【3.25】

**3.25每日一篇 | 外刊精读**

Language：The **babble** and the beyond  
   
Bye Bye I Love You.  
   
【1】BABIES COME into the world **seeking** out comfort, so their first word is often “mama”. It is easy to say and reflects the bond of mother and child. Meanwhile those leaving this world often make a **philosophical** **statement**, **reveal** a long-**hidden** truth or even **utter** a **witticism**. “Either those **curtains** go or I do,” Oscar Wilde supposedly said on his **deathbed**.  
   
【2】All this, including Wilde’s **quip**, is **dubious**, argues Michael Erard, an American journalist who has written several books about language. In “Bye Bye I Love You” he dismantles many long-held beliefs about **utterances** at both the beginning and end of life. He finds first and last words to be similar in many ways—such as how they are created by **expectant** listeners as much as by their speakers.Panda Foreign Magazine Intensive Reading:Respect for Originality, Piracy Must Be Punished  
   
【3】Sounds like mama and dada or papa **recur** in many of the world’s words for “mother” and “father”. But about as many parental words lack these common sounds; in some languages the word for “mother” features rare **consonants** that children master only later. “Mama” is what Mr Erard calls a “**cultural** first word”, **fussed** over by those who have learned to look out for it or even **elicit** it from little ones.  
   
【4】Things are very different elsewhere. Among the Beng people of Ivory Coast, a baby is not **supposed** to **utter** his first word too **precociously**. To do so is a bad **omen**, **involving** a “**cosmic** rebalancing”, and a grandparent might die in **compensation**. Among speakers of Tayap in Papua New Guinea babies are **expected** to be **defiant**; people listen out for “oki” and “aiata”, meaning “I’m getting out of here” and “stop it”. A similar belief holds among Samoans, for whom “tae” is **expected** to be many babies’ first word, short for “ai tae” (“eat shit”).  
   
【5】In **industrialised** **societies** early **linguistic** development is big business. Unusual and **varied** early words are meant to be a sign of a **gifted** child who will **reap** the **rewards** of being **brainy** later on. Baby books **encouraging** parents to report on their children’s first words made their **appearance** in the late 19th century along with an increasingly professional, **managerial** approach to **parenting**—child-**rearing** as **optimisation**. Rich-world parents are thus keen to **elicit** speech from their children as early as they can.  
   
【6】Mr Erard is not the first to point out that **industrialisation** has changed not only childhood, but old age, too. Medical **advances** in wealthy countries have led to more **protracted** declines and deaths at older ages; in earlier centuries, violence, **accidents** and **catastrophic** illnesses **claimed** many young, otherwise healthy people.Panda Foreign Magazine Intensive Reading:Respect for Originality, Piracy Must Be Punished  
   
【7】That has had an effect on last words. Popular culture has **conditioned** loved ones to expect some final truth or **profundity** in the last utterance of the dying. But **moments** of sudden **lucidity**, with clear, **meaningful** and **memorable** last words, are very much the exception in those who die today (and offer reason to be **sceptical** of many of the famous last words collected in anthologies).By far the most common process by which people die in the modern rich world is a slow **breakdown** of physical and mental faculties, “**neurochemical** **commotion**” that **gradually** robs people of the ability to say anything at all.  
   
【8】Indeed, in another link between first and last words, Mr Erard argues that dying people lose their **verbal** faculties in a way **resembling** the child’s language learning but in **reverse**. Though language **acquisition** is well studied, language **attrition** is not. Mr Erard is **elegiac** as he describes **glances**, hand squeezes and **gestures**, and the sometimes **upsetting** cries, **moans** and **delirious** talk that are often the final **communication** of the dying. This is why some cultures—many Hindus and Muslims among them—prepare and **practise** **declarations** for the moment of death long before it arrives. (Christians once did so, too.)  
   
【9】A book ending with so much death may sound like a hard read. Instead, it is a beautiful and even **strangely** **comforting** one, with Mr Erard as a **pensive**, patient **guide**. (He is training to be an end-of-life doula.) The end must come; **unrealistic** **expectations** about final messages need not.

**①短语**

1.原文：BABIES COME into the world seeking out comfort, so their first word is often “mama”.

词典：seek out 寻找并找到

例句：Children seek out regularities and rules in acquiring language.

儿童在学习语言过程中会找出各种规律和规则。

2.原文：such as how they are created by expectant listeners as much as by their speakers

词典：as much as 与……一样多；和……一样喜欢；几乎但并非完全

例句：Temperatures can fluctuate by as much as 10 degrees.

温差可达10度之多。

3.原文：“Mama” is what Mr Erard calls a “cultural first word”, fussed over by those who have learned to look out for it or even elicit it from little ones.

词典：fuss over 过分关注

例句：Auntie Hilda and Uncle Jack couldn't fuss over them enough.

希尔达婶婶和杰克叔叔再宠爱他们不过了。

4.原文：and a grandparent might die in compensation

词典：in compensation 作为补偿

例句：She was awarded $5,000 in compensation for unfair dismissal.

她因不公平的解雇获得了$5000的补偿。

5.原文：Unusual and varied early words are meant to be a sign of a gifted child who will reap the rewards of being brainy later on.

词典：later on 稍后

例句：I hate to rush you but I have another appointment later on.

我真不想催你，但我稍后还有一个约会。

6.原文：Rich-world parents are thus keen to elicit speech from their children as early as they can.

词典：keen to 热衷于……

例句：Most managements are keen to avoid strikes.

大多数经营者都很希望避免罢工的发生。

7.原文：That has had an effect on last words.

