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床头灯英语学习读本IV



THE SECRET AGENT

密 探

美国作家改编 纯英文版

原著 Joseph Conrad
[英] 约瑟夫·康拉德
改编 Wilfred Melville

航空工业出版社

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写在前面的话

——中国人学英语现状分析

◆英语是语言的帝国

全球 60 亿人中,有 8 亿人的母语是英语;2.5 亿人的第二母语是英语。12.3 亿人学习英语,33.6 亿人和英语有关。全世界电视节目的 75%、E-mail 的 80%、网络的 85%、软件源代码的 100% 使用英语。40~50 年后,全球 50% 的人精通英语。全球约 6000 种语言,本世纪末其中的 90% 将消亡。届时英语作为主导语言的地位将进一步得到提升。

目前中国大约有 3 亿人在学英语,超过英国和美国的人口总和,这是中国努力与时代接轨、与国际接轨的一个重要标志。大量中国人熟练掌握国际通用语言是中华民族走向繁荣富强的必要保障。

◆英语学习的远期目标

在中国,英语已经远远超出一个学科的范畴,一个人英语水平的高低总是和事业、前途、地位,甚至命运联系在一起。对于个人来讲,英语在人生旅途中具有战略意义,不失时机地在英语上投入时间、投入精力、投入金钱符合与时俱进的潮流,是明智之举。

◆目前存在的问题

尽管在中国学习英语的人很多,但收效却令人担忧,学了这么多年英语,能够运用自如的人实在是凤毛麟角。由于运用能力差,无法品尝到英语学习成功的快乐,很多人不得不承认学英语的目的只是为了考试”。

◆考试的压力对英语学习的积极影响

在我国,与个人命运休戚相关的各类考试,如中考、高考、四六级、

硕士研究生入学考试、博士研究生入学考试、职称考试、出国考试,都考或只考英语。目前,很多人把中国人学不好英语的责任推到英语考试身上,好像中国人学不好英语就是因为有了英语考试,甚至有人还产生了将英语考试废除的想法。

大家可以冷静地反思一下:如果没有各种各样的英语考试,哪里有这么多人坚持学英语?国家正是利用了考试这个指挥棒引导很多人去学英语。说句实话,你不能指望每个中国人都怀着与国际接轨的远大抱负去学英语。中国曾经取消过考试,结果造成了10年的人才断层。所以,我的看法是在谈论考试的不足时,首先应该承认它在选拔人才、培养人才方面的不可替代的作用。英语考试对中国人学英语起到了很大的积极作用,功不可没。但必须承认:如果真想把英语学好,光会做几道考试题是远远不够的。

◆不可缺少的环节

没有几百万字的输入无法学好英语。语言的习得是一个长期的过程,需要大量的“输入”。一个由汉语武装起来的头脑,没有几百万字英文的输入,即使要达到一般水平也难。绝大多数的英语学习者正是由于缺少了这一环节,所以停留在一个无奈的水平上。

◆“圣人”学英语的做法

在学英语的长远目标和考试的压力共同作用下,自然会产生学好英语的强烈愿望,但这一愿望的实现需要有很强的“韧劲(自我约束力)”。春来不是读书天,夏日炎炎正好眠,秋有蚊虫冬又冷,收起书包待明年。随着物质文明的繁荣,总有一些理由使人不能安心学习。这样下去,我们的英语之树永远长不高。古人云:人静而后安,安而能后定,定而能后慧,慧而能后悟,悟而能后得。很有道理。在四川大足佛教石刻艺术中,有一组大型佛雕《牧牛图》,描绘了一个牧童和牛由斗争、对抗到逐渐协调、融合,最后合而为一的故事。佛祖说:“人的心魔难伏,就像牛一样,私心杂念太多太多;修行者就要像牧童训练他们,驯

服他们,以完美自己的人生。”那些具有很强心力的人,我们姑且称其为“圣人”,他们能够驯服那些影响我们学习的大牛、小牛,抵制各种诱惑,集中精力,专心学习,到达成功的彼岸。

◆凡人的困惑

在目前的教育体系中,学好英语是需要坚韧不拔的毅力的。但问题是我们大多数平凡的人无法和圣人相比,所以在学英语的征途上,失败者多,成功者少。客观地讲,即使采用不太高的标准来衡量在中国英语学习的失败率应该在 99% 以上,有的人说难道我们不能把大多数的人都变成圣人吗,这样大多数人就可以学好英语了。我们不得不承认大多数凡夫俗子是不能够成为圣人的。值得我们深思的是,目前的英语学习体系没有给大多数人提供一条平坦的道路。

◆兴趣——英语学习成功的真正源泉

我和大家一样都是凡人,我也曾经遇到过学英语的困惑,干巴巴的课文无论怎样都激不起我的兴趣。幸运的是我有一个在国外生活多年的姐姐,有一次她回国,给我带来很多浅显有趣的读物。我拿起一本一读,觉得很简单,一个星期就读完了。就英语学习而言,一部英文小说其实就是用英语建构的一个“虚拟世界”。那里有人,有人的心灵和人与人之间关系的揭示,有人与自然、与社会的冲突和调和。走进一部英文小说,你实际上就已经“生活”在一个“英语世界”里了,不愁没有东西可学。经典作品要读,写得好的当代通俗小说也要读。我一共读了 50 本,从此对英语产生了兴趣,英语水平有了很大的提高。还是爱因斯坦说得好:“兴趣是最好的老师。”

