ADVANCED READING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

英语语言文学高级阅读教程

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Advanced Reading in English Language and Literature

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前　言

　　《英语语言文学高级阅读教程》共选文章 15 篇,分为 21 课。

　　本《教程》包含的内容颇为广泛:有对英语史纵向的阐述(第 1 课)、有对英语在世界范围内使用情况的横向介绍(第 2、3 课)、有对英语变体"地域方言"及"社会方言"的述评(第 4、5、6 课)、有对词源学基本理论及方法的概述(第 7 课)、有对英语词典史及词典种类的阐释(第 8、9 课);此外,《教程》还收录了从较新角度解释英语拼写及语音问题的两篇文章(第 10、11 课)、选取了全面而不失简明地介绍规定语法、描述语言学、转换—生成语法三大学派的文章(第 12、13 课)、选进了概略介绍西方文化之源——希腊、罗马神话和《圣经》——的两篇文章以及三篇有关英国文学简史、美国文学简史、英诗格律的文章——这些内容,都是英语专业学生及英语学习者应该掌握的语言文学基本知识。而象本《教程》这样结为一集、专门介绍上述知识的教材或书籍似乎并不多见,可以说,本书的最大特色,就是选编了**大学**英语专业现行诸课程没有涉及或基本没有涉及而学生又应该掌握的基本知识。每篇文章后均编有注释及练习,以帮助学习者更好地理解、掌握文章内容。而介绍这些知识的文章均选自英、美权威工具书及教材、专著等,因此司时亦能提高学习者的阅读能力。

　　本书承蒙上海外国语学院院长戴炜栋教授审定全稿,并提出了诸多宝贵意见,谨此诚挚致谢!

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《教程》编委会

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Lesson One

Outline History of
the English Language

Over the last five hundred years, the English language, formerly the language of a mere five or six million people living within the confines of the British Isles, has expanded to become everyday speech over three hundred million. Among the results of this expansoin is the present status of English as the mother tongue of most of the inhabitants of the vast ethnically[1] diverse society of the United States of America and as the most important second language of some fifty millions in South Asia and in a number of new nations of Africa. The expansion has , however, for all practical purposes been a feature of the most recent of the threee major phrases of development into which linguistic scholarship customarily divides the recorded history of the language. Although our principal concern here is with that geographical extension that has led to the label "English" being applied to many simultaneously existing varieties round the world, we can achieve a proper perspective only if we consider briefly the historical dimension of its variation.

"New English" or "Modern English[2]" , which has been so pre—

eminently an article for export, is distinguished from the earlier variety, "Middle English[3]," and the latter in turn from the still earlier " Old English[4]". The three periods are seperated by two watersheds, one associated historically with the Norman Conquest[5] of the English, and the other with those complex developments to which historians apply the terms Renaissance[6] and Reformation[7]. After the Norman Conquest and again during the Renaissance there occured marked accelerations in the process of change that all living language is subject to. The response of the language to historical pressures resulted on each occasion in the emergence of a form significantly different from that which preceded to it, so that Old English must now be learned by the native speaker of English as a foreign language, and Middle English, the language of Chaucer[8] and Langland[9], is today fully intelligible only to the specialist scholar.

Old English was the language of the heathen invaders who began to appear along the Eastern coast of Britain in the third century A. D. , and who, after the withdrawal of the Roman legions[10], settled all but the West and North, where a Celtic language continued to be used. As Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, they spoke different dialects of a common Germanic tongue, and their geographical disposition in the new land, the Jutes in the Southeast, the Saxons in Wessex, and the two major divisions of the Angles in the Midlands[11] and the North, set up at the outset many of the regional differences that still persist in the popular speech of the British Isles.

The earliest written records date from after the Christian conversion of the English instigated by Pope Gregory[12] in 597. By then, the warlike habits of the English had, for the most part, given way to

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agricultural pursuits, and one can create a pleasant, if somewhat romanticized, picture of the agarian life from a stock of words that are often spoken of approvingly as "short", "simple", and Anglo—Saxon — e. g. man and child; eat, drink, and sleep; love and hate; land, harvest, and crops.

Old English had a facility, comparable wih that of modern German, for meeting the need for new vocabulary by compounding existing words; daisy is picturesquely derived from "day's eye" and nostril from "nose hole." But the conversion to Christianity created needs that were not supplied from indigenous resources, and the Latin of the new clerics provided the first large—scale acquisition of foreign loans we know of. Apart from words of obvious ecclesiastical[13] significance, like priest, monk, hymn, alter and candle, others like master and grammar, plaster and fever, reflect the Church's commitment to learning and medical care.

