

# 英语语言 文化欣赏

—— 魅力英语

Learning *English*  
IS *Fun*

主编 邸爱英



电子科技大学出版社

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主 编 邸爱英  
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## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

英语语言文化欣赏: 魅力英语 / 邸爱英主编. —  
成都: 电子科技大学出版社, 2015.1  
ISBN 978-7-5647-2993-6

I. ①英… II. ①邸… III. ①英语—文化语言学—教材 IV. ①H31

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2015) 第 100039 号

## 内 容 简 介

本书为全英文教材, 共包括五章的内容: 第一章“语言与文化”, 阅读和讨论涉及了语言与文化的关系、语言的特点、语言的变迁、语言的哲学意义、语言与翻译、肢体语言、动物语言、网络语言、人工语言和语言消亡等话题; 第二章“英语语言与文化”, 包含英语语言历史沿革、英语语言的特点、新词的产生、世界英语等, 还有英汉语言对比。第三章“英语语言的瑰宝”, 为本教材的大雅部分, 从文学的意义展开选择英语文学中最优美的诗歌、最有力量的演讲和最被读者传颂的小说、散文和戏剧节选和片段, 使学生欣赏感受英语文学经典的魅力。第四章“英语语言修辞格”, 通过阅读、填空和翻译等练习, 聚焦使英语文字更加鲜活生动、使英语文学更加多姿多彩、使英语文学更具魅力的英语修辞格; 第五章“英语语言乐趣拾零”, 选取的语料为我们身边随处可见的通俗英语实例。

本书可以作为大学本科英语专业和非英语专业学生的教材, 也可供广大英语爱好者学习参考。

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出 版: 电子科技大学出版社(成都市一环路东一段159号电子信息产业大厦 邮编: 610051)  
策划编辑: 谢晓辉  
责任编辑: 谢晓辉 马 瑶  
主 页: [www.uestcp.com.cn](http://www.uestcp.com.cn)  
电子邮箱: [uestcp@uestcp.com.cn](mailto:uestcp@uestcp.com.cn)  
发 行: 新华书店经销  
印 刷: 煤田印务有限公司  
成品尺寸: 185mm×260mm 印张 11.25 字数 280 千字  
版 次: 2015 年 8 月第一版  
印 次: 2015 年 8 月第一次印刷  
书 号: ISBN 978-7-5647-2993-6  
定 价: 32.80 元

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# 编者的话

## 【为什么编写此书】

本书的写作源自一门在电子科技大学从 2002 年就开设的选修课。学生们在通过四级考试后还需继续大学期间的英语学习,在各种诸如托福雅思培训、六级培训、英语演讲与辩论、英美电影欣赏、职场英语等菜单中选择自己中意的课程。我们的课程名称很大,“英语语言文化欣赏”,而英文名称则更能体现课程设计的初衷: Learning English Is Fun,但因为这个名称似乎不太像正规的课程名称,因此在各种教学文件和资料中,我们一直沿用了较为宏大的名字。而正如英文名称所示,教授和学习该课程都是一个愉快的经历。虽然是选修课,还是经常出现学生需要提前占座位的“盛况”。该课程也于 2010 年被评为四川省精品课程。

然而,课程开设运行已经十余年,课程团队成员先后也有十余位,但我们一直都只是以讲义和 ppt 课件方式呈现给学生,并未编写正式出版的教材。刚开始几年大家都认为,该课教学互动性很强,内容随时在更新,讲义和 ppt 课件更加灵活。随着网络的普及,师生以讲义和 ppt 课件为线索和导引,可以在网上找到更加丰富的英语语言信息。互联网成了最方便快捷,甚至是取之不尽的资料源泉,大家对讲义成书一事就越发不上心了。

而从 2012 年开始,也就是该门课程运行十年的时候,团队老师们开始有了新的想法:既然学生对课程认可度高,我们又坚持了十年,那为什么不将十年的心血和教学实践成果固化下来,这样既是对该课程的阶段性总结,又是对未来教学的指导,而且未来我们依然可以保持课堂教学互动性和内容的灵活性。而此时学校和四川省对精品课程有了教材建设的专项支持,我们遂正式启动教材编写。

