我的教育專欄(373)有意義的英文考試

李家同

不知何故，我國的英文考試越來越難，考英文幾乎變成了考閱讀能力。要回答一些問題，還牽涉到數學和普通常識。這實在是怪到了極點。

對我們來說，英文不是母語，裡面有很多要學的東西，所以考英文絕對不該是考閱讀能力。我在此提出我們讀英文該注意的四件事。

1. 生字
2. 文法
3. 片語
4. 長句分析

這四個項目都不容易。就以生字來說，我本人如果要看新聞，就感覺到很容易，可是一看小說，裡面就有一大堆生字。但是我老奸巨猾，我可以猜這些生字的意思，所以也可以呼嚨過去。一般學生絕對沒有我現在的功力，尤其對於中學生來說，英文生字就不容易了。

再談文法，現在很多學生連最基本的文法都搞不清，兩個動詞會寫在一起。該用動名詞時，很多學生會糊裡糊塗地用了動詞。很多助動詞後面加了to，更不要談被動語氣了。

英文的片語更是多得不像話，有一個美國名人到台灣，下了飛機，有人問他，”你對台灣的初步印象如何?”他回答，"So far so good."第二天報紙的翻譯成了”那是如此遙遠但又是如此美妙”。大多數人不可能知道全部英文片語，如果能夠知道幾個常用的，如”as long as”、”as soon as”、"according to "、”in accordance for”、”get rid of”等等，也不容易了。

英文和中文不同，英文常常有非常長的句子，因此會搞不清楚主詞和動詞在哪裡。學理工的同學常常遭遇到這個問題。請看下面的句子:

The high voltage, applied to the gate of Transistor M1, will cause a serious problem of the circuit which is a part of an amplifier.

根據我的經驗，很多孩子會找到正確的主詞，但並不一定會找到正確的動詞，因為英文裡有很多子句，這些子句常常混淆視聽。以上述的英文句子為例，很多孩子會認為high voltage是主詞，applied是動詞，其實cause才是這句話的動詞。對英文素養高的人來說，這些子句並不可怕，可是如果老師不教他們，事實上很多同學是會會錯意的。

我寫這篇文章的目的，無非是希望教育界的當權者了解英文是外國語，生字、文法、片語和長句分析都不是簡單的事。最近，我準備了一份給高中學生的英文考題如下。

Translate the following into Chinese.

1. This novel was written by Charles Dickens who was a famous British writer and has worldwide readers.

2. Having rained for several days, the weather finally got better this morning.

3. He whom you saw yesterday was a friend of mine and a famous movie star.

4. The constant increasing of food price caused people to be exceedingly unhappy

5. This machine, designed by a group of engineers in Taiwan, is produced in China.

6. I have been practicing piano playing since 1995 and now I am one of the top piano players.

7. According to the news, there was a fire in this town.

8. As soon as he came in, everyone began to sing.

9. As long as you are sick, you should not go to school.

10. It is more important to love others than to be loved.

11. Many people who have lived in the United States for a long time still do not like black people.

12. Whenever it is raining, you should bring an umbrella.

13. He hardly works.

14. He works hard.

15. The war which broke out last year killed a lot of people.

16. It is unlikely going to rain.

17. To see is to believe.

18. Only by working hard you can succeed.

19. Based on physics, he finally solved the problem.

20. The book your father gave me last night was written by a Japanese writer who has lived in Taiwan for a long time.

21. In order to be strong, he swims every day.

22. Please get rid of the cat.

23. I couldn’t care less about what he will do.

24. He worked too hard so that he finally became sick.

25. He is good in English as well as French.

26. Do you know if your brother is coming or not.

27. He is by no means a bad person.

28. I drink neither tea nor coffee.

29. He failed the examination which was indeed a very difficult one.

30. He is poor, nevertheless, he still works hard.

我考了很多學生，有幾位是考得很好的，都是我教的。尤其是關於片語部分，我利用博幼在網站上的片語教材教他們，他們也就會了。還有好幾位成績很不好，搞不清楚被動語氣，也無法分析長句。

教育界的當權者不要成天叫學生閱讀長的文章，文章裡又有好多圖表，然後再問一些問題。要知道，考試的目的是要使學生知道自己的程度，也讓老師知道學生的程度夠不夠好。這種長而含有圖表的文章實在不該出現在任何英文考卷中，因為這類考題沒有辦法確切地知道學生的生字夠不夠、懂不懂文法、片語夠不夠以及能否分析長句。

有很多英文程度相當高的朋友，對這些又長又有圖表的題目都感到厭惡，因為這根本不是考英文。

目前考高中的入學考試，英文試題中就有非常長的文章，要學生回答問題。這種現象使得很多孩子對英文感到十分煩惱，最嚴重的結果是，很多大學生完全看不懂英文教科書，當然也不會寫正確的英文句子。這才是教育當局應該注意的事。

考英文的目的無非是在測驗學生的程度，在我看來，目前的英文考試並沒有這種功能。