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Vocabulary: language 词汇: 语言

You're learning English, right? You might think you can work out the **grammar** and have built a vast **vocabulary**, but then you come across an expression like 'plos'. According to online **urban slang** dictionaries, it means 'parents looking over shoulder'. Teenagers are to blame. They have their own **code**, including 'text speak' when they are on the internet or using their phones.



Text speak has a lot to do with inventing **cool** new **terms** – and these change quickly. Maybe you shouldn't be surprised if an English friend says you sound a bit **old-fashioned**. The **modal verb** 'shall' is **on the way out** because 'will' sounds more natural these days. Bas Aarts, Professor of English **linguistics** at University College London says, "If you have two words which more or less express the same meaning, one of the two words will get pushed out of the language."

People have been **shying away from** using the modal 'must' because it sounds **authoritarian** and people are choosing to express **obligation** in different ways. It sounds nicer to soften obligation by saying 'might'. For example, "You might like to read this article."

Progressive tenses - formed from the verb 'be' and the **suffix** 'ing' - are used for ongoing situations, for example, 'I'm writing this article for you to read'. But its use has been increasing rapidly. Bas Aarts says that this might have to do with **advertising**. A fast-food chain uses the expression 'I'm loving it' in English-speaking countries. But the verb 'love' expresses a state of being – as opposed to doing – and is usually used in the simple form, for example, 'I love it'. These days, people are using **stative verbs** in the progressive more and more.

Before you despair and throw your English book in the bin, be assured that some words take a very long time to change. According to Professor Mark Pagel at Reading University in the UK, **pronouns** like 'I', 'you' and 'we' evolve slowly – a thousand years ago we would be using similar or sometimes identical sounds. **Nouns** and **adjectives**, on the other hand, get replaced rapidly

– and in 500 years or so we'll probably be using different words to the ones we have now. But let's leave the problem for the future generations.

词汇表

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| grammar | 语法 |
| vocabulary | 词汇 |
| urban slang | 现代俚语 |
| code | 代码, 语言, 代号 |
| cool | 酷的, 时尚的 |
| term | 表达, 术语 |
| old-fashioned | 过时的, 老派的 |
| modal verb | 情态动词 |
| on the way out | 即将过时, 即将被淘汰 |
| linguistics | 语言学 |
| shy away from | 回避, 躲避 |
| authoritarian | 专制的 |
| obligation | 义务, 职责 |
| progressive tenses | 进行时态 |
| suffix | 后缀, 词尾 |
| advertising | 广告业 |
| stative verb | 静态动词 |
| pronoun | 代词 |
| noun | 名词 |
| adjective | 形容词 |

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Why are teenagers helping to change language?
2. Why might an English-speaking person think a non-native speaker of English sounds old-fashioned?
3. Why is the word 'might' often used to replace the word 'must'?
4. What has been interfering with the way grammar is used?
5. Which word is likely to change faster: 'likable' or 'they'?

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. 'I'm living in Beijing.' This is an example of _____.

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| a stative verb | a progressive tense | an adjective | old-fashioned English |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------------|

2. 'Ourselves' is a _____.

| | | | |
|-----------|------|----------|---------|
| adjective | noun | new word | pronoun |
|-----------|------|----------|---------|

3. These cars are mass produced. They are supposed to be _____.

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|-------|------|
| similar | identical | equal | same |
|---------|-----------|-------|------|

4. The current use of the verb 'like' is: We _____ it!

| | | | |
|------------|-------|------|----------------|
| are liking | likes | like | will be liking |
|------------|-------|------|----------------|

5. An informal use of language in a context known to a particular group is called _____.

| | | | |
|-----------|-------|---------------|-------------------|
| adjective | slang | old fashioned | progressive tense |
|-----------|-------|---------------|-------------------|

答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Why are teenagers helping to change language?

Because they tend to develop their own code to talk to each other (and not be understood by their parents).

2. Why might an English-speaking person think a non-native speaker of English sounds old-fashioned?

Because language has been changing quickly and some words disappear and are replaced by new ones.

3. Why is the word 'might' often used to replace the word 'must'?

The word 'might' sounds nicer than the word 'must' when you want to express obligation but sound less authoritarian.

4. What has been interfering with the way grammar is used?

Advertising.

5. Which word is likely to change faster: 'likable' or 'they'?

'Likable' because it is an adjective while 'they' is a pronoun. According to Professor Mark Pagel at Reading University in the UK, adjectives and nouns are likely to be replaced faster.

2. 请你在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. 'I'm living in Beijing.' This is an example of a **progressive tense**.

2. 'Ourselves' is a **pronoun**.

3. These cars are mass produced. They are supposed to be **identical**.

4. The current use of the verb 'like' is: We **like** it!

5. An informal use of language in a context known to a particular group is called **slang**.