

许国璋主编《英语》

难句分析

Analysis of Difficult Sentences

徐赴戎 蔡源远 编 罗义蕴 黄鼎业 审校

成都科技大学出版社

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前 言

资深教授许国璋先生主编的《英语》一书问世已逾二十多个春秋(七九年修订),印刷二十余次,其发行量恐不下数百万册之巨,足见其在国内影响之大,读者之众。为了帮助众多读者更好地学习这套教材,一些出版社已先后向社会推出多种教学参考资料。它们从各种不同角度研究这套教材,籍以提供辅导。然笔者读后仍觉意犹未尽,遂自编《难句分析》以资补充,并期望能为《英语》这一百花园增添一片绿叶。

《难句分析》从《英语》二至四册的四十九篇课文及四篇补充材料中择其难句共五百八十七句,逐句进行分析、讨论,务使读者化难为易,扫除学习课文中的障碍。书中对每一难句大致进行了下列的分析工作:

一. 句子结构分析:通过这一分析使读者洞察英语句子的结构及其变化,让读者虽行幽径,心中坦然。

二. 汉译、英译并举:对难句的两种译法可使读者深入领会句中的深层含意,见微知著而助读者了解全文。

三. 难句、语法释疑:借深入浅出地解释和大量的例句,有计划地扩大读者的词汇量及运用语言的能力。

国内外同行及前辈学人的大量著述对拙著的编写、丰富,功不可没,除专表列出外,谨在此深深致谢。美籍教师奥克森迪恩女士(Karen L Oxendene)曾对《难句分析》的设想提出过宝贵意见。她那渊博的学识和诚恳的态度给我留下了深刻的印象。

由于编者的水平有限,书中缺点和错误之处实属难免,尚希读者和专家们不吝赐教。

编 者

一九九〇年春于西昌

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BOOK TWO

LESSON ONE

THE LARGEST AND MOST POPULOUS

1. It is larger (than Africa,)larger (than either of the two Americas,) and four times as large (as Europe.)
亚洲比非洲大, 也比南北美洲中的任何一个洲大, 它是欧洲的四倍。

The area of Asia is larger than Africa, larger than either one of the two Americas and four times the size of Europe.

- a. It is a complex sentence. The adverbial clauses of comparison are elliptical sentences. "It" here means "Asia" used as the subject. "Is" is a link verb. The two "larger" and "four times as large" are used as the predicatives. They form compound nominal predicates.
- b. "Larger than" shows the comparative degree which denotes a higher degree of the area in one of two continents compared. The comparative "larger" is followed by the conjunction "than". Comparison is that inflection of the adj. or adv. to express the relative degree of the quality or quantity in the things or actions compared.

A bad bush is better than the open field. / two eyes can see more than one. / Are you prepared to work harder than you have been doing?

- c. Either of (the two...) = one or the other (of the two)

Either of the plans is equally dangerous. / I don't agree with either of you on many things. / you may take either of the roads.

- d. In the phrase "four times as large as Europe", "as...as" is used with adjective "large" in the positive to express equal sense, but the phrase "four times" is placed before "as...as" to express unequal sense. About this usage:

Waves of red light are about twice as long as waves of blue light. / The population of Scotland was eight times as large as that of Cornwall. / The peacetime military budget of 1950 is thirty times as

large as that of 1938.

e. About the size of main continents:

Asia is 44,614,399 square kilometres; / Europe is 10,505,000 square kilometres; / North America is 24,230,000 square kilometres; / South America is 17,814,435 square kilometres; / Africa is 30,218,000 square kilometres;

2. Indeed Europe is so much smaller (than Asia) (that some geographers regard Europe as a peninsula of Asia.)

欧洲比亚洲的确小得多,以致一些地理学家把它看作亚洲的半岛。

Really the size of Europe is too much smaller than the size of Asia, so some of the geographers consider Europe is a peninsula of Asia.

a. It is a complex sentence in which "so...that" leads an adverbial clause. "Than Asia" is another adverbial clause.

b. "...so...that..." is a sentence pattern. We use it to introduce an adverbial clause of result. e. g.

