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# Lesson 1

## Pub Talk and the King's English

Henry Fairlie

### I Background Knowledge (背景介绍)

#### 1. pub (酒馆)

A public house, informally known as a pub, is a drinking establishment fundamental to the culture of Britain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand. The number of pubs has been declining every year, so that nearly half of the small villages no longer have a local pub. In many places, especially in villages, a pub can be the focal point of the community. The writings of Samuel Pepys describe the pub as the heart of England.

#### 2. the King's English (标准英语)

The King's English, also called the Queen's English, or Received Pronunciation (RP), is the accent of Standard English in England, with a relationship to regional accents similar to the relationship in other European languages between their standard varieties and their regional forms. It is defined as "the standard accent of English as spoken in the south of England", but some have argued that it can be heard from native speakers throughout England and Wales. It is sometimes referred to as "Oxford English" or "BBC English" because those organizations are often considered standard-bearers for it.

#### 3. Henry Fairlie (亨利·费尔利)

Henry Fairlie (1924–1990), was a British political journalist and social critic. He spent 36 years as a prominent freelance writer on both sides of the Atlantic, writing for *The Spectator*, *The Washington Post*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and many other papers and magazines. Fairlie devoted about half of his career to trying to explain America to Americans.

#### 4. Alexandre Dumas (亚历山大·仲马，即大仲马)

Alexandre Dumas, born Dumas Davy de la Pailleterie (1802–1870), was a French writer, best known for his historical novels of high adventure which have made him one of the most widely read French authors in the world. Many of his novels, including *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers*, *Twenty Years After*, and *The Vicomte de Bragelonne*, were originally serialized. He also wrote plays and magazine articles and was a prolific correspondent. Born in poverty, Dumas was the grandson of a French nobleman and a Haitian slave.

#### 5. Anglo-Saxon (盎格鲁-撒克逊)

The term *Anglo-Saxon* is used by some historians to name the Germanic tribes who invaded and settled the

south and east of Britain beginning in the early 5th century and the period from their creation of the English nation to the Norman Conquest. The Anglo-Saxon era denotes the period of English history between about 550 and 1066. The term is also used for the language, now known as Old English, that was spoken and written by the Anglo-Saxons and their descendants in England (and part of southeastern Scotland) between at least the mid-5th century and the mid-12th century.

## 6. the Norman Conquest (诺曼征服)

The Norman Conquest of England in 1066 refers to the invasion of England by William, Duke of Normandy. William became known as William the Conqueror after his victory at the Battle of Hastings on 14 October 1066, defeating King Harold II of England. Harold's army was badly depleted in the English victory at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in Northern England on 25 September 1066 over the army of King Harald III of Norway. By early 1071, William had secured control of most of England, although rebellions and resistance continued until approximately 1088.

The Norman Conquest was a pivotal event in English history. It largely removed the native ruling class, replacing it with a foreign, French-speaking monarchy, aristocracy, and clerical hierarchy. This, in turn, brought about a transformation of the English language and the culture of England in a new era often referred to as Norman England.

By bringing England under the control of rulers originating in France, the Norman Conquest linked the country more closely with continental Europe, lessened Scandinavian influence, and also set the stage for a rivalry with France that would continue intermittently for many centuries. It also had important consequences for the rest of the British Isles, paving the way for further Norman conquests in Wales and Ireland, and the extensive penetration of the aristocracy of Scotland by Norman and other French-speaking families, with the accompanying spread of continental institutions and cultural influences.

## 7. Hereward the Wake (觉醒者赫里沃德)

Hereward the Wake (c. 1035–1072), known in his own times as Hereward the Outlaw or Hereward the Exile, was an 11th-century leader of local resistance to the Norman Conquest of England.

## 8. Thomas Nashe (托马斯·纳什)

Thomas Nashe (1567–c. 1601) was an English Elizabethan pamphleteer, playwright, poet and satirist.

## 9. Thomas Dekker (托马斯·德克)

Thomas Dekker (c. 1572–1632) was an English Elizabethan dramatist and pamphleteer, a versatile and prolific writer whose career spanned several decades and brought him into contact with many of the period's most famous dramatists.

## 10. Mistress Quickly (快嘴桂嫂)

Mistress Quickly is an inn-keeper who appears in four plays by William Shakespeare: *Henry IV, Part 1*; *Henry IV, Part 2*; *Henry V*; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

## 11. *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (《温莎的风流娘儿们》)

*The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a comedy by William Shakespeare, first published in 1602, though believed to

have been written prior to 1597. It features the fat knight Sir John Falstaff, and is Shakespeare's only play to deal exclusively with the English middle class life of Elizabethan era. It has been adapted for the opera on occasions.

## 12. the Angevins (安茹王朝)

The Angevins, also known as the House of Anjou, was a noble family founded in the early years of the Carolingian Empire. They first emerged as part of the minor feudal nobility, in what would soon be known as the Kingdom of France during the 10th century. After Geoffrey III, Count of Anjou inherited Anjou from his mother in 1060, the family began to grow in prominence. Then the senior line of the family branched off to become the House of Plantagenet, assuming the nickname of Geoffrey V of Anjou, its founder, eventually going on to rule the Kingdom of England, Lordship of Ireland, Principality of Wales and various other holdings in the vast Angevin Empire in 1154.

