**An impressive English lesson**

**一堂难忘的英语课**

**1 If I am the only parent who still corrects his child's English, then perhaps my son is right. To him, I am a tedious oddity: a father he is obliged to listen to and a man absorbed in the rules of grammar, which my son seems allergic to.**

**如果我是唯一一个还在纠正小孩英语的家长，那么我儿子也许是对的。对他而言，我是一个乏味的怪物：一个他不得不听其教诲的父亲，一个还沉湎于语法规则的人，对此我儿子似乎颇为反感。**

**2 I think I got serious about this only recently when I ran into one of my former students, fresh from an excursion to Europe. "How was it?" I asked, full of earnest anticipation.**

**我觉得我是在最近偶遇我以前的一位学生时，才开始对这个问题认真起来的。这个学生刚从欧洲旅游回来。我满怀着诚挚期待问她：“欧洲之行如何？”**

**3 She nodded three or four times, searched the heavens for the right words, and then exclaimed, "It was, like, whoa!"**

**她点了三四下头，绞尽脑汁，苦苦寻找恰当的词语，然后惊呼：“真是，哇！”**

**4 And that was it. The civilization of Greece and the glory of Roman architecture were captured in a condensed non-statement. My student's "whoa!" was exceeded only by my head-shaking distress.**

**没了。所有希腊文明和罗马建筑的辉煌居然囊括于一个浓缩的、不完整的语句之中！我的学生以“哇！”来表示她的惊叹，我只能以摇头表达比之更强烈的忧虑。**

**5 There are many different stories about the downturn in the proper use of English. Surely students should be able to distinguish between their/there/they're or the distinctive difference between complimentary and complementary. They unfairly bear the bulk of the criticism for these knowledge deficits because there is a sense that they should know better.**

**关于正确使用英语能力下降的问题，有许多不同的故事。学生的确本应该能够区分诸如their/there/they’re之间的不同，或区别complimentary跟complementary之间显而易见的差异。由于这些知识缺陷，他们承受着大部分不该承受的批评和指责，因为舆论认为他们应该学得更好。**

**6 Students are not dumb, but they are being misled everywhere they look and listen. For example, signs in grocery stores point them to the stationary, even though the actual stationery items — pads, albums and notebooks — are not nailed down. Friends and loved ones often proclaim they've just ate when, in fact, they've just eaten. Therefore, it doesn't make any sense to criticize our students.**

**学生并不笨，他们只是被周围所看到和听到的语言误导了。举例来说，杂货店的指示牌会把他们引向stationary（静止处），虽然便笺本、相册、和笔记本等真正的stationery (文具用品) 并没有被钉在那儿。朋友和亲人常宣称 They’ve just ate。实际上，他们应该说 They’ve just eaten。因此，批评学生不合乎情理。**

**7 Blame for the scandal of this language deficit should be thrust upon our schools, which should be setting high standards of English language proficiency. Instead, they only teach a little grammar and even less advanced vocabulary. Moreover, the younger teachers themselves evidently have little knowledge of these vital structures of language because they also went without exposure to them. Schools fail to adequately teach the essential framework of language, accurate grammar and proper vocabulary, while they should take the responsibility of pushing the young onto the path of competent communication.**

**对这种缺乏语言功底而引起的负面指责应归咎于我们的学校。学校应对英语熟练程度制定出更高的标准。可相反，学校只教零星的语法，高级词汇更是少之又少。还有就是，学校的年轻教师显然缺乏这些重要的语言结构方面的知识，因为他们过去也没接触过。学校有责任教会年轻人进行有效的语言沟通，可他们并没把语言的基本框架——准确的语法和恰当的词汇——充分地传授给学生。**

**8 Since grammar is boring to most of the young students, I think that it must be handled delicately, step by step. The chance came when one day I was driving with my son. As we set out on our trip, he noticed a bird in jerky flight and said, "It's flying so unsteady." I carefully asked, "My son, how is the bird flying?" "What's wrong? Did I say anything incorrectly?" He got lost. "Great! You said incorrectly instead of incorrect. We use adverbs to describe verbs. Therefore, it's flying so unsteadily but not so unsteady."**