It was so dark that he couldn't see the faces of his companions. / My mother lives so far away that we hardly ever see her. / Billy pitched so well that everyone cheered him at the end of the game.

c. Regard...as; consider sb. to be, reckon that sb. is;

He seemed to regard it as a small triumph. / He is regarded as the best doctor in town. / They regarded the contract as having been broken.

3. Many geographers say (that the Ural Mountains form the dividing line between Europe and Asia.)

许多地理学家说乌拉尔山构成了欧亚两洲的分界线。

Many geographers think that the Ural Mountains are the natural boundary between Europe and Asia.

a. It is a complex sentence. "Many geographers say" is the main clause. "That the Ural Mountains form the dividing line between Europe and Asia" is the object clause.

b. "Between Europe and Asia" is a prepositional phrase used as an attribute modifying the object "the dividing line".

c. Some books say that "between" should be followed by 2 things only, and "among" by 3 or more;

The Mediterranean Sea is between Europe and Africa. / A river flows between its banks. / The Yalu River flows between China and Korea.

4. All geographers agree (that Asia was once linked to North America.)

地理学家都认为亚洲曾经和北美洲相连。

All geographers have a common view that Asia was at one time connected with North America.

a. It is a complex sentence. "That" introduces an object clause.

b. Agree + that clause; be of the same opinion(s); be in harmony.

I agree that your plan is better. / He agrees that Tom and Ann should share the prize. / We've all agreed it's unjust.

c. Link to (together, with); say, suggest that two persons, events are connected.

Link hands to make a circle. / A ferry links England with the Isle of Wight. / I have heard his name linked to(with) that of a well-known public figure.

5. (Before the Suez Canal was cut in 1869) Asia was also linked to Africa.

一八六九年苏伊士运河挖通前,亚非两洲也是连在一起的。

Before Africa is separated from Asia by the Suez Canal, these two continents are also connected together.

a. It is a complex sentence. The main clause is "Asia was also linked to Africa".

b. "Before the Suez Canal was cut in 1869" is an adverbial clause of time.

c. About the Suez Canal;

It is a ship-canal across the Isthmus of Suez to Port Said, cut (1859—1869) by Ferdinand de Lesseps.

6. At this altitude the air is very thin//and the weather is uncertain.

在这样的海拔高度,空气非常稀薄,气候变幻无常。

The peak of the Himalaya Mountains is so high that the air is very thin and the weather is not reliable.

a. It is a compound sentence. The conjunction "and" connects the two coordinate clauses.

b. "At this altitude" means "at this height, esp. above sea level".

It is difficult to breathe at these altitudes. / The altitude of Denver is 5360 feet. / He kept the plane at an altitude of 8000 feet.

c. "The weather is uncertain" means "the weather is changeable; not reliable".

His temper continued very uncertain. / The uncertain weather delayed our departure. / Uncertain people make poor leaders.

7. The world's great religions originated from Asia; Buddhism from India, Christianity from Palestine, Islam from Arabia.

世界上的三大宗教都起源于亚洲:佛教源于印度,基督教源于巴勒斯坦,伊斯兰教源于阿拉伯。

The principal religions of the world came from Asia; Buddhism came from India, Christianity originated from Palestine. Arabia was the source of Islam.

a. It is a complex sentence. Before the colon there is a main clause, and after it there are three elliptic sentences.

b. The elliptic sentences are used as adverbial clauses, giving the further explanation. The same predicates as the main clause "originated" are omitted.

c. About these great religions;

Buddhism; a religion, originated by Buddha, holding that suffering is caused by desire and that the way to end this suffering is through an enlightenment.

Christianity; the religion based on the life and teachings of Christ, including the Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox churches.

Islam; the muslim religion, started by Mohammed!

