

Concise Special English for Anthropology:
Some Basic Knowledge and Classic Materials

简明人类学专业英语

基础知识与经典选读

满珂 编著



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前 言

众所周知，现代意义上的人类学与民族学专业是从西方国家（尤其是英语国家）传入的，世界上第一位人类学/民族学教授是当时任职于英国牛津大学的爱德华·泰勒，他还撰写了世界上第一部人类学教材。在人类学/民族学的研究、发展史上，以英语为媒介的著述、论文浩如烟海，如今人类学/民族学界世界最著名的学术杂志《美国人类学家》（*American Anthropologist*）、《美国民族学家》（*American Ethnologist*）、《当代人类学》（*Current Anthropology*）都是英文杂志。在此背景下，要想帮助人类学/民族专业的学生深刻认识、理解人类学/民族学的本质与内涵，与国际同行接轨，掌握学术前沿，并在此基础上，运用相关理论，分析中国的文化与社会现实，予以创新，为中国的社会和谐发展做出贡献，人类学/民族学专业的英语教学显得极为迫切。特别是在当下，由于意识形态和价值观念的不同，国外有些学者对我国民族存在状况的看法确有不实之处，需要我们培养出有能力与之论争的青年学人，进一步改变我们在国际学术交流中的被动局面（不理解，也无法反驳）。

然而，就目前国内的情况来看，除了北京大学、清华大学、中国人民大学和中山大学等高校外，还少有人类学/民族学的英语教学研究与实践，在我国西北地区更是如此。如今，大量的人类学/民族学经典著作被译成中文，一方面，这确实能够加快人类学/民族学知识的传播速度；另一方面，许多译者并不具有人类学/民族学专业背景，所译难免有误。因此，为提高人类学/民族学的教学水平，必须增强学生运用英语这一学习工具的能力。再则，虽然中国人民大学早在2008年就出版了由庄孔韶、冯跃编著，美国密歇根大学人类学系教授康拉德·菲利普·科塔克（Conrad Phillip Kottak）撰写的《高等院校双语教材·社会学系列：人类学》，但是它主要涉及人类学的基本研究领域，缺乏对其经典理论和方法的介绍，

为此,综上所述,我们有必要编写适当的双语或英文原文教材,提高学生的英语能力和相应的对人类学/民族学的理解程度,使之更为便利、快捷地获取学术信息,对有关民族问题的讨论做出迅速反应,以便于将来在国际事务中应对自如。

本教材主要参考《文化的视野》(Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists)、《人类学理论》(Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History)、《人类学研究方法》(Research Methods in Anthropology)、《人类学实践:田野作业和民族志方法》(Anthropological Practice: Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Method)等英文教材及人类学的经典著作,依次对其主要理论和方法进行简明扼要地概括,帮助学生学会使用人类学/民族学专业的基本概念、理论、方法等词汇与表达,并附录篇幅较短的人类学经典论文或名著节选,以供英文程度较好的学生展开延伸阅读,提高自己的英语水平,进而实现良性循环,加深对所学专业的理解。

由于本人能力有限,本教材中一定会有不少疏漏和错误,还请各位读者批评指正。

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Chapter 1

The Concept of Anthropology and the Early Development of It

What's Anthropology?

Generally speaking, anthropology aims to study the cultures or societies created by human being, no matter his color or location, to improve the communications among different people. In United States, the academic discipline of anthropology includes four main sub-disciplines, those are, sociocultural (cultural), archaeological, biological, and linguistic anthropology. McGee and Warms hold the idea that “anthropology is concerned with understanding the ‘other’ ... Some examine current cultures; others study the remains of past societies to recreate the lives of people who disappeared long ago; still others study primates to see what our closest relatives can tell us about being human” (McGee & Warms 2004: 1). Kottak argues “anthropology studies the whole of the human condition: past, present, and future; biology, society, language, and culture. Of particular interest is the diversity that comes through human adaptability” (Kottak 2008: 3). Moore had proposed the areas of anthropological studies, “Anthropology addresses a series of questions that humans have considered for millennia (many centuries): what's the nature of society? Why do cultures change? What is the relationship between the person as an individual and the person as a member of a distinctive social group? What are the distinguishing characteristics of humanness? Why are cultures different?” (Moore 2009: 1) He also mentioned: “before 1860, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘anthropology’ meant the study of human nature encompassing

physiology and psychology; after 1860, the word denotes a science of human-kind 'in its widest sense'. This shift in usage marks a change in an intellectual field that the works of Morgan, Tylor, Boas and Durkheim partly created" (Moore 2009: 2).