The arrival of the Vikings[14], who, until King Alfred's[15] victory in 878, threatened to subjugate the newly Christianized English, resulted in further augmentation of the vocabulary. But the language they spoke, which had a strong influence upon the speech of the Danelaw, the area lying to the northeast of a line drawn from Chester to London, was closely related to English. The results of its admixture were more subtle and elusive. Pairs of words, differentiated by a single sound, like skirt and shirt, whole and hale, have survived. Instead of a technical vocabulary associated with a new field of interest or endeavour, we have Old Norse borrowings that are every bit[16] as commonplace as native Old English words; husband, ugly, call, want, and , most surprisingly, the pronouns they, them, and their to go alongside

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Old English he, him, and her.

When *William, Duke of Normandy*[17], defeated the English king
at Hastings in 1066, he inaugurated a period of rule by French —
speaking kings and of pervasive domination by a nobility whose inter-
ests were predominantly in things French. Until King John lost the
last of the major continental possessions in 1205, Noman — French
was the language of the Court, of business, and of lay[18] culture, while
Latin remained the ecclesiastical language. English was virtually re-
duced to the role of a patois[19]. When its use was revived in educated
circles in the thirteenth century, it had undergone radical change,
some of which can be directly related to the long break in the literary
tradition.

The elaborate inflection system that had been a feature of Old
English, *manifested, for instance, in* the *six different forms of the*
noun stan (stone), may well have been undergoing simplification in
the spoken language before the Norman Conquest. Absence of the
conservative influence of the written form would undoubtedly accel-
erate the process; although some vestiges of inflectional endings sur-
vive until after Chaucer's time, Middle English is essentially without
this refinement. Another change was largely due to the fact that the
French—trained scribes[20], *who now replaced those of the Old English*
tradition, introduced new orthographical conventions and in so doing
were responsible for much of the inconsistency for which modern
English spelling is notorious. New characters — — k, g, q, v, w, and z
— — were brought into use. The two pronunciations of Old English "
c" could now be differentiated, as in the modern spelling of king
(from cyning) and choose (from ceosan). But the retention of "c" in

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words like cat, and its use to represent /s/ in nice have left us with confusing results: king, can, cent, sent. The characteristic Old English letters ð and þ were gradually replaced by th, and the loss of ȝ resulted in the sound it represented (a sound that was itself subsequently lost) being spelt as gh in words like night, daughter, and laugh. Finally, because of the similarity of a number of characters such as u, v, n, m, and w in the Carolingian[21] script used by the scribes, u was replaced by o in many words like come son, and wonder.

But by far the most noticeable feature of English, as it came to be re—established after the period of the supremacy of French, was the very large number of French words that had been absorbed into the common stock. Many of these have been sorted by scholars into sets that correspond with activities in which the indigenous English speakers are thought to have played little active part. They include much of the modern vocabulary of government and law, of ecclesiastical and military matters, of art, learning, and medicine, and words that reflect a preoccupation with fashion, polite social life, and refined feeding habits. A measure of the degree of assimilation of the new French words is the extent to which they occured in derivatives, taking English endings as in gently and gentleness, and forming compounds with English nouns as in gentleman. Generally, however, the accession of loan words was accompanied by a marked decline in the facility of the language for creating new, self — explanatory, compounds, a practice that was not revived extensively until the nineteenth century, when scientific and technological advances generated new needs.

A characteristic of Middle English was its very considerable re-

gional variation. Contemporary writers testify that the speech of one area was frequently unintelligible to inhabitants of another. Amid the dialectal confusion, it is possible to distinguish five major areas: the North extending as far as the Humber[22], the East and West Midlands, together extending from the Humber to the Thames, the South, and Kent[23]. The end of the fourteenth century saw the rise of Standard English, a result largely of the commercial supremacy of the East Midlands. In particular, the growing importance of London as a political, judicial, social, and intellectual centre led to the elevation of one particular variety of the East Midland dialect, namely London English, to a position of prestige that it has enjoyed ever since. It was this dialect that would be used overwhelmingly when the invention of printing opened up unprecedented possibilities for the dissemination of the written word.

The printing press was one of the factors that, around 1500, resulted in the second great change in English. The need and the possibility of what we can properly think of as mass circulation placed a high premium on the use of the vernacular. As in other parts of Europe, the latter made incursions into territories in which Latin had formerly held sway: law, medicine, and religion in particular. And one aspect of the revival of interest in classical antiquity was the very considerable translating activity that gave Shakespeare, for instance, with his "little Latin and less Greek", access to much of the classical heritage. Engagement with Latin and Greek had effects upon English — — upon both vocabulary and grammar. The effects on vocabulary were more immediately noticeable and led to a further large accession of new words, often learned and polysyllabic, which, when carried to

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excess, earned contemporary castigation as "ink — horn"[24] terms. In this way, the classical experience may be said to have been a potent instrument of change. Its effect upon grammar, though less immediate, was, by contrast, conservative.

