies like magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and positron emission tomography (PET), researchers can record the brain while thinking or feeling. They have found that the limbic system, the part of the brain that controls emotion, can be 8 times as big in women's brains than in men's. (Word count =385)

Reading Two

A Women's World

Adapted from "Men in Indian Tribe rebel against female dominance"

By Biswajyoti Das, *The Japan Times*

On Sundays the sound of church bells can be heard across the beautiful grassy hills of northeastern India. But the sweet ringing is not music to the ears of Casper Tariang, a bachelor who says he is not looking forward to getting married. He is one of the 200,000 men who belong to the Khasi tribe—one of the world's few remaining matrilineal societies—and Tariang says the gender roles of his tribe are really bothering him. "I am a bachelor now. After I get married, I don't want to be a baby-sitter," the hotel manager said.

Tariang is not alone. Many educated Khasi men, who live in the peaceful hills outside of the northeastern city of Shillong, India, are also tired of their traditional female-led system. Khasi society is matrilineal, which means that men and women there take their mother's family name. property—houses, land—is handed down from the mother to the youngest daughter of each family. While both men and women share the housework, women are considered the better businesspeople, and work outside the home during the day; the men often are unemployed and take care of the children. For many Khasi men this is hard to accept: on television, and in the surrounding cities of India, they see the opposite patriarchal system, and they wish they could lead the life shown in American family television shows. They want a wife who will cook, clean, and obey them, who will stay at home and take care of the children.

Khasi male rebellion against such a "woman's world" is just one of the challenges faced by the traditional Khasi husbands who are lazy. These men are happy not to work outside the home, but they also cut corners with the housework. They prefer to take it easy while their wives work hard to make the salary. This of course makes Khasi women angry.

Finally, teen marriage and pregnancy rates are rising. The average age of marriage has fallen to 14 from over 18 a decade ago. But most Khasi women say it is not matriarchy that is to blame for the growing number of family problems. They think the real problem is spreading narcotic drug use. In any case, it seems just a matter of time that this ancient and unusual matriarchy will be changing to a more typical patriarchal system. (Word count = 409)

Reading Three

Men's Liberation

Information taken from "The evolving study of men"

By Kyoko Sato, *The Japan Times*, May 29, 1997

When it comes to the status of women, it is no secret that Japan falls behind other countries. Women have been calling for equal status in society, but do they really envy men's lives?

Take *karoshi*, death from overwork. It is just one example of the problem of overwork shared by many Japanese men. Other problems facing Japanese men in the 1990's: the fashion of wives leaving their retired husbands; the increase of the suicide rate of middle-aged men; the high suicide rate of high school boys as a result of bullying; the high rate of alcoholism.

Experts say these problems are caused by the fixed image, or stereotype, of what a good man is and should be — tough, hardworking, career-minded, a man who won't ask for help nor show his feelings. Some say that men need to be liberated from these fixed gender roles. Kimio Ito, a professor at Osaka University, specializes in the new field of "men's studies", an area of social studies which examines men's issues and identity. His courses are very popular with Japanese college students: in 1995, about 3000 students tried to sign up for Ito's men's studies course at Osaka University.

The discipline of men's studies started in the U.S. in the 80's, in response to the women's liberation movement. The first men's lib group in Japan was formed by Ito and other men in 1991. These men in their 40's and 50's wanted

to question the typical image of the ideal man's life based on social and economic success. They have been joined by younger men in their 20's and 30's who also have problems with the values and lifestyle of the previous generation who during Japan's rapid economic growth period worked hard as "company soldiers." It says men's and women's issues are two sides of the same coin and thinks fixed gender roles should be broken. If women made social advances and earned salary, while men worked less, did housework and childrearing, they "both could have more complete lives," he says. "It's time to understand that this male-dominated society is not a paradise for men at all. We should seek not a strong economy but a society in which each individual can have a rich and full life." (Word count = 379)

Reading Four

Gender Stereotypes in Chinese Schools

Adapted from "Gender Stereotypes stick in schools"

By Gong Qian, *China Daily*, June 10, 1998

This is a typical scene in a Chinese kindergarten: The teacher gives some toy guns to the boys and toy cooking utensils to the girls and they start to play. Soon after, a fight takes place among the boys and one of them is thrown to the ground, weeping. He is scorned by the teacher. "Stop crying! Don't behave like a girl." The girls are no better. Screaming with joy, they spill water on their skirts and then get a good scolding too: "Behave yourselves. Look how dirty you are! You don't look like girls any more."

Consciously or unconsciously, the teacher paints a picture for these children: Boys should behave like boys — daring and brave; and girls like girls — gentle and clean. "If you take the trouble to track down the factors that may affect personality development, you will find partial answers in our education system, in the way we are nurtured in our earliest years," said Zheng Xinrong, vice-director of the Education Department of Beijing Normal University (BNU).

