

# 文科英语选读

下 册

汪 淑 钧      郑 昌 珏

商 务 印 书 馆

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# Lesson One

## TEXT

### 'Primitiveness' in Language

'Primitive' is a word that is often used ill-advisedly in discussions of language. Many people think that 'primitive' is indeed a term to be applied to languages, though only to *some* languages, and not usually to the language they themselves speak. They might agree in calling 'primitive' those uses of language that concern greetings, grumbles and commands, but they would probably insist that these were especially common in the so-called 'primitive languages'. These are misconceptions that we must quickly clear from our minds.

So far as we can tell, all human languages are equally complete and perfect as instruments of communication: that is, every language appears to be as well equipped as any other to say the things its speakers want to say. It may or may not be appropriate to talk about primitive peoples or cultures, but that is another matter. Certainly, not all groups of people are equally competent in nuclear physics or psychology or the cultivation of rice or the engraving of Benares brass. But this is not the fault of their language. The Eskimos can speak about snow with a great deal more precision and subtlety than we can in English, but this is not because the Eskimo language (one of those sometimes mis-called 'primitive') is inherently more precise and subtle than English. This example does not bring to light a defect in English, a show of unexpected 'primitiveness'. The position is simply and obviously that the Eskimos and the English live in different environments. The English language would be just as rich in terms for different kinds of snow, presumably, if the environments in which English was habitually used made such distinction important.

Similarly, we have no reason to doubt that the Eskimo language could be as precise and subtle on the subject of motor manufacture or cricket if these topics formed part of the Eskimos' life. For obvious historical reasons, Englishmen in the nineteenth century could not talk about motorcars with the minute discrimination which is possible today: cars were not a part of their culture. But they had a host of terms for horse-drawn vehicles which send us, puzzled, to a historical dictionary when we are reading Scott or Dickens. How many of us could distinguish between a chaise, a landau, a victoria, a brougham, a coupe, a gig, a diligence, a whisky, a calash, a tilbury, a carriage, a phaeton, and a clarence?

The discussion of 'primitiveness', incidentally, provides us with a good reason for sharply and absolutely distinguishing human language from animal communication, because there is no sign of any intermediate stage between the two. Whether we examine the earliest records of any language, or the present-day language of some small tribe in a far-away place, we come no nearer to finding a stage of human language more resembling animal communication and more 'primitive' than our own. In general, as has been said, any language is as good as any other to express what its speakers want to say. An East African finds Swahili as convenient, natural and complete as an East Londoner finds English. In general the Yorkshire Dalesman's dialect is neither more nor less primitive or ill-fitted to its speaker's wants than Cockney is for the Londoner's. We must always beware the temptation to adopt a naive parochialism which makes us feel that someone else's language is less pleasant or less effective an instrument than our own.

This is not to say that an individual necessarily sounds as pleasant or as effective as he might be, when using his language, but we must not confuse a language with an individual's ability to use it. Nor are we saying that one language has *no* deficiencies as compared with another. The English words 'home' and 'gentleman'

have no exact counterparts in French, for example. These are tiny details in which English may well be thought to have the advantage over French, but a largescale comparison would not lead to the conclusion that English was the superior language, since it would reveal other details in which the converse was true. Some years ago it came as something of a shock to us that we had no exact word for translating the name that General de Gaulle had given to his party — *Rassemblement du Peuple Français*. The B.B.C. for some time used the word ‘rally’, and although this scarcely answers the purpose it is a rather better translation of ‘rassemblement’ than either of the alternatives offered by one well-known French-English dictionary, ‘muster’ and ‘mob’.

The more we consider the question, then, the less reasonable does it seem to call any language ‘inferior’, let alone ‘primitive’. The Sanskrit of the Rig-Veda four thousand years ago was as perfect an instrument for what its users wanted to say as its modern descendant, Hindi, or as English.

(From *The Use of English*, by RANDOLPH QUIRK.)

## NOTES

1. They might agree in calling “primitive” those uses ...

1) 这是个虚拟语气的句子，等于：

If they were asked, they might agree ...

- 2) “primitive” 是动名词 calling 的宾语补足语，因为宾语 those uses ... 很长，所以把补足语提前。

2. Benares brass 贝拿勒斯黄铜器

贝拿勒斯在印度北部，是世界古城之一，著名的印度教圣地，以制作精巧的黄铜器出名，1957年改名为瓦拉纳西 (Varanasi [və'rɑ:nəsi]).