The increasing use of English in more scholarly contexts after 1500 resulted in misgivings about its ability to survive. Compared with the fixity and predictability of Ciceronian[25] Latin — — by now a well and truly "dead" language — — it seemed all too subject to change. The desire to "fix" English, so that matter expressed in it would have the same chances of survival as that expressed in the ancient languages, led to attempts by grammarians to legislate for the user, the basis of their legislation was , understandably, the well — known syntax of Latin. A similar concern for durability and respectability underlay the new preoccupation with orthography. Early spelling reformers, especially printers, sought to replace the largely idiosyncratic[26] practices that had sufficed in the pre — printing era with a common system that seemed to them to be more consistently related to the sound system. They were not helped in this enterprise — — an enterprise that, incidentally, has continued to exercise the minds of language teachers ever since — — by the fact that some of the sounds were themselves currently undergoing major changes. A complex process that led to an altered distribution of all the long vowels of English, known to philologists[27] as the Great Vowel Shift, began in the latter part of the Middle English period but was not completed until after Shakespeare's time. For his audiences Rome and room, raisin and reason had similar pronunciations.

In bringing this sketch of the development of English to the be-

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ginning of the Modern English period, we have already reached the stage where its internal history and its external history react upon each other. The astonishing—and, as some thought, excessive—openness of English to new vocabulary resulted in the adoption of words not only from every major European language, but also from the more exotic languages of remoter lands to which it was now being carried. In the following paragraphs we note something of the effect of local languages and conditions upon the speech of English—speaking settlers not only in vocabulary, but in grammar and pronunciation also. An important aspect of the more recent development of British English has been its absorption of features from the new regional varieties to which geographical dispersion gave rise. Since no account of language development, however brief, can legitimately omit reference to attitudes, we must recognize that this last tendency has by no means always been welcomed by purists. And if a desire to protect the home — grown product from the effects of outside interference is questionable, the wish to prescribe standards for the much greater number of people who speak English outside the British Isles is even more so.

In the various forms that Standard English now takes there are, in fact, only very slight differences in grammar, and the variations in pronunciation—the numerous local accents—represent no insuperable barrier to intelligibility, however forcibly they may impress themselves upon the listener. As for vocabulary, there is a central core of ordinary, most frequently used words shared by all types of the standard language; and there is also a shared lexicon of highly specialized and technical terms. Between these two lies a considerable body of

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moderately common words and idioms, and it is here that the major national and local distinctions are to be found. Americanisms, Australianisms, Scotticisms, and so on, all having their own peculiarities of usage.

The differences and distinctions obtaining in the use of English around the world seem hardly likely to wither away. Present conditions seem rather to indicate a gradual increase, and common sense suggests willing acceptance of them as natural and interesting aspects of the language and of the individualities of all the people who use it.

Notes

1. 按种族;按种族特征。

2. 现代英语(指公元 1500 年以后的英语)。

3. 中古英语(指公元 1150 年到 1500 年期间的英语)。

4. 古英语(指公元 450 年到 1150 年期间的英语)。

5. 指 1066 年诺曼底人对英国的征服。

6. 文艺复兴(指欧洲从 14 世纪到 16 世纪复兴被遗忘的希腊、罗马古典文化的运动)。

7. 宗教改革(欧洲 16 世纪进行的宗教改革,结果是新教的成立)。

8. 乔叟(1340—1400):英国诗人。

9. 朗格兰·威廉(1332? —1400?):英国诗人,著有《关于农夫彼尔斯的映象》(The Vision of Piers the Plowman)。

10.古罗马军团。

11.英国中部。

12.格雷戈里,597 年他曾派奥古斯汀到英国传播基督教。英国人从此改信基督教。

13.基督教会的;教士的。

14.公元八世纪到十世纪间掠夺欧洲西海岸的北欧海盗。

15.阿尔弗雷德王(849—899,在位期间为 871—899,号称 Alfred the Great,即阿尔弗雷德大帝)。

16.全部;完全。

17.即威廉一世(1066—1087 在位)。

18.短叙事诗;短抒情诗。

19.方言;土语。

20.抄写员。

21.法兰克王国第二个王朝加洛林王朝时代的人。

22.亨伯河(英)。

23.肯特郡(英)。

24.卖弄学问的。

25.(古罗马雄辩家、政治家和哲学家)西赛罗风格的;雄辩的;文字精炼优美的。

26.由于个人特性所致的。

27.语言学家。

Exercises

I Questions for discussion:

1. What are the results of the English Expansion over the last