8. China, the country with the largest population in the world, is in Asia.

中国这个拥有世界上最多人口的国家,位于亚洲。

China who has the largest population in the world lies in Asia.

a. It is a simple sentence in which "China is in Asia" is the main part.

b. "The country with the largest population in the world" is in apposition to "China". Nouns may be modified by appositives, that is, words added by way of explanation. As we say: "London, the capital of England, is the largest of the cities of the world."

c. In the appositive, "with" means "having".

The lamp with the green shade is alight. / I painted a girl with a pigtail. / There was a letter for Lanny with a Swiss stamp on it.

d. About population;

The whole population in the world is over 5 billion; Asia is the most populous continent. In 1981 it has 2,665,412,000 persons, over half the total number of the world. Whereas China has over 1,100,000,000 persons (1989. 4. 13). One-fifth of the world's population are Chinese.

9. The Asian Games meet every four years, sometimes with as many as 28 nations taking part.

亚运会每四年举行一次, 有时有 28 个之多的国家参赛。

There is an Asian Games every fourth year, sometimes even 28 countries participated.

- a. It is a simple sentence. "Sometimes with as many as 28 nations taking part" is an absolute construction.
- b. The pattern about the absolute construction is "with + n. (pron.) + participle (adj. and prep. phrase), used as an adverbial phrase. A noun or pronoun with a participle or participial phrase may be used as the modifier of a verb to express cause, time, or circumstance.

All the afternoon he worked with the door locked. / With winter coming on, it's time to buy warm clothes. / His wife came down the stairs, with her year-old son in her arms.

c. About Asian Games;

Amateur athletic contests held by the Asian countries every 4th year, organized by an Asian committee which decides where each festival is to be held and including athletics, gymnastics, combative sports, swimming, equestrian sports, the pentathlon, and art.

10. There was a time (when Asia led the world in civilization.)

曾经有一段时间, 亚洲是在世界文明发展的前列。

In the certain past time Asia gained an advantage over the other continents.

- a. It is a complex sentence. "There was" is the predicate and "a time" the subject. It is in inversion. As a general rule, the subject precedes the predicate verb. But when a sentence begins with the preparatory "there", it is an exception to the above rule.

There has been a heavy rain. / There was no one in the room. / There must have been a mistake in my exercise.

- b. "When Asia led the world in civilization" is an attributive clause modifying "a time". "When" is one of relative adverbs.

That happened on the day when I saw you. / On Wednesday, when I saw you, I was in a hurry. / He came to help at a time when we were in straitened circumstances.

- c. Adjective clauses are nearly all relative clauses, that is to say, they are introduced by the relative pronouns "who (whom, whose), which", the relative adverbs "where, when and why", and the relative conjunctions "that" and "as".

LESSON TWO

THE GOLDEN TOUCH

1. Long, long ago there lived in Greece a king (whose name was Midas.)

很久很久以前, 希腊有位国王, 名叫迈达斯。

Once upon a time there was a king in Greece named Midas.

- a. It is a complex sentence. "There lived in Greece a king" is the principal clause which is in inverted word-order.
- b. The predicate verb "live" is placed before the subject "a king" because the sentence begins with an adverb "there", and the subject is not a personal pronoun.

There goes the bell. / There came a knock at the door. / There remained just eight pounds.

- c. "Whose name was Midas" is an attributive clause modifying "a king".

- d. About Midas;

King of phrygia; was given by Dionysus the power of turning everything he touched into gold; He suffered from it. Another time, when Midas declared Pan a better flute-player than Apollo, Apollo turned his ears into an ass's, and Midas tried to hide them, but his barber whispered the secret to some reeds, which repeated it whenever the wind rustled them.

2. The gods decided to punish him and said; ["Very well; in the morning everything (that you touch) will become gold. "]

众神决定惩罚他, 于是说: "行, 明晨你所摸过的东西都会变成黄金。"

The gods wanted to make him suffer for his greed and told him everything he touched would turn to gold.

- a. It is a complex sentence with two predicates in the main clause, "decided" and "said".
- b. After "said" there is an object clause in which "that you touch" is an attributive clause.
- c. About god and God;

The former denotes super-human being worshipped as having power over nature and human fortunes, deity; the latter denotes supreme being, creator and ruler of universe.

