

"DO-AS-THE-ROMANS-DO" ENGLISH IN COMMUNICATION

随俗英语十八讲

孙德玉 杨玉林 著

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前 言

《随俗英语十八讲》是《得体英语十八讲》的姊妹篇。前者从社会语言学角度,根据交际双方的“角色关系(Role-Relationship)探讨日常会话中的语言对社会场合的适合性;后者从民俗学角度描述日常口语中语言的文化特性,从而觅寻其对社会场合的适合性。

我国著名文体学专家王佐良教授曾这样说过,“不了解语言当中的社会文化,谁也无法真正掌握语言。”可见,学习语言中的社会文化是何等重要。语言本身也是文化,是文化的组成部分;它不可避免地要受着文化的影响和制约。同时,语言的文化因素又直接影响着语言学习。在语言学习中,学习者对某段文字的理解正确与否,对某一词语或表达方式掌握得深浅程度和使用得是否得体,在很大程度上取决于他对有关文化的了解。所以,我们在《得体英语十八讲》之后,又编写了《随俗英语十八讲》一书。本书的主要读者对象为学习英语的学生、从事英语教学的教师、赴英美留学或进修者、涉外工作人员以及从事民俗研究的人员。

本书以语体学理论为基础,以民俗为主线,描述英语的文化特性。在描述英美民族的心理意识、风土人情、礼仪习俗、历史传统等一系列因素的同时,探讨其有关的语言习惯,从而觅寻日常口语中的语言对社会场合的适合性。

全书共分十八个专题,其中每个专题主要包括民俗描述和有关的语言习惯(怎样说和说什么才合适)两部分内容。有时,也穿插一点跨文化交际(Intercultural Communication)方面的内容。为方便读者,我们采用英汉对照方式编写。正文的英语部分多半选自英美及海外其他地区出版物,是地道的英国英语或美国英语。汉语部分大多由编者自译并校订成标准汉语,目的在于帮助读者加深对原文的理解。

从民俗入手,探讨英语日常会话语体实属尝试,编者水平有限,挂一漏万自不待言,谬误或不妥之处也在所难免,希望读者多提批评和改进意见。

编 者

一九九〇年七月

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The British Mentalities and Attitudes

1. Exclusiveness

The best-known quality of the British people and, in particular, of the English people is their exclusiveness. This means, "I am English. You stay away from me. I am exclusive. I am quite happy to be myself, I do not need you. Leave me alone."

It is difficult to know such a man who does not talk much, never says anything about himself, does not show much emotion and hardly gets excited.

Why do the English people have this feature? Perhaps there are many reasons. Of these reasons, two are very important. One is the special geographical location of Britain; the other is the distinct development of her

英国人的处世 态度

1. 孤傲

英国人(特别是英格兰人)最突出的性格特征是孤傲。其意思是,“我是英国人,请你离我远点儿。我喜欢自己一个人呆着,不需要你。请别理睬我。”

很难了解这样的人:不太讲话、从不讲自己的事、感情不外露、几乎从不动声色。

为什么英国人具有这样的性格特征呢?原因可能很多,其中有两个重要原因。一是英国的地理位置特殊,二是英国的历史发展独特。

history.

Britain is an island country which is cut off, separated and isolated from the rest of the world. First it is cut off by the English Channel from the rest of Europe, and then it is separated from the rest of the civilized world. So the special geographical location isolates Britain, and its people as well. When the British are in Britain, they do not even regard themselves as Europeans for the Europeans are foreigners to them. On the other side of the English Channel, within the country if you say "English" instead of "British", you sometimes annoy the Scots and the Welsh who are very proud of their separate nationality.

Another reason is perhaps a matter of history. The English people are very proud of their history. If you ask an Englishman why he is so exclusive, why he stands offish and thinks himself better than most people

英国是个岛国,与世界其他地区分离,独居大洋之中。首先,它隔英吉利海峡与欧洲大陆相望;再就是,它与世界其他文明国家隔绝。因此,这种特殊的地理位置孤立了英国国土和国民。英国人在其国土上甚至不把自己看作是欧洲人。在他们看来,欧洲人是与他们完全不相同的人种。在英吉利海峡的彼岸,即他们自己国内,如果你用 English 泛指 British,有时可能会触怒苏格兰人和威尔士人,因为他们都为各自的民族而自豪。

另一个原因可能是历史方面的问题。英国人为自己国家的历史感到自豪。如果你问一个英国人为什么那么孤傲、为什么那么冷漠、为

in the world, he will say, "why, I've been educated in that way." He would tell you a lot of things he is proud of. He might tell you that the King James Bible and Shakespeare's plays have given incalculable influence on the Western culture and the culture in the world; the British Parliament is the oldest parliament in Europe; as early as 1215 when the rest of the world was suffering under arbitrary kings and royal power, in England they were able to develop a certain amount of parliamentarism; there was an Industrial Revolution as early as the 18th century and so on and so forth.