## 13. the Plantagenets (金雀花王朝)

It refers to the House of Plantagenet, a branch of the Angevins. It was a royal house founded by Geoffrey V of Anjou, father of Henry II of England. Plantagenet kings first ruled the Kingdom of England in the 12th century. Their paternal ancestors originated in the French province of Gâtinais and gained the County of Anjou through marriage during the 11th century. The dynasty accumulated several other holdings, leading the Angevin Empire to its peak, stretching from the Pyrenees to Ireland and the border with Scotland.

## 14. Thomas Carlyle (托马斯·卡莱尔)

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was a Scottish satirical writer, essayist, historian and teacher in the Victorian age. He wrote articles for the *Edinburgh Encyclopedia*, and then became a controversial social commentator.

## 15. Wystan Hugh Auden (威斯坦·休·奥登)

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907–1973), who published as W. H. Auden, was an Anglo-American poet. He was born in England, later became an American citizen, regarded by many as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. His work is known for its stylistic and technical achievements, its engagement with moral and political issues, and its variety of tone, form and content. The central themes of his poetry are love, politics and citizenship, religion and morals, and the relationship between unique human beings and the anonymous, impersonal world of nature.

## 16. E. M. Forster (爱德华·摩根·福斯特)

Edward Morgan Forster (1879–1970), who published as E. M. Forster, was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist and librettist. He is well-known for his ironic and well-plotted novels examining class difference and hypocrisy in the early 20th-century British society.

## 17. Charles Lamb (查尔斯·兰姆)

Charles Lamb (1775–1834) was an English essayist, best known for his *Essays of Elia* and for the children's book *Tales from Shakespeare*, which he produced with his sister, Mary Lamb (1764–1847). Charles Lamb has been referred to by E. V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as the most lovable figure in English literature.

## 18. *The Washington Post* (《华盛顿邮报》)

*The Washington Post* is the most widely circulated newspaper published in Washington, D.C., and the oldest extant in the area. Located in the capital city of the United States, *The Washington Post* has a particular emphasis on national politics. Daily editions are printed for the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia. The newspaper is published as a broadsheet, with photographs printed both in color and in black and white.

*The Washington Post* is generally regarded as one of the leading daily American newspapers, along with *The New York Times*, which is known for its general reporting and international coverage, and *The Wall Street Journal*, which is known for its financial reporting. *The Washington Post* has distinguished itself through its political reporting on the workings of the White House, the Congress, and other aspects of the US government.

## II Language Points (语言要点)

### 1. Glossary (词汇汇编)

#### Para. 1

**indulge** *v* [I, T] to let yourself do or have something that you enjoy, especially something that is considered bad for you (使自己)沉溺于, 沉湎于

#### Para. 2

**meander** *v* [I] 1. if a river, stream, road, etc. meanders, it has a lot of bends rather than going in a straight line (河流、小溪、道路等)蜿蜒而行, 迂回曲折 2. also **meander on**, if a conversation or a piece of writing meanders on, it is too long and has no purpose or structure (对话、文章)冗长, 结构松散

**sparkle** *v* [I] to shine in small bright flashes 闪闪发光, 闪烁

**anecdote** *n* [C] a short story based on one's personal experience (基于个人经历的)轶事, 趣事

#### Para. 3

**upbringing** *n* [singular, U] the way that your parents care for you and teach you to behave when you are growing up 抚育, 养育, 培养, 教养

**musketeer** *n* [C] a soldier in the past who used a musket 火枪手, 滑膛枪手

**delve** *v* [I] to try to find more information about someone or something 探索, 探究, 查考

#### Para. 4

**desultory** *adj* formal done without any particular plan or purpose 【正式】漫无目的的, 毫无计划的, 散漫的

**Jupiter** *n* the planet that is fifth in order from the sun and is the largest in the solar system 木星 (太阳系中最大的行星)

**alchemy** *n* [U] 1. a science studied in the Middle Ages, which involved trying to change ordinary metals into gold 炼金术 2. literary magic 【文】魔法, 法术

**pressing** *adj* needing to be discussed or dealt with very soon 紧迫的, 迫切的

#### Para. 6

**affirmation** *n* [C, U] a public statement of something that is true 确认, 证实

#### Para. 7

**tart** *adj* a tart reply/remark refers to a reply or remark that is sharp and unkind 尖刻的回答/话语等

**descendant** *n* [C] someone who is related to a person who lived a long time ago, or to a family, group of people that existed in the past 后代, 后裔

**convict** *n* [C] someone who has been proved to be guilty of a crime and sent to prison 囚犯

**Para. 8**

**churl** *n* 粗暴的人；农民，乡下人；吝啬鬼，守财奴

**Para. 9**

**Anglo-Saxon** *n* [C] someone who belonged to the race of people who lived in England from about the 5th century  
盎格鲁-撒克逊人

**snobbery** *n* [U] behavior or attitudes which show that you think you are better than other people, because you belong to a higher social class or know much more than they do—used to show disapproval 势利，自命不凡 [含贬义]

