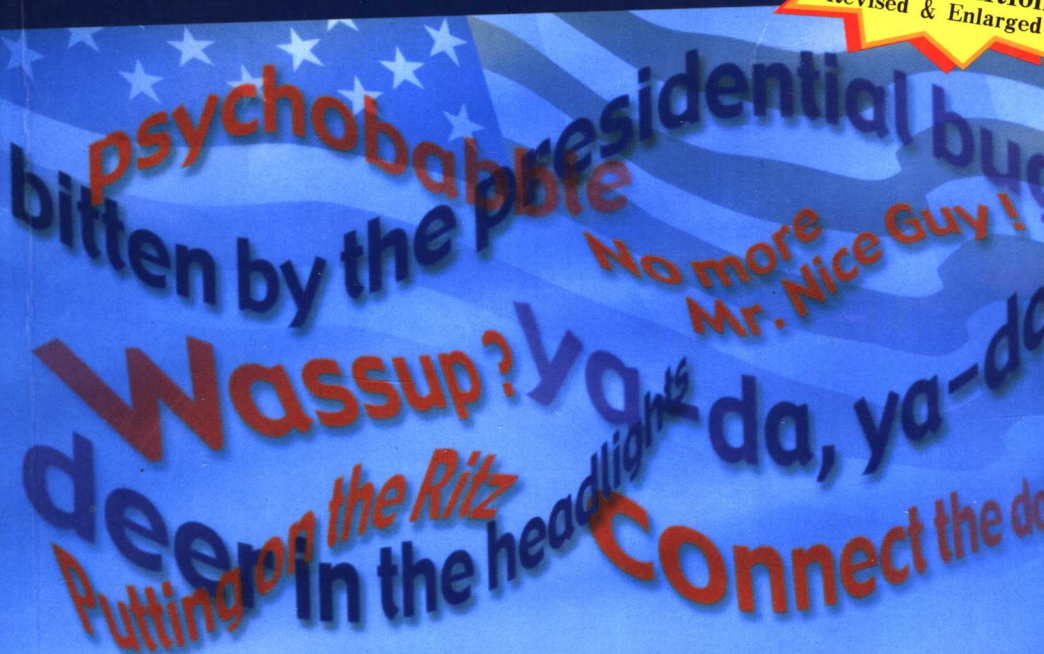


A NEW DICTIONARY OF
IDIOMATIC AMERICAN ENGLISH

最新通俗美语 词典

增订版
Second Edition
Revised & Enlarged



Edited by George Kao Irving K.Y.Kao
高克毅(乔志高) 高克永 编著



北京大学出版社
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

增订版英汉详解
最新通俗美语词典

A New Dictionary of
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*A Compendium of Popular Words and Phrases
Edited with Chinese Translation and
Notes and Comments*

By

George Kao
Irving K. Y. Kao



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

最新通俗美语词典/高克毅,高克永编著. —北京:北京大学出版社,
2006. 1

ISBN 7-301-09783-2

I. 最… II. ①高…②高… III. 英语,美国-词典 IV. H316

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2005)第 117854 号

© 香港中文大学 2004

本版限在中国大陆发行

书 名：最新通俗美语词典

著作责任者：高克毅(乔志高) 高克永 编著

责任编辑：袁玉敏 张 冰

标准书号：ISBN 7-301-09783-2/H·1557

出版发行：北京大学出版社

地 址：北京市海淀区成府路 205 号 100871

网 址：<http://cbs.pku.edu.cn>

电子邮箱：zbing@pup.pku.edu.cn

电 话：邮购部 62752015 发行部 62750672 编辑部 62767347

排 版 者：北京华伦图文制作中心

印 刷 者：北京大学印刷厂

经 销 者：新华书店

890 毫米×1240 毫米 A5 20.625 印张 670 千字

2006 年 1 月第 1 版 2006 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

定 价：42.00 元

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增订版前言

《最新通俗美语词典》1994年初版，内容是根据1992年以前搜集的资料写成的。整整十年后的今天，我们重整旗鼓来编写这本增订版。

过去十年不是一个平常的时期，它不但跨过两个世纪，而且随着电脑科技的发展及其瞬息万变的Internet(互联网)，带来了世界性的信息和文化革命。在此期间，国际战火、政治动乱连绵不绝，惨无人道的行径，在“9·11”恐怖分子袭击美国的高潮前后，随时随地不断发生。