3. Scott

司各特 (Walter Scott, 1771—1832) 英国诗人，历史小说家。

4. Dickens



狄更斯 (Charles Dickens, 1812—1870), 英国著名作家。

5. de Gaulle [di'gəul]

戴高乐 (1890—1970), 法国第五共和国第一任总统 (1959—1969)。

6. B.B.C. 英国广播公司

British Broadcasting Corporation 的缩略式。

7. the less reasonable does it seem to call ...

这里加用助动词 does 构成倒装语序是为了加强语气。

8. Rig-Veda 《梨俱吠陀》

吠陀 (Veda) 是印度最古的宗教文献和文学作品的总称。

《吠陀本集》共四部, 最早的一部是《梨俱吠陀》(颂诗)。

## LEARNING TO WRITE ENGLISH (写作学习)(1)

### 用 词 (一)

#### 词 类

中国学生初用英语写作时, 最常犯的毛病是用汉语去套英语, 结果写出来的英语句子往往不合英语的语法, 或者用词不当, 不合英语的表达习惯。例如, 要求用英语表示“他很忙时”, 有的学生会写成 “He very busy”, 而不知道应该是 “He is very busy”, 或者想表示“许多工作”时会写成 “many works”, 而不知道应该是 “a lot of work”. 这类错误往往一讲就明白了, 但是在写作练习中仍然经常出现, 原因就在没有考虑英语的特点。

英语在词法、句法和表达习惯等方面都和汉语有很大的差别, 要学会用英语写作, 少犯以至不犯上述错误, 只有通过多读, 多记和大量模仿性的造句练习, 达到比较熟练地掌握英语的各种表达法, 才能较快地提高写作能力。要能比较熟练地掌握英语的特点, 阅读时就不能满足于读懂, 而需要细心学习并且记住各种词语的用法和不同句式的结构。在用词方面, 首先要注意词类与句子成分之间的关系, 因为哪类词在句子里担任哪种成分是有规则的, 不能乱用。请看课文中的一个句子:

The Eskimos can speak about snow with a great deal more precision and subtlety than we can in English, but this is not because the Eskimo language is inherently more precise and subtle than English.

句中的 precision 和 subtlety 是名词, precise 和 subtle 是形容词, 都相当于汉语的“精确”和“巧妙”, 但是在英语里, 前面是作介词 with 的宾语, 必须用名词, 后面是作表语, 表示主语 language 的特点, 就要用形容词。

下面的句子在用词方面有错误吗? 如果看不出, 可到课文中去找答案:

The word “primitive” is often used ill-advisedly in discuss of language.

All human languages are equal complete and perfect as instruments of communication.

Every language is as good equipped as any other to say the things its speakers want to say.

For obviously historical reasons, Englishmen in the nineteenth century could not talk about motorcars with the minute discrimination which is possibly today.

The writer does not mean that one language has not deficiencies as comparing with another.

The English word “gentleman” has not exactly counterpart in French.

## EXERCISES

### I. Answer the following questions:

1. Why is the word ‘primitive’ often used in discussions of language?
2. Why can the Eskimos speak about snow with a great deal more precision and subtlety than the English can?
3. Is any language as good as any other to express what its speakers want to say? Give an example, please.
4. Why is it unreasonable to describe any language as primitive?
5. Can we say the language itself is inferior when an individual uses his language badly? Why?

### II. Fill in the gaps with expressions from the list below:

neither ... nor ... , distinguish between, apply to, bring to light, distinguish ... from ... , so far as ..., confuse ... with ... , let alone

1. This rule can be \_\_\_\_\_ any case.
2. One newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ some important new evidence.
3. You have \_\_\_\_\_ adverbs \_\_\_\_\_ prepositions.
4. He can't write even his own language correctly, \_\_\_\_\_ a foreign one.
5. She couldn't \_\_\_\_\_ right \_\_\_\_\_ wrong.
6. You do not know how to \_\_\_\_\_ these two kinds of contradictions.
7. He \_\_\_\_\_ knows \_\_\_\_\_ cares what happened.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ I know, he is a reliable person.

III. Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with 'a' or 'an', 'some' or 'any', as required:

'Primitive' is \_\_\_\_\_ word that is often used ill-advisedly in discussions of language. Many people think that 'primitive' is indeed \_\_\_\_\_ term to be applied to languages, but only to \_\_\_\_\_ languages, and not usually to the language they themselves speak. But it is misleading to describe \_\_\_\_\_ language as 'primitive', because \_\_\_\_\_ language is as good as \_\_\_\_\_ other to express what its speakers want to say. Whether we examine the earlier records of \_\_\_\_\_ language, or the present-day language of \_\_\_\_\_ small remote tribe, we come no nearer to finding \_\_\_\_\_ stage of communication more primitive than our own. And we must sharply distinguish between human and animal communication, because there is no sign of \_\_\_\_\_ intermediate stage between them.