**因为语法对大多数年轻学生而言枯燥且乏味，所以我觉得讲授语法得一步一步、注重技巧地进行。有一天机会来了。我跟儿子开车外出。我们出发时，他看到一只小鸟飞得很不稳，就说：“它飞的不稳。”（It’s flying so unsteady.） 我小心翼翼地问：“儿子， 鸟怎么飞?”“有问题吗？我说得不对吗？（Did I say anything incorrectly?）”他一头雾水。“太好了，你说的是incorrectly而不是incorrect。我们用副词来描述动词。所以，要用unsteadily来描述鸟飞 ，而不是unsteady。”**

**9 Curious about my correction, he asked me what an adverb was. Slowly, I said, "It's a word that tells you something about a verb." It led to his asking me what a verb was. I explained, "Verbs are action words; for example, Dad drives the truck. Drive is the verb because it's the thing Dad is doing."**

**他对我的纠正很好奇，就问我什么是副词。我慢慢解释道：“副词是用来修饰动词的词。”这又导致了他询问我什么是动词。我解释说：“动词是表示行为的词，例如：爸爸开卡车。‘开’是动词，因为它是爸爸在做的事。”**

**10 He became attracted to the idea of action words, so we listed a few more: fly, swim, dive, run. Then, out of his own curiosity, he asked me if other words had names for their use and functions. This led to a discussion of nouns, adjectives, and articles. Within the span of a 10-minute drive, he had learned from scratch to the major parts of speech in a sentence. It was painless learning and great fun!**

**他开始对表示行为的词产生兴趣，所以我们又罗列了几个动词：“飞行”、“游泳”、“跳水”、“跑步”。然后，他又好奇地问我，其他的词有没有说明它们的用法和功能的名称。这就引发了我们对名词、形容词和冠词的讨论。在短短十分钟的驾驶时间内，他从对语法一无所知到学会了句子中主要词语的词性。这是一次毫无痛苦而又非常有趣的学习经历。**

**11 Perhaps, language should be looked upon as a road map and a valuable possession: often study the road map (check grammar) and tune up the car engine (adjust vocabulary). Learning grammar and a good vocabulary is just like driving with a road map in a well-conditioned car.**

**也许，语言应该被看成是一张路线图和一件珍品：我们要常常查看路线图（核对语法）和调整汽车的引擎（调节词汇）。学好语法和掌握大量的词汇就好比拿着路线图在车况良好的车里驾驶。**

**12 The road map provides the framework and guidance you need for your trip, but it won't tell you exactly what trees or flowers you will see, what kind of people you will encounter, or what types of feelings you will be experiencing on your journey. Here, the vocabulary makes the journey's true colors come alive! A good vocabulary enables you to enjoy whatever you see as you drive along. Equipped with grammar and a good vocabulary, you have flexibility and excellent control. While the road map guides your journey to your destination, an excellent vehicle helps you to fully enjoy all of the sights, sounds and experiences along the way.**

**路线图为你的旅行提供所需的基本路线和路途指南，可是它不会告诉你一路上你究竟会看见什么树或什么花，你会遇见什么样的人，或会有什么样的感受。这里，词汇会使你的旅途变得五彩缤纷、栩栩如生。大量的词汇让你享受到开车途中所见的点点滴滴。借助语法和丰富的词汇，你就有了灵活性，掌控自如。路线图会把你带到目的地，而一台好车却能让你完全陶醉于旅途的所有景色、声音及经历之中。**

**13 Effective, precise, and beneficial communication depends upon grammar and a good vocabulary, the two essential assets for students, but they are not being taught in schools.**

**对学生来说，有效、准确且富有成效的沟通技能取决于语法和词汇这两大有利条件，可是学校并没有教他们这些。**

**14 Just this morning, my son and I were eating breakfast when I attempted to add milk to my tea. "Dad," he said, "If I were you, I wouldn't do that. It's sour."**

**就在今天早上，我跟儿子吃早饭时，我想把牛奶加入我的茶里。 “爸爸，” 他说，“如果我是你的话，我不会这样做。牛奶会变酸。（If I were you, I wouldn’t do that. It’s sour.）”**

**15 "Oh my!" I said, swelling with pride toward my son, "That's a grammatically perfect sentence. You used were instead of was."**