**rift** *n* [C] a situation in which two people or groups have had a serious disagreement and begun to dislike and not trust each other 分歧，嫌隙，裂痕；= split

**Para. 10**

**till** *v* [T] to prepare land for growing crops 耕（地），犁（地）；= cultivate

**rear** *v* [T] to look after a person or animal until they are fully grown 养育，抚养（孩子）；饲养（动物）；= raise

**scamper** *v* [I, always + *adv/prep*] to run with quick short steps, like a child or small animal 蹦蹦跳跳地跑

**Para. 13**

**tussle** *v* [I] **1.** to fight or struggle without using any weapons, by pulling or pushing someone rather than hitting them 揪扯，搏斗 **2.** to try to beat someone in order to get something 争夺，争抢

**Para. 14**

**dandelion** *n* **dandelion clock** [C] *BrE* the soft ball of white seeds that grows on the dandelion plant 【英】蒲公英的白绒球

**Para. 15**

**pejorative** *adj* *formal* a word or expression that is used to show disapproval or to insult someone 【正式】（单词或短语）贬义的，用于侮辱的

**facetious** *adj* saying things that are intended to be clever and funny but are really silly and annoying 乱开玩笑的

**vigor** *n* [U] physical or mental energy and determination 活力，精力，热情

**underling** *n* [C] an insulting word for someone who has a low rank—often used humorously 下属，部下，走卒（侮辱性用词；常为幽默用法）

**jeer** *n* [C] a laughter at someone or a shout of unkind things at people in a way that shows you do not respect them 嘲笑，嘲弄

**Para. 16**

**edict** *n* [C] *formal* an official public order made by someone in a position of power 【正式】法令，敕令；= decree

**immune** *adj* [not before noun] not affected by something that happens or is done 不受影响的

**Para. 17**

**ultimatum** *n* **ultimatums/ultimate** [plural, C] a threat saying that if someone does not do what you want by a particular time, you will do something to punish him/her 最后通牒

**Para. 18**

**prose** *n* [U] written language in its usual form, as opposed to poetry 散文（与诗歌相对的文体）

**Para. 19**

**lofty** *adj* of high moral or intellectual value（理想、信仰、态度等）高尚的，崇高的

## 2. Useful Expressions (实用表达)

- 1) **indulge in (Para. 1):** to take part in an activity, especially an illegal one 参与, 参加 (尤指违法活动)  
e.g. Women do not indulge in crime to the same extent as men. 妇女参与犯罪的程度不如男人。
- 2) **on the rocks (Para. 3):** *informal* a relationship or business that is on the rocks is having a lot of problems and is likely to fail soon 【非正式】(关系) 濒临破裂; (企业) 濒临破产  
e.g. I'm afraid Tim's marriage is on the rocks. 蒂姆的婚姻恐怕是濒临破裂了。
- 3) **get out of bed on the wrong side (Para. 3):** *BrE* 【英】, **get up on the wrong side of the bed** *AmE* 【美】 to feel slightly angry or annoyed for no particular reason (无缘由地) 感觉不对劲, 心情不好  
e.g. He must have got out of bed on the wrong side today, because he has shouted at everybody in the office. 他今天准是情绪不佳, 办公室里的每一个人他都训斥了。
- 4) **burst into flames/flame (Para. 6):** to suddenly start to burn very strongly 突然起火, 猛烈燃烧起来  
e.g. Their cars crashed and burst into flames. 他们的汽车撞车后猛烈燃烧了起来。
- 5) **lay down (Para. 7):** to officially state something or say that rules, principles, etc. must be obeyed (正式或坚决地) 阐述, 声明; 规定  
e.g. He had already clearly laid down his view in his opening speech. 他在开场白里已经明确阐述了自己的观点。
- 6) **turned up one's nose at something (Para. 10):** *informal* to refuse to accept something because you do not think it is good enough for you 【非正式】瞧不起 (某事物), (对某事物) 嗤之以鼻  
e.g. My children turn their noses up at home cooking. 我的孩子都看不上家里做的饭菜。
- 7) **come into its own (Para. 13):** to become very good, useful, or important in a particular situation (在某一特殊情况下) 显示出用处或重要性, 显出本色  
e.g. On icy roads, a four-wheel drive vehicle really comes into its own. 在结冰的路面上, 四轮驱动车尽显本色。
- 8) **sit up (Para. 18):** to suddenly start paying attention to someone, because he/she has done something surprising or impressive 突然关注 (注意) 起 (某人) 来  
e.g. If Maria succeeded, then everyone would sit up and take notice. 如果玛丽亚成功了, 大家马上就会注意起她来。
- 9) **talk sense (Para. 21):** *spoken* to say things that are reasonable or sensible—often used when you think someone has just said something silly 【口】说话要讲道理, 别胡说  
e.g. Talk sense! There's no way we can afford a new car! 说话要有脑子! 我们哪里买得起新车!