## 【编写指导思想】

本教材的编写者都是长期在大学英语教学第一线的优秀教师,我们深感近十余年中国教育对英语教学的重视,从幼儿园、小学、中学、大学到工作后的职称评定、出国进修等,英语已经成为人们终身学习的一部分,这是可喜的地方。但另一方面我们也倍感遗憾,英语语言学习功利性太强,掺杂了太多“不快乐因素”:为了考级、为了升学、为了学位证、为了职称、为了出国……学习者似乎忽略了对语言本身的欣赏与感悟,忽略了对学习语言乐趣的体验,没有认识到学会了一门语言就意味着推开了一扇文化之窗,意味着掌握了打开一个全新世界的钥匙,没有意识到语言与文化的学习与体验将使学习者的一生变得更加丰富。

鉴于此,我们将不以学习知识和训练技能为目的,而是围绕“欣赏与体验”制定课程大纲,设计教学内容,编写教材。通过阅读、讨论、翻译、填空、仿写、角色练习和课堂陈述等十余种互动性练习,帮助学生欣赏英语语言中最优美、最永恒的文字,欣赏英语语言中对英语文化和对世界文化影响最深刻、最持久的篇章,体验身边既随处可见又易被忽略的鲜活灵动的语言片段。激发学生在雅俗之间探索英语语言魅力的主动性,即所谓“知之者不如好之者,好之者不如乐之者”。

## 【教材框架】

本教材分为五章。

第一章“语言与文化”，阅读和讨论涉及语言与文化的关系、语言的特点、语言的变迁、语言的哲学意义、语言与翻译、肢体语言、动物语言、网络语言、人工语言和语言消亡等话题。

第二章“英语语言与文化”，不仅含英语语言历史沿革、英语语言的特点（包容性、扩展性和不合逻辑性）、新词的产生、世界英语等，还有英汉语言对比。通过诸多语言实例，让学生分析对比东西方文化和思维差异对英汉语言词汇、句法和篇章上的影响，对英语学习和双语翻译带来的挑战，在欣赏体验之余，增强语言比较意识，提高英语学习效率。

第三章“英语语言的瑰宝”，该章为大雅部分，从文学的意义说起，选择英语文学中最优美的诗歌、最有力量的演讲和最被读者传颂的小说、散文和戏剧节选和片段，使学生欣赏感受英语文学经典的魅力。

第四章“英语语言修辞格”，本章通过阅读、填空和翻译等练习，聚焦使英语文字更加鲜活生动、使英语文学更加多姿多彩、使英语文学更具魅力的英语修辞格，其中有文学色彩浓厚的比喻、排比、象征、对偶、象声，也有诙谐、幽默、智慧的反讽、委婉语和矛盾表达等。

第五章“英语语言乐趣拾零”，本章选取的语料为我们身边随处可见的通俗英语实例，有妙趣横生的公共场所的各种标识、警示和通知，有 T 恤衫个性语、广告语、网络个性签名、儿歌和打油诗，也有令人忍俊不禁的幽默笑话、脑筋急转弯、魔鬼词典和谜语、双关语等文字游戏。

本教材注重课堂内外的阅读与讨论相结合，阅读欣赏和批评分析相结合，语言学习和文化理解相结合，经典选段的严肃阅读与文字碎片的轻松欣赏相结合。因此编者建议，师生在使用本教材时尽量灵活，不拘泥于篇章顺序，不拘泥于教学进度。如教师能精心组织教学，通过高质量授课将教材提供内容作为一个起点、一个提纲，使学生将课内学习有效延伸至课外，探索体验更加丰富的英语语言文化世界，我们就实现了本课程和教材的目的。

编 者

2015 年 4 月

## 鸣 谢

本书的完成倾注了许多师生的心血。首先,感谢电子科技大学外国语学院的一批志同道合的中青年教师,这十二年来他们坚守在英语语言教学的第一线,坚信语言与文化密不可分,坚信对英语语言的兴趣培养与应试技能训练不仅不会冲突矛盾,还会提高学习者的学习主动性和学习效率,丰富学习者的文化体验和人文素养。因此,我们优秀的一线教师们用扎实严谨的工作,不仅使学生在大学英语四、六级考试、托福和雅思等国际测试中取得良好成绩,还渐渐学会欣赏语言,提高文化体验的意识。