**“哦，上帝！”我满怀着无比的骄傲说道，“这是一句语法完全正确的句子。你用了were 而不是was。”**

**16 "I know, I know," he said with a long agreeable sigh. "It's the subjunctive mood."**

**“我知道，我知道，”他愉悦地舒了口气，“这是虚拟语气！”**

**17 I was, like, whoa!**

**这下轮到我“哇！”了。**

**The great journey of learning**

**伟大的学习之旅**

**1 Malcolm X was an African-American civil rights activist, religious leader, writer, and speaker. Born in 1925, he was mysteriously assassinated in 1965. By the time of his death, his own telling of his life story, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, had been widely known. He was born Malcolm Little into a poor household. Later, he took the name Malcolm X after joining an organization called the Nation of Islam, a religious group that had changed major practices and beliefs of mainstream Islam to apply more specifically to the condition of African-American people in the United States in the early 1960s.**

**马尔科姆·艾克斯是一位非裔美国民权活动家、宗教领袖、作家和演说家。他生于1925年，1965年被神秘地暗杀。在他去世之前，他对自己生平的自述——《马尔科姆·艾克斯自传》已闻名遐迩。他出生于一个贫民家庭，取名马尔科姆·利特尔。后来，他加入了一个叫“伊斯兰民族”的组织，之后改名为马尔科姆·艾克斯。“伊斯兰民族”是个宗教团体，它改变了美国主流伊斯兰教的一些主要的习俗和信仰，使之更适用于19世纪60年代早期非裔美国人的特定情况。**

**2 Malcolm X learned about the Nation of Islam while in prison for committing criminal acts such as theft. Because he was poorly educated, he felt inadequate to teach his new beliefs to others. As a young man, he could sketch his thoughts with poor grammar and little vocabulary using the simple, unsophisticated language of people on the street. As an adult, when he tried to inform people about his new beliefs at a rally, he found that he didn't have the adequate communication skills he needed. In his own words, he "wasn't even functional".**

**马尔科姆·艾克斯因当时犯有诸如偷窃等罪而入狱。他在监狱里得知了“伊斯兰民族”组织。由于没有受过良好的教育，他在向别人传授他的新信仰时感到力不从心。作为一名年轻人，他可以用草根语言来概述自己的想法，语言简单、粗浅、语法差劲，且词汇贫乏。可作为一名成年人，当他在大型公众集会上向人们阐述他的新信仰时，他发觉自己缺少了所需的语言交流技能。用他自己的话说，他“甚至没有这个功能”。**

**3 In a bid to increase his knowledge and improve his skills, desperate Malcolm X devised a scheme. He turned to books, believing this would be beneficial. However, when he tried to read serious books on his own, he was distressed as he didn't know most of the words. "They might as well have been in Chinese," he wrote. He skipped all the words he didn't know and then would end up with no clue as to what the book was about. "I became frustrated," Malcolm X wrote in his autobiography, speaking of his inadequate language skills.**

**为了增长知识，提高沟通技能，深陷绝望的马尔科姆·艾克斯为自己制定了一个计划。他决定求助于书籍，相信书会使他受益匪浅。可是当他试图阅读一些严肃的书本时，他不禁倍感苦恼，因为大部分的词他都不认识。他写道：“这些书还不如是用中文写的。”他跳过了所有不认识的词，可是最终他全然不知这本书里写了什么。马尔科姆·艾克斯在他的自传里谈到他贫乏的语言技能时是这样写的：“我变得沮丧起来。”**

**4 Malcolm X's considerable frustration at his inability to read and write launched him on a quest to overcome his deficiencies. He said, "I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary — to study, to learn some words." And he was lucky enough to reason also that he should try to improve his handwriting. "It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line," he told us. These ideas together moved him to appeal to the prison authorities for some paper and pencils.**

**由于无法阅读和写作所遭受的巨大挫折促使马尔科姆·艾克斯开始探索如何攻克自己的语言缺陷。他说：“我明白我所能做的就是弄到一本词典来学习，学一些单词。”他也幸运地意识到应该尝试去改进他的书写。他告诉我们：“令人伤心的是我甚至不能把英文书写得整齐。”这些想法促使他向狱管请求，要了一些纸和铅笔。**

