

IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

By C. K. FAN

英文惯用语用法手册



外 语 学 习 社

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外語學習社印行

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IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS EXPLAINED

英文慣用語用法手冊

1. CANNOT, ... TOO

I cannot thank you too much.

[句 之 研 究]

就“cannot”而論，人人都知道是否定的意思，例如說：“I cannot do it”（我不能做它）；“too”字表示過度的意思，等於“more than enough”，例如：“He is too old to go out.” 就是說：“他的年紀太大，不能出外。”由此看來“cannot”和“too”都含有否定的意思，可是這兩個字放在一處，他們的意義，就等於是肯定的。“I cannot thank you too much.”的意思就是等於“I thank you very much.”

“cannot...too”可以用“cannot...enough”或“cannot...over”代替牠。“...cannot”又可用“It is difficult (impossible)...”等字代替牠。

現在舉幾個例句如下：

- I. You cannot pay too much attention to the diet of the patient. (你對於這病人的飲食愈能注意愈好).

2. We cannot be too faithful to our duties. (我們無論如何忠於職務亦不爲過.)
3. One can never be too careful in the choice of one's friends. (人之擇友, 愈能謹慎愈好.)
4. The importance of physical training cannot be over-estimated. (身體鍛練之重要無論如何過分估價亦不爲過.)

2. CANNOT BUT

**I cannot but laugh. =
I cannot help laughing.**

[句 之 研 究]

先就 “cannot but” 中之 “but” 一字研究之. “but” 可用作 preposition, conjunction 或 adverb.

All but (=except) one fulfilled their promises. (全體中除一人外, 餘均踐言.)

I cannot but laugh. (我禁不住笑.)

以上的 “but” 都用作 preposition, 它後面的字, 不論任何詞類, 都是它的 object; 上面之 “one” 和 “laugh” 兩字, 都是 “but” 的 object.

“cannot but” 的意義等於 “cannot avoid”, “must”, “cannot help” (不禁). 類乎此者, 有下列各句:

I cannot forbear laughing.

I cannot keep from laughing.

I cannot refrain from laughing.

我們看了上列各句，可以明瞭這兩種句子——“I cannot but laugh” 和 “I cannot help laughing”——的構造。在 “I cannot but laugh” 句子裏，laugh 雖是動詞，但是可以做 “but” 的 object。在 “I cannot help laughing” 句子裏，laugh 一定要加 “-ing” 做 help 的 object。（按此處 help 不作“幫助”解，是“阻止”，“避免”等意義。）

現在再舉幾個例句如下：

1. They could not but cry over the calamity. (他們對於這種災厄，惟有哭泣。)
2. I cannot help forming some opinion of a man's character from his dress (我動輒從人的服裝判斷他的品行)
3. He cannot refrain from doing evil. (他不能免於作惡)
4. I cannot refrain from tears. (我不禁淚下。)
5. I cannot keep from smiling to hear her talk. (聽她講話我就要笑了。)
6. She could not help doing so. (她不得不這樣做。)

3. NEVER... BUT

**It never rains but it pours.—
Proverb**

[句 之 研 究]

“but” 這樣用法是一個連接詞 (conjunction). 和用作介系詞 (preposition) 者不同。 “never...but” 就等於

“never...without -ing.” 上例 “It never rains but it pours” 就等於 “It never rains without pouring” (不雨則已，雨則傾盆.)

“but” 用作 conjunction 時，常用在 no, not, 或 never 後面，還有 deny, fail, hinder, question, fear, doubt 等否定語後面，亦用 but，用時常與 that 字並存，意思就是於that；例如，

I do not deny *but that* (=that) you will succeed. (我不否認你會成功的.)

