
● 南强丛书

英语易混淆词辨异

——词汇学应用

Easily Confused English Words
——Lexicology in Practice

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前 言

孪生儿最难分辨,连非孪生同胞,乃至亲堂、中表、叔侄,因为本是同根,音容维肖,远处难以区分的也有的是。这时如贸然相认,常闹笑话。

英语词汇中也有许多孪生儿或血缘近亲,如不仔细审辨,张冠李戴,也易造成误解;其影响可能不止是笑话,不可不慎!

就词的相似来说,有同音异义(homophones),同形异词(homographs),因其意义截然不同,词典上也分列词条处理,反而不易混淆。还有同义词(synonyms)是一望便知不同的单词,也不至误以为一。另外一类是一些词源相关、词根相同、词形(有时乃至语音)相似的词。这些词之间词义常又相近或相关,但解释不完全相同,在一定语境中可以大不相同,乃至相反。特别在用法上各有分工,不可互换。把它用于不适当场合,就会出语病! 如:

acceptance, acception

access, accession

adherence, adhesion

definite, definitive

displace, misplace

dispersal, dispersion

elemental, elementary

observance, observation

permissible, permissive

rational, reasonable

这一类词可笼统称为易混淆词。它们貌同心异，形似神非，如果想当然地自以为知其一即知其二，在阅读翻译时必然误解或感到费解，写作时不能达意。例如：一般词典常在两词之间互作释义，不易分辨，如：partly, partially。其中，partially 可能被定义为 partly, not completely, 也可能在 partial 词条之后加一个 partially *adv.*, 那么“书一半用英语写”是 partly in English 还是 partially in English?

有时辞典中的中文语义相同。如 incident, incidental 都作“易发生的；伴随的”；locality, location 都作“场所”、“地点”；assent, consent 都是“同意”。此外还有 allure, lure; amend, emend; apprehend, comprehend; assume, presume; avenge, revenge; award, reward; bloom, blossom; certainty, certitude; contemporaneous, contemporary; continual, continuous……它们之间何时才同义？是否任何场合都可以交替使用？

以前上海租界公园门口挂着“中国人与狗不得入内！”的侮辱性的牌子。对这些帝国主义者，真应该“以其人之道还治其人之身”，也在别人可去而他们也想去的地方写上“不准入内！”可是且慢！英语怎么表达？是 No admittance 还是 No admission？

female voice 和 feminine voice; female education 和 feminine education 哪一个是对的？也许全对？

sensual pleasures 和 sensuous pleasures 在某一定语境下可以都讲得通，如果要表达夏天洗完澡，两腋风生，清凉无汗这种感觉，该用哪个？

该说 economic rent 还是 economical rent？

detract 和 distract 中的-tract 这个词根都表示 to pull, to draw, 而 de-和 dis-又都是一种表示消极意思的前缀，两词意义一样吗？

flammable 和 inflammable 之间是什么关系？

这一连串问题，会不断在学习英语过程中出现。如果说词汇学

可以通俗地定义为“词的科学”，似乎不能不指导学生解决这一类问题。如果在传统教材外，另以易混淆词为纲，自分别比较中讲授各组词条的词源、构成（前后词缀、词根）、词义转变、褒贬词性、书面语、口头语等等，一而再、再而三地通过解剖麻雀的方式来巩固一般词汇学书中所谈到的上述重要的问题。那么，既学到了概念，又解决了上述容易混淆的难点，更重要的是，可以学会如何运用辞书及活的口笔语教材，研究单词的办法。也许可以使理论更好地结合实践。

笔者以前在词汇学教学过程中，出于这种设想，上课时常就易混淆词先各列举若干例句，要求学生考虑、讨论，然后作结论式说明。笔者认为这种做法可以启发同学思维，而且由于易混淆性有似是而非的感觉，对比兴趣盎然，印象较为深刻。因反映良好，以后又以若干词条于研究生课中讨论，也有一定效果。

现自历年讲义中选出若干词条，整理成编。编排方式以每两词作一组（以免多词交叉对比，印象混乱，难以记忆），每组中先给例句让读者自行考虑有何区别后，再作说明。例句一概不加译文，只对各词条略给词典中一、二释义，供参考。为了突出区别，有时还将两词放在其它方面相同或极相似的结构中，作为对比。例如：