**5 For the first two days, Malcolm X just skimmed through the pages of the dictionary trying to negotiate his way through its unfamiliar format. He told us of his amazement at how closely related the words seemed. How moist could be the root of moisture, and advisable and advisory had the same root word! "I didn't know which words I needed to learn," he said, "finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying." In his slow, careful, crude handwriting, Malcolm X copied everything on the first full page of the dictionary into a notebook. He even copied the quotation marks! This took him one full day. After that, he read everything he had written aloud. "Over and over aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting." Malcolm recalled. He also logged important things that happened every day. Repetition helped move him from basic literacy toward true proficiency.**

**头两天，马尔科姆·艾克斯只是很快地浏览了一下词典，试图在这不熟悉的格式里寻找出他自己的应付方法。他告诉我们，他对这些单词之间的密切关系感到诧异。moist怎么会是moisture的词根；advisable跟advisory竟是同根词！“我都不知道哪些单词我需要学，”他说，“最后，为了有所行动，我开始抄写词典。”马尔科姆·艾克斯用他缓慢、仔细、蹩脚的书写，把词典的第一页全都抄写在一个笔记本上，他甚至把引号也抄了。这花了他整整一天的时间。在此之后，他高声朗读所有抄写下来的东西。“我一遍又一遍地给自己大声朗读自己抄写的东西。”马尔科姆回忆道。他还把每天发生的重要事情记录下来。重复朗读帮助他从一个仅有一些基础文化知识的人变成真正精通语言的人。**

**6 Malcolm X depicted how the next morning when he woke up, he kept thinking about the words he had copied and read aloud and about the acquisition of the knowledge he was pursuing. It was a marvelous feeling. He felt immensely proud.**

**马尔科姆·艾克斯描述了他第二天醒来时，是如何努力回忆他抄写和朗读过的单词及他苦苦追求所获的知识。这是一种神奇的感觉，他感到无比自豪。**

**7 He was so fascinated that he went on copying the dictionary's next page. Once again, he awoke, proud and energized. With every succeeding page he copied and read aloud, Malcolm X found he was learning and remembering more and more words. With each successive day, his confusion diminished.**

**他对此如此着迷以至于他又继续抄写词典的下一页。又一次，他醒来时感到骄傲且精力充沛。随着不断抄写和朗读，马尔科姆·艾克斯发现自己在学到东西，也记住了越来越多的单词，他的困惑也逐日减少。**

**8 As Malcolm X's word base broadened, he began to better understand the books he read. It was the first time in his life this had ever happened, "Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened." From then until he left that prison, his concentration was focused on reading. He was so absorbed in it. Months passed without his even thinking about being in prison. "In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life."**

**随着马尔科姆·艾克斯的词汇量不断扩大，他开始能更好地理解所阅读的书了。这种现象在他的一生中从未发生过。“任何一个阅读广泛的人都能想象那个开启了的新世界。”从那时起到他离开那个监狱，他一直专注于阅读，被它深深吸引。数月过去了，他竟然没感到自己在坐牢。“事实上，在这之前，我从没如此真正地感受过生活的自由。”**

**9 "I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life," Malcolm X wrote. He described how one day a writer telephoned him from London for an interview. The interviewer asked Malcolm X what college he had graduated from as he could write so fluently. He told the Englishman that his own personal university was "books".**

**“就是在监狱里我意识到阅读永远地改变了我的人生轨迹，”马尔科姆·艾克斯写道。他描述了有一天一位作家从伦敦打电话来采访他。那位作家问马尔科姆·艾克斯，他文笔那么流畅，是从什么大学毕业的。马尔科姆告诉那位英国人他的大学是“书本”。**

**10 Malcolm X's life is a wonderful example of the profound effect of learning a language. He was born into a world full of poverty and ignorance. However, as he acquired knowledge, his horizons expanded. He had left behind the narrow, ignorant world of his youth to join the world community of thoughts and actions ever since he started with his great journey of learning English in prison.**

**马尔科姆·艾克斯的一生成功地创造了一个通过语言学习而深刻改变人生的光辉典范。他出生于贫穷、无知的世界。可是，知识开阔了他的眼界。从他在监狱里踏上伟大的英语学习之旅起，他就离开了青年时代狭窄、无知的世界，加入到有思想、有作为的世界之中。**