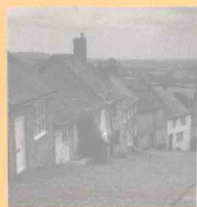
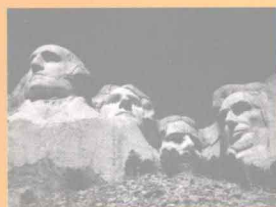


语言文化系列丛书

A Perspective of Language from Culture

文化视角下的语言

总主编 李庆明
副总主编 尹丕安 贾立平



主编 席西利



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【内容简介】 本书共分 15 章,论述了英汉语言之间的差异,并分析了其文化渊源。本书的主要内容涉及词汇(词类和词义)、句法(语法和句子结构)、语篇(衔接和结构)、语体以及成语、谚语、委婉语、禁忌语、敬辞、谦辞、日常用语等。

本书的特点在于从中、西方文化差异的角度,对比分析了英汉语言的不同特点和使用规律,有助于读者在学习英语的过程中进一步了解中、西方文化,避免母语文化对英语学习产生负面影响,以便更全面、更准确的掌握和使用英语。

本书可以作为大专院校跨文化交际课程教材,也可供留学生、研究生以及各类涉外工作人员学习使用。

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总 序

教育现代化飞速发展和经济全球化进程的不断加快对教育,尤其是高等教育的发展提出了更新更高的要求,社会的激烈竞争,要求当代大学生学会如何快速运用自身知识能力以期达到适应社会竞争的目的。在信息化快速发展的时代中,中西文化、政治、经济交流日益密切,提高当代大学生的核心竞争力,发挥语言在各项交流中的桥梁枢纽作用,从而适应我国经济社会的快速发展对高素质人才需求的迫切要求,这也是广大从事英语教育和研究的工作者不得不重视并且应加以解决的实际问题。

面对这样的挑战和要求,我们对大学英语教育进行了全方位的调研和思考,发现传统的大学教材由于受到传统的理念和体制的限制,存在着种种的不足和局限性,导致学生在面对实际知识应用和综合知识素养培养方面都面临着很大的困难与障碍。面对这样的现状和教育现状背景,我们编写了这套符合当代大学生实际学习情况的语言文化系列教材,以此抛砖引玉,达到尽快改善当今英语教育的不足和误区,提高大学英语教学质量的目的。

本系列教材包括《英美文化与电影》、《新闻英语》、《学术英语写作》、《英美历史上四十个重大事件》、《文化视角下的语言》、《英美文化导读》、《英语美文鉴赏》、《现代英语口语与演讲》、《多元文化范式导入》及《从针灸到十二生肖——中国文化的26个主题》。

在“拓宽视野,培养能力,提高素质”的指导方针下,本系列教材以介绍英美文化为背景,培养人文素质为宗旨,达到英语的合理应用能力的提高为目的,涵盖面广泛,内容翔实,重点突出。不仅从英语国家的历史、政治、经济、社会等诸多方面加以阐述和讲解,并且从跨文化交际的视角下与中国的传统文化和现状进行对比。同时更加注重对听、说、读、写、译等英语实际技能的培养和强调,从不同角度体现了语言应用和文化理解并重的概念,总的来看,本套系列教材具有以下几个鲜明的特点:

涵盖面广:

本系列教材内容涵盖文化、历史、文学、语言、新闻等方方面面,方便大专院校的本专科学生、硕士生和博士生以及英语爱好者更好地了解和掌握英语语言文化知识,更有效率地进行跨文化交际。

选材合理:

本系列教材以教育部颁发的《大学英语课程教学要求》为指导,目的是为各个高校合理设置和规划其所开设的课程,教材难度适中、选材广泛、内容新颖、符合实际、语言灵活,非常适合在校大学生的学习。