{ access to the throne
{ accession to the throne

12年来编写讲义一再更新过程中承黄丽蓉、苏宗文两君经常提供资料，提出建议；成书阶段，又得林立、李红梅、李美华、许紫红诸君热情协助整理、补充例句，林、李二位出力尤多，实为可感。

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作者

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词 目 表*

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6	acceptance acceptance	14 admission admittance
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	with)	17 advance advancement
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10	activate actuate	19 advert avert
	actuate → activate	20 affect effect
		21 affectation affection
		affection → affectation

* “→”表示“见前…条”。

22 affinity infinity
 22 allude elude
 23 allure lure
 24 alternate alternative
 alternative → alternate
 25 amend emend
 26 amiable amicable
 amicable → amiable
 27 amity enmity
 27 amoral immoral
 28 antiquated antique
 antique → antiquated
 28 appraise apprise
 29 appraise praise
 30 apprehend comprehend
 apprise → appraise
 31 arbiter arbitrator
 arbitrator → arbiter
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 31 artisan artist
 artist → artisan
 32 aspire inspire
 33 assent consent
 34 assignation assignment
 assignment → assignation
 34 assimilate simulate
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 36 avenge revenge
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 37 avocation vocation

37 award reward

B

39 bail bale
 bale → bail
 40 baleful baneful
 baneful → baleful
 40 beneficent beneficial
 beneficial → beneficent
 41 biannual biennial
 biennial → biannual
 41 bloom blossom
 blossom → bloom
 42 born borne
 borne → born

C

43 catalogue category
 category → catalogue
 43 censor censure
 censure → censor
 44 ceremonial ceremonious
 ceremonious → ceremonial
 46 certainty certitude
 certitude → certainty
 46 cessation cession
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 47 cession session
 47 cheerful cheery
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48	childish childlike childlike → childish		
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56	complacent complaisant complaisant → complacent comprehend → apprehend	64	contemporaneous contempo- rary
57	comprehensible comprehen- sive comprehensive → comprehensi- ble concede → accede	64	contemporary → contemporane- ous
58	confident confidential confidential → confident	65	contemptible contemptuous contemptuous → contemptible
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60	conscience consciousness	67	co-respondent correspon- dent
60	conscientious conscious conscious → conscientious	68	corporal corporeal corporeal → corporal correspondent → co-respondent
		69	corps corpse corpse → corps
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72 | credible creditable
 | credit → credence
 | creditable → credible
 73 | crumble crumple
 | crumple → crumble
 | curtsy → courtesy
 | custom → costume

D

74 | daze dazzle
 | dazzle → daze
 75 | deadly deathly
 | deathly → deadly
 76 | debar disbar
 77 | deceit deception
 77 | deceitful deceptive
 | deception → deceit
 | deceptive → deceitful
 78 | decided decisive
 | decisive → decided
 79 | declaim disclaim
 80 | deduce deduct
 | deduct → deduce
 80 | defective deficient
 82 | defensible defensive
 | defensive → defensible
 82 | deference deferment
 | deferment → deference
 | deficient → defective
 83 | definite definitive

 | definitive → definite
 84 | delicate delicious
 | delicious → delicate
 85 | deliverance delivery
 | delivery → deliverance
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 88 | deportation deportment
 | deportment → deportation
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 89 | deprecate depreciate
 | depreciate → deprecate
 90 | derange disarrange
 91 | derelict dereliction
 | dereliction → derelict
 91 | desert dessert
 | dessert → desert
 92 | desirable desirous
 | desirous → desirable
 92 | despair desperation
 | desperation → despair
 93 | destination destiny
 | destiny → destination
 93 | detract distract
 94 | detract subtract
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 | directly → direct
 96 | disability inability
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 96 | disassemble dissemble
 | disbar → debar

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97	disburse	disperse
	disclaim	→ declaim
98	discreet	discrete
	discrete	→ discreet
99	disinterested	uninterested
99	dispersal	dispersion
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	dispersion	→ dispersal
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101	displace	replace
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	disposition	→ disposal
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	diversity	→ diversion

