

Embarrassing English

尴尬英语

胡孝申 主编

课堂里学不到的英语



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尴 尬 英 语

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本书收集英语会话时容易碰到的问题 200 余例。每一例都分为 4 个部分。第一部分介绍一般情况，第二部分例举一个误用英语的对话实例，第三部分对该例进行分析解说，第四部分提供一个经过修正的版本，供大家学习参考。该书构思独特，新颖有趣，可读性强，不同层次的学习者都能从中获得启发。

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前 言

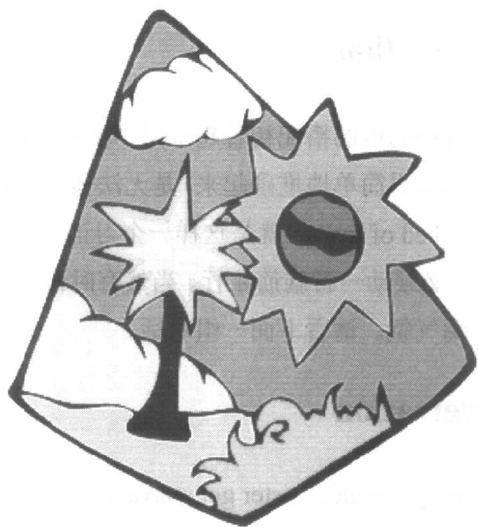
我们在学习英语的过程中，总会遇到不少的困难，其中令人感到很头疼的不仅仅是那些长而怪异的单词，更有那些经常让人感到不可思议的习惯用法。但恰恰就是这些习惯用法，构成了英语语言中最生动有趣的部分。一旦掌握好这些用法，并能运用得当，你的英文水平将得到突飞猛进的提高。

我们相信，我们编写的这本叫做《尴尬英语》的小册子，会给正在学习英文的年轻朋友们一点小小的帮助和启示，你们在学习中一定也遇到过类似的情况吧？

但这只是一个开始，要想真正学好英文，非要下一番苦功不可。要多读英文小说，循序渐进，数年之后，你的英文水平会让我们刮目相看的。

编者

二〇〇三年九月



课堂里学不到的 English

A bed of roses



Introduction

英语中有些词语的搭配初看起来是不易理解的。如果按照单词字面上的意思简单地堆砌起来,是无法体会到其丰富的文化含义的。“a bed of roses”就是这样一个习语,学习者千万不可望文生义,必须动一番脑筋才行。当然有时语言使用者会将错就错,协调气氛。请看下面一组对话。



Conversation

Shirman: Finally my elder sister got married.

Cong: Congratulations. How is she now?

Shirman: En, not bad. Her husband loves her so much and made her a bed of roses.

Cong: Bed of roses! Is he a gardener?

Shirman: How humorous you are. I mean her husband provided her with a comfortable life.

Cong: A fortunate woman!





Analysis

“a bed of roses”不是指用玫瑰花做成的床。在西方，玫瑰花是“幸福、爱情”的象征，而这条成语原指美丽芬芳的玫瑰花坛，引申一下就指“安逸舒适的环境”。例句中 **Shirman** 想说他的姐夫给他姐姐创造了一个安乐窝，可 **Cong** 却误解为 **Shirman** 的姐姐嫁了个园丁，真是闹了个大笑话。如果 **Cong** 理解其含义，交流就没问题了。



Suggested Conversation

Shirman: Finally my elder sister got married.

Cong: Congratulations. How is she now?

Shirman: En, not bad. Her husband loves her so much and made her a bed of roses.

Cong: A fortunate woman!

Shirman: By the way, can you guess what does her husband do?

Cong: No matter what he does, he must be wealthy.

A green hand



Introduction

对于汉语学习者而言，最难的恐怕是汉语的成语和习语了，这些词往往有着深远的文化渊源，仅从字面上看很难理解其真正的含义。而对于英语学习者来说，难点也在于此。



Conversation

Feng: I really can't get along with Jim.

Claudy: Well, what happened?

Feng: He is too slow in his work that all of us have to stop to wait.

Claudy: Forget it! He's just a green hand.

Feng: I can't see there is anything wrong with his hands.

Claudy: Who says something goes wrong with his hands?



Analysis

“a green hand”如果仅从字面上看这个短语，可能每个人都会觉得奇怪，怎么会有“绿色的手”呢？这也是 **Feng** 的疑问。其实这个短语的真正含义是“新手”，指那些刚刚从事某项工作，对工作还不甚熟练的人。如果 **Feng** 知道这个习语的正确含义就不会觉得奇怪了。



Suggested Conversation

Feng: I really can't get along with Jim.

Claudy: Well, what happened?

Feng: He is too slow in his work that all of us have to stop to wait.

Claudy: Forget it! He's just a green hand.

Feng: I know, but my patience is running out.

Claudy: Take it easy. Let's go out for a drink.



A lucky dog



Introduction

要想学好英语，不仅要背单词，还要懂得一些英美文化习俗，尤其是那些与中国习俗大相径庭的风俗习惯，否则在交往中容易产生误解。下面的对话之所以不成功就是因为中英文化存在着差异。



Conversation

Hellinton: Did you watch the horse race last night?