设计系统：

本系列教材所包含的全部教材可视作为一个有机整合的集合体，所包含内容互为补充，相辅相成，既可作为选修课教材单独使用，也可作为参考资料互相借鉴弥补。

实用性强：

本系列教材的编写者都是参与实际教学多年的一线高校教师，拥有丰富的课堂教学经验，每一位编者都力求将实用性放在首位，兼顾理论和实际的结合。编写内容丰富，形式多样，以易学、易用为目的，优先考虑学生的学习主导地位，努力实现教师的讲授达到举一反三，学生达到能学会用的最佳效果。

本系列教材在编写过程中，得到了相关外语教学机构和同仁的帮助和支持，对此我们表示最衷心的感谢。

李庆明

2011年5月



前言

语言之于文化,正如天气之于气候、行为之于思想或大脑。天气受气候环境制约,人的行为受思想或大脑支配,语言离不开其所处的文化而存在。学习一门语言,尤其是外语,不了解其所处的文化背景,诸如宗教信仰、价值观念、思维模式、行为规范、风俗、习惯等,即使记诵大量的好词佳句及语法规则,也不能真正学好该语言,不能恰当、得体地使用已经拥有的语言素材。

在英语学习中,人们对英汉语言差异司空见惯,习以为常,但对造成这些差异的内在的、根本的因素却不甚了解,也没有刻意去了解。这也许是很多人学习英语多年,却依然不能自如运用英语的一个重要原因。本书试图帮助读者解决这一问题,剖析那些深刻而有趣因素,即语言、文化与思维间不可剥离的关系、中西思维模式、宗教信仰、价值观、地域特征等差异所导致的英汉语言在词法、句法、语篇、语体、成语、谚语、委婉语、禁忌语、敬辞、谦辞、日常用语、称谓等维度的差异。希望并相信本书能够使读者有拨云见日、豁然开朗之感,更能深入了解英汉语言使用特点和规律及其蕴涵折射的文化,消除汉语思维模式对英语学习所产生的负面影响,提高使用英语的能力。

本书由席西利担任主编,负责本书大纲的制定、内容的修改以及文字的加工和润色等工作。具体编写分工如下:第1,5章由成芳霞编写;第2章由李莎编写;第3,8章由王冕编写;第4,10章由武小丹编写;第6,15章由崔小清编写;第7章由石捷编写;第9,11,12章由张萍编写;第13,14章由莫文莉编写。

在本书的编写过程中,参考、引用了国内外许多专家学者的相关研究成果,受益匪浅,在此谨表示衷心的感谢。

由于时间仓促,水平有限,书中不足之处在所难免,诚望专家、同行及读者不吝赐教,给予批评和指正。

编者

2011年2月



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Unit 1

Language, Culture and Thought

Language is an integral part of human life. But what is language? What is the nature of language? What about the role of language in a given culture and the impact of culture upon a given language? How can language help find out the work of brain?

Language, culture and thought are inter-related and interact, influencing and shaping one another, though each is an independent system. Therefore, it is not enough to study a language just as a subject if a thorough and deep understanding of language is wanted. Rather, the study should be set in a framework formed by language, culture and thought so as to learn the complicated relation between the three and nature of language.

1.1 Language

1.1.1 Definition of language

What is language? What are the features of language? Many philosophers, linguists and historians have offered different answers to the questions and different definitions of language in accordance with their emphasis on the different aspects of language. No matter how different their views are, “many linguists have agreed to accept the view that language is a system of symbols designed for the purpose of human communication.” “Language is a means of verbal communication,” as is said by Dai Weidong.

Both definitions emphasize the most important fact that language is used to communicate purposefully, by speaking or writing, expressing ideas and emotions. Communication is the fundamental function of language. Human society wouldn't operate normally without language as a medium of communication.

Language is verbal since it is a system of vocal sounds to which meaning is attributed. Spoken language is prior to written language. It is a set of symbols used for the transmission of information.

There is no necessary relationship between the symbol and meaning. The relationship is

arbitrary, onomatopoeic words and compounds being exceptions.

1.1.2 Nature of language

Language here refers only to natural human language. It doesn't include animal "languages" or any artificial language that mathematicians, logicians and computer scientists use. Bees and birds also communicate by some systems of symbols such as dancing or singing, but what they use is not language. So language is essential to human beings. The possession of language is what most clearly distinguishes man from other animals, and human language is far more sophisticated than any animal communication system.