其次,我们要感谢电子科大的同学们,他们对“英语语言文化欣赏”课程的支持与认同给了我们信心,也是他们每学期对课程教学的反馈使我们能不断调整补充,使本教材更加完善。感谢学校外国语学院和教务处领导给予本课程的肯定和教材编写的支持。

感谢电子科技大学出版社对教材选题的支持与肯定,相信在所有人的支持、鼓励和帮助下,这样一本不太像教材的教材、不太像读物的读物不至于淹没在浩如烟海的各类英语考试辅导和应试技巧材料当中。

《英语语言文化欣赏——魅力英语》编写小组

2015年4月

电子科技大学清水河校区

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# Chapter One

## Language and Culture

### Outline

#### I. Introduction: The Unfolding of Language

1. The most fascinating “invention”
2. The seemingly simple language
3. The origins of language

#### II. Quotes about Language

#### III. Discussions on Language and Culture

#### IV. Readings on Language and Culture

1. The relationship of language and culture
2. Language is Power
3. Translation between Languages and Cultures
4. Body Language
5. Animal Language
6. Language Learning
7. Invented languages
8. Language Death

#### V. After-class Reading Assignment: The Death of Language?



Lead-in exercise: Fill in each of the blanks with one of the words given below.

Chomsky has highlighted the main purposes of language as follows: to \_\_\_\_\_ information, \_\_\_\_\_ relationships, \_\_\_\_\_ our thoughts or \_\_\_\_\_ them, \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge and understanding, \_\_\_\_\_ our minds creatively, and \_\_\_\_\_.  
clarify    establish    exercise    express    play    pursue    transmit

## **I.** Introduction: The Unfolding of Language

*Questions on Lead-in Reading Passage:*

—Do most people feel fascinated about language or take language for granted? Why?

—Is language a human invention?

If yes, can you imagine how it was invented? How does it compare with other human inventions like the wheel, the compass or the water closet?

If not, where did language originate from?

—Why are language and culture inseparable? Or why is language an indispensable part of culture?

### **(1) The most fascinating “invention”**

“Of all mankind’s manifold creations, language must take pride of place. Other inventions—the wheel, agriculture, sliced bread—may have transformed our material existence, but the advent of language is what made us human. Compared to language, all other inventions are pale in significance, since everything we have ever achieved depends on language and originates from it. Without language, we could never have embarked on our ascent to unparalleled power over all other animals, and even over nature itself.

“But language is foremost not just because it came first. In its own right it is a tool of extraordinary sophistication, yet based on an idea of ingenious simplicity: ‘this marvelous invention of composing out of twenty-five or thirty sounds that infinite variety of expressions which, whilst having in themselves no likeness to what is in our mind, allow us to disclose to others its whole secret, and to make known to those who cannot penetrate it all that we imagine, and all the various stirrings of our soul’. This was how, in 1660, the renowned grammarians of the Port-Royal abbey near Versailles distilled the essence of language, and no one since has celebrated more eloquently the magnitude of its achievement. Even so, there is just one flaw in all these hymns of praise, for the homage to language’s unique accomplishment conceals a simple yet critical incongruity. Language is mankind’s greatest invention—except, of course, that it was never invented.

“This apparent paradox is at the core of our fascination with Language, and it holds

many of its secrets.” (Deutscher 2006:1)

## (2) The seemingly simple language

“The most extraordinary thing about language, however, is that one doesn’t have to be a Napoleon or a Newton to set its wheels in motion. The language machine allows just about everybody—from pre-modern foragers in the subtropical savannah, to post-modern philosophers in the suburban sprawls—to tie these meaningless sounds together into an infinite variety of subtle senses, and all apparently without the slightest exertion. Yet it is precisely this deceptive ease which makes language a victim of its own success, since in everyday life its triumphs are usually taken for granted. The wheels of language run so smoothly that one rarely bothers to stop and think about all the resourcefulness and expertise that must have gone into making it tick. Language conceals its art.” (Deutscher 2006:2)

## (3) The origins of language

“For as long as anyone can remember, the origins of language’s artful construction have engaged scholars’ minds and myth-makers’ imaginations. In earlier centuries, the answer to all these questions was made manifest by Scripture: like everything else in heaven and earth, language was invented, and the identity of the inventor explained its miraculous ingenuity. Language declared the glory of God, and its accomplishment showed his handiwork.