茲更舉例句如下：

1. I never see you but I think of my brother.
= I never see you without thinking of my brother.
(我看見你，未有不想起我的哥哥來.)
2. He never reads a book but he digests it.
= He never reads a book without digesting it.
(他不讀書則已，讀則必融會貫通.)
3. I seldom went out but I met him. (我出外難得不遇見他的.)
4. I never hear such a story but I laugh.
= I never hear such a story without laughing.
(我聽見這種故事就要笑了.)
5. The tiger's roar is never heard by the natives without a feeling of fear, and no wonder; for a year does not pass without a number of those people falling victims.

to its ferocity. (土人聞虎吼的，未有不怕的，這是無足爲怪的；因爲沒有一年他們裏面沒有許多人犧牲於虎的兇暴的。)

4. BOTH...AND

**This book is both interesting
and instructive.**

[句 之 研 究]

這句的“both”，也可以刪去不用；如“*This book is interesting and instructive.*”不過“*both...and*”是 *conjunctive phrase*，應該兩者並用。“*both...and*”是表示兩種事實聯合的加重語氣方式，如上例“*This book is both interesting and instructive*”其意義謂這本書不僅是有趣，也不僅增益智慧，而是兩者兼而有之的。

用“*at once...and*”以代替“*both...and*”意義沒有分別；例如，*He is at once a philosopher and a poet.* (他既是哲學家，又是詩人。)

以上所說，無論是用“*both...and*”或“*at once...and*”都是表示兩者間無分軒輊；如果兩者有畸輕畸重的關係，比較重者應置於後面；例如，

。He was both degraded from his class, and suspended from school for one year. (他既降級，又停學一年。)

茲更舉例句如下：

1. He is at once stern and tender. (他又嚴厲又溫和.)
2. He has both experience and knowledge. (他既有經驗, 又有學問.)
3. Both you and I shall be held responsible. (你和我都要負責任.)
4. The sound of a gun near by startled both my horse and myself. (近處鎗聲既驚動我的馬又驚動我自己.)

5. NOT ONLY...BUT ALSO

This book is not only interesting but also instructive.

[句 之 研 究]

這句的意義，與前面的例句意義不同。前者的意義間，沒有輕重可分，用“not only...but also”時，就分軒輊了。“not only...but also”的用法是側重在第二個的；例如，

Not only I, but also all other men declare this to be true. (不僅我一人，其他的人都稱這件事是真實的.)

“not only...but also”可作“not only...but”，又可作“not merely...but (also)”，“not alone...but(also)”，

“not only...but likewise” 等式，但是意義上並沒有分別。

現在更舉例如下：

1. It is not merely the largest, but also the richest city in the world. (這不僅是世界上最大的城，也是最富的城。)
2. He is not only a good teacher, but a perfect gentleman. (他不僅是個好教師，並且是個完善的君子。)
3. I honor him not only for what he has done, but likewise for what he is. (我不僅因為他的行為，並且因為他的人品而尊敬他。)
4. She was dressed not only richly but also tastefully. (她穿的衣服不僅富麗，而且雅致。)
5. He gave me not only advice but also money. (他不僅給我以忠告，並且給我以金錢。)

6. AS WELL AS

This book is instructive as well as interesting.

[句 之 研 究]

這句子與前面的 “This book is both interesting and instructive”, “This book is not only interesting but also instructive” 兩例句不同。 “This book is both interesting

and instructive” 是說有趣與增益智慧並重，沒有輕重的意思。 “This book is not only interesting but also instructive” 是側重兩者中間後面的一個。這句與用 “not only...but also” 式所造成的句子，適得其反。這句的意思，注重兩者間的第一個；例如： “He has experience as well as knowledge.” 這句的意思，蓋示經驗重於學問也。

與 “as well as” 用法相同者，有 no less than 一仿語；如： “Your friends no less than I will be glad to see you. (你的朋友同我都喜歡會你.)

因為 as well as 和 no less than 都側重第一個主詞，所以後面如用動詞時，動詞的人稱 (person) 和數目，應與第一個主詞相一致；例如：

My comrades as well as I were betrayed. (我的同伴同我都被背棄.)

茲更舉例如下：

1. In its climate as well as in several other respects, China may be considered as a wealthy nation.
(就中國的氣候以及其他各方面而論，中國可以夠得上稱為一個富饒的國家。)
2. He was his parents', as well as his sister's, favorite.
(他是他父母的以及他姊姊的寵愛者。)
3. He as well as you is guilty. (他與你都有罪。)
4. He is no less guilty than you. (他之有罪不減於你。)

7. SO AS TO

**I went to bed early so as to rise
early the next morning.**

[句 之 研 究]

上面的句子等於 “I went to bed early so (=in such a way) as (=in which way I should go to bed) to rise early the next morning.”