Founders of Anthropology

The Main Contributions of Edward Tylor

Tylor held the first professorship of anthropology at Oxford, and he wrote the first anthropology textbook. We should know the following concepts to summarize Tylor's main contributions to anthropology. 1) the definition of culture: "Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". (Tylor 1958: 1). 2) uniformitarianism: "the condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, insofar as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action. On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform actions of uniform causes; while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution, each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the future" (Tylor 1958: 1). Tylor thought culture was created by universally like minds and governed by the same basic laws of cognition. 3) the concept of survivals: "processes, customs, opinions, and so forth, which have been carried by force of habit into a new state of society different from that in which they had their original home and they remain as proofs and examples of an older condition of culture out of which a newer has been evolved" (Tylor 1958: 16), for example, in China, we use firecrackers to "scare off monsters" on the Spring Festivals because it is a kind of survival, not because we still believe the ferocious beast called "the year" will come ashore and devour livestock and people every New Year's Eve.

Lewis Henry Morgan: the Evolution of Society

To understand Morgan's idea about the evolution of society, we should first probe into his study of kinship. He argued that all kinship systems could be classified into two large groups—descriptive systems and classificatory systems. Descriptive systems distinguish between lineal relatives and collateral kin; “father” and “father's brother” are given different titles. In descriptive systems, there are fewer special kin terms, and these terms are applied to kin who are relatively close to the speaker, referred to as “Ego” (Morgan 1871: 468–469). In contrast, classificatory systems treat lineal and collateral kin in the same way, only making a distinction between generations (Ego's mother versus Ego's mother's mother) and gender (Ego's male cousins versus Ego's female cousins), but using the same term to call “father” and “father's brother”, to call “mother” and “mother's sister”, and so on. Morgan believed descriptive systems were natural interferences about descent when marriage was based on monogamy while classificatory are inferences from polygamous, communal or promiscuous marriages. So Morgan had connected kinship terminology with marriage systems. In English, do they use classificatory systems? We know “mother's sister” and “father's sister” are same word: aunt. And they use same term “uncle” to refer to “mother's brother” and “father's brother”. But in Chinese, things are different. We also make a difference between patrilineal kinship and matrilineal one. How about in other languages and cultures? Uyghur, Tibetan, Mongolian, for example? We can see the kinship terminology really reflect the structure of our family and the way we treat different kins. For most ethnic groups in China, in principle, father's kins are more important than mother's. But this is not always true. For example, you may be closer to your mother's sister instead of your father's sister.

Morgan inferred different social relations based on distinct kinship systems and then arranged them on a continuum from “most primitive” to “most civilized”, from promiscuous intercourse to monogamy.

In *Ancient Society*, Morgan used the terms “savagery”, “barbarism”, and “civilization” to mark each stage of progress measured by four sets of cul-

tural achievements: 1) invention and discoveries, 2) the idea of government, 3) the organization of the family, and 4) the concept of property. The lines of progress were clearest in the field of inventions and discoveries because certain inventions surely preceded others (fire before pottery, hunting before pastoralism). Therefore, Morgan regarded technological developments as the elementary but not sole "test of progress" representing the different stages of cultural evolution.

Franz Boas: Cultures not Culture

The fact that American anthropology has included sociocultural anthropology, linguistics, physical anthropology, and archaeology—the so-called four fields approach—is partly a reflection of Boas's broad interests which help him to create an anthropology that is very different from those of Morgan, Tylor, or Durkheim, the early founders and practitioners of evolutionism. Rather than presuming that cultural practices were only in relation to broad evolutionary stages, Boas argued that they were understandable only in specific cultural contexts. For Boas, there is no Culture but Cultures.