But if language was indeed divinely conceived and revealed to Adam fully formed, then how was one to account for its many less than perfect aspects? For one thing, why should mankind speak in so many different tongues, each one boasting its own formidable selection of complexities and irregularities? The Bible, of course, has an explanation event for these flaws. God quickly came to regret the tool that he had given mankind, for language had made people powerful, too powerful, and words had given them the imagination to lust for even more power. Their ambition knew no bounds, ‘and they said: go to, let us build a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven’. And so, to thwart their overweening pride, God scattered the people over the face of the earth, and confounded their languages. The messy multiplicity of languages could thus be explained as God’s punishment for human hubris.

“The story of the Tower of Babel is a remarkable evocation of the power of language, and is surely a premonition of the excesses that this power has made possible. Taken literally, however, neither invention by divine *fiat* nor dispersal as a punishment for human folly seems at all likely today. But has anyone ever come up with a more convincing explanation?” (Deutscher 2006:5)

## II. Quotes about Language

Language should never be taken for granted. As you see from the quotes below.

1. Similes and metaphors are used to explain the nature of language. Fill in each of the



blanks with a proper word.

(1) Language is the armory of the human mind, and at once contains the trophies of its \_\_\_\_\_ and the weapons of its future conquests. (Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

(2) Thought is the blossom; language the bud; action the \_\_\_\_\_ behind it. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

(3) Language is a skin: I rub my language \_\_\_\_\_ the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with desire. (Roland Barthes)

(4) Thanks to words, we have been able to rise \_\_\_\_\_ the brutes; and thanks to words, we have often sunk to the level of demons. (Aldous Huxley)

(5) If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his \_\_\_\_\_. (Nelson Mandela)

(6) Mrs. Keller: What will you try to teach her first?

Anne Sullivan: First, last, and in between, language.

Mrs. Keller: Language?

Anne Sullivan: Language is to the mind more than light is to the \_\_\_\_\_. (William Gibson)

2. Translate the following quotes into Chinese.

(1) By words the mind is winged. —Aristophanes

(2) Language is the dress of thought. —Samuel Johnson

(3) The limits of my language mean the limits of my world. —Ludwig Wittgenstein

(4) A special kind of beauty exists which is born in language, of language, and for language. —Gaston Bachelard

(5) One does not inhabit a country; one inhabits a language. That is our country, our fatherland—and no other. —E. M. Cioran

### III.

### Discussions on Language and Culture

1. Read the following passages and summarize the fundamental features of language.

(1) “Change is legitimate and inevitable, for our language is a mighty river, picking up silt and flotsam here and discarding it there, but growing ever wider and richer.” —Robert MacNeil (Lederer, 2010:228)

(2) “Language is the Rubicon that divides man from beast”, declared the philologist Max Muller. The boundary between human and animal—between the most primitive savage and the highest ape—is the language line. In some tribes in Africa, a baby is called a *kuntu*, a “thing”, not yet a *muntu*, a “person”. It is only through the gift of language that the child

acquires reason, the complexity of thought that sets him or her apart from the other creatures who share this planet. The birth of language is the dawn of humanity; in our beginning was the word. We have always been endowed with language because before we had words, we were not human beings. (Lederer, 2010:3)

(3) Is there a necessary or natural relationship between a word and the object or concept it represents? Alan Wilson Watts has a famous quote: “The menu is not the meal.” What does the author want to say? Compare this quote with Shakespeare’s “Rose, by any other name, would smell just as sweet.”