## 3. Study of Key Words and Expressions (词汇学习点拨)

- 1) **Word Choice (词语辨析): conversation/chat/gossip**  
**conversation:** an informal talk in which people exchange news, feelings and thoughts (非正式的) 谈话, 交谈, 会话。 *It's impossible to carry on a conversation with all this noise in the background.* 在这么喧闹的环境中进行谈话是不可能的。  
**chat:** especially *BrE*, an informal friendly conversation 【尤英】(轻松愉悦的、友好的) 闲谈, 聊天。 *She was enjoying their friendly little chat.* 她很喜欢他们那种友好的闲聊。  
**gossip:** a conversation in which you exchange information with someone about other people's behaviors and lives, often including remarks that are unkind or untrue 说闲话, 说长道短。 *The whole town was gossiping about them.* 全镇的人都在议论他们。
- 2) **Word Choice (词语辨析): intricate/complex/complicated**

**intricate:** hard to follow or understand because full of puzzling parts, details or relationships 错综复杂的，盘根错节的，复杂精细的。事物各部分互相交错、互相影响而令人迷惑，难以理解或掌握。*The intricate computer requires a skilled operator.* 这台复杂精密的电脑需要熟练的操作人员。

**complex:** consisting of two or more related parts; not simple 由部件组成的，组合的，复杂的，难懂的。指某事物由许多不同的部分组成，他们既相互联系，又相互影响，因此需要深入研究或具备专门知识才能认识、掌握或处理。*His political ideas were too complex to get support from ordinary people.* 他的政治主张太深奥，不能取得普通老百姓的支持。

**complicated:** made up of parts intricately involved; hard to untangle, solve, understand, analyze, etc. 结构复杂的，难懂的，难解的。强调因某一事物的复杂性而难以理解或处理。*Don't ask me such complicated questions.* 请不要问我这么复杂的问题。

简言之，**intricate** 强调复杂而精致；**complex** 通常指由不同部分和过程构成，因而复杂且难懂；而 **complicated** 则更强调理解和处理上的难度。

#### 4. Sentences to Be Memorized (靓句背诵)

- 1) The fact that their marriages may be on the rocks, or that their love affairs have broken or even that they got out of bed on the wrong side is simply not a concern. (Para. 3)  
他们之中也许有人面临婚姻破裂，或恋爱失败，或碰到别的什么不顺心的事儿，但这些都没关系。
- 2) They are like the musketeers of Dumas who, although they lived side by side with each other, did not delve into each other's lives or the recesses of their thoughts and feelings. (Para. 3)  
他们就像大仲马笔下的三个火枪手一样，虽然朝夕相处，却从不打探彼此的私事，也不去揣摸别人内心的秘密。
- 3) It was not something that was pressing on her mind. (Para. 4)  
那也不是什么非说不可的要紧话。
- 4) The glow of the conversation burst into flames. (Para. 6)  
闲聊立刻热烈起来。
- 5) Who was right, who was wrong, did not matter. The conversation was on wings. (Para. 8)  
孰是孰非，都没有关系。聊天热火朝天地进行着。
- 6) They are cattle in the fields, but we sit down to beef (*boeuf*). (Para. 9)  
在地里放养的叫牛，餐桌上的叫牛肉（来自法语 *boeuf*）。
- 7) We ought to think ourselves back into the shoes of the Saxon peasant. (Para. 11)  
我们应设身处地为当时的撒克逊农民想一想。
- 8) There must have been a great deal of cultural humiliation felt by the English. (Para. 11)  
英国人一定在文化上感到了莫大的羞辱。
- 9) The conquered in the end conquering the conqueror, English had come royally into its own. (Para. 13)  
被征服者征服了征服者，英语开始名正言顺地为国王所使用。
- 10) Yet there had been something in the remark of the Australian. (Para. 15)  
不过，那个澳大利亚人说的话也有一定的道理。
- 11) I have an unending love affair with dictionaries. (Para. 17)  
我一向对词典有着永无止境的喜爱。
- 12) The only difference between her cook and the supreme chef, Brinvilliers, lay in their intentions. (Para. 19)  
她（侯爵夫人）家的厨子和总厨师长布兰维利耶之间的唯一差别只不过是用心不一而已。

### III Text Analysis (篇章分析)

#### 1. Summary of the Text (文章的概述)

The text is a piece of expository writing, talking about what makes a good conversation. Conversation, as the most sociable of all human activities, does not start with a given topic—nor does it develop with a logical structure, nor does it end with the problems settled. Pub conversation, according to this passage, has a charm of its own. The writer illustrates this point by describing the conversation he had with his friends in a pub the other evening on the topic—“the King’s English,” which was a term of criticism from an Australian. Later in the passage, the writer digresses a great deal, shifting from a general discourse on what makes a good conversation to a number of examples. The writer concludes by saying that talking sense in a conversation ruins it all.

#### 2. Theme of the Text (文章的主题)

The central theme of the text, as stated in the first two paragraphs: Conversation is the most sociable of all human activities; conversation does not really start anywhere, and no one knows where a conversation will go; conversation is not for making a point and there is no winning in conversation.

#### 3. Structure of the Text (文章的段落)

**Part I:** Paras. 1–2

This part tells the reader what is a conversation and what are the characteristics of a real conversation.