Bao: Of course.

Hellinton: The black horse got the first again.

Bao: Yes, and I bet 1000 dollars on him.

Hellinton: Really? You lucky dog!

Bao: What?!





Analysis

虽然狗是人类的忠实朋友，但中国文化习俗中被比喻成狗的贬义词较多，如：丧家犬、落水狗、狗仗人势，等等。如果把一个人比喻成狗或称作狗，都带有极强的侮辱性。英美的文化习俗也有许多与狗有关的习语，但往往并无贬义，如：Every dog has its good day. 意思是“凡人皆有得意时”。并无任何贬低侮辱之意。在上面的对话中，“a lucky dog”不是骂对方是“一条幸运的狗”，而仅仅是“你真幸运”，当然也毫无侮辱之意。



Suggested Conversation

Hellinton: Did you watch the horse race last night?

Bao: Of course.

Hellinton: The black horse got the first again.

Bao: Yes, and I bet 1000 dollars on him.

Hellinton: Really? You lucky dog!

Bao: Wish you good luck, too.

A pain in the neck



Introduction

如果有个美国人对你说: He's a pain in the neck. 你会不会把它解释为: He has a pain in the neck——他脖子痛? 看起来倒是挺像的, 对不对? 现在来设想另一个场景——当你在电影院里聚精会神地欣赏电影的时候, 有一个坐在中间的人不断地进出, 于是你就得一次又一次的站起来为他让路, 电影也一次次地被打断。这个时候你就可以一点也不夸张地说: He's really a pain in the neck.



Conversation

Xiao: Alice asked us if we wanted to go to the cinema with her and her friends?

Rossman: No, I don't. You might not know that she's a pain in the neck.

Xiao: Really? Since she doesn't feel comfortable, why does she want to go to the cinema?

Rossman: She doesn't feel well? I never said that.



Analysis

为什么 **Rossman** 说 Alice's a pain in the neck, 却又否认他说过 Alice 身体不好的话呢? 看过 introduction 的话, 相信你应该有了一些了解。A pain in the neck 的本意就从看戏而来——如果一个坐在中间的人不断地进进出出, 相信你的脖子也会痛的。现在 a pain in the neck 已经不仅仅指戏院里那些不安分的观众, 还可以进而代指一切让人头疼的人。



Suggested Conversation

Xiao: Alice asked us if we wanted to go to the cinema with her and her friends?

Rossman: No, I don't. You might not know that she's a pain in the neck.

Xiao: Really? She seems quite nice and good.

Rossman: I had a date with her once before. It was horrible.

A walking refrigerator



Introduction

说起 refrigerator(冰箱), 大家的第一印象是什么呢? 如果看过畅销书《蛋白质女孩》的读者应该会有这样的印象, “冰箱女人”代表的是冷冰冰的感觉, 相信会有很多读者对 refrigerator 有一个先入为主的理解, 那就是冷若冰霜。那么在本篇中, “会走的冰箱”是什么意思呢?



Conversation

Xie: What are you doing here? You're supposed to be at Martha's birthday party now.

Pitzer: I don't want to go. You know, her roommate is a walking refrigerator, and Martha is asked to introduce me to her.

Xie: Maybe she's very pretty. Well, most of cold women are pretty.

Pitzer: She's a walking refrigerator. How could she be pretty?



Analysis

从上面的对话中我们可以看出，一个“行走的冰箱”所关系的并不是冷淡不冷淡的问题，而是一个美不美的问题。这下子就容易多了。冰箱看起来怎么样？非常庞大是不是？所以说一个人体重很重的时候可以参考这个用法。另外不要忘记了还有“a walking dictionary”和“a walking encyclopedia”，都是称赞一个人有学问的意思。



Suggested Conversation

Xie: What are you doing here? You're supposed to be at Martha's birthday party now.

Pitzer: I don't want to go. You know, her roommate is a walking refrigerator, and Martha is asked to introduce me to her.

Xie: Pity on you!



Actress / driver



Introduction

英语的名词也有性别，而其中很多都是以后缀来加以区分的。后缀“-er, -or”变成“-ess”就是阳性名词变成阴性的一个最常见的例子，但是，并非所有以“-er”结尾的阳性名词变成阴性都遵循这个规律。如果类比错误，肯定会出错。请看下面的对话。



Conversation

Son: Mum, two of my classmates have sisters.

Mother: Oh? What do they do?

Son: The sister of one classmate is an actor.

Mother: You should say his sister is an actress.

Son: I see.

Mother: And how about the other classmate's sister?

Son: En...She is a drivess.



Analysis

演员的英语单词是“actor”，女演员则为“actress”，这一组词符合一般的规律。但是女司机就不能变为“drivess”，而是“woman driver”。由此可见，学习任何一门语言都要考虑到共性和个性的存在，千万不可一律照搬。



Suggested Conversation

Son: Mum, two of my classmates have sisters.

Mother: Oh? What do they do?

Son: The sister of one classmate is an actor.

Mother: You should say his sister is an actress.

Son: I see.

Mother: And how about the other classmate's sister?

Son: En....She is a drivess.

Mother: You should say she is a woman driver.

Son: That's strange.

Mother: You'll soon learn to say the right thing.