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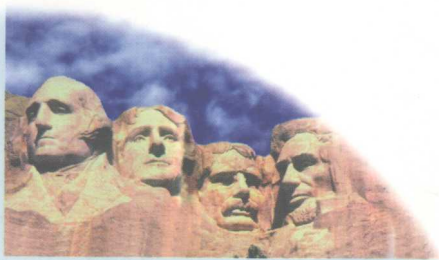


(英汉对照)

# 美国语言与文化

ENGLISH — CHINESE  
AMERICAN LANGUAGE  
AND CULTURE

黄小群  
编译



**英汉对照**

# **美国语言与文化**

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# Chapter One

## An American Accent

### 第一章

### 美国口音

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While Englishmen along the colonial seaboard tried to cling to the familiar local ways of the different parts of England from which they had come, they founded—without meaning to—a culture which was in many ways more homogeneous in vast America than it had been in course of moving about the New World and in moving up and down the social scale, they made it more uniform. A single spoken language soon echoed across the continent, overcoming space as the printed word overcomes time. The American language would fulfill the Elizabethan prophecy of Samuel Daniel written in 1599:

当北美殖民地沿海地区的英国人想紧紧抱住他们所熟悉的、从英国不同地区带来的地方生活方式时，他们毫无意识地作为一种新的文化奠定了基础。从许多方面来看，这种文化在广阔的美国土地上比在小小的英国故土具有更强的一致性。定居者坚持讲他们祖国的语言，他们在新世界四处流动，其社会阶层也经常变动，在此过程中，他们使用的语言更加统一了。就像印刷文字克服了时间上的障碍一样，北美大陆克服了空间上的障碍，很快出现了一种单

一的口头语言,美国语言使塞缪尔·丹尼尔 1599 年写下的伊丽莎白女王时代的预言得以实现:

And who, in time, knowes whither we may vent  
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores  
This gaine of our best glory shall be sent,  
T'inrich unknowing Nations with our stores?  
What worlds in th'yet unformed Occident  
May come refin'd with th'accents that are ours?  
谁能知道,到时候我们会  
向何处传播我们语言的精华?  
我们最引以自豪的成就  
又将送往哪些陌生的地方,  
用我们的宝藏去丰富  
那些不知名国家的文化?  
又是哪些尚未定型的西方美洲国家  
会用我们的语音改造他们的语言,  
使之变得优美动听?

Only two centuries later when this dream had become a fact, Noah Webster foresaw that "North America will be peopled with a hundred millions of men, *all speaking the same language*". Contrasted with Europe, America promised a "period when the people of one quarter of the world, will be able to associate and converse together like children of the same family."

两个世纪之后,梦想变成了现实。诺亚·韦伯斯特预言,“北美大陆将定居着 1 亿操着同一种语言的人口。”同欧洲的情况正好相反,美国开辟了“一个新时代,使整个世界四分之一土地上的人将能像

一家人一样，用同一种语言互相了解和交谈。”

The American language has indeed shown a spectacular uniformity. Only after we have looked at polyglot nations like India, the Soviet Union, and China, or when we remind ourselves that Europe, with an area of less than four million square miles, possesses at least a dozen major languages, can we appreciate our advantage. The people of the United States, spread over three million square miles, speak only one language. There is more difference between the speech of Naples and Milan, or of Canterbury and Yorkshire, or of a Welsh coal-miner and an Oxford undergraduate, or of a Provencal peasant and a Paris lawyer than there is between the language of Maine and California, or between the speech of a factory-worker and a college president in the United States.

美国语言具有惊人的一致性。只要对比一下像印度、苏联和中国那样多种语言并存的国家，或者提醒自己注意这样的事实，即欧洲的面积不到 400 万平方英里但存在着十几种各不相同的主要语言，我们就能正确地理解我们在这方面所具有的优越性。美国人民散居在 300 多万平方英里的土地上，却只讲着一种语言。那不勒斯人和米兰人，或者坎特伯雷人和约克郡人，或者英国一个威尔士煤矿工人与一个牛津大学生，或者法国一个普罗旺斯的农民和一个巴黎的律师，与美国缅因州人和加利福尼亚州人或者美国一个工厂工人和一个大学校长所讲语言，其差别要大得多。

The linguistic uniformity of America is geographic (without barriers of regional dialect) and social (without barriers of caste and class). Both types of uniformity have had vast consequences

for the national life; they have been both symptoms and causes of a striving for national unity. When we note what a large French-speaking population has meant in Canadian political life or how numerous languages have obstructed federation in India, we begin to realize how different our political life might have been without our language unity. Many other features of modern American culture—including the geographic mobility of the population, the public educational system, the mail-order catalogs, the networks of radio and television, the national mass-circulation magazines and “national advertising” (with all these have meant for the standard of living)—would have been more difficult in a nation of several languages. What would have happened to the Log-Cabin-to-the-White-House style of American politics if, as in England, a man who lacked the “proper” background betrayed himself in every word? Our common, classless language has provided the vernacular for equality in American.