◆《新概念英语》的主编 L. G. Alexander 的启示

中国人读英语书有个特点,越读不懂越读,习惯于读满篇都是生词的文章。L. G. Alexander 先生是世界著名的英语教学专家,他的经典之作《新概念英语》对于中国的英语教学产生了深远的影响。针对这一现状 Alexander 先生说过:“记住,你的接受型词汇量(即你听或阅读英

语时能理解的部分)比你的积极词汇量(即你在说或写时能自如运用的部分)要大得多。如果要扩大词汇量,最好的办法是多听英语,多读英语,但不要超出自己的水平,即阅读那些比你目前水平稍低的书。”这才是提高英语运用能力的诀窍。

本套读物的特色:

●情节曲折:本书选材的时候非常注意作品的吸引力。比方说:

《查泰莱夫人的情人》(Lady Chatterley's Lover):我当年读大学的时候,班上每个同学都买一本看。有的同学甚至熄灯后,打着手电筒躲在被窝里看。

《吸血鬼》(Dracula):这个故事真吓人,我看完以后好几天没睡好觉。后来我的一个学生说他对英语从来不感兴趣,我就把这本小说推荐给他。后来他对我说:“这是我一口气读完的第一本英语书,就是太吓人了。老师,能不能再给我来一本?”

《呼啸山庄》(Wuthering Heights):讲述的是一个骇人听闻的复仇故事,当初没有想到这本书的作者竟然是一个生活在几乎与世隔绝环境中的女孩。

《飘》(Gone with the Wind):几乎所有的美国女孩都读过这本书,主人公斯佳丽是美国女孩的偶像,可以说我见过的每个美国女孩都是一个 Scarlett。

.....

本套丛书收入的都是你在一生中值得去读的作品,读这些作品不但可以提高你的英语水平,而且能够提高你的个人修养。

●语言地道:本套读物均由美国作家执笔,用流畅的现代英语写成。他们写作功底深厚,这是母语为非英语的作者很难达到的。

●通俗易懂:本书是用 3300 个最常用的英语单词写成,易读懂,对于难词均有注释,你躺在床上不用翻字典就能顺利地读下去。

●配有高质量的音带:这样大家可以在读懂的基础上进行听的训

练,请注意:阅读需要量,听力更需要量。大量的语音输入是用英语深入交谈的源泉。

这套读物供你在下课后或下班后闲暇时阅读,其优点是帮你实现英语学习的生活化,使英语成为你生活的一部分。这才是英语成功的真谛,更是任何有难度事情成功的真谛。

王若平 于北京

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故事梗概

故事以 20 世纪初的伦敦为背景,围绕外国势力指使下的无政府主义破坏活动,向我们展示了一幅跌宕起伏、扣人心弦的社会斗争和政治斗争的画面。

首先登场的是伍洛克,他和妻子温妮经营着一家以卖黄色图片和书刊为主的小店。与他们同住的还有伍洛克的岳母和小舅子史蒂夫。一家人以此维持生计,虽然有些拮据,倒也不失温馨。随着故事的展开,我们了解到,伍洛克原来是一名身兼数职的密探:一个无政府主义地下组织的小头目、外国使馆的间谍、希特检察官的线人。这个组织的成员,伍洛克所谓的朋友,是几个终日宣称要用恐怖活动来改变当时社会的无政府主义分子:糟老头子卡尔·云特虽然牙齿头发掉光、虚弱不堪,但似乎还有力气进行最后一次谋杀;迈克尔里斯当时蹲了十五年监狱,非但没有改过自新,反而在为狱中所思所想著书立说;欧西本长着一张典型的罪犯脸,只知道追女人……

伍洛克本来还算平静的日子因为一个叫拉丁米尔的人的出现而阴云密布。这个人是一个外国大使馆的大使,出于政治目的,他指使伍洛克去炸毁格林威治天文台。正在伍洛克为此郁郁寡欢、夜不能寐的时候,有些弱智的小舅子史蒂夫闯入了他的视野。史蒂夫是一个极易因社会不公而愤愤不平,为他人的苦难伤心感怀的小伙。他很尊重和信任他姐夫。伍洛克决定利用史蒂夫爱打抱不平的性格、他的弱智以及他对他的信任。他从教授那里买来了一颗新型的炸弹。教授,用他自己的话来说,是一个用实际行动实践着无政府主义信条的冷酷无情的人。他以造出炸弹为人生终极目标。但是,炸弹提前爆炸了,史蒂夫被炸成了一堆碎片,伍洛克也因警察从史蒂夫尸体上找到的一块写有他们家地址的破布而被警方和检察官找上了门。温妮在得知她深爱的弟弟被她一直信任的丈夫害死后,极其伤心和绝望。愤怒之下,她用切刀