(4) Language ... has created the word “loneliness” to express the pain of being alone. And it has created the word “solitude” to express the glory of being alone. Give some other examples to show that words that seem to have similar meanings may have different implications and shades of differences. Here are two groups of words:

slim-slender-skinny

academic-scholarly-erudite-learned-studious-pedantic-bookish

(5) Although language enables people to understand each other, language can also be a source of misunderstandings. Give examples to illustrate how language sometimes prevents people from understanding each other. Read the following conversations and answer the questions.

Conversation 1:

A. Do you have a watch?    B. Yes, I do.

Question: What does A want to know?

Conversation 2:

A. 我喜欢你，做我女朋友好么？

B. 我觉得我们都还年轻，应该把精力用在学习上。

Question: What does B imply?

Conversation 3:

A. Mr. Smithson, why did I only get a C for this paper?

B. I’m afraid that this paper of yours is a little short of originality.

Question: What is the real problem of A’s paper?

(6) Joseph Roux said, “We call that person who has lost his father, an orphan; and a widower that man who has lost his wife. But that man who has known the immense unhappiness of losing a friend, by what name do we call him? Here every language is silent and holds its peace in impotence.” Jodi Picoult in *My Sister’s Keeper* also sighed, “In the English language there are orphans and widows, but there is no word for the parents who lose a child.”

Does this phenomenon also exist in the Chinese language? We have words such as 孤儿、



寡妇、鳏夫, is there a Chinese word to denote parents who have lost their children? How do we describe these people? Yes, we have to turn to a phrase or sometimes a sentence like “中年丧子、白发人送黑发人” to describe them. The lack of a word to describe something indeed tells a tale, a cultural tale to be more precise. Is there an equivalent word to 师母 in Chinese, that is a word for “the husband of our teacher”? And what does the lack of English equivalents of “连桥、连襟、老挑、婶婶、姑妈、妯娌” imply?

2. Fill in the blanks with one of the words given below to complete the statements about the features of language.

arbitrary                  communication                  creative                  displacement  
intentional              rule-governed                  symbols

	Statements about the features of language	Descriptions
1	Language is a form of _____.	Language allows for an exchange of information.
2	Language is _____.	Unlike when we yawn or sneeze, we want to communicate when we speak.
3	Language uses meaningful _____ to communicate.	Words and other signs are used in our communication.
4	These symbols are _____.	There is not a natural and logical relationship between a word and the object it represents.
5	Language is _____.	We cannot speak in whatever way we like. We have to follow certain rules, for example, syntax. But the rules are also subject to change.
6	Language is _____.	What should we do when we want to talk about brand new ideas and name new objects (new inventions)? We make up new words and brand new sentences.
7	Language has _____.	Language can transcend time and place: we cannot only describe things in front of us, but also speak about things in the past or about abstract ideas.

## IV. Readings on Language and Culture

### Passage 1. The relationship of language and culture

#### Questions:

- (1) According to Kramsch, how is language bound up with culture in communication?
- (2) How do you translate the three italic sentences?

(3) What are the media through which people communicate with each other?

(4) Why does the author say that language is also a symbol of social identity?

“Language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways.

To begin with, the words people utter refer to common experience. They express facts, ideas or events that are communicable because they refer to a stock of knowledge about the world that other people share. Words also reflect their authors’ attitudes and beliefs, their points of view, that are also those of others. In both cases, *language expresses cultural reality*.

But members of a community or social group do not only express experience; they also create experience through language. They give meaning to it through the medium they choose to communicate with one another, for example, speaking on the telephone or face-to-face, writing a letter or sending an e-mail message, reading the newspaper or interpreting a graph or a chart. The way in which people use the spoken, written, or visual medium itself creates meanings that are understandable to the group they belong to, for example, through a speaker’s tone of voice, accent, conversational style, gestures and facial expressions. Through all its verbal and non-verbal aspects, *language embodies cultural reality*.