美国语言的一致性,就地理而言没有地区方言的障碍,就社会性而言则没有地位和阶级的隔阂。这两个方面的一致性都给国家生活带来了巨大的影响。它们是争取国家统一的象征和原因。如果我们关注一下加拿大的大量讲法语的人对于加拿大政治生活所产生的影响,或者多种语言的存在如何妨碍了印度联邦制的确立,我们就会开始认识到,如果没有统一的语言,我们国家的政治生活可能会出现多么大的不同啊!在一个多种语言并存的国家里,很难形成现代美国文化的许多其他特征——包括人口的地区性流动、公共教育制度、邮政编号、广播电视网、全国性报刊杂志的批量发行、“全国性广告”,以及所有这一切对于人民生活水平的影响。如果像在英国那样,一个缺乏“合乎传统教养”背景的人一开口说话就暴露出他的身份,试想这对于“从小木屋到白宫”式的美国政治



又会产生什么样的后果呢？这种大众化的不分阶级的语言为美国提供了平等的讲话方式。

The other “American” qualities of our language seem trivial beside this monumental uniformity, which can be traced back to the earliest age of English settlement. If the roots of this linguistic uniformity had not been strongly developed during the colonial period, before the numerous and motley immigrations of the 19th century, the United States might not today offer the world the paradoxical spectacle of a nation of many peoples who speak a single language. Almost from the first settlement there were pressures toward uniformity.

面对这种影响力巨大的一致性，美国语言的其他特色就显得无关紧要了。这一点可以追溯到英国移民最早定居北美的时期。如果这种语言上的一致性没有在殖民时期，在19世纪多种族的移民大量进入北美大陆之前，就深深地扎下了根，今天的美国就不可能以一个多民族组成的国家却讲着单一语言这样一种自相矛盾的面貌出现在世界上。几乎从第一批定居北美的人开始，就存在着统一语言的要求。

First, consider pronunciation. Men in areas as remote from each other as Massachusetts Bay and Virginia had brought with them the same language. They had come mostly from the same regions—London, the Midlands, and southern England—and they represented roughly the same social classes. Although the speech differences between New England and the South even today are not great enough to make them barriers to understanding, the most remote parts of the Atlantic colonies in 17th-century Amer-

ica probably did not show even these small differences. New Englanders and Southerners then spoke with something like what we now call a "Southern accent". Southern pronunciation today is thus in many respects a survival of older ways and the "English" characteristics of later New England speech are apparently innovations.

首先,看看发音。从马萨诸塞海湾殖民地到弗吉尼亚,在相距这么遥远的各个地区定居的人带来的是同一种语言。他们之中多数来自相同的地区(伦敦、英格兰中部地区和南英格兰),而且大体上属于同一个社会阶层。虽然今天新英格兰和南方口音上有点区别,但这并没有大到妨碍他们之间相互了解的程度。在17世纪,即使在大西洋沿岸各个殖民地的最边远地区这点小差别也没有表现出来。那时候,新英格兰人和南方人都讲着我们现在称之为“南方口音”的相同语言。所以今天的南方口音在许多方面还保留着旧时代的讲话方式,而新英格兰口音中所具有的“英国”特征很明显是后来创造出来的。

Once on American shores, English speech tended to become more uniform, because of some general colonial and some peculiarly American forces. "In consequence of the frequent removals of people from one part of our country to another", John Pickering in his vocabulary of Americanisms (1816) noted "greater uniformity of dialect throughout the United States... than is to be found throughout England." Even before the end of the 18th century, such students of language as the Rev. John Witherspoon, who had come from Scotland to become president of Princeton, noted this fact. "The vulgar in America speak much better than the vulgar in Great-Britain," he remarked in *The*

*Druid* (1781), "for a very obvious' reason, viz. that being much more unsettled, and moving frequently from place to place, they are not so liable to local peculiarities either in accent or phraseology. There is a greater difference in dialect between one county and another in Britain, than there is between one state and another in America." The once-isolated English regional dialects met and had to speak to one another. Recent linguistic scholars have noted this tendency toward uniformity to be a general characteristic of the speech of any colony compared to that of its mother country.