“so as to” 一仿語，有時是聯接在一處，並不分開（如上面例句是），也有分開用的；例如：

“I went to bed so early as to rise early the next morning.” 這句等於 “I went to bed so (to that extent) early as (to which extent I should be early) to rise early the next morning.” 也就等於 “I went to bed early enough to rise early....”

又如 “He was so kind as to take me into his house.” 等於 “He was kind enough to take me into his house.” 也等於 “He had the kindness to take me into his house.”

“so as to” 與 “so...as to” 兩仿語用法有點不同：“so as to” 表示目的，而 “so...as to” 表示自然的結果；例如：

He studied very hard so as not to be degraded from the class. (他學習很勤，其目的在不被降級.)

He walked *so fast as to* be in time for the train. (他走得很快, 其結果及時趕到火車.)

茲更舉例句如下:

1. I got up at 6 a.m. *so as to* be certain of being in time. (我因為要確信不至晚到, 所以早晨六時起身.)
2. On the third day, the barometer fell so low as to induce the captain to believe that they should have a severe gale. (第三天, 寒暑表如此下降, 以致使船主相信暴風將至.)
3. A man must *so* cultivate his habits as to rely upon his own powers in time of emergency. (一個人必須養成在危急時憑藉他一己的能力之習慣.)
4. That boy was so foolish as to forget his own age. (該男孩如此愚笨, 竟忘其自己年齡.)

8. SO...THAT

I went to bed so early that I got up earlier than usual this morning.

[句 之 研 究]

“so...that” 係 conjunctive phrase, 聯接 “I went to bed early” 與 “I got up earlier than usual this morning” 兩子句。這種用法, 是表示結果 (effect) 的; 例如

He talked so much that he made himself hoarse. (他談話太多，以致聲啞。)

“so...that”的用法，與上面的“so as to”的用法相同，上例句可以用 so as to 代之：

“I went to bed so early as to get up earlier than usual this morning.”

“so...that”有時亦作“so that”；例如：

He knows English so that he has no need of an interpreter. (他懂英語，所以不需通譯者。)

不過“so that”另外還有一種用法，就是有時表示有條件的意思；例如：

You can do whatever you like, so that (provided, or on condition that) you injure no one but yourself. (你只要傷害自己不傷害他人，你能做你喜歡的任何事件。)

現在更舉例句如下：

1. I am so tired that I cannot go any farther. (我疲倦之極，不能再走。)
2. The sand was so hot that we could hardly go barefoot. (沙非常地熱，以致我們幾不能跣足而行。)
3. The book is so difficult that it is beyond my comprehension. (這本書難讀得非我所能了解。)
4. They placed themselves all round the town, so that no man could enter or leave. (他們圍着城，所以無人能出入。)
5. This story is so strange that no one will believe it. (這故事太離奇，故無人相信。)

9. SO THAT...MAY

He studies hard so that he may succeed.

[句 之 研 究]

這裏所用的 “so that” 同上面的 “so that” 不同。上面所用的 “so that” 是指結果而言，此處的 “so that” 是指目的 (purpose) 而言，而且在這個後面一定要放一個 “may” 或 “might” 字

用 conjunction “that” 聯接兩子句而表示目的的，除用 “so that” 外，尚有其他的字，有時只用一個 “that”，有時用 “in order that”，不過都要用 may 或 might 在後面。還有一種方法，就是用 “lest” 這個字。

“lest” 本作 “by which the less”。在從前的英文裏，後面用現在式虛擬語氣 (present subjunctive)；例如：Take heed, lest you fall (注意，否則將要跌下去)。在現代英文裏，“lest” 後面，有個補助詞 “should” 但亦有用 might 的；例如：

He would not speak, lest he might wake me. (他不願講話，恐怕驚醒我。)

“lest...should” 就等於 “that...may not”，也就等於 “for fear...may”，“for fear...should”。現在把每種用法舉例句如下：