从世界大事到日常琐闻，时代的迈进替通俗美语平添了许多新的词语，使美语较前更加全球化。增订版脱稿于2002年年底(因此没来得及包括2003年出现而可能上榜的条目，例如伊拉克战中被称为embedded的美国随军记者和从中国蔓延出来而惊恐全球的SARS)。我们吸收截稿以前所见的一些新词新语，每条冠以[新]字作为标识；同时增添一些以前未及收录的传统俗语谚语，现在还会听到见到的，作为原书的补充。

无论新词语或是旧词新用，我们推敲它的意义，帮助中文读者领略其中况味。我们利用前所未有的电脑搜寻功能，浏览许多报纸和书刊，选择适当的例句来阐明原义。可是总的来说，这一百多页参插在原书里的新资料，仍然是两个编者“耳闻目睹”的所得。英美词语专家和新闻从业人员，在他们母语运用方面对我们有很多启发。他们拥有庞大的资源和人力，相形之下，我们这个小小的操作似乎有点离奇古怪，这也正是本书与众不同之处，不只是中英对照而已。增订版按照原版的主旨，目的不仅在为中文读者出一本有用的参考书，同时希望做成一种交流中西文化的有趣的读物。因此可以说这是一本字典，但也不止于一本字典。

我们永远感激众多亲友对这项“家庭工业”的关爱和支持。特别感谢夏志清教授对词典原版细心所作的评语；再一次感谢石泰克先生热心校阅增订版原稿的匡助。他们两位的贡献使本书免掉不少讹错。至于全书尚存的任何欠缺和失误，那就要由编者负责了。

作为这种辞书的最先尝试者，我们敢于借用18世纪约翰生博士留下下来的隽语，自许是个“与人无忤的苦工”。

高克毅(乔志高)、高克永

2003年5月

于美国佛罗里达州冬园

密歇根州安娜堡

附录：

一部词典是无法紧跟着新闻走的。但在本书付梓的前夕，有三个“最新”词语似乎非提一下不可，只好在此处留一点记录，作为21世纪头10年，美国政经、社会的雪泥鸿爪：

outsourcing 外源 名词。指人力资源的外来。很多“美国制造”的消费品送到世界每一个廉价劳工的角落(包括中国)去装配、加工，以便压低成本。此一现象导致美国工人失业，引起他们强烈的反感和抗议。

w. m. d. weapons of mass destruction(毁灭性强大的武器)的缩写，包括核子与生化战争可用的武器。美国出兵伊拉克的理由之一，其有无引起国内外极大的争议。

schadenfreude 幸灾乐祸 源自德文，为一般作家和传媒人士喜用的时髦语，好比不久以前开始流行的短语 *déjà vu* [见本书 *déjà vu* 条]，已不需印斜体字。女强人玛莎·斯图尔特(Martha Stewart)被判在财务上畏罪隐藏，报道中偶见此字。

2004年4月5日

Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of this work, published in 1994, was mainly compiled and written in the years prior to 1992. Exactly ten years have gone by, now that we have summoned up the energy to attempt a second edition.

No ordinary period of time this, but a decade that straddled the turn of the century, 2000-2001, and brought forth an information and cultural revolution worldwide through computer technology with its instant Internet communication. It has been a time of continuing wars and political strifes, of acts of inhumanity before and after the “Nine-Eleven” terrorist attacks on the United States, now committed almost anywhere and at any time.