3. He was sorry [that the flowers changed as soon (as he touched them,)] // for he loved their rich colours.

他感到很遗憾, 这些花朵经他一摸就变成了黄金, 而他却很爱这些花朵艳丽的颜色。

Midas felt sad because the rich colours of the flowers disappeared and all the flowers he touched became gold.

- a. It is a compound complex sentence. It contains two clauses joined by the conjunction "for". These clauses are principal clauses and hence coordinate, for they can stand alone and make complete sense. (Some grammarians think "for" is a subordinate conjunction. Then it is not a compound but complex sentence.)
- b. "That the flowers changed as soon as he touched them" is an object clause of the adjective "sorry".

I am sorry I haven't done as much as I should. / I am sorry that your brother is ill. / She is very glad that you are able to come.

- c. In that-clause "as he touched them" plays the function of an adverbial clause of time.
- d. "For he loved their rich colours" is another principal clause showing the reason.

He shook his head, for he thought differently. / The days were short, for it was December. / We must

start early; for we have a long way to go.

4. It was good to be the richest man in the world, // but he was hungry, // and he could not eat or drink gold.

当世界上的头号富翁是好事情,然而他现在饿了,他总不能吃金子,喝金子啊!

Although Midas would be the richest man in the world, he couldn't eat or drink gold instead of food.

- a. It is a compound sentence. There are three coordinate clauses, joined together with "but" and "and".
b. In the first clause "it" is a formal subject, whereas the infinitive phrase "to be the richest man in the world" is the real one which comes after the predicate.

It is wrong to waste time. / It takes two to make a quarrel. / It cost £100 to mend the roof.

- c. "The richest man in the world" is the superlative degree which denotes the greatest degree of the quality. It is used, when more than 2 things are compared, always preceded by "the", and generally followed by "of" or "in".

This horse is the strongest of all in the pasture. / Iron is the most valuable of all metals. / He is the oldest man in the crowd.

5. His eyes filled with tears, // and he begged the gods to take away the Golden Touch.

他的眼睛里充满泪水,他哀求众神收回点金术。

Midas, drowned in tears, asked the gods to take their Golden Touch away.

- a. It is a compound sentence containing two coordinate clauses.
b. In the first clause "filled" shows an action not equal to the phrase "be filled" which shows a state. So "fill" = become full; Thus,

The room filled with smoke. / The house soon filled (with children). / My heart fills with pleasure.

- c. "The gods to take away the Golden Touch" is a complex object in which the infinitive phrase "to take away the Golden Touch" is the object complement.
d. "Beg" could be followed by a complex object.

He begged them to speak a word for him. / She begged him to remain at home. / He begged me never to mention her name to him again.

6. ("I was very foolish to love gold so much,") he said. "Take all my gold and give me back my daughter."

迈达斯说:“我太蠢了,居然如此喜欢黄金。”“把金子都拿走吧,把女儿还给我。”

Midas blamed himself for loving gold so much and he begged the gods to take all his gold away and gave his daughter back.

- a. The first sentence is a complex sentence. This is in inversion. The object clause is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

"Please hurry," she said. / Soon this would be behind us, she said. / Whether this is true or not, I cannot say.

- b. "To love gold so much" plays the function of an adverbial expressing the result.
c. The second sentence is an imperative sentence which expresses a request. It has the verb in the imperative mood. That means only one simple form (i. e. the plain root form of the verb) for the second person singular or plural.

Give him what help you can. / Do not make the same mistake again. / Study hard or you will fall short of the expectations of the people.

7. ("Go,") said the gods, ("and wash your hands in the river near your garden, and the water will take

away the Golden Touch. ")

诸神说：“去吧，到你花园旁的河里去把手洗一洗，河水会洗去你的点金术的。”

The gods asked Midas to go and wash his hands in the river near his garden, the Golden Touch would be taken away by the water.

- a. It is a complex sentence in inverted word order. In a complex sentence with a "direct quotation" as its direct object, the whole or part of the direct quotation can be placed at the head of the sentence. In this case the predicate verb of the principal clause generally comes before its subject.