Finally, language is a system of signs that is seen as having itself a cultural value. Speakers identify themselves and others through their use of language; they view their language as a symbol of their social identity. The prohibition of its use is often perceived by its speakers as a rejection of their social group and their culture. Thus we can say that *language symbolizes cultural reality*. (Kramsch 1998:3)

## Passage 2. Language is Power

As Chomsky has said, “Questions of language are basically questions of power.” Language is a potent instrument for promoting notions of togetherness and of discord. There’s an old joke that a language is ‘a dialect with an army and a navy’, which spread and defend it. It makes more sense to say that a language is a system of signs, where there is a standard way of writing those signs, and that it is promoted through formal education and government endorsement. Any definition of language will meet with objections in some quarters, but it would be hard to come up with a useful definition that did not convey—even if only implicitly—the idea summed up in the now rather hackneyed maxim ‘Language is power’. Power involves relationships, and those relationships tend to be unequal; they subsume loyalties, responsibilities, traditions and systems of control.

## Passage 3. Translation between Languages and Cultures

### Questions:

(1) What does Willis Goth Regier mean when he says, “ ‘Seize the day’ drains dignity from ‘Carpe diem’?” (Willis Goth Regier, *Quotology*, 2010.) How do you compare these two



with Chinese 只争朝夕?

(2) What role does translation play in the interaction and communications between languages and cultures?

(3) What is gained and what is lost in translation?

(4) What are the criteria of good translation?

(5) What factors will affect a translator's work?

(6) What does cultural translation mean? Why is cultural translation difficult?

"The person who will have to play a major role in regulating the pendulum between global and local communication is the translator ... Translators build bridges not only between languages but also between the differences of two cultures. We have established that each language is a way of seeing and reflecting the delicate nuances of cultural perceptions, and it is the translator who not only reconstructs the equivalencies of words across linguistic boundaries but also reflects and transplants the emotional vibrations of another culture." (Lefevere 1992:131)

Here is Nagesh Rao's description of a translator:

I am a door...

I am caught between two rooms

swinging from one to another.

grasping moments as the wind

sways me from the first to the next.

living loving, caressing life in each

taking a little from one

and giving to the other, and back.

...

Between these two worlds

I am happy, confused, angry

And in pain – all at the same time.

For I am a door caught between two rooms:

I see and feel both of them

But I don't seem to belong to either.

("Cultural Identity: Issues of Belonging" in Larry A. Samovar, Richard Porter and Edwin McDaniel, *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, Thomson Wadsworth, 2006)

#### Passage 4. Body Language

Body language belongs to a broader concept of nonverbal communication, which is believed to represent two-thirds of all communication.

Body language is a means of transmitting information through body posture, gestures,



facial expressions, and eye movements, and etc. And nonverbal communication may also include the use of voice (the tone, timbre and volume), touch, distance, body adornment (clothes, jewelry, hairstyle and tattoos) and physical environments/appearance and etc.

*Questions:*

- Why do people say that your body speaks louder than your words?
- What kinds of body language do you know about? List the body language signs and postures.
- Is body language intentional and unintentional?
- Can body language affect our attitude and impression of a person?
- Does body language have cultural differences?
- Do men and women have different body language features?
- What is the relationship between verbal and nonverbal language?
- Why is face to face communication still important in the age of the computer and the mobile internet when we rely so much on text messages, emails, telephones and video conferencing and etc.?

This following passage describes the event that triggers the study of body language.

### **A Little History**

Where did the study of body language begin? Strangely enough, it can actually be pin-pointed to a specific time and place. The year was 1960. Vice President Nixon and John F. Kennedy were in the first televised presidential debate.

In 1960 only about half of the American households owned a television which made the opinions after debate even more interesting, as you are about to find out.

Kennedy was advised to wear make-up, as was Nixon. Kennedy wore make-up and looked healthy and vibrant, yet Nixon refused to wear make-up as it seemed unnatural. As it turned out, many viewers thought Nixon looked older and unhealthy. At this point the advantage goes to Kennedy.

During the debate both men were very well spoken. Kennedy held excellent posture and poise while Nixon's demeanor seemed a little less convincing. Nixon leaned on the podium and his eyes wandered—especially when Kennedy was speaking, as he didn't think the cameras were focused on him. Nixon even wiped perspiration from his face with a handkerchief. It may have been due to the heat from the studio lights, but visually, he appeared anxious.

When Americans were polled after the debate some interesting facts came in. Those who watched the debate on television thought that Kennedy won the debate by a large margin, yet