All this and the trivia of everyday life, too, have given rise to new words and phrases in the American-English idiom, a language that is more than ever global in reach. The writing and editing of this edition had been completed by the end of 2002—not in time to include would-be entries that came soon after, such as the word “embedded” applied to accredited correspondents with the American troops in the Iraq War; and the abbreviation “SARS” for the epidemic that started in China and for a while threatened many other areas in the world. We have collected a number of items current in these first years of a new era, while also treating some of the older expressions not covered in the original work that are still in use. This time around, we have benefited from the computer “search engines” in canvassing the popular press and publications for examples of usage. But, by and large, the 100-odd pages of new material, here interspersed with the original text, are the product of the eyes and ears of two individuals. In pursuing this self-appointed task for the edification of our Chinese readers, we continue to profit from the instruction of lexicographers and journalists writing in their native tongue. Against the vast resources at their command, this work must seem an oddity. It is, for that reason, a

different kind of exercise, and not just by virtue of its bilingualism. Like the original edition, this revised and updated volume aims to be not only a useful reference to a specialized audience, but also an entertaining read in comparative culture. In this sense, it is a dictionary and something more than a dictionary.

We appreciate, as always, the loving support of family and friends, without which we would not have embarked on this “cottage industry.” Special thanks go to Professor C. T. Hsia for his meticulous critique of the original edition; and once again, to Mr. Gerald Stryker for his enthusiastic reading of this edition in the manuscript. They have each contributed to the improvement of our text by pointing out sundry mistakes therein. For any sins of commission and omission that remain, the authors alone are to blame.

As the first to attempt such a lexical work, we venture to borrow the words of no less an authority than Dr. Johnson and think of ourselves as a “harmless drudge. ”

G. K. /I. K.

Winter Park, Florida
Ann Arbor, Michigan
May 2003

ADDENDUM:

No dictionary can keep up with the rapidly unfolding events of the day. However, as we go to press, there are three items that cry out for mention as reflecting America in the first decade of the 21st century in all its economic, political, and social aspects:

outsourcing Going to foreign countries (including China) for sources of cheap labor in the manufacture of American products, a source of unemployment and protest from U. S. workers.

w. m. d. Abbreviation of “weapons of mass destruction, ” one of the reasons cited for the invasion of Iraq. Whether or not there existed materials for chemical, biological, and nuclear warfare is a matter of great controversy in the U. S. and elsewhere.

schadenfreude German. Gleeful over other people’s misfortune, an exact equivalent to the Chinese 幸灾乐祸. Comparable to the French term déjà vu that became popular some years ago, it is no longer italicized in American usage. May be found in the reporting of the Martha Stewart case of cover-up of financial misdeeds.

April 5, 2004

初版序

英语——特别是美式英语——在 20 世纪后期，几乎成为全世界通用的一种语言。中国人以英语为第一外语，从教师口中或教科书、字典里学来的，是标准的英语，可是现在随时随地遇到的，往往是美国人的词汇和辞藻，因此感觉到对“美语”也需要增加了解。

整整 20 年前，1974 年，“乔志高”曾把他所撰、散见港台报章杂志、漫谈美式英语的文章，结集成书，趣曰《美语新论》，当年一篇书评，有以下几句话：

美语中俚语俗语用得之多，向来叫人吃不消，望文不能生义，字面的解释和其中的含义相差何止十万八千里。一般中国人打从初中读 ABC 起，整整十年学下来，碰到个老美，说出来的话全不是课本里读过的，也没有照书上文法说，先就傻了一半。哪怕不是和洋人“短兵相接”，看两本美国小说，也要煞费疑猜。看国外来的电影或电视片，也必须自己懂得“察言观色”……（摘自《书评书目》杂志）

今天，中国人与美国人士、美国事物的接触，日益频繁。我们编写此书，介绍通俗美语字词和语句，希望可以帮助纾解上面这段引文所形容的一些困扰。

本书与一般性的英汉字典，有几点不同：一、专门处理美国人习用的词语，不是以英语为主而附带谈及“美俚”。二、提供条目不限于单字，也包括字词、词组和短语，以至于完整的语句。条目除定义外，还加以比较详细的解说和注释，并搜集实用的例句。三、根据编者旅居美国多年的第一手经验，以个人观点和随笔体裁编写，而不是翻译现成的英语字典。