登上北美的海岸,英语就变得更加一致了。这是某些一般性的殖民地因素和某些特殊的美国因素起作用的结果。约翰·皮克林在他所著的《美国创用语辞典》(1816年出版)中提到,“因为人们经常从我国的一个地区流动到另一个地区,美国的语言比英国的语言更加一致。”18世纪,像约翰·威瑟斯庞牧师这样的语言学大师(他从苏格兰前来美国担任普林斯顿大学校长的职务)就注意到了这一事实。他在《共济会》(1781年出版)中说,“美国老百姓说英语比英国老百姓地道得多,明显的原因是这里的人居住地点不固定,经常从一个地区流动到另一个地区,因此他们无论是在发音还是在用词方面,都不那么容易受到地方色彩的影响。英国郡与郡之间的方言差别,要比美国州与州之间语言上的差别大得多。”一度相互隔绝的英国方言在美国碰到一起来了,人们又不得不相互交谈。最近,语言学家们发现,这种语言统一的倾向是北美殖民地的一个普遍的特点,其母国就没有这个特点。

America, then, in the 18th century was a melting pot, although the distinctions among the ingredients were subtler in its earliest period. In the 19th and 20th centuries such diverse ele-

ments as Irish, German, Polish, Jewish, Italian, Mexican, and Chinese were to be compounded; in the 17th and 18th centuries the immigrants came from Yorkshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, London, Kent, Hampshire, and other English counties. Anyone who looks at a map of England marked to show the places of origin of traceable 17th-century immigrants to New England and Virginia cannot fail to be impressed with their dispersion over the face of the mother-country. Although, as we have already noted, there was some tendency to concentrate (those from the Midlands in Virginia; from London and East Anglia in New England), and immigration did not yet draw heavily from the peasantry, still the earliest American colonies included men from different social classes and from many parts of the homeland.

18 世纪的美国是一个大熔炉——虽然在初创时期,各种成分的居民之间的差别甚微。19 世纪和 20 世纪,美国进一步融合了爱尔兰人、德国人、波兰人、犹太人、意大利人、墨西哥人和中国人这样一些成分完全不同的民族;17 世纪和 18 世纪,美国的移民主要来自英国的约克、诺福克、萨福克、埃塞克斯、伦敦、肯特、汉普等郡,看过 17 世纪新英格兰和弗吉尼亚英国移民的原居住地的地图的人,都会对这些来自英国许多不同地区移民这一事实留下深刻的印象。虽然正如我们已经谈到的那样,移民具有某种相对集中的倾向,如弗吉尼亚的移民主要来自英格兰的中部地区,新英格兰的移民主要来自伦敦和英格兰东部,而且当时的移民主要还不是来自农民阶层,但是,美国早期殖民地包括了来自母国的各个不同社会阶层和许多不同地区的人。

American life bred uniformity even within smaller areas, like New England itself. About seventy per cent of the traceable set-

tlers of Plymouth, Watertown, Dedham, and Groton in Massachusetts during the 17th century seem to have come from London and the Eastern counties; the remainder were widely dispersed. Most important, the ruling group did not all speak a single dialect, so could not fix any particular dialect as the language of the community. The pronunciation revealed by the spelling of the semi-literate scribes of the New England towns, who had come from many parts of England, suggests a speech remarkably uniform and remarkably near the standard speech of England.

即使是在较小的地区内,如在新英格兰,美国生活方式也培育了一致性。17世纪,马萨诸塞的普利茅斯、沃特敦、德达姆和格罗顿诸地,大约百分之二十可以追溯其来源的移民是来自伦敦和英格兰东部各郡,其余的则来自英国的四面八方。重要的是,当地的统治集团并不都说一种单一的方言,因此也就无法规定某一种方言为当地社会的通用语言。新英格兰城镇里略通文化的书写员就来自英国许多不同的地区,根据他们的拼写所发出来的字音,表明他们使用的语言具有惊人的一致性,并且非常接近英国的标准口头用语。

The same 18th-century travelers who noted the lack of dialects were impressed also by the proper and grammatical English spoken by Americans of all classes. In Virginia, the Rev. Hugh Jones observed in 1724, "the Planters, and even the Native Negroes generally talk good English without idiom or tone, and can discourse handsomely upon most common subjects." Councillor Robert Carter preferred American-trained, rather than Scotch or English tutors for his children "on account of pronunciation in the English Language". The faculty of William & Mary

College in the 18th century was especially concerned that the students learn proper pronunciation. In Philadelphia, the Scottish Lord Adam Gordon, traveling the colonies in 1764—1765, found that “the propriety of Language here surprized me much, the English tongue being spoken by all ranks, in a degree of purity and perfection, surpassing any, but the polite part of London”.

18 世纪的旅行者发现美国不存在什么方言,美国各个阶层的人都能说准确而合乎文法的英语给他们留下了深刻的印象。1724 年,休·琼斯牧师在弗吉尼亚发现“种植园的工人,甚至土生土长的黑人,都能讲一口很好的不带土语和乡音的英语,能够就日常生活问题进行交谈”。“考虑到英语的发音问题”,地方议会议员罗伯特·卡特宁愿为他的孩子请一个美国培养的家庭教师,而不愿要苏格兰的或英格兰的家庭教师。18 世纪的威廉·玛丽学院校方特别注意要求学生掌握正确的发音。在费城,苏格兰勋爵亚当·戈登于 1764 至 1765 年在各殖民地旅行之后,发现“这里的人言语得体,使我惊叹不已,不同阶层的人都讲得一口地道的英国口语,其准确和纯正的程度,超过了伦敦上流地区以外的任何地方。”

Some went so far as to say that the colonists “in general speak better English than the English do”. Even critical observers agreed. The Rev. Jonathan Boucher (1737—1804)—who had lived in the South for about fifteen years, had taught Washington’s stepson, John Parke Custis, and was a leading Loyalist in the Revolution—spent many years preparing a *Glossary of Archaic and Provincial Words*. He felt that the absence of dialect in America had actually impoverished the tongue, but he still found it “extraordinary that, in North America, there prevails not

only, I believe, the purest pronunciation of the English Tongue that is anywhere to be met with, but a perfect uniformity.”

有些人甚至说,殖民地的人“总的说来,英语讲得比英国人还要好”,就连那些最挑剔的人也无异议。乔纳森·鲍彻尔牧师(1737—1804)在南方生活了约15年,教过华盛顿之妻与前夫生的儿子约翰·帕克·柯蒂斯,也是美国独立革命时期亲英派的领导人之一。他花了数年的时间编写了一部《古体字和地方用词汇编》,认为美国没有方言实际上使语言趋于贫乏;他还发现,“在北美,不仅普遍流行任何别的地方都可以听到的最纯正的英国发音,而且还具有完美的语言上的一致性,我认为这是很独特少有的。

The state of American speech in the years just before the Revolution was summarized by William Eddis in his letter from America dated June 8, 1770:

有关独立之前那些年代里美国口语的情况,威廉·埃迪斯在他1770年6月8日发自美国的一封信中作过如下总结:

In England, almost every county is distinguished by a peculiar dialect; even different habits, and different modes of thinking, evidently discriminate inhabitants, whose local situation is not far remote; but in Maryland, and throughout adjacent provinces, it is worthy of observation, that a striking similarity of speech universally prevails; and it is strictly true, that the pronunciation of the generality of the people has an accuracy and elegance, that cannot fail of gratifying the most judicious ear.

在英国,几乎每个郡都有它自己特定的方言,甚至还存

在着不同的讲话习惯和思维方式,把相距并不太远的居民区分得清清楚楚。但值得注意的是,美国的马里兰及其周围几个殖民地,语言上却普遍存在着惊人的一致性。普通百姓发音准确优美,使最有见解的人听了也会赞叹不已,这是千真万确的事实。

The colonists are composed of adventurers, not only from every district of Great Britain and Ireland, but from almost every other European government, where the principles of liberty and commerce have operated with spirit and efficacy. Is it not, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that the English language must be greatly corrupted by such a strange intermixture of various nations? The reverse is, however, true. The language of the immediate descendants of such a promiscuous ancestry is perfectly uniform, and unadulterated; nor has it borrowed any provincial, or national accent, from its British or foreign parentage.

殖民地居民人人勇于冒险。这些人不仅来自英国和爱尔兰的每一个地区,而且也来自几乎每一个欧洲国家。在那里,盛行自由和商业交往的原则。因此,人们自然会认为来自这么多国家的人凑合在一起,英语肯定会严重讹用;但是,实际情况正好相反。祖辈的人虽然那么混杂,但他们的后代讲的语言却是非常的一致和纯正,也没有继承他们的英国的或其他外国的父辈所特有的地方或本民族的口音。

For my part, I confess myself totally at a loss to ac-



count for the apparent difference, between the colonists and persons under equal circumstances of education and fortune, resident in the mother country. This uniformity of language prevails not only on the coast, where Europeans form a considerable mass of the people, but likewise in the interior parts, where population has made but slow advances; and where opportunities seldom occur to derive any great advantages from an intercourse with intelligent strangers.

就我个人来说,我必须承认,当我看到殖民地居民和受过同样教育、拥有相等财富而仍然生活在母国的人两者之间竟存在如此明显的差别时,我真感到有些不知所措了,这种语言上的一致性不仅存在于欧洲人占相当数量的沿海地区,而且也存在于内地;在那里,人口增长缓慢,很少有机会同博学多识的陌生人交往并从中得到教益。

The resistance of the American language during the colonial period to borrowing and the invention of words shows the strength of the forces toward a uniform English speech. Wholesale assimilation of foreign words might have produced a semi-English patois, a pidgin English or a papiamentu, like those in the Caribbean or in parts of South East Asia. But this never happened. The opportunities for the mixing of French and German into English in the colonial period were so numerous that the failure of English colonials to seize them is doubly remarkable. Few words were borrowed from German before the Revolution, despite the several German-speaking communities in Pennsylv-