**Part II:** Paras. 3–5

The focus of this part is pub talk, which has a charm of its own. Para. 5, a short transition paragraph, introduces the focal subject of the conversation—“the King’s English” as a term of criticism.

**Part III:** Paras. 6–17

This part shifts from a general discourse on what makes a good conversation to a series of instances.

**Part IV:** Paras. 18–21

This part summarizes the whole passage—talking sense ruins all conversations.

#### 4. Text Appreciation (文章的赏析)

##### 1) Writing Style (写作风格)

Loose organization is the most dominant characteristic of this article. It is intentionally written in a conversational style to illustrate the theme of this article, that is, what makes a good conversation. The characteristics of a real conversation are well embodied in this article. It does not really start anywhere, and nobody knows when and where it will end, it just digresses here and there, rambling around touching upon many subjects. In addition to this, this article employs a large number of rhetorical devices, such as simile and metaphor, etc. The language in the article is informal, colloquial, and idiomatic, coinciding with the characteristics of a good conversation.

##### 2) Writing Skills (写作手法)

The article is a piece of exposition, or, an expository writing. The purpose of such a piece of writing is to put forth, to expound, to inform or to explain something. The writer has successfully achieved this, explaining what makes a good conversation in the article.

The loose structure is used deliberately by the author of this article to suit his theme of what makes a good

conversation. The use of the loose structure says a lot about what makes a good conversation. So the structure is something impressive about the article, and the use of conversational language also adds to the convincing power of the article. Besides, the use of a large number of rhetorical devices, coupled with copious literary and historical allusions enhances the vividness and humor of the writing.

### 3) Figures of Speech (修辞手法)

Many similes and metaphors are used in the article. Here are some examples:

#### simile:

- ① They are like the musketeers of Dumas who, although they lived side by side with each other, did not delve into each other's lives. (Para. 3)
- ② The Elizabethans blew on it as on a dandelion clock, and its seeds multiplied, and floated to the ends of the earth. (Para. 14)

#### metaphor:

- ① The charm of conversation is that it does not really start from anywhere, and no one has any idea where it will go as it meanders or leaps and sparkles or just glows. (Para. 2)
- ② The glow of the conversation burst into flames. (Para. 6)
- ③ The conversation was on wings. (Para. 8)
- ④ I have an unending love affair with dictionaries. (Para. 17)
- ⑤ The King's English slips and slides in conversation. (Para. 18)
- ⑥ When E. M. Forster writes of "the sinister corridor of our age," we sit up at the vividness of the phrase, the force and even terror in the image. (Para. 18)
- ⑦ Otherwise one will bind the conversation... (Para. 20)

## IV Detailed Study of the Text (课文注释)

1. **(Title) Pub Talk and the King's English:** On the surface, "pub talk" and "the King's English" are irrelevant; however, the writer successfully arouses the reader's interest by juxtaposing the two. In this article, the writer uses the topic of the King's English in a pub talk to illustrate what a good conversation is.
2. **(Para. 2) The charm of conversation is that it does not really start from anywhere, and no one has any idea where it will go as it meanders or leaps and sparkles or just glows.:** What is beautiful about a conversation is that it starts naturally, it does not need anything specific or special to get started. And once the conversation gets started, no one knows where it will go and when it will end. Here the conversation is compared to a stream that meanders and leaps and is also compared to a fire that glows and sparkles. 此处作者使用的修辞手法是混合隐喻, 将谈话同时比作小溪和火花。
3. **(Para. 2) The enemy of good conversation is the person who has "something to say.":** Good conversation will be spoilt, if people think they have a lot of important things to say.
4. **(Para. 2) Conversation is not for making a point.:** To make known your viewpoints and opinions in order that others would accept them is not the purpose of having a conversation.
5. **(Para. 2) In fact, the best conversationalists are those who are prepared to lose.:** Those who are not eager to get the upper hand in a conversation are good with conversations.
6. **(Para. 3) They are like the musketeers of Dumas who, although they lived side by side with each other, did not delve into each other's lives or the recesses of their thoughts and feelings.:** The three musketeers are

characters from the novel of *The Three Musketeers* by Dumas. They are close friends, but they are not nosy about each other's private lives, nor do they probe into the inmost thoughts and feelings of their companions.