本书撷取美国人的日常用语以及大众媒体中习见的字词，按照字母顺序排列。其中有新创的词语，也有源自古老的英文成语、目前仍在美国流行的；有早已过去的字眼忽然又时兴起来、可是用法不同的，也有来自外国语文、现在变成地道美国话的。除少数例外，词条皆有摘自报章杂志、通俗传媒的例句，注明出处和日期，用以示范字词的真实用法。例句用灵活的中文翻译出来，有时跟条目上和释义里的中译不尽相同，证明美语变化多

端,非要揣摩一句话的上下文和事实情况,才能充分了解而把原意表达出来。

本书对一些词语的历史背景,凡有资料,也作适当的交代;以轻松的笔调引述有关的故事和传说,增加读者的兴趣。在可能的范围之内,我们还联想到中国成语、俗语,甚至还用“普通话”里常见的各地方言,借以衬托中美通俗语言之间的异同。

编者参考美语专家的同类书刊,加以中国人的文化背景和耳濡目染的心得,来作这本书的尝试,虽然可以说早有心理上的准备,实际搜集资料和编写的功夫不过两年多。在这期间,许多亲友不断给我们鼓励和协助;没有他们的关爱,这项艰巨的工程不会如此顺利完成。我们特别感谢老友石泰克,他以精通中英文的才学和敏锐的眼力,将全书原稿审阅一遍,并提出宝贵的意见。另一位好友麦嘉锡,把他历年来所撰《美国之音》谈俚语俗语的广播稿,拿出来供我们参照,盛意可感。

所谓通俗美语,范围广大,而且层出不穷。我们在取材、诠释,以至于翻译例句等各方面,纯以文字为取舍,别无其他作用,也无意推销美式文化。我们在致谢之余,也要申明:书中凡有讹错,文责一概自负;同时引用编纂辞书的一句老话:“挂一漏万,在所难免。”其实我们在工作过程中,不得已而割爱的词条和资料,几乎可以出一本续篇。希望读者、方家不吝赐教,将来有机会,再作补充和改进。

高克毅(乔志高)、高克永

1994年春

于美国佛罗里达州鼠咀滩

密歇根州安娜堡

Introduction

English—American English in particular—has become the closest thing to an international language in the latter half of the 20th century. To the Chinese, English is the first foreign language. What they learn from their teachers, and from studying school-books and looking up in the dictionary, is Standard English. But, more and more, they feel the need to add to this knowledge an understanding of the pervasive American vocabulary and rhetoric.

Exactly twenty years ago, in 1974, “Chiao Chih-kao” (George Kao) published his first Chinese book on Americanisms, a collection of articles that had appeared in Taiwan and Hong Kong over a dozen years previous. A book review at the time contained the following passage (translated from the Chinese):

In American English we find an abundance of idioms and slang that is overwhelming. No one can surmise the sense of a word or phrase when its literal meaning is ten thousand miles removed from its true signification. Most Chinese who started learning their ABC's in primary school, after ten years of diligent study, will still be dumbfounded when they meet up with a Yankee. The guy's talk bears no relation to what they've learned in their textbooks. Outside of personal encounter, more problems await. Reading an American novel is an exercise in guesswork, going to a Hollywood movie or sitting before an American TV program is a test of one's ability in lip-reading. . .

Today, this comment remains valid, as the Chinese people come into increasing contact with Americans and things American. In compiling this sampling of American words and phrases, we hope to contribute to the relief of the quandary so graphically described above.

The present work differs from conventional English-Chinese dictionaries in three respects: 1) It focuses on idiomatic American speech, with emphasis on current usage, as distinguished from the *larger mother tongue* common to Britons and Americans. 2) It is not confined to single

words, but includes compound expressions, phrases and whole sentences. Entries are provided with not just definitions, but also explanatory notes and comments in some detail, and copious illustrative quotations. 3) It is a personal and informal compilation, based on the Editors' long residence in the United States, plus the result of firsthand research, and not a translation of existing English dictionaries.

Entries, arranged alphabetically, are culled from everyday speech, the popular press and electronic media. These could include new coinages and turns of phrase, ancient but still very-much-alive idioms traced to their origins, familiar words given new meanings, or borrowings from various foreign sources. Examples of authentic usage are cited, with Chinese translation and annotation, to illuminate how a given word or phrase functions in context.