Boas's consistent idea is that cultures were integrated wholes produced by specific historical process rather than reflections of universal evolutionary stages. We still remember that Morgan argued that different societies with similar cultural patterns (such as the main symbol of human development: technology) were at similar evolutionary levels. On the contrary, Boas believed very similar cultural practices may arise from different causes. For example, when someone doesn't eat pork, do you think he must be a Muslim? One student has told me (the editor of this textbook) that he doesn't eat pork because he thinks people all need some taboos. Anthropologist's primary task, according to Boas, was to provide "a penetrating analysis of a unique culture describing its form, the dynamic reactions of the individual to the culture and of the culture to the individual." (Boas 1966: 310–311) Boas did not assume (as some of his students did) that general laws of human behavior did not exist completely, but rather that those laws could be derived only from an understanding of specific historical processes. Thus Boas suggests that lawlike generalization can be based on adap-

tational, psychological, or historical factors, but only if documented by well-established ethnographic cases. All in all, Boas argued that detailed studies of particular societies had to think over the entire range of cultural behavior, and thus the concepts of anthropological holism and cultural particularism became twin tenets of American anthropology. In later years, Boas grew even more skeptical about the possibility of deriving cultural laws. And he never really answered the question how cultures become integrated wholes.

Émile Durkheim: the Relationship between Individual and Society

The specific focus of Durkheim's work was, in his own words, the questions of the relations of the individual to social solidarity. Why does the individual, while becoming more autonomous, depend more upon society? How can he be at once more individual and more solidarity? Certainly these two movements, contradictory as they appear, develop in parallel fashion. This is the problem we are raising. (Durkheim 1964: 37) As an adult, we seem socially independent, but we can not survive without others. His important work-*The Division of Labor in Society* is not about the sexual division of labor, but rather about how society can be alternately divided or unitary and characterized by homogeneity or heterogeneity and yet, stay together. Mechanical solidarity "comes from a certain number of states of conscience which are common to all the members of the same society" (Durkheim 1964: 109), which applied to societies in which all members have a common, shared social experience, but who do not necessarily depend on each other to survive. Organic solidarity "are formed not by the repetition of similar, homogeneous segments, but by a system of different organs each of which has a special role, and which are themselves formed of differentiated parts. . . . They are . . . coordinated and subordinated one to another around the same central organ which exercises a moderating action over the rest of the organism. (Durkheim 1972: 143) To put it in simple way, organic society is integrated by the interdependence of different people and institutions and based on social divisions.

The other important word in Durkheim's theory is *conscience collective*. The French term *conscience* includes three things: "internalized sanc-

tions, awareness, and perceived culture.” (Bohannan 1960: 78 – 79) Conscience collective has different characters in societies based on mechanical solidarity versus those based on organic solidarity. First, in mechanical solidarity the individual tends to have values or views that are in line with all other members of the society; in that sense, as Giddens writes, “Individual ‘consciousness’ is simply a microcosm of conscience collective” (Giddens 1972: 5), which is not true in organic solidarity society. Second, in societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, the conscience collective has a greater intellectual and emotional hold over the individual. Third, in societies characterized by mechanical solidarity, the conscience collective has greater rigidity; certain behaviors are required, encouraged or barred and everyone knows what they are, whereas in organic societies—such as our own—there may be permanent debates about concrete acceptable behaviors or appropriate values although there really exists a general abstract rule or value. Finally, in societies associated with mechanical solidarity, the conscience collective is broadly related to religion; the sanctions for social norms come from the supernatural thing. In societies characterized by organic solidarity, the role of religion is minified.

