深度阅读：The Glorious Messiness of English

导 读

　　Some languages resist the introduction of new words. Others, like English, seem to welcome them. Robert MacNeil looks at the history of English and comes to the conclusion that its tolerance for change represents deeply rooted ideas of freedom.

　　有些语言拒绝引入新词。另一些语言，如英语，则似乎欢迎新词的引入。罗伯特·麦克尼尔回顾英语的历史，得出结论说，英语对变化的包容性体现了根深蒂固的自由思想。

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The Glorious Messiness

of English

Robert MacNeil

绚烂而又杂乱的英语

罗伯特·麦克尼尔

Unit 7

1   The story of our English language is typically one of massive stealing from other languages. That is why English today has an estimated vocabulary of over one million words, while other major languages have far fewer.

我们的英语的历史是典型的大量窃取其它语言的历史。正因为如此，今日英语的词汇量据估计超过一百万，而其它主要语言的词汇量都要小得多。

2   French, for example, has only about 75,000 words, and that includes English expressions like snack bar and hit parade. The French, however, do not like borrowing foreign words because they think it corrupts their language. The government tries to ban words from English and declares that Walkman is not desirable; so they invent a word, balladeur, which French kids are supposed to say instead -- but they don't.

例如，法语只有约75,000个单词，其中还包括像snack bar（快餐店）和 hit parade（流行唱片目录）这样的英语词汇。但法国人不喜欢借用外来词，因为他们认为这样会损害法语的纯洁性。法国政府试图逐出英语词汇，宣称Walkman（随身听）一词有伤大雅，因此他们造了个新词balladeur让法国儿童用——可他们就是不用。

3   Walkman is fascinating because it isn't even English. Strictly speaking, it was invented by the Japanese manufacturers who put two simple English words together to name their product. That doesn't bother us, but it does bother the French. Such is the glorious messiness

of English. That happy tolerance, that willingness to accept words from anywhere, explains the richness of English and why it has become, to a very real extent, the first truly global language.

Walkman一词非常耐人寻味，因为这个词连英语也不是。严格地说，该词是由日本制造商发明的，他们把两个简单的英语单词拼在一起来命名他们的产品。这事儿我们不介意，法国人却耿耿于怀。由此可见英语中绚丽多彩的杂乱无章现象。这种乐意包容的精神，这种不管源自何方来者不拒的精神，恰好解释了英语为什么会这么丰富，解释了英语缘何在很大程度上第一个成了真正的国际语言。

4　　How did the language of a small island off the coast of Europe become the language of the planet -- more widely spoken and written than any other has ever been? The history of English is present in the first words a child learns about identity (I, me, you); possession (mine, yours); the body (eye, nose, mouth); size (tall, short); and necessities (food, water). These words all come from Old English or Anglo-Saxon English, the core of our language. Usually short and direct, these are words we still use today for the things that really matter to us.

欧洲沿海一个弹丸小岛的语言何以会成为地球上的通用语言，比历史上任何一种其他语言都更为广泛地被口头和书面使用？英语的历史体现在孩子最先学会用来表示身份（I, me, you）、所属关系（mine, yours）、身体部位（eye, nose, mouth）、大小高矮（tall, short），以及生活必需品（food, water）的词汇当中。这些词都来自英语的核心部分古英语或盎格鲁－萨克逊英语。这些词通常简短明了，我们今天仍然用这些词来表示对我们真正至关

NO APPLE OR PINE IN PINEAPPLE.

重要的事物。
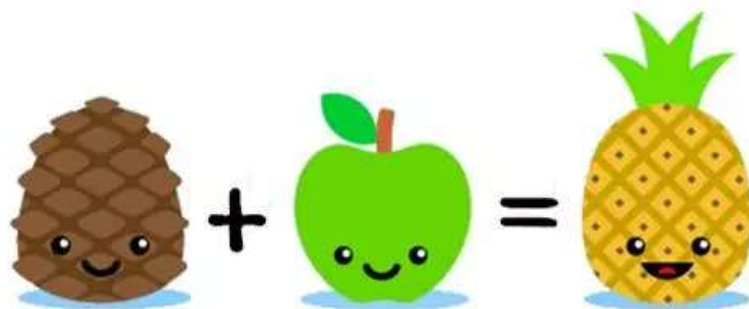
5   Great speakers often use Old English to arouse our emotions. For example, during World War II, Winston Churchill made this speech, stirring the courage of his people against Hitler's armies positioned to cross the English Channel: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender."

    伟大的演说家常常用古英语来激发我们的情感。例如，在二战期间，温斯顿·丘吉尔作了如下的演讲来激励国民的勇气以抵抗屯兵英吉利海峡准备渡海作战的希特勒的军队：“我们要战斗在海滩上，我们要战斗在着陆场上，我们要战斗在田野和街巷，我们要战斗在群山中。我们决不投降。”

6   Virtually every one of those words came from Old English, except the last -- surrender, which came from Norman French. Churchill could have said, "We shall never give in," but it is one of the lovely -- and powerful -- opportunities of English that a writer can mix, for effect, different words from different backgrounds. Yet there is something direct to the heart that speaks to us from the earliest words in our language.

    这段文字中几乎每个词都来自古英语，只有最后一个词——surrender 是个例外，来自诺曼法语。丘吉尔原本可以说：“We shall never give in，”但这正是英语迷人之处和活力所在，作家为了加强效果可以糅合来自不同背景的不同词汇。而演说中使用古英语词汇具有直接拨动心弦的效果。

7   When Julius Caesar invadedBritainin 55 B.C., English did not exist. The Celts, who inhabited the land, spoke languages that survive today mainly as Welsh. Where those languages came from is still a mystery, but there is a theory.

尤利乌斯·凯撒在公元前55年入侵不列颠时，英语尚不存在。当时不列颠的居民凯尔特人使用的那些语言流传下来主要成了威尔士语。这些语言的起源至今仍是个不解之谜，但有一种理论试图解开这个谜。

8   Two centuries ago an English judge inIndianoticed that several words in Sanskrit closely resembled some words in Greek and Latin. A systematic study revealed that many modern languages descended from a common parent language, lost to us because nothing was written down.

两个世纪前，在印度当法官的一位英国人注意到，梵文中有一些词与希腊语、拉丁语中的一些词极为相似。系统的研究显示，许多现代语言起源于一个共同的母语，但由于没有文字记载，该母语已经失传。

9   Identifying similar words, linguists have come up with what they call an Indo-European parent language, spoken until 3500 to 2000 B.C. These people had common words for snow, bee and wolf but no word for sea. So some scholars assume they lived somewhere in north-central Europe, where it was cold. Traveling east, some established the languages ofIndiaandPakistan, and others drifted west toward the gentler climates of Europe. Some who made the earliest move westward became known as the Celts, whom Caesar's armies found inBritain.

语言学家找出了相似的词，提出这些语言的源头是他们称之为印欧母语的语言，这种语言使用于公元前3500年至公元前2000年。这些人使用同样的词表达"雪"、"蜜蜂"和"狼"，但没有表示"海"的词。因此有些学者认为，他们生活在寒冷的中北欧某个地区。一些人向东迁徙形成了印度和巴基斯坦的各种语言，有些人则向西漂泊，来到欧洲气候较为温暖的地区。最早西移的一些人后来被称作凯尔特人，亦即凯撒的军队在不列颠发现的民族。

10   New words came with the Germanic tribes -- the Angles, the Saxons, etc. -- that slipped across the North Sea to settle inBritainin the 5th century. Together they formed what we call Anglo-Saxon society.

新的词汇随日尔曼部落——盎格鲁、萨克逊等部落——而来，他们在5世纪的时候越过北海定居在不列颠。他们共同形成了我们称之为盎格鲁‐萨克逊的社会。

11   The Anglo-Saxons passed on to us their farming vocabulary, including sheep, ox, earth, wood, field and work. They must have also enjoyed themselves because they gave us the word laughter.

盎格鲁 - 萨克逊人将他们的农耕词汇留传给我们，包括sheep, ox, earth, wood, field 和 work等。他们的日子一定过得很开心，因为他们留传给我们laughter一词。

Laughter Really Is the Best Medicine

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Strengthens Your Immune System
Burns Calories
Makes You HAPPY

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12   The next big influence on English was Christianity. It enriched the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary with some 400 to 500 words from Greek and Latin, including angel, disciple and martyr.

下一个对英语产生重大影响的是基督教。基督教以400至500个希腊语、拉丁语词汇丰富了盎格鲁 - 萨克逊词汇，如angel（天使），disciple（门徒） 和 martyr（殉难者）等。

13   Then into this relatively peaceful land came the Vikings from Scandinavia. They also brought to English many words that begin with sk, like sky and skirt. But Old Norse and English both survived, and so you can rear a child (English) or raise a child (Norse). Other such pairs survive: wish and want, craft and skill, hide and skin. Each such addition gave English more richness, more variety.

接着北欧海盗从斯堪的纳维亚来到了这块相对和平的土地。他们也给英语带来了许多以sk开头的词汇，如sky 和 skirt。但古斯堪的纳维亚语和英语同时留传下来，因此你可以说rear a child（英语），也可以说raise a child（斯堪的纳维亚语）。其他留传下来的这类同义词组有：wish 和 want，craft 和 skill，hide 和 skin。每一个类似的词的增添都使英语更加丰富，更加多样化。

14   Another flood of new vocabulary occurred in 1066, when the Normans conqueredEngland. The country now had three languages: French for the nobles, Latin for the churches and English for the common people. With three languages competing, there were sometimes different terms for the same thing. For example, Anglo-Saxons had the word kingly, but after the Normans, royal and sovereign entered the language as alternatives. The extraordinary thing was that French did not replace English. Over three centuries English gradually swallowed French, and by the end of the 15th century what had developed was a modified, greatly enriched language -- Middle English -- with about 10,000 "borrowed" French words.

另一次新词的大量涌入发生在1066年，诺曼人征服英国的时候。这时英国三种语言并用：贵族使用法语，教会使用拉丁语，平民使用英语。由于三种语言相互竞争，有时同一事物就出现了不同的名称。例如，盎格鲁－萨克逊语有kingly一词，但诺曼人入侵后，royal 和 sovereign作为替代词进入了英语。不同寻常的是，法语没有取代英语。三个多世纪后，英语逐渐吞并了法语，到15世纪末，发展成为一种经过改进，大大丰富了的拥有一万多个"借来"的法语词汇的语言——中古英语。

15   Around 1476 William Caxton set up a printing press inEnglandand started a communications revolution. Printing brought into English the wealth of new thinking that sprang from the European Renaissance. Translations of Greek and Roman classics were poured onto the printed page, and with them thousands of Latin words like capsule and habitual, and Greek words like catastrophe and thermometer. Today we still borrow from Latin and Greek to name new inventions, like video, television and cyberspace.

大约在1476年，威廉·卡克斯顿在英国制造了一台印刷机，由此掀起了一场信息传播技术的革命。印刷术把欧洲文艺复兴运动中涌现的大量新思想传入英国。希腊罗马经典著作的译文纷纷印成书册，成千上万的拉丁词，如capsule（密封小容器；航天舱）和 habitual（惯常的），希腊词，如catastrophe（大灾难）和 thermometer（温度计）等也随之涌入。今天我们仍借用拉丁、希腊语命名新的发明创造，如video, television 和 cyberspace（虚拟空间）等。

16   As settlers landed in North America and established theUnited   States, English found itself with two sources -- American and British. Scholars inBritainworried that the language was out of control, and some wanted to set up an academy to decide which words were proper and which were not. Fortunately their idea has never been put into practice.

随着移民在北美登陆并建立美国，英语出现了两个源头——美式英语和英式英语。英国的学者担心英语会失控，有人想成立一个有权威的学会，决定哪些词汇合适，哪些词汇不合适。幸运的是，他们的设想从未付诸实施。
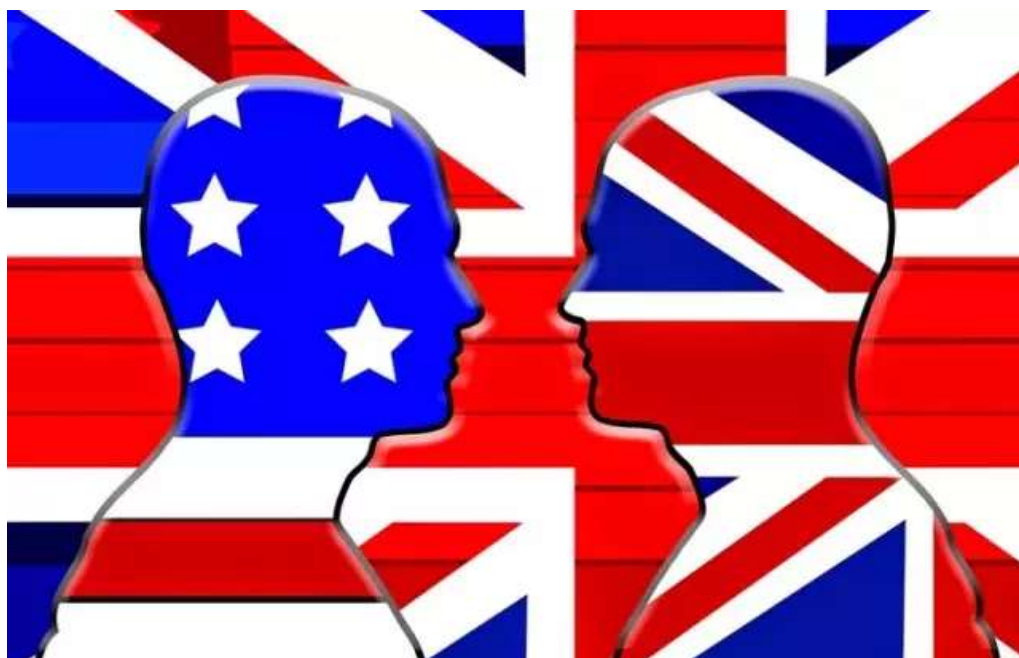
17   That tolerance for change also represents deeply rooted ideas of freedom. Danish scholar Otto Jespersen wrote in 1905, "The English language would not have been what it is if the English had not been for centuries great respecters of the liberties of each individual and if everybody had not been free to strike out new paths for himself."

这种对变化的包容态度也体现了根深蒂固的自由精神。丹麦学者奥托·叶斯柏森在1905年写道："如果不是多少世纪以来英国人一向崇尚个人自由，如果不是人人都能自由地为自己开拓新的道路，英语就不会成为今天的英语。"

18   I like that idea. Consider that the same cultural soil producing the English language also nourished the great principles of freedom and rights of man in the modern world. The first shoots sprang up inEngland, and they grew stronger inAmerica. The English-speaking peoples have defeated all efforts to build fences around their language.

我喜欢这一观点。想想吧，孕育英语的文化土壤也同样为现今的世界培育了伟大的自由精神及人权准则。最初的根芽在英国萌发，接着在美国生长壮大。英语国家的人民挫败了种种意欲建立语言保护的企图。
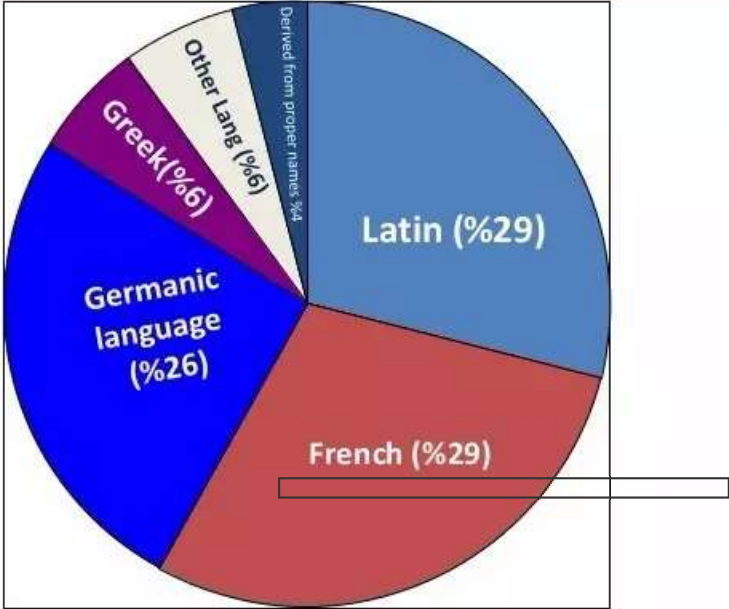
19　Indeed, the English language is not the special preserve of grammarians, language police, teachers, writers or the intellectual elite. English is, and always has been, the tongue of the common man.

　　事实上，英语不是语法学家、语言卫道士、教师、作家或知识精英的特殊领地。英语是，而且一向是，人民大众的语言。