7. (Para. 4) **It was on such an occasion the other evening...was a focus.:** One evening a few days ago, they had a conversation and the conversation went on aimlessly, without any specific focus; they talked about ordinary and everyday stuff, also touched upon the planet Jupiter. They were happy with such a conversation and didn't think that it was necessary to have a focus. Then all of a sudden, the seemingly magical process (of transmuting ordinary materials into something of true merit) took place and they had a focus in their conversation. 作者再次使用隐喻, 将炼金术比作聊天中突然出现的奇迹。
8. (Para. 6) **The glow of the conversation burst into flames.:** A metaphor. Conversation is being compared to a fire. All of a sudden the glow became flames, meaning the conversation suddenly became lively. 隐喻, 将谈话比作火焰, 说明其热烈程度。
9. (Para. 6) **...and of course the promise, made in all such conversation, that we would look it up on the morning.:** As what would happen in all such conversation, when there was a question that was unsettled, someone promised to search for the answer in reference books the next morning and settle the question.
10. (Para. 8) **Look at the language barrier between the Saxon churls and their Norman conquerors.:** The Norman rulers spoke French while the conquered Saxon peasants spoke English, hence they had difficulty communicating with each other.
11. (Para. 8) **The conversation was on wings.:** In this sentence, conversation is compared to a bird flying high. The conversation soon became spirited and exciting. 隐喻, 再次说明谈话的热烈程度。作者反复使用此修辞手法, 但每一次的喻体均不同, 形象且生动, 由此可见作者驾驭语言的非凡能力。
12. (Para. 9) **It is a pig in its sty; it is pork (porc) on the table.:** Here "pig" is an Anglo-Saxon word while "pork" is actually a French word, coming from "porc." When the animal is in the sty, it is called a pig; when its meat is served on the table it is called pork. The choice of different words with different origins indicates the fact the Anglo-Saxons were the oppressed, while the French were the oppressors, the ruling class.
13. (Para. 9) **Even if our menus were not written in French out of snobbery, the English we used in them would still be Norman English.:** Menus in some restaurants were written in French. This was because some people were snobbish, they thought that French food was the best in the world. Even if they wrote their menus in English, the English they used would still be Norman English.  
**Norman English:** also called the Anglo-Norman language. The Norman invasion started the Anglo-Norman period in England. The Anglo-Norman language was mostly spoken by nobles at the time. However, many words of the contemporary English language reflect this heritage, particularly when it comes to food, administration, military vocabulary, law and religion.
14. (Para. 9) **What all this tells us is of a deep class rift in the culture of England after the Norman Conquest.:** After the Norman Conquest, the Norman rulers spoke French while the Anglo-Saxons spoke their own language. The very fact indicated that the gap between the conquerors and the conquered was widening, hence the widening of the class gap in the culture of England.
15. (Para. 10) **The Saxon peasants who tilled the land and reared the animals could not afford the meat, which went to Norman tables.:** The Anglo-Saxon peasants were the conquered. They were oppressed and exploited. They did all the farming and toiled all the year round, but they still could not afford to buy the meat the Norman rulers consumed.
16. (Para. 10) **...the Norman lords of course turned up their noses at it.:** Naturally the Norman rulers refused to eat the cheap rabbit meat, because they thought it's beneath them. It would lower their social position if

they ate the cheap rabbit meat eaten by the poor Saxon peasants.

17. (Para. 11) **As we listen today to the arguments about bilingual education, we ought to think ourselves back into the shoes of the Saxon peasant.:** The way we understand the pros and cons of bilingual education today is certainly different from how the Saxon peasant understood the use of two languages (English and French) in England. If we did not think as if we were in their position, if we did not use their perspective, we would never understand how they felt about the use of two languages at the same time.
18. (Para. 11) **The new ruling class had built a cultural barrier against him by building their French against his own language.:** After the Norman Invasion, the Normans became the rulers of England, and the language they used was French rather than English. Because of this, they made it difficult for the conquered to be assimilated into the culture of the rulers.
19. (Para. 11) **There must have been a great deal of cultural humiliation felt by the English....:** In their homeland, the very existence of two languages and two cultures, with the ruling class speaking French and they themselves speaking English, was a lot of humiliation to the English people.
20. (Para. 11) **“The King’s English”—if the term had existed then—had become French.:** The term of “the King’s English” hadn’t been coined and did not exist at that time. If so, it would have been French, because the King then spoke French rather than English.
21. (Para. 11) **And here in America now, 900 years later, we are still the heirs to it.:** Hereward the Wake was an 11th-century leader of local resistance to the Norman Conquest. The article “Pub Talk and the King’s English” was published in *Washington Post* in 1979, so the time span is about 900 years. “We are still the heirs to it” very likely means 900 years later, the United States is experiencing a similar situation. English is the national language, though not the official language at the national level, but it is the official language of at least 28 states. This makes it difficult for people speaking other languages (for example, many people in some states speak Spanish) to live their daily life in the country and these people may feel the same cultural humiliation as the English had felt 900 years before.
22. (Para. 12) **“thou clipst the King’s English.”:** “thou clipst” is Middle English, “thou” means “you,” while in modern English “clip” is used instead of “clipst.” 中古英语，意为“你将标准英语简化了”。
23. (Para. 12) **Is the phrase in Shakespeare? That would be the confirmation that it was in general use.:** Is the phrase “the King’s English” found in the works written by Shakespeare? If it were the case, it would prove that the term “the King’s English” was used then by many people.
24. (Para. 12) **He uses it once, when Mistress Quickly in “The Merry Wives of Windsor” says of her master coming home in a rage, “...here will be an old abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English,” and it rings true.:**
  - 1) **Mistress Quickly:** a character in Shakespeare’s play “The Merry Wives of Windsor,” she is the servant to Doctor Caius.
  - 2) **“...here will be an old abusing of God’s patience and the King’s English”:** God, who is famous for his patience, will not be patient with her master this time, and at the same time, there is going to plenty of misuse of the King’s English.
  - 3) **...and it rings true.:** If something someone has said or written rings true, it seems to be true. Here, it means that Mistress Quickly’s statement seems to be true.
25. (Para. 13) **After five centuries of growth, of tussling with the French of the Normans and the Angevins and the Plantagenets and at last absorbing it, the conquered in the end conquering the conqueror....:** 历经五个世纪的发展成长，先后与诺曼人、安茹王朝以及金雀花王朝的法语奋力抗争后，最终英