词典：have an effect on 对…有影响；对……起作用，产生效果

例句：Does television have an effect on children's behaviour?

电视对孩子的行为有影响吗？

8.原文：“neurochemical commotion” that gradually robs people of the ability to say anything at all.

词典：rob of 抢夺，剥夺

例句：She knew they would rob her of the car.

她知道他们会抢劫她的车。

1. 原文：Mr Erard argues that dying people lose their verbal faculties in a way resembling the child’s language learning but in reverse.

词典：in reverse 相反；向后

例句：The secret number is my phone number in reverse.

这个密码是我的电话号码的逆序排列。

**②长难句**

原文：All this, including Wilde’s quip, is dubious, argues Michael Erard, an American journalist who has written several books about language.

分析：这个句子的主语是“Michael Erard”，他是一位美国记者，作为句子的行为主体提出了一个观点。谓语动词“argues”表示他在陈述或论断某件事情。宾语部分是一个从句，即“All this, including Wilde’s quip, is dubious”，这个从句详细说明了Michael Erard所论断的内容。在这个从句中，“All this”作为主语，表示“所有这一切”，“including Wilde’s quip”是修饰主语的介词短语，而“is dubious”则作为系动词和表语，描述了“All this”的性质是“可疑的”。

译文：美国记者迈克尔·埃拉德（Michael Erard）曾著有多部语言相关书籍，他认为，包括王尔德那句俏皮话在内的所有这些说法都颇值得怀疑。

原文：But moments of sudden lucidity, with clear, meaningful and memorable last words, are very much the exception in those who die today (and offer reason to be sceptical of many of the famous last words collected in anthologies).

分析：这个句子的主语是“moments of sudden lucidity”，指的是“突然变得神志清醒的时刻”。主语后面跟着一个介词短语“with clear, meaningful and memorable last words”作为定语，进一步描述这些清醒时刻的特点，即伴有清晰、有意义且令人难忘的遗言。are是系动词，the exception是表语，表示这些时刻是非常罕见的例外情况。最后，括号内的部分“(and offer reason to be sceptical of many of the famous last words collected in anthologies)”是一个并列的谓语成分，由“and”连接，说明这种罕见情况还提供了对许多选集中收录的所谓“著名遗言”持怀疑态度的理由。

译文：然而，在当今，那些临终前突然神志清醒，说出清晰、有意义且令人难忘的遗言的情况，其实是非常少见的（这也让我们有理由对那些选集中收录的许多所谓“著名遗言”持怀疑态度）。

**③写作技巧**

He finds first and last words to be similar in many ways—such as how they are created by expectant listeners as much as by their speakers.

他发现，人生的第一句话和最后一句话在诸多方面存在相似之处，比如，它们的形成同样受到倾听者的期待和说话者本人的共同影响。

在这个句子中，“as much as”这个短语起到了强调对比双方平等或相似程度的作用。它表示“和……一样多/同样地”，在这里用来强调“first and last words”（第一句话和最后一句话）不仅由说话者创造，也同样由期待的听众所塑造或影响。

例句：

She loves reading books as much as she loves watching movies.

她喜欢看书，就像她喜欢看电影一样。

He contributes to the project as much as anyone else on the team.

他对项目的贡献和团队中的其他人一样多。

The success of the event depended as much on the planning as it did on the execution.

活动的成功既取决于计划，也同样取决于执行。

**④背景知识**

奥斯卡·王尔德（Oscar Wilde）是19世纪英国（实际为爱尔兰，当时由英国统治）最伟大的作家与艺术家之一，以其独特的剧作、诗歌、童话和小说闻名于世。他是唯美主义的代表人物，主张“为艺术而艺术”，认为艺术的唯一目的就是创造美，与社会伦理道德无关。王尔德的作品以其词藻华美、立意新颖和观点鲜明著称，他的长篇小说《道林·格雷的画像》被誉为唯美主义的代表作，探讨了美、罪恶与灵魂的主题。同时，他的戏剧作品如《温德米尔夫人的扇子》、《理想丈夫》等也广受赞誉，展现了唯美主义的独特魅力。此外，王尔德还是一位杰出的童话作家，他一生创作了九篇童话，每篇都蕴含着深刻的哲理和对社会现实的批判。尽管王尔德的人生经历了许多波折，但他依然以其卓越的才华和独特的艺术风格，在文学史上留下了浓墨重彩的一笔。

**⑤段落大意**

【1】婴语成因：婴儿因求慰藉，首词常为 “妈妈”，临终者常留哲理、诙谐之语

【2】质疑观点：埃拉德质疑相关说法，其书颠覆对人生始终言语的看法，点明始终言语受说者、听者影响

【3】语词异同：世界语言“爸妈”发音有同有异，“mama”被称“文化首词”

【4】**特殊习俗**：不同文化中，婴儿首词的出现及含义各有特殊习俗与寓意

【5】**育幼商机**：工业化社会，早期语言发展成商业，育儿书出现，富裕国家父母盼孩子早开口

【6】工业变革：埃拉德称工业化改变童年与老年，医疗进步使老年人衰老死亡进程不同以往

【7】遗言实情：工业化影响临终遗言，人们期待深刻遗言，但如今临终清醒留遗言少见，常见因身心衰退失语言能力

【8】语言逆回：垂死之人失语言能力似儿童学语逆过程，埃拉德描述其临终交流，解释部分文化准备临终宣言的缘由

【9】书籍评价：以死亡结尾的这本书读来美好慰藉，埃拉德如引路人，指出不必对临终遗言有不实期待