2. Conservativeness

The English people are generally regarded as conservative. The Americans say that the English people always need 20 or 40 years to do things that they do today because the English people are so conservative that they have to wait a long time before they are prepared to try something

什么认为自己比世界上其他人都好,他会说,“唔,我就是那样受的教育。”他会对你讲很多他感到自豪的事情。他可能给你讲 King James 圣经和 Shakespeare 的戏剧对西方和世界文化所产生的不可估量的影响;英国议会是最早的议会;早在 1215 年,欧洲其他国家还在封建帝王专制统治下遭受苦难时,英国已经部分地实行了议会制;18 世纪又进行了工业革命,等等。

2. 保守

一般都认为英国人保守。美国人说,英国人总是需要 20 年或 40 年才开始做美国人今天在做的事情,因为英国人太保守,往往要过很长一段时间才着手去试做某种新事情。

new.

Englishmen think their way of doing things is always the best, and always the most normal. So an Englishman is not very interested if somebody in America has a new idea. He is very careful. He would say, "Be careful. It might be dangerous." There are many examples to show this. One is that the British people have been slow in adopting rational reforms, such as metric system. They suffered inconvenience from adhering to the old ways, yet they did not want the trouble of adopting new.

In 1966 it was decided that decimal money would become the regular form in 1971; in the 1960s the twenty-four hour clock was at last adopted for railway timetable. Furthermore, the public attitudes to the monarchy illustrate conservativeness, too. The majority of the English people hold an affection and reverence for it. You seldom hear them complaining about

英国人认为,他们做事的方式总是最好的、最规范的。所以,如果美国人有个什么新主意,英国人总是不太感兴趣。英国人很谨慎,总爱说,“Be careful. It might be dangerous.”有很多例子可以说明这一点。比如,实行米制这样的合理的改革,英国人也非常缓慢。他们宁愿忍受极大的不方便,也不愿做点努力去革新。

1966 年决定货币十进制制于 1971 年才正式实行;到六十年代,24 小时计时法才最后用于列车时刻表。此外,公众对君主政治的态度也可以说明英国民族思想守旧。大多数英国人对君主非常崇拜。你很少听到他们抱怨奢侈豪

the high cost of the trappings of the monarchy, and in particular of the royal yacht. In fact you can perceive many sound and reasonable arguments in favour of the monarchy. For the majority of the British people, they accept it and take it for granted.

Another example is that the British people do not accept change because they are told to. They favour the old ways. In Britain, all the houses even in big cities like London, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham had fire places in the past. When central heating was developed in the U. S. A., the English people thought this was a horrible thing. They said that this was going to ruin the health of the people. Until 1960 they continued to have the fire place in most towns. And then in 1960, a law was passed saying that you could no longer have open fires in the house. Then they installed electric stoves which looked much like fireplaces. This is what some British people consider as "a

华的皇家服饰,特别是皇家游艇。实际上,你反而会听到许多赞扬和支持君主政体的议论。绝大多数英国人接受这种政体,并认为是理所当然的。

另一个例子是,英国人不易听取别人意见进行变革。他们喜欢旧的方式。在英国,即使大城市,如伦敦、利物浦、曼彻斯特和伯明翰的所有楼房过去都有壁炉。当美国发明了中央供暖法以后,英国人则认为那是一种可怕的东西。他们说,那种供暖法会损害人们的健康。到1960年,大部分城镇仍继续使用壁炉;而且同年还通过了一项法律,规定在房内禁止使用外露火炉。后来他们安装了电炉,但电炉与壁炉也非常相像。这就是一

long-established tradition" they would be most unwilling to lose. Even today, some people build a house with an open fireplace.

3. Politeness

In Britain, all politeness is based on the basic rule of showing consideration for others. The British people do not readily ask you to do anything inconvenient for them, who prefer to wait for such service to be offered, rather than ask for it. If they do want to ask, you would hear them say with an implied apology like, "I know the trouble I am causing you, but would you mind...?" or "I don't really like asking you, but ...", and so on. Sometimes the British people give offers simply out of politeness, not really expecting them to be accepted, so you reject the offers with the same politeness. Similarly it is often polite to refuse an offer of service by replying "Oh, please don't bother."

些英国人最不愿意丢掉的所谓“长期形成的传统”。甚至今天,一些人仍建造设有外露火炉的房子。

3. 讲礼貌

在英国,讲礼貌的根本原则是基于为他人着想。英国人从不主动请你为他们做不方便的事情,而是等待你主动提出帮助。即使他们确实需要主动提出,也往往会听到他们婉言相告,如 "I know the trouble I'm causing you, but would you mind...?" 或者 "I don't really like asking you, but ..." 等等。有时英国人主动提出相助,仅仅是出于礼貌,而并非期望对方接受。因此,在这种情况下,应以同样方式婉言谢绝。通常以 "Oh, please don't bother." 来

In everyday life of the British "Excuse me" is heard as an apology for troubling somebody. "Sorry" expresses regret for an unconscious disturbance; "sorry" also replaces "no" when you cannot accede to a request. And "Pardon" rather than "what" is the normal polite way of asking somebody to repeat what he has said. A bare "yes" or "no" is considered very rude when you reply to an offer. "Please" and "Thank you" are quite common words for the British people who are particular about saying these.