Our collection will show that sports and entertainment contribute importantly to the American vernacular. But we leave out jargon and specialized slang from any field—whether it is the world of science and technology, crime and drug addiction, or the esoteric and ephemeral youth culture—if they have not entered into the speech of the average American.

Another feature is the association, whenever possible, of American idioms with their Chinese counterparts. Chinese is perhaps the oldest living language in the world, spoken in various dialects by one fourth of humankind who nevertheless share a common writing and literary heritage. It is, like American English, a robust language, rich in humor and metaphors and hospitable to outside influences. Today, you are likely to read in a Chinese newspaper about *di-xian* (bottom line), *re-xian* (hot line), *tang-shou shan-yu* (hot potato) and *bing-shan-de yi-jiao* (the tip of the iceberg). One of the joys of editing this work is to come up with some time-honored Chinese phraseology, or an earthy Beijing or Shanghai slang expression, that bears an uncanny resemblance to an American buzzword or catch phrase.

Though a long time gestating, this book was actually researched and written within a period of a little more than two years, from the winter of 1991 to the spring of 1994. During this period the Gulf War was winding down, a presidential election took place in the United States, and the new administration was having some ups and downs faced with unprecedented

political, economic, and social problems. In our choice of entries, and especially with the quotations concerning current events, we were guided solely by considerations of language without regard to content. When apt quotes were hard to come by, we could not very well pass one up on the ground of the speaker's politics or for any other extraneous reasons. Nor were we, in compiling this volume, motivated by any desire to help sell American pop culture to the Chinese people.

It has been remarked that a person from a different cultural background having some proficiency in English tends to be more aware of its idiosyncrasies than do the native speakers. Be that as it may, in our own time, ever since H. L. Mencken first trumpeted the "two streams of English," and as a result of the communication explosion following World War II, Americans seemed to have awakened to the unique sound and color of their own talk. There is today a plethora of the unique sound and color of their own talk. There is today a plethora of writings by Americans about the American language, and apparently an endless fascination with it on the part of their readers.

The present Editors have benefited from the columns of many pundits and wordsmiths, not least the multi-faceted Safire and the late poet John Ciardi, who had turned his hand to making "browser's dictionaries" for his last three books. We are also indebted to lexicographers like the Funks father and son, William and Mary Morris, Stuart Berg Flexner, et al., who have edited formidable standard dictionaries and written for popular consumption as well. We summarize their findings where there is consensus, and give due credit for citations from a single authority. What we have brought to the task is an additional Chinese dimension, in fashioning a volume that is intended to be read for pleasure as well as consulted for information.

GEORGE KAO / IRVING K. Y. KAO

Boca Raton, Florida
Ann Arbor, Michigan
Spring 1994

关于本书

条目分类

本书共收词条 2000 左右;“条目”和“副目”皆用黑体字排印,以首字按照字母顺序排列。根据条目的结构,分以下五类:

一、缩写或简称。包括 abbreviation(缩写),例如:AA、BLT、DWI; acronyms(字母连缀词):MADD、NOW、snafu; blend words(混合词),亦称 portmanteau words(簪带词):gofer、druthers、wannabe; 和 clipped forms(斩头截尾词):-gate、-nik、dis、phenom、pol。

二、单词。例如:access、cockamamie、doozy、pizzazz、razzmatazz、wonk、moxie、nerd。

三、双字或复合词。包括两字或两字以上组成的字词,通常是名词与名词或形容词与名词的组合。例如:ambulance chaser、feeding frenzy、whistle-blower、safety net; cheap shot、free fall、Foggy Bottom。复合词整个用作形容词时,通常加“连字号”。例如:knee-jerk reaction、rip-off artist、holier-than-thou attitude。

四、短语或词组。例如:bring down the house、go with the flow、go bananas、hit the ground running、on a roll、up for grabs。

五、整句。包括 idioms(成语)、adages(谚语)、catch phrases(流行语)、wisecracks(俏皮话)、quotations(引文或引语)、titles(书名、戏名、歌名等)。例如:You can't eat your cake and have it too. Put your money where your mouth is. Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. You're telling me? All I know is what I read in the papers. Diamonds are a girl's best friend。

