

当代交际流行英语

——典型美国会话392例

(美)林E·亨利克森 (中)刘希彦 合著

吉林教育出版社

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刖

言

当今中国，英语学习盛行，孜孜不倦者不计其数。然而遗憾的是他们从书本上学来的英语不但呆板，而且陈旧，听起来很不自然。当与他们与操英语的人交际时，经常遇到困难。他们讲英语，就象是在背书，而听英语时，则无法弄懂一些非常流行的表达方式。

为了帮助中国学生克服这些困难，我们编写了这本《当代交际流行英语》(Popular English for Modern Communication)。本书向您展示了当今美国现实生活中所流行的的大众语言。学习并掌握本书会话中的用语将特别有助于开发中国学生的会话能力，并能为他们未来的交际工作打下坚实的基础。

书中例话源于真实生活中谈话、电视节目、流行书刊中的对话。搜集资料工作是在美国进行的，共用了一年多时间。然后对全部资料进行分类、编辑。最后由英语为母语的美国教师对书中会话进行核对、再核对，看其是否地道、自然、逼真，直至满意。因此，本书会话中的语言真正代表了当今美国现实生活中的流行用语。

本书可作为大专院校英语会话课教材（包括英语专业和非英语专业），也可作为中、高级英语培训班口语课教材。本书对高中生及其他有一定基础的英语爱好者也很适用，可使他们一开始就学习地道美国英语。

在每个单元的开始，都对该单元所涉及的语言和文化背景知识作了较全面的介绍和讲解。当然了，每个单元最重要的部分莫过于那些长短相宜的会话了，有三、五句长的微型会话 (Mini-Conversation)，有十句、八句长的会话 (Conversation)，还有较长的展开会话 (Extended Conversation)，全部会话都是在特定的情景中展开。由于采用了地道的大众化语言，在情景的烘托下，每个会话都显得那么自然、逼真、有立体感。

对于同一种事物或行为可用几种方法表达。在此种情况下，我们将其他表达方式置于方括号内。对于那些具有选择性的词、表达法和指示性的话语，则置于圆括号内。

在每个单元的结尾，都对该单元所出现的语言点和特殊的文化背景知识进行了注释。学生和老师都会发觉这些注释是非常有用的，并从中得到启发。

本书是中、美两国有关学校和个人友好合作的结果。我们对曾给予我们大力支持的吉林大学、夏威夷杨伯翰大学及波利尼西亚文化中心的管理人员致以衷心的感谢！我们特别感谢夏威夷杨伯翰大学奥尔顿·威德校长和吉林大学伍卓群校长，是他们的远见卓识和良好愿望才使两校交流项目得以实施！

为了方便读者，本书配有两盘磁带。

著 者

1990年4月

Preface

The English language is very popular in modern-day China. Millions of students are diligently trying to master it. Unfortunately, the English they learn from their textbooks is often old fashioned and stilted. When they try to use the English they have studied, it does not sound natural.

When these students try to communicate with English speakers, they often have problems. When they speak, they sound like books instead of people. When they listen, they can not understand many of the expressions English speakers use.

This book, *Popular English for Modern Communication*, is designed to help Chinese students overcome these problems. It presents the English language as it is actually spoken in the United States today. Students who master the language contained in its sample conversations will be much better prepared to communicate with English speakers.

The conversations in the book are based on speech samples taken from real-life conversations, television programs, and popular books. These samples were gathered in the United States over a period of one year. They were categorized, compiled, and then checked (and double-checked) for naturalness by native-speaker teachers of English. The result is an authentic representation of English as it is spoken by Americans today.

Popular English for Modern Communication may be used as a textbook in English classes at the university level (for both English majors and non-English majors). High-level students in middle-school will benefit from this book also, as they learn natural, authentic English from the beginning.

At the beginning of every unit, the language and culture which it focuses on are introduced and explained thoroughly. Additional explanations are provided within many units. Of course, the major portion of each unit consists of dialogs or conversations of varying lengths (mini, normal, and extended), which present English as it is actually spoken in the United States. For many lines in these conversations, additional alternate expressions are given in

square brackets. Optional words, explanations, and instructions are given in parentheses. At the end of each unit, particular points of difficulty (either linguistic or cultural) in the conversations are explained. Teachers and students will find these notes valuable and enlightening.

This book is the result of friendly cooperation among various individuals and institutions in the United States and China. The authors wish to thank the administrative officers of Jilin University, Brigham Young University—Hawaii, and the Polynesian Cultural Center for their support. A special expression of thanks goes to President Alton Wade (BYU-Hawaii) and Pres. Wu Zhuo-qun (Jilin University), whose vision and good will made the exchange program between their two universities possible.