Human language is rule-(or principle-) governed. Every known language has systematic rules governing pronunciation, word formation and grammatical construction. The way in which meanings are associated with phrases of a language is characterized by regular rules. The use of language to communicate is governed by rules, and even the so-called casual speech is governed by systematic regularities in rules. Here the terms "rule" and "rule-governed" are used in the special way that linguists use them. Rules of this sort are called descriptive rules, rules that describe the actual language of some group of speakers and not some hypothetical language that speakers should use.

All languages change slowly over time in the sound, syntactic, semantic system. The changes in language and language use are the result of a natural and continuous process.

Language exists only in human society and is a product of society, growing, developing or dying with the growth, development or disappearance of a society. When there is no society, there can be no language.

1.2 Language and Culture

Language and culture have been closely inter-related through their history and develop together.

1.2.1 Culture

What is culture?

In its broad sense, culture can be defined as "attribute of man", including whatever distinguishes human beings from animals and nature. It is also called large C Culture, taking culture as attributes or characteristics of man as contrasted with those of animals and nature.

In large C Culture, there are six components of culture: material, social institutions and

organizations, science and technology, language and other communicational systems; customs and behavioural patterns, value systems, national traits, aesthetic standards and thinking patterns. They summarize attributes or characteristics of man, which animals or nature can never have.

In its narrow sense, culture means the total way of life of a people. It refers to the pattern of customs, traditions, social habits, values, beliefs and language of a society as contrasted with way of life of other peoples, emphasizing the differences between different groups of people. Culture in this sense is known as small C Culture, taking a given culture as contrast to other cultures.

It has been accepted that culture is acquired, not inherited, by man as a member of a society. It is a complicated system including knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, custom and other capacities and habits. Natural science is excluded for it has become the common wealth of mankind across boundaries between countries.

Culture permeates every aspect of human life, conditioning and determining people's behaviour, including linguistic behaviour.

With regard to the existing form of culture, we can have two types of culture, material and spiritual.

Material culture is concrete, substantial and observable. A small part of spiritual culture, the product of the mind, such as works of philosophy, history and literature, is tangible, and most spiritual culture, including ideologies, beliefs, values and concepts of time and space, is indiscernible, that is, implicit, hidden and abstract.

1.2.2 Properties of Culture

- 1) Culture is something owned by man exclusively, i. e. only human beings have what is called culture.
- 2) Culture is social, a product of cooperative human societies.
- 3) Culture is national, each nation living in its own geographical and historical framework where a unique culture is established and developed.
- 4) Culture is historical, transmitted from generation to generation.
- 5) Culture is changing, due to the emergence of new material, new ideas and new knowledge and the coming of foreign culture.

1.2.3 The Relationship between Language and Culture

The relationship between language and culture is rather complex, each influencing and

shaping the other.

Language is the major means by which a culture transmits its beliefs, values, and norms.

Language is part of culture, and at the same time, the carrier and container of culture. It can describe human knowledge and experiences, analyze a people's custom and behavioural pattern and comment social institutions, values, beliefs, world outlooks and arts such as paintings, sculpture, dance, music and etc. Even culture itself is discussed in language.

Language is influenced and shaped by culture, especially by the geographical environment and tradition of a culture.

Culture is also influenced by language. If a language can easily present some ideas or concepts, it can stress them, draw attention to them and thus reinforce them.

Culture is a wider system that includes language as a subsystem, and so the relation of language to culture is that of part to whole.

1.3 Language and Thought

1.3.1 Thought

Thought is the function and product of human brain which records and manufactures various experiences and form ideas. It is a social product and part of culture, referring to patterns of ideas and characteristics of a group of people.

1.3.2 The Relationship between Language and Thought

Language is used to express man's thought, serving as the instrument in the communication of man's thought.

Language helps thinking and is the medium of thinking. Much of human thinking is interfered by language.

Language is influenced and shaped by thought. It is used to express thought, and so its structure and function reflect the thought.