"This," answered the guide, "is the room where the premier once lived." / "They must be in the fields now," thought Mr. Lee. / "I do hope," said Millie, "they haven't forgotten all about it."

- b. Then the main clause is "said the gods", the rest of the sentence is an object clause.
- c. The object clause contains two coordinate clauses. The first is an imperative sentence "Go and wash your hands..." The second is declarative one "the water will take away..."
- d. The river near Midas' garden was Pactolus.

LESSON THREE

ROBERT BRUCE, KING OF SCOTLAND

1. Many centuries ago, Scotland was ruled by a king named Robert Bruce.

许多世纪前, 苏格兰被一个名叫罗伯特·布鲁什的国王统治着。

Several hundred years ago, there was a king in Scotland whose name was Robert Bruce.

- a. It is a simple sentence in passive voice. The verb "was ruled" is said to be in the passive voice form which is formed by combining the past participle with the auxiliary "be".
- b. The subject of the active verb "a king" is converted into a prepositional object in the passive construction, the preposition being "by". This phrase is used as an adverbial.
- c. "Named Robert Bruce" is a past participle phrase modifying the noun "king", as an ordinary adjective.

It is a book published just a few weeks ago. / Those chosen as representatives must come. / I especially enjoyed the play put on by the students.

- d. About Scotland and Robert Bruce;

Scotland is in the northern part of Great Britain, formerly a separate kingdom; capital, Edinburgh. In 1707, it became a part of the united kingdom.

Robert Bruce (1274—1329) was the king of Scotland (1306—29). He liberated his country from the English, whom he defeated at the Battle of Bannockburn.

2. (When the English army invaded Scotland,) Bruce took up arms and led his people in the defence of their country.

当英军入侵苏格兰时, 布鲁什拿起武器, 领导人民保家卫国。

During the time Scotland was attacked by the English army, Robert Bruce called on and led his people to take up arms to defend their freedom, their country.

- a. It is a complex sentence. At the beginning there is an adverbial clause introduced by the word "when".
- b. In the main clause there are two predicates. The first is "took up"; the second is "led".
- c. "Take up arms" means "to get ready to fight; fight or make war". e. g.

The country would certainly take up arms in its own defence. / The president called on people to take up arms against poverty. / His people and the Emperor Charles would take up arms against him if he killed either the woman or her daughter.

- d. The phrase "in defence of..." means "the act or action of defending".

He gave his life in defence of his country. / Let us rise as one man in defence of Spanish democracy. /

He spoke in defence of justice.

3. Six times Bruce led his brave little army against the enemy, // and six times his men were beaten.

布鲁什曾率领他那弱小而英勇的军队抗击入侵者。六次战斗均以失败告终。

Bruce and his little army fought bravely against the invaders, but they failed in the wars six times.

- a. It is a compound sentence which contains two coordinate clauses. At the beginning of each clause there is a same phrase "six times". It has two functions; first, anaphora in the rhetoric; second, emphasis.
- b. "Against (the enemy)" is a prepositional phrase used as an adverbial, and means "in opposition or hostility to (the enemy)". Thus,

My father was against the union idea. / I will speak against anything I know to be wrong. / Their

whole lives are a fight against poverty and unemployment.

- c. "Beat" here is "defeat".

His policy was to beat each enemy in turn. / I can easily beat him at golf. / After some thought he hit on a plan to beat his competitors.

4. His army was scattered, // and he was forced to go into hiding—in the woods or in lonely places in the mountains.

部队溃散了,布鲁什被迫躲了起来——或藏身于森林、或隐置于偏僻的群山。

Bruce's army was beaten and separated widely, and he himself had to go into the forests and mountains to avoid his enemy.

- a. It is a compound sentence. "His army was scattered" is the first clause, and the rest is the second clause.
b. We can paraphrase the verb "scatter" as "throw or spread loosely over a wide area". Such as we say "scatter seeds" or "scatter the crowd, the clouds, the flock and so on".
c. "To go into hiding" means "to hide oneself".