捅死了伍洛克。然而对绞刑的恐惧使她决定投泰晤士河自尽。在摇摇晃晃地走在街上的时候，她碰到了迎面走来的欧西本。欧西本从教授那里得知伍洛克已被炸死，正在争取最先赶到伍洛克家去骗取他留下的钱财。在看到伍洛克躺在家中的尸体后，他才明白了一切。为了在保全自身的情况下拿到那笔钱，他欺骗温妮要与她到国外生活。在骗到温妮的钱后，他从两人乘坐的开往国外的火车上跳下去，回到伦敦。然而，他还没来得及去享用那笔钱，就从报上得知温妮投河自尽了。这个消息把他逼疯了。

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CHAPTER ONE

In the morning, Mr. Verloc left his store with his wife's brother, which was easily done because he hardly ever had customers, especially late in the afternoon. His store **was located** in the same building as his house. He sold mainly pictures of naked women, sex books, and a couple of funny French cartoon books. These goods usually attracted either very young or very old men. Both types were quite shy about being seen walking into the store. The old men would wear long coats with the collars turned up in order to hide their faces. The young men, on the other hand, would stand on the sidewalk, trying to seem uninterested while taking secret looks at the pictures in the window. Then, when they knew what they wanted, they would run in, buy it, and run back out.

Mr. Verloc did not **care about** his store at all. He did not keep his appearance **nice and** clean for the customers, nor was he very friendly to them. When the broken bell at the top of the door announced that a new customer had arrived, he would walk from his home to the shop and stand silently behind the counter, waiting

for the person to buy something expensive and useless.

In the evenings, Mrs. Verloc worked in the store. This often made the customers (all of them being men, of course) quite uncomfortable. However, it was good for business, because people would also buy other things, like pens or envelopes, **in order to** make it seem like they had not come only to buy dirty pictures.

Most people who came in the evening were not customers, however. Instead of looking around the shop, they would say "hello" to Mrs. Verloc and walk directly to the back of the store and down some stairs. There was only one entrance and exit from the house, and that was through the door of the store.

Mr. Verloc did not often leave his home. He found that everything he needed to do could be done there. Life at home was quite comfortable for him, because his wife took very good care of him.

He also had his wife's mother around the house. She had once owned an old hotel with a bar on the first floor. It was located in an area that **used to** be considered very wealthy, but was now less fashionable. She rented rooms to anyone who needed them. Most of her customers were quite poor and less than perfect gentlemen.

Mrs. Verloc's mother was quite old and had bad legs. In order to keep the business going, Mrs. Verloc had worked in the bar. She was good at the job, for she was beautiful and enjoyed talking with the customers.

Before they were married, Mr. Verloc was a frequent visitor of the hotel. He would leave the hotel late in the evening and return very early in the morning. He always told the young **barkeeper** that he had just come back from abroad, where he had been doing business. He never made clear what kind of business he had done.

When they got married, Mr. Verloc decided that his mother-in-law's business would have to be sold so that he and his wife could start their own business. They moved into the home that was described earlier and Mr. Verloc began to spend most of his evenings out. The result was that Winnie hardly ever saw him, and was never taken out for a night on the town, like a good husband would do. When she asked him what kind of work he did, he would only say that it was related to politics. She accepted this and treated his political friends very well when they occasionally came over in the evenings.

When Mr. Verloc's **mother-in-law** moved in with

her daughter and son-in-law, her health got worse. She could no longer walk at all. Realizing the kind of shop that Mr. Verloc owned, she was a little surprised. However, she accepted it, because she liked him. It made her happy to know that both her daughter and son, Stevie, would be taken care of for the rest of their lives. She was especially worried about Stevie, because he had a disability that would make him like a child for all of his life. Winnie was very close to her brother and planned to always care for him in the future.

Stevie worked as Mr. Verloc's **delivery boy**. However, because he found everything on the street so interesting, he would often make mistakes or forget where he was going.

When he was fourteen, a friend of the family gave him a job in his office helping the workers with small tasks. One day, however, he surprised everyone in the company by lighting many **fireworks** inside the building. The loud noise and smoke **frightened** many people and caused them to run outside, fearing for their lives. When asked why he had done it, Stevie said that two other boys in the company had upset him. The manager fired him immediately. It was clear that Stevie would not be able to work among the rest of society.

Now, he had a room on the first floor of Mr. Verloc's home, next to his mother's. When he was not helping his sister with housework, he spent his time drawing circles on a piece of paper with a pencil.

注释

be located 位于

care about 担心

nice and... 后接形容词或副词,表示满意或赞赏,意思是“很,十分,非常”。如:这里的 nice and clean 便不能理解为“美好而又清洁”,而应该理解为“非常清洁”。

in order to 为了

used to 强调过去常发生但现在不再发生的动作; **would**: 只表示过去的习惯动作,常常,总是,不强调与现在的对比。

barkeeper ['bɑ:kɪpə] *n.* 酒吧老板或酒吧招待员

mother-in-law 婆母,岳母

delivery boy 送报员

fireworks ['faɪəwɜ:kz] *n.* 烟花,焰火

frightened ['fraɪnd] *vt.* 使惊吓 *vi.* 惊恐