Then too, the British people are quite particular about the table manners. When you are invited to a person's home, you should not arrive early since the hostess is preparing for you. Five or ten minutes late is excellent. At table, it is advisable to

谢绝,同样显得很礼貌。

在英国人的日常生活中,经常听到"Excuse me"用作打扰别人的婉言;"Sorry"用作歉语,表示无意识地妨害或触犯了别人。如果你不能回答某人或不能答应某人的要求时,"Sorry"还可用来代替"No"。"Pardon"是请求某人重复所说内容的礼貌用语,而不能用"What"来代替。仅仅用"Yes"或"No"来回答某人主动相助是非常不礼貌的。"Please"和"Thank you"是英国人的常用词语,对此他们也非常讲究。

英国人还特别讲究就餐礼节。如果邀请你到某人家去作客,不应提前到达,因为主人在忙于准备工作。最好是晚到五分钟或十分钟。就餐时,最好坐正,别人

sit up straight, copy everyone else, gaily asking what to do if you are not sure and keep the conversation going. As to when to leave, there is no rule, but it is most impolite to stay too late.

The British people usually do not cry and shout in public. They do not cry even if they are very unhappy. If they say good-bye to their intimate friends, or even their mothers, they would not cry. If they can't help crying, they must cover their faces with their hands or handkerchiefs to restrain their feelings.

4. Love of Privacy

The right to privacy and personal freedom is unquestioned by the British. Perhaps it is the lack of space that has fostered and maintained their fierce individualism. There is a common saying among the British people, "My home is my castle. The wind can come in, but the Kings and

怎么做,你就怎么做;如果确实不知怎么做,就应该不失礼貌地询问,并以此作为话题谈下去。至于什么时间告辞,并没有什么规定。不过,呆得太晚是最不礼貌的。

英国人通常不在公共场合高声喊叫或啼哭,即使非常不愉快也不大声哭闹。他们告别亲密朋友或者自己的母亲时,也不哭泣。如果实在忍不住要哭,他们通常用手或手帕把脸捂起来抑制自己的感情。

4. 喜欢独处

英国人独处和个人自由的权利是没有异议的,也许是因为没有空间培养其强烈的个性所造成的。所以在英国人之间流传着这样一句俗话: "My home is my castle. The wind can

Queens and human beings can never come in without my permission. ”

When an Englishman moves into a new house, the first thing he does is to build a fence around the house to separate himself from his neighbours. So deeply does the Britishman immerse himself in his private interest that he sometimes can quite ignore the fact that the world is rocking precariously, everything is fleeing just as long as nothing disturbs his favourite “nesting castle. ”

5. “Phlegm”

There is another quality of the British people showing their mentality which is called “phlegm”. It means dull or apathetic coldness or indifference. The British people are cold by nature. They do not show their feelings very much. They do not show their emotion if they are very happy and neither do they if they are sad.

come in, but the Kings and Queens and human beings can never come in without my permission. ”

英国人搬进新居, 要做的第一件事是在房子周围建篱笆, 与邻居隔开。英国人非常重视个人利益, 甚至有时连地球在不停地摇晃这个事实都能置之度外。只要不骚扰他心爱的“安乐窝城堡”, 一切都可以过去。

5. “冷淡”

英国人的另一个性格特点是冷淡, 即沉默、无动于衷、漠不关心。英国人生性冷漠, 感情不外露; 高兴时不外露, 悲伤时也不外露。

Rigid formality is familiar to everybody. So some people say that the Englishman is like a cold fish that has just come out of the ice. Suppose you travel by underground in London every morning between seven o'clock and nine o'clock. There are six million people in the underground in London, but you can not hear a sound because everybody is sitting in silence behind his or her newspaper. And the only word they speak to each other is "sorry" when they get up and walk out too fast. So when you walk through the underground station in the morning and when there are millions of people moving about, you can only hear their feet, you don't hear them talking.

This reluctance to communicate with others is demonstrated in another case. When you work at a factory, the guy, whom you work with, never tells you anything about himself. You may work for years with him, yet you even don't know where he lives,

拘泥礼节这一点是尽人皆知的。所以有人说,英国人像条刚刚从冰里捞出来的冰冷的鱼。假如你每天早晨7点至9点钟乘地铁看看,可以发现,约有六十万人乘地铁;不过,你听不到说话声,因为每个人都静静地坐在那里,捧着报纸看。他们站起来往外走得太快时,彼此唯一的话是"Sorry"。因此,你早晨通过地铁车站时,尽管有数以万计的乘客在走动,但是,听到的只是脚步声,却听不到他们讲话。

这种不喜欢与别人交谈的特性,在另一方面也可以说明。如你在工厂工作,和你一起工作的同事从来不跟你谈他自己的事情。你可能同他一起工作多年,但