I think you should go into hiding for a while. / There result was that the peasants went into hiding. / It was now necessary for him to go into hiding until November 6.

- d. After the dash are two prepositional phrases joining together with "or". Both of them are used as adverbials.

5. One rainy day, Bruce lay on the ground in a hut, listening to the sound of the rain on the roof.

一个下雨天,布鲁什躺在一间茅屋里,听着雨水打在屋顶上的声音。

It was raining one day, Bruce had to rest on the ground in a hut and listened to the sound of the rain on the roof.

- a. It is a simple sentence in which "Bruce lay" is the main part.
b. Because "lie" is an intransitive verb, "on the ground in a hut" is an adverbial of place.

It's wonderful lying on the beach all day. / Anderson was lying on the bed with all his clothes on. / Barbary lay still and happy.

- c. The present participial phrase "listening to the sound of the rain on the roof" is used as an adverbial expressing the circumstance. We can see such functions from the following examples:

Choosing his words with care, the speaker hinted that the plan was not good enough. / The enemy fled in a panic, leaving behind a lot of dead bodies and munitions. / They stood there watching the basketball match.

6. It seemed to him (that it was no use trying to do anything any more.)

他感到再努力也没有用了。

Everything appeared to be worse, he felt it was no use fighting again.

- a. It is a complex sentence. "It" is an expletive. That-clause is the real subject. "It" may be used merely to fill a place in a sentence. It has no meaning in itself.
b. We can simply say "it seems (that)" is a sentence structure.

It seems to me that someone is calling. / It seems to him that he had never worked so hard in his life. / It seems that nobody knew what had happened.

- c. In that-clause "it" is another expletive; the real subject is the gerundial phrase, "trying to do anything any more".
d. But "it is no use + gerund (or gerundial phrase)" is also a sentence structure.

It's no use asking me. I don't know any more than you do. / It is no use being an ostrich about it. / I

don't think it's any use going further.

7. (As he lay thinking,) he saw a spider over his head, trying to spin a web.

当他躺在地上漫无边际地遐想时,看见在头顶上的一只蜘蛛正艰难地织着网。

Bruce noticed a spider, who was trying to spin a web over his head, when lying thinking.

- a. This is a complex sentence; the main clause is "he saw a spider over his head...", "Over his head" is an attribute, modifying the spider.
b. "As he lay thinking" is an adverbial clause, modifying the predicate "saw". Within the clause "as" is a conjunction and means "while; when".

As he was leaving, Mr. Scales saw her. / Just as he was speaking there was a loud explosion. / I met him as I was going up the Sandgat Hill.

- c. In the clause "thinking" is a present participle used as an adverbial, modifying "lay".
d. "Trying to spin a web" is a participial phrase; here it is an object complement.

Did you ever see the sun rising above the sea. / The old woman watched the children playing games. / They caught a young man stealing in their shop.

8. Bruce almost forgot his own troubles (as he watched her swing herself out upon the slender line.)

布鲁什几乎忘记了自己的烦恼,他全神贯注地看着蜘蛛挂在纤细的丝上摆动着。

Bruce watched the spider as she swung forwords while hanging on a slender line. His troubles were over then.

- a. This is a complex sentence. The main clause is "Bruce almost forgot his own troubles".
b. "As he watched her swing..." is an adverbial clause of time. Within the clause "her" denotes the spider. It is a rhetorical skill, personification. In ordinary speech, most large animals are considered as masculine and hence are referred to by "he"; most small animals and insects are regarded as neuter and referred to by "it" or "she", e. g.

Be careful of that dog—he sometimes bites. / The mare whinnied when she saw her master. / The buffalo, released at last in the evening from his monotonous circling round the water wheel, comes down to the bank and subsides with a groan of satisfaction into the mud. (c. f. 黄昏,水牛终于从围绕水车单调打转中解放了出来,它来到岸边满意地出了口粗气,便慢吞吞地躺进了泥潭里。)

- c. Within the same clause, "swing herself..." is an infinitive phrase used as a part of the complex object. The sign "to" is omitted after the object of the verbs expressing physical perception "watch".