Sun Lili from the Education Department conducted a survey among 144 students from the Beijing No 2 Teachers' School. The respondents were asked to select from 28 adjectives the ones suitable for boys and girls. Most of the respondents chose words like "bold, brave, vigorous" to boys and "gentle, pretty, fussy" to girls, despite the fact that all of them said that they treated

them as equals. In another questionnaire, Sun asked the teachers to describe how they would act when both a girl and a boy ask to take the role of the wolf in a role-playing game. Only 10.4 per cent of the respondents say they would not take the child's gender into consideration in choosing the role. Nearly 70 per cent believed that boys are more suitable to play the role of the wolf, as wolves are fierce and powerful.

Teachers' expectations can influence the performances of children. Teachers are more likely to choose boys to answer challenging questions with no definite solutions, while asking girls to answer questions that are less difficult, with definite solutions. Consequently, boys tend to choose more difficult questions to answer and do not care if their solutions are the same as those of the teachers. Assertiveness, courage and creativity are needed by both males and females if they are to function successfully in modern society. But these qualities are fostered in boys and much neglected in girls. (Word count = 408)

Chapter 3 Aging

Reading One

Aging Crisis in China

Information taken from: "Rapid Growth Poses Hurdles", *China Daily*, June 16, 1998; "SOS Bells for Elderly", *Beijing Review*, July 14, 1997; "Tradition Changes", *Shanghai Star*, Jan 20, 1998; "Aging with Attitude", *New Internationalist*, February 1995

1 "Aging," says Alex Kalache, Head of the Programme on Aging at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, "is the number one problem in the world. And if it is not addressed now, there will be serious consequences." It is the "number one problem" because the numbers of people over 60 — and particularly those over 80 — are growing fast. The rapid aging trend in China's population also poses immediate challenges to Chinese society. How can China face this challenge? As the social structure changes in terms of demographics, so will tradition.

2 In 1959 there were 200 million people over 60 in the world, accounting for 8 percent of the total population. By 2025 there will be 1.2 billion — 14 percent of the total. It is predicted that in China, by 2000, the number of retired people will be several times that of the mid-90's. In 2020 they will have increased by several times again. The problem is that as more and more people live longer and their numbers increase both in actual numbers and relative to the general population, there will be fewer people to care for them. The dependency ratio, as it is called, is also affected by the fact that women, who have been the traditional caretakers of the elderly, are becoming more career-oriented and are not at home to care for their parents.

3 One solution is senior homes. Traditionally, it is considered a Chinese virtue for children to take care of their parents. But if people are working long hours, older parents feel lonely at home. At senior citizen centres, they can get good care from the nurses, who are also willing to listen to their stories. "When I first came here, I complained about my daughter's decision. But gradually, I began to like this place," Wei Wenkuei, 86, said, "The nurses are more attentive than a house maid, and the food is good." Wei is staying at the Peixin Senior Citizens Centre in Nanshi District. There are only three senior centres in the Dongjiadu Neighbourhood in Nanshi District, which is not enough for more than

20,000 people over the age of 60. However, the neighbourhood has about 15,000 laid-off women workers who are eager for jobs, and the area expects to open several new centres in the near future. The government is not only encouraging individuals to run senior citizen's homes, but the government itself is building centres.

4 Some say that these homes isolate the elderly from the rest of society and that keeping an intergenerational bond is necessary for a rich, wise society. Another model which helps old people to live more independently is known as "care in the community." A unique example of this is the "SOS Bells for the Elderly" system which was introduced in Changqiao Neighbourhood in the Western District in 1996, and has proved successful. Families were encouraged to volunteer to form mutual help "pairs" with elderly people who had no children nearby to care for them. Bells were affixed at the bedside of lonely and ill senior citizens and connected to the home of the "pair household." When the bell rings, the helper goes at once. In May 1997, the Beijing Committee for the Elderly had emergency bells installed in 297 homes in Beijing's 10 districts.

5 Although larger social welfare system reform needs to be undertaken, these changes in the traditional way of caring for old people show a China which is ready and willing to deal with change in a creative way. Now that "over-population" and "the aging crisis" are seen as problems by modern society world-wide, it is important that the elderly are not ignored, alienated or mistreated, but rather treasured for their great store of experience. These are problems that need thoughtful solutions. (Word count = 631)

Reading Two

Why Do We Age?

Adapted from "Why Do We Age" by Nancy Shute,
US News and World Report, August 18, 1997

Is aging a disease or a natural part of life? Since the 1960's, American scientists have been seriously examining the aging processes. Most theories of aging fall into two groups: nature or nurture.

Nature

In this view, the aging process is intrinsic to every living thing. It is as if there was an invisible clock inside of each of us, ticking for a pre-set length of time. That is, our lifespan is pre-programmed. Almost all living organisms, from butterflies (12 weeks) to dogs (20 years) to humans (122) do indeed appear to have a maximum lifespan, set by their genes. Studies of skin proteins show they naturally break down over time. Strongly supporting this view of aging are the studies showing that life span can be affected by genes. Researchers have doubled the life span of fruit flies to 70 days through selective breeding. In 1961, cell biologist Leonard Hayflick discovered that human cells divide 80 or 90 times,