词条性质

一、词条标识。本书所收字词和语句,统称“通俗美语”(idiomatic American English)。此处 idiomatic 一字是广义的,包括口语(colloquialism)、成语(idioms)、俚语(slang),等等,多半无须细分。但为方便读者辨认起见,有些条目下用方括号标出词源、用途或词性:

[政]治	[娱]乐	[口]语	[时]髦、流行语
[经]济	[简]称	[俚]语	[混]合语
[商]业	[缩]写	[成]语	[引]语、引文
[体]育	[诙]谐	[谚]语	[犹]太(意第绪)
[文]艺	[贬]义	[过]时	[新]词、新语

这些略语,只是表示初步、主要的印象,不是严密的分类。例如 *fullcourt press* [体],源自篮球比赛的动作,但实际用途常指政治及一般行为;*kiss-and-tell* [时],是现时流行的词,其中也可标以[贬],因多半用来批评某种揭发内幕的新书。[俚]在本书中代表日常所用比较俚俗的语言,不一定是黑社会里的“说法”。[口]语中往往有俚语的成分;[成]语和[谚]语的界线不易区分。流行语、俏皮话什么时候变成老生常谈,甚至陈词滥调(cliché),词学专家也无法断定。[过]时的词语,忽然又会[时]兴起来。一般而言,我们标识[时]的条目较多,因本书特别注意近年来一些新出现的词语;至于其中有的属[政]治、有的含[贬]义等,就不重叠标识,好在一看释义自明。

二、“通俗”的含义。本书书名所谓的“通俗美语”,不限于狭义的 idioms,已如上述,而是来自“通俗文化”(popular culture)的词汇。这些词语不仅是出于一般人口,也常见诸书报、杂志、电视、广播,写在专栏作家文章里,而为其他知识分子所乐用。这里所收,并不是“引车卖浆”之言,也不是“市井小人”的粗口(street talk)。我们不录“禁语”(taboo words),并非道学先生“非礼勿言”,只是认为这些“专门性”的词语尚未渗入一般人的词汇之中。基于同一理由,我们摒除各行各业的术语和电脑及其他科技的新词,除非像有些例子一样,已通用到尽人皆知的程度,或假借来别有所指。书中的[俚],不包括青少年和大学生那些随时随地会改变的俚语。书中的[引],也不过是一些大家耳熟,但不一定能详的话,并不是有意阑入名人语录的范畴。

三、“美语”与英文。英、美同文,至今美国人说话,词汇与语法仍然以英文为“核心”,也可以说为“骨干”。但自从17世纪英国人最初殖民美洲的时代起,就产生独特的美国字词(Americanisms),用以命名新大陆的奇花异兽以及跟原居民印第安人打交道。早年就有人搜集美国人自创的词汇。1828年韦伯斯特(Noah Webster)出版他的两卷《美国英语词典》(*An American Dictionary of the English Language*),共收3.8万词条,其中包

括 5000 美国字词。有趣的是,韦氏这部美国人的英语字典,比 1928 年方才出齐的《牛津字典》(*Oxford English Dictionary*)早了整整 100 年。*OED* 自原始的主编默里(James Murray)老先生起,已广征世界各地的英语;60 年后靠电脑编纂的 20 巨册新版,大概把截至那时(1988 年)的美语都网罗无遗了。

英文字典,不管新旧、大小,是美国人或英国人编的,总是把美语视为英文的一部分。真正倡议美语和母语分歧的,要归功于 30 年代的名报人门肯(H. L. Mencken)。他未编过字典,可是“研究”(research)的精力过人,出版了《美国语言》(*The American Language*)巨著及两大本续篇,书中罗列各种“土生土长”的美国字词,堆积如山,令读者很难消化。普通美国人对自己的语言——跟任何民族对本国语言一样——没有什么研究的兴趣,只知其然而不知其所以然。直到第二次大战以后,美式文化传播全球,美国国内报章杂志才注意到这是大好题材,开始辟有谈语言的专栏,出版商也推出专论美语的一般性书籍。