IV. Choose the right answer (a, b, c, or d) for each sentence:

1. They might agree in \_\_\_\_\_ 'primitive' those uses of language that concern greetings, grumbles and commands.
  - a. call
  - b. to call
  - c. calling
  - d. called
2. All human languages are equally complete and perfect \_\_\_\_\_ instruments of communication.
  - a. for
  - b. as
  - c. by
  - d. with
3. We are not saying that one language has no deficiencies as compared \_\_\_\_\_ another.

- |         |         |
|---------|---------|
| a. with | c. by   |
| b. to   | d. from |
4. Englishmen in the nineteenth century had a host of terms \_\_\_\_ horse drawn vehicles.
- |       |        |
|-------|--------|
| a. of | c. for |
| b. in | d. as  |
5. The Eskimo language is very rich \_\_\_\_ terms for different kinds of snow.
- |         |       |
|---------|-------|
| a. with | c. in |
| b. for  | d. by |
6. Human language must be sharply distinguished \_\_\_\_ animal communication.
- |         |            |
|---------|------------|
| a. to   | c. between |
| b. from | d. with    |

V. Complete the following sentences with suitable words or expressions given in the text.

1. We may \_\_\_\_ a 'primitive' culture, but this does not mean that the language of a people with such a culture is primitive.
2. The fact that some peoples may have a lower level of technology than others does not mean that their languages are \_\_\_\_ .
3. The Eskimo language is very rich in terms for different kinds of snow because snow \_\_\_\_\_ an important part of the Eskimo's environment.
4. There are some English words that have no \_\_\_\_ in French, but this should not lead us to conclude that English is superior to French.
5. It may or may not be appropriate to talk about primitive cultures, but that is another \_\_\_\_ .
6. So far as we can tell, all languages are equally perfect as \_\_\_\_ .

VI. Correct mistakes in the following sentences:

1. Neither she or I spoke to him.
2. I don't have some books to read.
3. She has a hosts of admirer.
4. I do not agree to him on this subject.
5. Can you distinguish from a frog and a toad?

6. The question is that whether they will agree to it or not.

VII. Translate the following passage into Chinese:

The use of language primarily and predominantly involves making noises with our speech organs and interpreting other people's speech noises through our ears. It is not a necessary condition of a language's existence that it should have a written form or indeed any form other than talk. All natural languages had a very long history as solely speech before they were ever written down or became associated with rules of spelling and punctuation. Many hundreds of languages exist in the world today which have never been written down yet. Most of the changes that affect languages in time and space (the differences between Chaucer's English and our own, for instance, or the differences between British and American English) are to be explained in terms of language as spoken and heard. Most of the difficulties we experience in using language in what we have called here its more 'exotic' ways (writing an essay, for example) arise from the fact that our chief competence in the use of language lies in talking it.

The primacy of speech in the consideration of language and the importance of understanding how speech is transmitted in sound are matters that are dealt with in Mr Gimson's Supplement. For the present, the vital point to grasp is that although we can transmit language by highly 'unnatural' means such as the teleprinter, and can use language for highly sophisticated and intellectual purposes such as the statement of atomic theory, all languages are geared primarily to the fairly primitive needs of ordinary people and to the fairly primitive and physical conditions of tongue and ear. It is easy for literate people with some education to forget this and to think of language primarily in terms of its written manifestations.

VIII. Write a short paragraph in your own words explaining why it is ill-advised to call some languages 'primitive'.

# Lesson Two

## TEXT

### The Printed Word

I do not wonder, what with television, with color TV here, with pictures beckoning and bemusing us from all sides and in all shapes, I do not wonder that the question is raised: Has the printed word a future?

I firmly believe that it has.

Let us start with an examination of what is, to me, a basic fallacy. It is said, repeatedly, that "one picture is worth 10,000 words" — and this is surely an age of cameras. But I ask: What pictures and what words? There are pictures that do speak eloquently — pictures like Michelangelo's or El Greco's or, at times, photographs, like Brady's of Lincoln. But they are rare indeed; most pictures are only snapshots, as momentary as a flicker of the eye or of the lens.