Thought is, on the contrary, decisively influenced and shaped by language. For instance, ads, public speeches, newspapers, etc. are aimed at influencing people's thought. Words can influence people's life, and numerical words can influence mathematical thinking.

In short, language, culture and thought interact and interplay, influencing and shaping

one another. They are seen as three parts of a whole, interdependent and mixed.

Reflections and Practice

- (1) What is language?
- (2) What is culture?
- (3) What about the relation between language and culture?
- (4) What is thought?
- (5) What is the relation between language and thought?



Unit 2

Thought Patterns

Different cultures have different thought patterns. What is considered logical and reasonable in one culture may be illogical and unreasonable in another one. Thought patterns affect the way people communicate. Pribram holds that there are four patterns of thinking in the world: universalistic reasoning, nominalistic hypothetical reasoning, intuitionistic reasoning, and dialectical reasoning. The universalistic reasoning is prevalent in France, Mediterranean countries and Latin America. People in these cultures think that concepts are a component of the real world and have faith in these concepts. The nominalistic or hypothetical reasoning puts great emphasis on induction and empiricism. Anglo-Saxon countries belong to this group. People believe that they can discover truth through knowledge. The intuitionistic or reasoning is dominant in Germany and Slavic Central European countries. It has the characteristic of both universalistic reasoning and nominalistic reasoning. It assumes that there are no innate ideas, but “we are able to attribute knowledge to the general truth.” The dialectical reasoning “dictates that the explanations for all phenomenon and events must follow the evolutionary process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.”

Generally speaking, the predominant thought patterns in individualistic cultures are logical, analytical and linear, while collectivist cultures are characterized by relational, holistic and intuitive thought patterns. To be specific, individualistic thinking is “the effort to make a coherent and verifiable ‘world construct’, and to impose man’s will on nature and society.” Individualistic cultures view the world in terms of dichotomies. That is to say, people in individualistic cultures are likely to regard things or people as good/evil, right/wrong, true/false, and beautiful/ugly.

The following is the comment by Steward:

For Americans, the world is composed of facts—not ideas. Their process of thinking is generally inductive, beginning with facts and then proceeding to ideas. But the movement from the concrete to the more abstract is seldom a complete success, for Americans have a recurrent need to reaffirm their theories and ...

their ideas require validation by application and by becoming institutionalized.

On the other hand, collectivist people tend to think in terms of unity—the relation between the inner and outer conditions, and do not break a topic down into smaller parts. Okabe compares Japanese logic and U. S. logic as follows:

American logic and rhetoric value *step by step* or *chain-like* organization, as frequently observed in the problem-solution pattern or in the cause-to-effect or effect-to-cause pattern of organization... By contrast, Japanese logic and rhetoric emphasize the importance of a *dotted*, *point-like* method of structuring a discourse. No sense of rigidity... is required in the Japanese-speaking society, where there is instead a sense of leisurely throwing a ball back and forth and carefully observing each other's response.

Chinese culture and English culture have many differences in thought patterns. Chinese thinking is figurative, synthetic and circular, whereas English thinking is logical, analytical and linear.

There are lots of discussions about the causes of different thought patterns, of which history and language are the most important. American pragmatism has a lot to do with the immigration. The old immigrants came to the new world for freedom and to get rid of all the restrictions. A totally new world meant a number of unexpected and they had to be pragmatic to solve them all.

Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf are the first to put forward the idea that language influences thinking. As Nanda indicates, language would seem to have a major impact on the way an individual perceives and conceptualizes the world. For example, we have lots of terms to identify different relatives in Chinese, whereas in English they use one label to describe groups of relatives.

2.1 Figurative Thinking vs Logical Thinking

Chinese people tend to express abstract ideas through feelings and senses and make use of imagination to convey ideas and concepts. On the contrary, people from English speaking countries value abstract ideas, using logical analysis to understand the world.