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	earthy	→ earthly
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107	economic	economical
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	edible	→ eatable
	edition	→ addition
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	educative	→ educational
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	efficacious	→ effectual
	efficient	→ effective
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	electrical	→ electric
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116	eminent	imminent
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118	enormity	enormousness
	enormousness	→ enormity
119	entrance	entry
	entry	→ entrance
120	enviable	envious
	envious	→ enviable

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120	epigraph		epitaph
	epitaph	→	epigraph
121	equable		equitable
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123	especially		specially
123	estimate		estimation
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124	evasion		evasiveness
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124	every one		everyone
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125	exceedingly		excessively
	except	→	accept
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	exceptional	→	exceptionable
	excessively	→	exceedingly

F

127	facility		faculty
128	facility		felicity
129	factitious		fictitious
	faculty	→	facility
130	falsehood		falseness
	falseness	→	falsehood
131	farther		further
131	fatal		fateful
	fateful	→	fatal

	felicity	→	facility
132	female		feminine
	feminine	→	female
134	festal		festive
	festive	→	festal
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134	flare		glare
135	flashing		flashy
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136	flavour		savour
137	fleshly		fleshy
	fleshy	→	fleshly
138	forceful		forcible
	forcible	→	forceful
138	forego		forgo
	forgo	→	forego
139	funeral		funereal
	funereal	→	funeral
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G

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	gaze	→	gape
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	gentle	→	genteel
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	gesture	→	gesticulation
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144	gleam		glimmer

	glimmer → gleam
	glimpse → glance
145	glisten glitter
	glitter → glisten
145	glorify glory
	glory → glorify
146	gold golden
	Ggolden → gold
147	gourmand gourmet
	gourmet → gourmand
147	graceful gracious
	gracious → graceful
149	grand grandiose
	grandiose → grand
149	grateful gratified
150	gratification gratitude
	gratified → grateful
	gratitude → gratification
151	grief grievance
	grievance → grief
151	groan moan
152	growl howl

H

154	hard hardly
	hardly → hard
154	healthful healthy
	healthy → healthful
155	hesitancy hesitation
	hesitation → hesitancy

156	high highly
	highly → high
156	historic historical
	historical → historic
158	honorable honorary
	honorary → honorable
	howl → growl
159	human humane
	humane → human
159	humiliation humility
	humility → humiliation

I

161	identification identity
	identity → identification
	illegible → eligible
	illusion → delusion
161	illustrative illustrious
	illustrious → illustrative
162	imaginary imaginative
	imaginative → imaginary
	immerge → emerge
	immigrate → emigrate
	imminent → eminent
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163	immunity impunity
164	imperative imperious
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165	imprudent impudent

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166	incapable unable		
166	incident incidental		J
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169	informant informer		kindly → kind
	informer → informant		
169	ingenious ingenuous		L
	ingenuous → ingenious	180	last latest
170	inhibit prohibit		latest → last
170	inquest inquiry	180	legislation legislature
	inquiry → inquest		legislature → legislation
171	insidious invidious	181	lengthened lengthy
	inspire → aspire		lengthy → lengthened
	institute → institution	181	limit limitation
	institution → institute		limitation → limit
172	instructional instructive	182	linage lineage
	instructive → instructional		lineage → linage
173	intellectual intelligent	183	literal literary
	intelligent → intellectual		literary → literal
174	intense intensive	183	locality location
	intensive → intense		location → locality
175	intent intention		lure → allure
	intention → intent		

184 | luxuriant luxurious
| luxurious → luxuriant

M

186 | magic magical
| magical → magic
187 | masterful masterly
| masterly → masterful
| misplace → displace
| mistrust → distrust
| misuse → abuse
| moan → groan
188 | mode mood
189 | momentary momentous
| momentous → momentary
| mood → mode
189 | moral morale
| morale → moral
190 | motif motive
| motive → motif