They watched the sun sink into the Mediterranean. / We were standing watching him skip rope. / Aziz watched him go with amazement.

9. He told them of his plans, and sent them out with messages of cheer to his disheartened people.

他把自己的计划告诉了随从,并打发他们四处去用鼓舞人心的消息鼓动人民。

Bruce drew up a new plan for beating the invaders and asked his men to encourage his disheartened people with it.

- a. This is a simple sentence with two predicates, "told" and "sent".
b. In the first predicate, "told...of..." means "told...about".

He told us of the deep friendship he had formed with the Tanzanian people. / He told her of what he had been doing. / He hurried off to tell his uncle of the news.

- c. Another verb phrase is "sent...out". It means; to cause, direct, order, etc., (a person) to go from a central point.

We stayed in our hotel room and sent a boy out for food. / The other people were sent out of the

room. /I forgot to pick up the flowers on my way to the office. I suppose we could always send Anne out to collect them?

d. From "out with messages" to the end is an adverbial phrase.

10. This time the Scots won // and the English invaders were driven out of Scotland.

这次苏格兰人打胜了,英军被赶出了他们的国土。

At last the Scots drove the English invaders out of their country and gained the victory.

a. It is a compound sentence containing two coordinate clauses, joined together with a conjunction "and".

b. In the first clause the subject is "the Scots"; the predicate is "won".

c. In the second clause the subject is "the English invaders"; The predicate is "was driven out..." in passive voice.

LESSON FOUR

AN OUTING

1. We were discussing where to go for an outing during the spring holidays.

我们讨论春假期间到何处去郊游。

We were discussing where we should go for a short pleasure trip in the spring holidays.

- a. It is a simple sentence. The predicate is "were discussing".
- b. "Where to go for an outing..." is an infinitive phrase combined with an interrogative adverb to form a sort of abbreviated clause. It is used as an object here. Thus,

Tell me where to go and what to see. / He is learning how to drive a car. / He never knows when to speak and when not to.

- c. "For an outing" and "during the spring holidays" are both adverbials, modifying "go".
- d. About the Spring Festival;

China's most popular holiday. Having a big dinner is the most common way the Chinese celebrate the day. Often friends and family gather together to spend the day enjoying a long dinner and conversation. For many families it is one of the only times of the year when all family members can get together. So, the Spring Festival has come to mean a time for family reunions, as well as a time to give thanks for all the richness of the past year.

2. We had gone there the year before to plant trees in the surrounding mountains.

一年前我们曾到安庄去过,在周围的山上种过树。

We had been to Anchuang the year before in order to plant trees around the mountains nearby.

- a. This is a simple sentence with three adverbials: "there", "the year before", and "to plant trees in...". They express the place, the time, and the purpose respectively.
- b. "The year before" is not equal to "a year ago". The former means "earlier in time than", whereas the latter means "back in time from now". "Ago" is not used with the perfect tense. We can say: I came here a year ago. But not: I have (had) come here a year ago. Thus,

On Tuesday morning we went where we left off the day before. / He had taken his degree a year before. / The seed planted ten years before had flowered.

He left 10 minutes ago. / How long ago did he live here? / I took the chair at a meeting some time ago.

- c. "To plant trees in..." is an infinitive phrase played the function as an adverbial of purpose.

The window was wide open to admit air. / To defend our country we must strengthen ourselves. / We often listen to English broadcasts on BBC to get more practice in training our ears.

- d. "In the surrounding mountains" is an adverbial of place, modifying the infinitive "to plant".

3. We could hardly sit still, // for there were so many interesting sights outside the window.

我们坐立不安,窗外的景色是那么诱人。

The beautiful scenery of the natural surroundings out of the window is so interesting that we could almost not keep still.

- a. This is a compound sentence, containing two clauses, joined together by the conjunction "for". A conjunction is a word used to connect words, phrases, or clauses. Coordinate conjunctions connect those of