And then I ask: What words? What pictures can speak as eloquently as certain phrases, well-known but still echoing phrases such as these:

Churchill, addressing the House of Commons in 1940: "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

Or Benjamin Franklin: "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Or Franklin Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Or Socrates: "I am a citizen not of Athens or Greece, but of the world."

Or Lincoln: "That this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom ...."

Or, finally, Voltaire: "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

As you read or hear passages such as these, you become certain that the word has more impact, much more impact, than the picture. But there then arises the question as to whether the spoken word makes a deeper impress than the printed one. I do not deny that, on state occasions, at great moments in history, the spoken word can be an atomic force. And it can doubtless weave a hypnotic spell, especially in presidential election years. But, in the long run, the printed word has an authority that the spoken word can never have, because it reaches beyond the limited audience for the spoken word — an audience limited, if not in size, then surely in time and in depth — and because it is set down **definitely** in black and white.

A study of the evolution of the printed word reinforces this conviction that it is here to stay. The story runs this way: at the beginning, pictures; then, written words; then, printed words; then, back to pictures; now, back to the printed word.

First, there were hieroglyphs, the tabloids of the Stone Age; then came manuscripts, printed laboriously by hand; then there was Gutenberg — and here we must pause a while.

For we are now in 1456, the great year for the printed word — the year when the Gutenberg Bible was completed. Gutenberg's press, it is said, could turn out 300 impressions a day. This is tortoise work by today's standards — today's presses can produce 300,000, 48-page newspapers in an hour — yet when the speed of Gutenberg's press is compared with the speed of a man copying, the extent of the advance can be realized.

But another invention was needed to make the Gutenberg press really effective: namely, a papermaking machine. That came in 1798. And still another impetus to literacy was required — broader education. Reading did not become common until the rise of the public school, well along in the nineteenth century. After

that, it assumed megaton proportions.

Up until the 1920's, the printed word was law and literature, and was without real challenge. Then radio blared forth, and then, in 1951, came coast-to-coast television to move in upon leisure time and to compete with the printed word for impact.

What has been the result? Let us look at the record for two important carriers of the printed word — books and newspapers.

As for books, the industry is booming. In 1955, more books were published in the United States than ever before — a total of 12,589. And certainly the multiplying number of book clubs indicates that literature, or what passes for literature, is still big business.

As for newspaper reading, the circulation of daily newspapers in the United States, for the year 1955, was approximately 56,000,000, an increase of 4.3 per cent over 1950. So there is hope for reading of all sorts — books, magazines, and newspapers.

The newspaper, like other printed media, supplies the written word — in contrast with the spoken word. And the written word still carries more potential authority because it is set down with deliberation and is there to be seen and pondered upon, rather than snatched from the air waves.

“ Television is a stimulus to read rather than a substitute for reading a good newspaper. A great national event such as an inauguration, or a dramatic happening such as a devastating wreck or fire, or a sports spectacle such as a championship fight, are done graphically on television. But people want to read about these events, to check their impressions against those of the reporters, and to compare their opinions with those of the experts.

Likewise with the other media of the printed word. Television excites primary curiosity about the potentates and the planets, the birds and the bees. The listener turns increasingly to books and magazines to pursue these matters further. Seeing and listening inevitably lead to perusing and pondering. Even when better tele-



vision is evolved, it will not do the job that reading does.

(Adapted from "The Printed Word" by Lester Markel,  
WISDOM, February, 1957)

## NOTES

1. Michelangelo [ˌmaɪkəˈlændʒɪləʊ]  
米开朗琪罗 (Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1475—1564), 意大利文艺复兴盛期的雕塑家、画家、建筑师和诗人。
2. El Greco [el ˈɡrekəʊ]  
埃尔·格列柯(约 1541—1614), 西班牙画家。
3. Brady [ˈbreɪdi]  
布雷迪(1823?—1896), 美国摄影家。
4. Benjamin Franklin  
本杰明·富兰克林(1706—1790), 美国政治家及哲学家。
5. Franklin Roosevelt [ˈrəʊzəvelt]  
富兰克林·罗斯福 (1882—1945), 美国第三十二任总统 (1933—1945)。
6. Voltaire [ˈvɒlteɪ]  
伏尔泰(1694—1778), 法国作家及哲学家。
7. ... I will defend to the death your right to say it.  
划线部分是修饰动词 defend 的, 所以紧跟在它后面, 把动词和宾语隔开了。
8. But there then arises the question ...  
这是用 there 作引导词的句子, 主语是 the question ...
9. The story runs this way: = It is said that: 据说是:  
run 在这里的意思是 be told or written, 如:  
The letter runs as follows 信上说: