

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week

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Q & A of the Week: Identifying American Accents 辨别美语口音

Jo: On today's BBC Learning English Question and Answer of the Week programme, Jean and I will be looking to answer this question from Qimley in Shantou.

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How can I identify American accents from British ones? And how can I learn pure British accents?

Jean: Qimley 想知道她怎么样能够辨认出英音和美音的不同。鉴别、辨认 **identify**, 口音 **accent**. 而且她也想知道她怎么才能够说一口纯正的英音口语。纯正的 **pure**.

Jo: Well, this is of course quite difficult to answer as there isn't one American accent and one British accent.

Jean: 是的, 即使在英国和美国当地也是存在着不同的地方口音的。为了帮助大家更好的理解和辨别, 我们请加拿大人 **Dana** 以她的角度给我们谈了她在这方面体会。作为加拿大人 **Dana** 的口音是北美口音, 不过她已经在英国生活居住了十年。

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For me what really stands out is the different vocabulary we use. For example, a North American would use the word apartment whereas a Brit would say flat. Another example is rubbish, that's the British word and the North American equivalent would be garbage.

Jo: So for Dana what really stands out is the different vocabulary British and North American accents use.

Jean: To stand out 就是“比较突出的、明显的”。对于 **Dana** 来说, 英美英语里最突出的不同就是在他们使用的词汇上 **vocabulary**.

Jo: So a North American would use the word apartment whereas a Brit would say flat.

Jean: **Dana** 把英国人成为 **Brits** – 这是英语里比较普遍和口语化的“英国人”的简称。她谈到了英美两国使用词汇的不同, 比如说“公寓”这个词在美语里是 **apartment**, 而英国人会说 **flat**. **Whereas** 是英语里的转折词“而、却”的意思。

Jo: Another example she gave is rubbish.

Jean: 垃圾这个词，在北美同样的意思他们用的词是 **garbage**. 相等的、等同的 在英语里就是 **equivalent**.

Jo: The North American equivalent. There are lots of similar examples that you can find on the internet. Here's Dana with more differences.

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There are some words that very clearly the Brits and the North Americans pronounce differently, even though they're the same word and the best example I can think of is tomato and tomato.

Jo: So there are also some words that very clearly North Americans and British people pronounce very differently.

Jean: 没错。有的时候同样的一个词，而英国人和美国人的发音就相差很多。发音 **pronounce**。比如说 **tomato** 和 **tomato** “番茄”这个词。

Jo: Again there are other examples like herb in North American English and herb in British English.

Jean: Herb 就是膜塑香草，草药的意思。

Jo: But as well as words, some sounds are pronounced differently too.

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If I were going to drive my car – that's how I pronounce c.a.r. However a Brit might say caa – they don't actually pronounce the r.

I can also think of words that have the combination of the letter t and the letter u in it. So in London I would take the Tube whereas a Brit would take the Tube. It's almost as if they would pronounce it with a ch instead of a t. The instrument a tuba they would call a tuba.

The way we pronounce our as is also quite different – for example the North Americans would say water, whereas a Brit would say water. It's almost as if the a has an aw sound in the British accent.

Jean: Wow so quite a few differences there. 首先是 R 的发音，在美式里 R 是卷舌音很重的，和英音听上去很不同。

Jo: So a North American would say car and a British person would say car. However, if you are from Scotland or Ireland the R pronunciation is more likely to be like the North American pronunciation.

Jean: 还有那些拼写中有字母 t 和 u 组合在一起的单词。组合 **combination**. 比如说在伦敦的地铁，英国人就叫它 **tube**.

Jo: Tube. But a North American would say tube.

Jean: Dana 给我们解释说，当英国人说这个词的时候他们发的几乎是 **ch** 的音。还有大号 **tuba** 这个 **instrument** 这个乐器。

Jo: Tuba in British English, tuba in North American English. And finally Dana mentions a difference in the way As are pronounced. North Americans will say water, whereas British people say water.

Jean: 看来“水” water 这个词的英美发音也很不同，还有一个词是表示“令人敬畏的”或者“极好的”。

Jo: Awesome in British English and awesome in American English. In North America As are pronounced A and in British English it's more like AW.

Jean: 我们也专门请教了 BBC 英语教学部的专家 Nuala O'Sullivan，听她给我们介绍几个学习英音的小诀窍。

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You need to look for resources that are British-based – so be trying to look at websites that are British, try to listen to programmes like this on the BBC World Service, try to watch films or TV programmes that are British-based and then you'll be exposed to British accents and British vocabulary and British ways of speaking.

Jo: So you need to look for British-based resources.

Jean: 英国本地的资源 – 那首先就要数我们 BBC Learning English 喽!! 你也许要夺取接触英国人的口音、词汇和英式的表达方法。

Jo: You'll be exposed to British accents, vocabulary and British ways of speaking. And Nuala has a very important message for everyone who might be worried about which kind of English is better to speak or learn. Here's some language to help you. Be true to yourself.

Jean: 真实面对自己。

Jo: A global society.

Jean: 一个环球社会。

Jo: To get hung up on something.

Jean: 太过于计较某事。

Jo: To get your message across.

Jean: 表达出你的意见来。不过最后还要提醒大家的是，虽然我们比较了一些英语和美语的发音与用词方面的不同，不过区分英美口音也是没有一成不变的一定之规的，英美英语和其它地域的英语它们之间都存在着许多的相同和不同点，而我们今天给大家介绍的只是其中的几个，正如 Nuala 给我们做的如下解释。

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I think it's not that important to say this is exactly how Americans speak and this is exactly how British people speak. I think the most important thing is to be able to understand a variety of Englishes and to be able to express yourself in English and use your own accent, be true to yourself – that's what I'd say.

I mean we live in a global society now – I don't think you should get too hung up about saying I want to speak like an American, I want to speak British English, or whatever.

From my point of view as an English speaker, when I'm with other people I just want to communicate with them and I don't care if they speak South African English or Singaporean English or Chinese English or American English –so it's getting your message across that's the important thing, not the accent in which you do it.

Jo: So excellent advice there. We hope that's helped all of you and answered your question Qimley. Don't forget our website www.bbcchina.com.cn where you can see all the questions people have asked us.

Jean: 如果大家有其它问题想要我们来为你解答，那么就请发邮件到我们的电子邮箱：questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk。好，今天的节目就到这里了，我们下次节目再见！

Jo: Bye.