Popular English for Modern Communication

392 Typical American Conversations

by

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Unit 1

Greetings

Greetings are indispensable in our lives. We use them many times every day to make contact with other people, recognize their presence, and show friendliness.

It is important to remember that the expressions used for greeting people usually do not carry any literal meanings. For example, "What's up?" does not really mean, "What is up?" It is only an expression of greeting. Also, remember that a positive response to a greeting is usually expected, even if it is not totally true. For instance, if someone greets you by saying, "How are you?" "Fine," is the most appropriate response—even if you are feeling bad.

Greetings vary in their level of formality. Using a greeting that is too formal or too casual for a particular situation is a social error which may be offensive or embarrassing.

There are at least five different styles in English: frozen, formal, consultative, casual, and intimate.¹ The style which is appropriate

for a situation depends on the age and the relationship of the people speaking as well as where they are and what they are talking about.

Frozen style is seldom used in normal speaking situations. It is a classic, literary, almost ceremonial style reserved for the most formal occasions, such as declamatory speeches to large audiences. Language in this style is carefully edited and rehearsed. It is used for one-way communication, and the listeners remain social strangers to the speaker.

Formal style is sometimes used in speaking (such as in university lectures and formal introductions), but it is most commonly used in written form—in text and reference books, reports, and business letters. Formal utterances are usually either formulaic (established words and structures are used repeatedly with little variation) or prepared in advance (carefully composed and edited). Although it is used for communicating information, formal style typically does not allow immediate feedback from listeners. It is a socially detached style for addressing strangers or large groups.

Consultative style, the first of two colloquial styles in English, is used for two-way

communication between people who do not belong to the same social group. It is typical of interactions between a dominant person (such as a professor or a supervisor) and his/her social subordinate (such as a student or a worker). Consultative style allows cooperation and communication without social integration. Conversations in this style are usually not prepared in advance but are composed as they develop.

Casual style is used among members of the same social group (for example, students in the same grade, co-workers in an office, or two teachers who are friends) or for integrating strangers into a social group. Casual conversations are usually not planned, composed, or edited in advance. Rather, they develop through interaction. Their content and direction depend on continuous and immediate feedback from other members of the conversation group.

Intimate style is reserved for members of a small closely related group (such as a family or club) or pair (such as a husband and wife, mother and child, or boyfriend and girlfriend). It joins personalities and reflects a cozy relationship. Intimate utterances are abbreviated and minimal, with much of the message left unsaid but understood since the conversational

partners are so close. "Insider words," whose special meanings only the partners understand, are common in intimate style, as are titles which show affection, such as *dear*, *sweetheart*, *darling*, or *honey*.

Formal style is typically used when people first meet. With the passage of time, as a friendly relationship develops, the style used will become casual. Be careful, however, not to shift styles too quickly. Becoming friendly or casual too soon can be offensive. In the course of a conversation, it is possible to switch or alternate styles, but only from one style to its neighbor. Do not take more than one step at a time.

Greetings can consist of a statement and/or a question. Used alone, the question (such as "How are you?") seems rather abrupt. Generally, the question comes only after a greeting statement (such as, "Hello.").

In different regions of the United States and among different ethnic groups, non-standard greetings are common. For example, in the West, "Howdy" is a common greeting. In the South, people say, "Hi, y'all²" and in Hawaii you may be greeted with the question, "Howzit?"³ Some ethnic groups add special titles also,

resulting in greetings such as "Hey, bro."⁴ While it is useful to be able to recognize these greetings, you should use them cautiously. They often imply a casual or intimate relationship and may be offensive if used by an outsider.

1-1 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two strangers meet at night.⁵ (formal
→consultative)

Mr. A: Hello.

Ms.⁶ B: Good evening.⁷

1-2 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two acquaintances meet. (formal→
casual)

Katherine: Hello, Robert.⁸

Robert: Hello, Katherine.

1-3 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two acquaintances or friends. (casual
→intimate)

Katherine: Hi, Bob.

Robert: Hi, Kathy.^{9,10}

1-4 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two people who are familiar with

each other's faces but do not know
each other's names meet. (casual)

Person A: Hi, there.

Person B: Hi.

1-5 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two acquaintances or friends greet
each other. (formal→casual)

Katherine: Hello, how are you?

Robert: Fine, thanks, and you?

Katherine: Fine.

1-6 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two acquaintances or friends meet,
(consultative→casual)

Mary: Hi, How are you?

John: Fine, How are you?

Mary: Good.¹¹

1-7 Mini-conversation

Situation: Two friends meet again after being
apart for a few days or weeks. (con-
sultative→casual)

Louie: Hi, Carmen. How have you been?

Carmen: Pretty good, and you?

Louie: Just fine.