Durkheim also contributed to the study of religion. In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Durkheim began to describe the basic elements of religious life by studying the most primitive society he knew of: the native people of central Australia. He attempt to identify not only the elemental constitutes of religion, but also the origins of religion. Previously, two basic ideas had been suggested on the origins of religion. First was animism, an idea developed by Tylor, which characterized religion as originating with an individual’s explanation of misunderstood phenomena (that means they treat everything in the world, no matter what it is, as having life. Actually, it is a kind of personification). Animism is the idea that spirits occupy all sorts of objects. Just as humans have different states of being—asleep and awake, living and dead—that imply the existence of an animating forces, objects also have anima. An alternative concept, naturalism, saw religion as a representation of natural forces and objects—weather, fire, the sea, lightning, sun, star and so on. Ani-

mism and naturalism similarly view religion as originating with individual's explanations of natural phenomena. But for Durkheim, "religion is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities", (Durkheim 1968: 22) for example, totem refers to a category of things—animals, plants, celestial bodies, ancestral mythic beings—related to a social group. The totem is the name and emblem of the clan and is incorporated into the liturgy (ritual) of religious practices and is also "the very type of sacred thing" (Durkheim 1968: 140). Durkheim thought the elementary properties of religion are as followed: "A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred thing, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, called a Church, all those who adhere to them" (Durkheim 1968: 62).

Further readings:

1. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, *The Science of Culture* (1871)
2. Émile Durkheim, *What Is a Social Fact?* (1895)
3. Franz Boas, *The Methods of Ethnology* (1920)

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All the footnotes of the further readings are from R. Jon McGee, Richard L. Warms. 2003. *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History* (Third Edition) . Boston: McGraw-Hill.

1. The Science of Culture^①

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor (1832 – 1917)

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. The condition of culture among the various societies of mankind, in so far as it is capable of being investigated on general principles, is a subject apt for the study of laws of human thought and action.^② On the one hand, the uniformity which so largely pervades civilization may be ascribed, in great measure, to the uniform action of uniform causes; while on the other hand its various grades may be regarded as stages of development or evolution each the outcome of previous history, and about to do its proper part in shaping the history of the fu-

① From *Primitive Culture* (1871)

② Throughout this essay, Tylor reaffirms his faith in the possibility of a science of human society analogous to the physical sciences. In this, he is very much like the other thinkers of his era, particularly Herbert Spencer. The opening sentence of this essay is one of the most frequently quoted definitions of culture in anthropology. Despite this, Tylor's understanding of the meaning of culture is clearly very different from that of most modern anthropologists. Whereas most anthropologists today believe that there are a great many different cultures, Tylor believed that "Culture" was, ultimately, a single body of information of which different human groups had greater or lesser amounts. This understanding was based on his belief in the psychic unity of humankind, here referred to as "the uniform action of uniform causes".

ture. To the investigation of these two great principles in several departments of ethnography, with especial consideration of the civilization of the lower tribes as related to the civilization of the higher nations, the present volumes are devoted.

Our modern investigators in the sciences inorganic nature are foremost to recognize, both within and without their special fields of work, unity of nature, the fixity of its laws, the definite sequence of cause and effect through which every fact depends on what has gone before it, and acts upon what is to come after it. They grasp firmly the Pythagorean doctrine of pervading order in the universal Kosmos. They affirm, with Aristotle, that nature is not full of incoherent episodes, like a bad tragedy. They agree with Leibnitz in what he calls "my axiom, that nature never acts by leaps (*La nature n'agit jamais par saut*),"^① as well as in his "great principle, commonly little employed, that nothing happens without its sufficient reason." Nor, again, in studying the structure and habits of plants and animals, or in investigating the lower functions even of man, are these leading ideas unacknowledged. But when we come to talk of the higher processes of human feeling and action, of thought and language, knowledge and art, a change appears in the prevalent tone of opinion. The world at large is scarcely prepared to accept the general study of human life as a branch of natural science, and to carry out, in a large sense, the poet's injunction to "Account for moral as for natural things." To many educated minds there seems something presumptuous and repulsive in the view that the history of mankind is part and parcel of the history of nature, that our thoughts, wills, and actions accord with laws as definite as those which govern the motion of waves, the combination of acids and bases, and the growth of plants and animals.

The main reasons of this state of the popular judgment are not far to

① *La nature n'agit jamais par saut*: a French phrase meaning "nature never acts by leaps." Darwin also used this phrase in an 1858 essay on variation in species (in Latin rather than French) to express the gradualism of his evolutionary theory. Tylor frequently uses foreign phrases in this essay. They almost always repeat the sentence that precedes them.