Once, a Chinese teacher asked her Chinese-learning student, who had no idea of Chinese at all, to distinguish Chinese characters 哭, 笑, 雨. But amazingly, she made all the guesses right. When asked why, the student said: "It is easy because the Chinese characters speak for themselves." In other words, the student made all the judgments only on the

formations of the Chinese words.

Pictograph may also be used to explain the reason why Chinese people are said to have the tendency to think figuratively. Many Chinese characters originate from pictures and drawings, and even today, it is not hard to find such characters as 山, 哭, 笑, 日, 凹, 凸。

There are a great amount of classifiers in Chinese, but in English, great attention is paid to the object and its quantity. For example, in Chinese, we have 一匹马, 一面镜子, 一口钟, the English equivalents of which are a horse, a mirror and a bell respectively. The classifiers 匹, 面, 口 show the figurative thinking pattern in Chinese, which makes the Chinese language flexible and colorful.

It is not uncommon to find a lot of rhetoric in the Chinese literature. For instance, in the poem 关关雎鸠, 在河之洲, 窈窕淑女, 君子好逑, analogy is applied. If we look at the following advertisement, it is not surprising to find that there are lots of rhetoric in Chinese.

中华大地, 江河纵横; 华夏文化, 源远流长……(然后才讲到本地, 再讲到龙舟节)
轻快的龙舟如银河流星, 瑰丽的海船似海市蜃楼, 两岸那金碧辉煌的彩楼连成一片水晶宫, 是仙境? 是梦境? 仰视彩鸽翩飞, 低眸漂灯流霓, 焰火怒放火树银花, 灯舞回转千姿百态, 气垫船腾起一江春潮, 射击手点破满天彩球, 跳伞健儿绽空中花蕾, 抢鸭勇士谱水上凯歌……啊, XX 城是不夜城, 龙舟会是群英会!

2.2 Synthetic Thinking vs Analytical Thinking

Synthetic thinking refers to the mental process of combining all the parts of the object together and analytic thinking is the process of dividing the whole into parts and viewing each part separately. As a matter of fact, if we only do the synthesis, then we cannot grasp the true nature of the matter.

Traditional Chinese painting is a good example to illustrate Chinese synthetic thinking. The arts of poetry and calligraphy are included in traditional Chinese paintings. However, in western paintings, the painters sign their names at most and their paintings are not a combination of several arts such as calligraphy.

Language serves as the best reflection of both synthetic thinking and analytical thinking. The attribute is placed before the word it modifies most of the time in Chinese, but it is located after the word modified in English. The attribute is placed at the beginning of the sentence in Chinese because it is too long. If it is located somewhere else, the readers will wonder what the attribute is and may get lost. It is appropriate for the attribute to be placed after the object in English because the object is already there and the reader or listener can

catch the speaker. For example:

- (1) a job easy to do
容易做的工作
- (2) the girl washing the clothes
在洗衣服的女孩
- (3) something to happen
即将发生的事情
- (4) Are you interested in the book I lent you last week?
你对我上周借给你的书感兴趣吗?
- (5) China is a country whose history goes back thousands of years.
中国是一个历史可以追溯到几千年前的国家。

2.3 Circular Thinking vs Linear Thinking

Chinese way of thinking is circular, the background knowledge or reason always coming first. However, an English speaker would begin his/her discourse with a brief introduction to the main points and then provide the arguments to support the main points. It is called westerners' linear thinking.

Ron Scollon and Suzanne Wong Scollon describe the differences between circular thinking and linear thinking in the following:

1) Because of Y (topic, background, or reasons), X (comment, main point, or actions suggested).

2) X (comment, main point, or actions suggested) because of Y (topic, background, or reasons).

And they give two examples to support their arguments:

Because most of our production is done in China now, and uh, it's not really certain how the government will react in the run-up to 1997, and since I think a certain amount of caution in committing to TV advertisement is necessary because of the expense. So, I suggest that we delay making our decision until after Legco makes its decision.

I suggest that we delay making our decision until after Legco makes its decision. That's because I think a certain amount of caution in committing to TV advertisement is necessary because of the expense. In addition to that, most of our production is done in China now, and it's not really certain how the government