本书所选词语,从例句上可以看出,全是今天美国人惯用的。但其中也有不少渊源英伦的旧词新用,尤其是关于猫儿狗儿之类的成语。例如 *beat the band* 这句话十足美国味儿,说话的人未必知道出自于从前爱尔兰的地名或人名。还有些句子早已成为美国人的常用语,考证起来却可以上溯莎士比亚,甚至于中古时代的乔叟。门肯书上说,美语早就有一个特征,喜欢吸引外来的字词。本书有这些例子:*mantra*,来自梵文;*honcho*,日文;叠字词 *hubba-hubba* 是中东盟军对日作战时留下来的痕迹。美国国会里典型的用语 *filibuster*,来源最为曲折:先是荷兰文,经过英文、法文、西班牙文,才到美国,而且原义完全改变。黑人的许多俚语,通过爵士音乐传播,是美国固有文化的一部分。至于我们标识为[犹]的意第绪语(Yiddish),是东欧犹太人脱胎于德文的语言,19 世纪末叶由大批移民带来,在纽约、洛杉矶等大都市生了根,其中有些词语非常引人发噱,在娱乐界通用,由之广为流传。

美国号称“种族的熔炉”,现在提倡尊重文化的“多样性”(diversity);在语言方面脱离不了英语,便可能将来会有更多外语掺杂,奇葩异放。

处理方式

一、“条目”与“副目”。本书正文以条目为单位。英文“词头”

(headword)之后,中文多半直译。例如:*ambulance chaser*,直译“追赶救护车的人”,下文的解释是“急于拉生意的律师”;*glass ceiling*，“玻璃天花板”,解释是“职业前途的阻碍”,并指出是女权运动用语的隐喻。往往字面上的意义和通俗话语中的用意,看似不同,一经阐释,就表出其中的关联,是合乎逻辑而且饶有趣味的。有些条目无法直译,如一字一字硬译出来,不但不知所云,而且会引人“误入歧途”。在这种情形之下,则予以意译,旨在一语道破。例如:*cut the mustard*,不作“切碎芥末”,而译“能力足够”;*hang-up*,不作“挂起来”,而译“困扰”。拟声词和人名,用音译并加引号。例如:*gobbledygook*，“高不低咯克”;*zap*，“噤”;*Rube Goldberg*，“鲁布·戈德堡”;*Walter Mitty*，“沃尔特·米蒂”。

副目的中译放在括弧内,紧接英文。副目的是与条目相关的词组或短语,因此中文多半意译。如果需要,再加解释。

条目和副目文字间或末尾,偶有与书中其他条目可以相互参照者,用方括号标出[参看某某条],以便查阅。

词典正文后附有四种“特辑”,缩写词(ABBREVIATIONS),字母连缀词(ACRONYMS),混合词(BLEND WORDS),押韵词(RHYMING WORDS)。每一特辑自成首尾,其中条目亦按字母顺序排列,条目有译文,但不一定详解。在书中另有独立条目单独处理者,则加一星号*标识。

二、词义详解。每个条目之下,首先以释义及其他方法说明字词或语句在本书范围内的意义和用法:指出是否隐喻,有无贬义,列举中文同义词,偶尔也提到相等的标准英文词汇。可能的话,我们用中文成语、俗语或方言来提高兴趣和认同。例如:*hang in there*之于“锲而不舍”;*hanky panky*之于“上下其手”。*If it ain't broke, don't fix it*.这句话令人联想到“何必多此一举”、“一动不如一静”。中英(美)文成语偶然巧合;至少字面上类似,可以帮助联想,然后看得出用法上的分歧。至于中国方言,不等近年来两岸三地的交流,有些丰富多彩的话语,早已收在普通话里面——如北方话的“帅”、“棒”;吴语的“混摸”、“写意”;粤语的“倾偈”和“炒鱿鱼”等——亦可用来帮助读者对比通俗美语,而产生亲切、生动的了解。

本书对各条目不作“语源学”(etymology)的探讨,可是凡有能够帮助了解词语来源的故事、传说或历史背景,都用简洁概括的文字交代出来,借此增加读者的兴趣。这些材料的真实性,有时连语言学家都无法肯定,我们在重述时也明白指出。