语吸收消化了法语。被统治者最终征服了统治者。

26. (Para. 13) **...English had come royally into its own.:** The English language was recognized by the royal family and was used by them once again.
27. (Para. 14) **The Elizabethans blew on it as on a dandelion clock, and its seeds multiplied, and floated to the ends of the earth.:** The English language is compared to the seeds of the dandelion. The Elizabethan writers spread the English language far and wide.  
**Elizabethans:** (*n*) English persons, especially writers, of the time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603). 指伊丽莎白女王时代的人们, 尤指当时的英国文人、诗人及剧作家。
28. (Para. 15) **The phrase has always been used a little pejoratively and even facetiously by the lower classes.:** When the people from the lower classes use the term “the King’s English,” they always use it jokingly and sarcastically. They tend to make fun of the so-called formal and correct use of the language.
29. (Para. 15) **...will lose his control and speak with the vigor of ordinary folk.:** People from the upper class tend to speak politely, they do not always use the strong or dirty language, while the ordinary people are in the habit of speaking directly and vigorously, and sometimes use strong language. Dr. Caius, Mistress Quickly’s master and someone from the upper class, may lose control of himself and speak as the ordinary people do.
30. (Para. 15) **...the claim is often mocked by the underlings, when they say with a jeer “English as it should be spoke.:** People from the upper class, the educated people insist that the King’s English is “English as it should be spoken,” and people should always use correct and standard English. People from the lower classes, the working class people often make fun of the so-called correct and standard English by using incorrect and non-standard English, and speak “English as it should be spoke.”  
**“English as it should be spoke”:** “Spoke” instead of “spoken” is used here to emphasize the idea that the working class people are not happy with the rules laid down by the ruling class, when it comes to the correct use of language. Perhaps they know it is not the correct use as accepted by the ruling class. They say so deliberately to make fun of the ruling class and the so-called correct and standard English. 此处底层人民故意戏谑, 翻译时不妨将其译为“规反英语”(谐音“规范英语”, 但为明显别字, 从而体现出其中的嘲讽意味)。
31. (Para. 16) **There is always a great danger, as Carlyle put it, that “words will harden into things for us.:** “Words will harden into things for us” means that sometimes we may lose sight of the fact that words are just symbols, they are not the things they represent. However, according to Carlyle, there is always a great danger that people will take words for the things they represent. 词语会硬化而成为具体的事物, 此处作者的意思是我们将一个词与其所代表的事物等同起来, 词不过是一个符号而已。
32. (Para. 16) **Perhaps it is worth trying to speak it, but it should not be laid down as an edict, and made immune to change from below.:** Perhaps it is a good idea that people would try to speak the King’s English, however, it is wrong to ask or order all to speak the King’s English. At the same time, it is wrong not to allow the working class people to introduce changes into the language.
33. (Para. 17) **The King’s English is a model—a rich and instructive one—but it ought not to be an ultimatum.:** The King’s English is something excellent that people are supposed to model after. In this sense, it is a rich and instructive model, but it should not be regarded as an ultimatum, meaning people shouldn’t be forced to accept it as the only correct way of speaking English.
34. (Para. 18) **So we may return to my beginning.:** In this article, the writer has been digressing from the central theme of the essay shortly after he sets out. Now the writer realizes this digression and comes back once again

to the central theme—what a good conversation is.