N

192 | negligent negligible
| negligible → negligent
| nominate → denominate

O

193 | observance observation
| observation → observance
| obtrude → intrude

P

194 | partially partly
| partly → partially
195 | peaceable peaceful
| peaceful → peaceable
196 | pence pennies
| pennies → pence
196 | permissible permissive
| permissive → permissible
197 | perpetrate perpetuate
| perpetuate → perpetrate
197 | personage personality
| personality → personage
| personify → impersonate
198 | perspicacious perspicuous
| perspicuous → perspicacious
199 | potent potential
| potential → potent
200 | practicable practical
| practical → practicable
| praise → appraise
201 | precede proceed
| presume → assume
| proceed → precede
| prohibit → inhibit

R

202 | rational reasonable
| reasonable → rational

replace → displace
restrain → constrain
revenge → avenge
reward → award

S

203 savour → flavour
seasonable seasonal
seasonal → seasonable
204 sensible sensitive
sensitive → sensible
205 sensual sensuous
sensuous → sensual
205 sentiment sentimentality
sentimentality → sentiment
session → cession
206 shade shadow
shadow → shade
simulate → assimilate
207 sociable social
social → sociable
specially → especially
208 spiritual spirituous
spirituous → spiritual
208 stimulant stimulus
stimulus → stimulant
209 storey story
story → storey
subtract → detract

210 suit suite
suite → suit

T

211 tasteful tasty
tasty → tasteful
211 temporal temporary
temporary → temporal
212 tortuous torturous
torturous → toutuous
213 transient transitory
transitory → transient
214 triumphal triumphant
triumphant → triumphal

U

unable → incapable
unbelief → disbelief
uninterested → disinterested

V

venture → adventure
216 verbal verbose
verbose → verbal
216 virtual virtuous
virtuous → virtual
vocation → avocation

A

abjure 弃绝,放弃

adjure 命令,恳求

- (A) (1) The ambitious general, taking advantage of the event, abjured all allegiance to the emperor.
- (2) The church proclaimed that the professor would have to abjure his belief before he could give lectures again.
- (3) The rigidity in his position made the negotiators abjure mediation as a solution to the dispute.
- (B) (1) The investigation committee adjured the ex-secretary to testify truthfully.
- (2) His girl friend adjured him to think carefully before taking any action.
- (3) His family adjured him to tell them what had actually happened.

说明:

两词不同只在一个字母(d与b)上,但意义出入很大。因为前缀 ad-和 ab-意义相反。前者等于“to”,后者等于“away from”。按词源来说,两词的-jure 这一部分等于“to swear”(宣誓)。abjure = to swear away from; adjure = to swear to。

因此 abjure 有“违反誓言”、“发誓断绝(关系)”或“放弃(主张、信仰、忠诚)”等的意义。此外,我们通常所说“发誓再也不干”的事,必是深知其恶,或身受其害,因此又引申为故意避免,怀有恶意

地拒绝。

adjure 原意是命令(对方)宣誓(要做某事),如例句(B)(1)。按宣誓的用意无非表示真诚、严肃、认真,因此从宣誓的意旨出发,该词意义扩张为“靠触动对方责任感来命令或呼吁(对方)做(某事)”。现在更引申作“恳求”,或表示“迫切”的心理。

由于两词词干(*jurare* 即“to swear”)是法律词语(可比较 jury(陪审团),jurisdiction(裁判权)),不难理解,两词都适用于正式文体。

abrogate 废止

arrogate 冒称,僭取

- (A) (1) Any earlier laws which conflict with this new statute should be abrogated.
- (2) The treaty between the two countries can not be abrogated by either a court decision or a statute.
- (3) The new government soon abrogated all special legal privileges for the nobility.
- (B) (1) The assistant manager arrogated to himself the right of approving or rejecting all applications.
- (2) The secretary arrogated to himself all the authority of the board of directors.
- (3) Mary arrogated to herself a certain air of importance.

说明:

to abrogate a law 是废止某项法令;to abrogate a custom 是中止某种习惯。

to arrogate to oneself 是毫无根据地对不属于自己的权益、特权擅自据为己有,如例 B(1)、(2),或妄自装成如例 B(3)。按 arrogate 和 arrogant(傲慢的)都可推源到同一的拉丁词 *arrogare*(=