35. (Para. 18) **Even with the most educated and the most literate, the King's English slips and slides in conversation.:** Even the most educated people do not use standard, formal English all the time in their conversation; even these people make mistakes in conversation.  
此处作者也使用了隐喻的修辞手法，将在谈话中频频出错比作行走中摔跤滑倒；同时，还运用了押头韵的修辞手法。
36. (Para. 18) **There is no worse conversationalist than the one who punctuates his words as he speaks as if he were writing...:** If one speaks as if he were writing, inserting punctuation marks in his speech, he is the worst conversationalist.
37. (Para. 18) **When E. M. Forster writes of "the sinister corridor of our age," we sit up at the vividness of the phrase, the force and even terror in the image.:** When E. M. Forster uses the phrase "the sinister corridor of our age," we find it shockingly impressive and become suddenly alert and alarmed at the vividness of the metaphor, in which the things we do and the road we travel along in this age are compared to a corridor.
38. (Para. 18) **But if E. M. Forster sat in our living room and said, "We are all following each other down the sinister corridor of our age," we would be justified in asking him to leave.:** If E. M. Forster talked like this (used this kind of formal, pompous, literary language) in an ordinary conversation in our living room we would have every right to ask him to leave the room. The writer here means that people shouldn't be talking like this.
39. (Para. 19) **Other people may celebrate the lofty conversations in which the great minds are supposed to have indulged in the great salons of 18th century Paris...:** Other people may be full of praises when they talk about the elevated and sublime conversations (conversations that were supposed to be witty and learned) of the great people in the great salons of 18th century Paris. 也许还有人会倍加推崇 18 世纪巴黎文艺沙龙里名人大家的高谈阔论。
40. (Para. 19) **but one suspects that the great minds were gossiping and judging the quality of the food and the wine.:** But people suspect that these distinguished people were actually talking about other people's behavior and private lives and making comments on the quality of the food and the wine.
41. (Para. 19) **...the only difference between her cook and the supreme chef, Brinvilliers, lay in their intentions.:** The only difference between Mme. Deffand's cook and the supreme chef Brinvilliers can be found in their intentions of cooking and their attitudes towards cooking.
42. (Para. 20) **We would never have gone to Australia, or leaped back in time to the Norman Conquest.:** We would never have talked about Australia, nor would we have travelled back in time and talked about what happened during the Norman Conquest.
43. (Para. 21) **Perhaps above all, one would not have been engaged by interest in the musketeer who raised the subject...:** One would not have thought with interest about the woman who raised this topic.
44. (Para. 21) **The bother about teaching chimpanzees how to talk is that they will probably try to talk sense and so ruin all conversation.:** Chimpanzees are not human beings, they are not capable of conversation. People who try to talk sense in a conversation are just behaving like chimpanzees, they will ruin all conversation. At the end of the article, the writing returns to the central theme—what is a conversation—once again. 作者在此处有讽刺挖苦之意，将破坏闲聊的人与不会聊天的黑猩猩相提并论。

## V Key to Exercises (练习答案)

### I. Oral Presentation

#### Suggested Presentation Outline:

1. The theme of the essay is:  
Conversation is the most sociable of all human activities; conversation does not really start anywhere, and no one knows where a conversation will go; conversation is not for making a point and there is no winning in conversation.
2. The organization of the article is loose. Roughly it can be divided into 4 parts. Please refer to Structure of the Text for more information.
3. Refer to Structure of the Text for answers.

### II. Questions

#### A. Questions on the Content:

1. According to the author, a good conversation is one that does not really start anywhere, and no one knows where it goes; a good conversation is not for making a point, there is no winning in a good conversation. According to the author, if someone has something to say, if he argues, tries to convince and tries to win, that will spoil the conversation.
2. The writer likes “bar conversation” so much because he thinks that bar conversation has a charm of its own; in particular, he thinks that bar friends are not deeply involved in each other’s lives.
3. A good conversation doesn’t need a focal subject, but sometimes in the course of a good conversation, a focal subject does materialize, and it comes naturally into a good conversation.
4. People in the pub talked about Australia because a woman raised the topic of the King’s English and the person who gave her the definition of the King’s English is an Australian. The conversation turned to Norman England because the author wants to have a look at the language barrier between the lower classes and the upper class, and in the case of Norman England, it’s the language barrier between the Saxon churls and the Norman conquerors.
5. There are many examples illustrating the fact that the use of words shows class distinction. For example, when we talk of meat on our tables we use French words; when we speak of the animals from which the meat comes we use Anglo-Saxon words. This is simply because the French were the ruling class or the upper class, while the Anglo-Saxon people were the lower classes.
6. “The King’s English” was regarded as a form of racial discrimination during the Norman rule in England, that was before Queen Elizabeth I.
7. In his opinion, words are not themselves a reality, but only representations of it, and the King’s English, like the Anglo-French of the Normans, is a class representation of reality. Perhaps it is worth trying to speak it, but it should not be laid down as an edict, and made immune to change from below.
8. The term “the King’s English” or “the Anglo-French” used by the Norman rulers only represents the language used by the ruling class (or the King). In other words, it represents the language used by a certain class.

During the Norman period, the ruling class spoke Anglo-French while the peasants spoke their native Saxon language. Language bears the stamp of the class that uses it. “The King’s English” today refers to

the language used by the upper, educated class in England.

### B. Questions on Structure and Style:

1. The thesis statement of this expository writing is "Conversation is the most sociable of all human activities." It is stated in the opening sentence of the first paragraph.
2. The writer explains in Para. 2 what a good conversation is. It introduces the topic of the text.
3. There are many literary and historical allusions used in this piece. Here are some of the examples: the Norman Conquest, the saloons of 18th century Paris, and the words of many a man of letters. For a short expository essay like this, the allusions used are more than expected and desirable. Maybe once again, it's because the writer chooses to use so many literary and historical allusions to illustrate what a good conversation is.
4. Para. 5 is a transition paragraph. The writer now passes from a general discourse on good conversation to a particular instance of it. But one feels the transition a bit abrupt. It could have been a bit smoother.
5. The writer introduces the topic about dictionaries in Para. 17 because he wants to illustrate this point: The King's English is a model—a rich and instructive one—but it ought not to be an ultimatum. Dictionaries are only instruments of common sense.
6. In Para. 18, the writer realizes he has been digressing from his subject by discussing the King's English at length, so he comes back to his central theme—conversation. The main idea of the paragraph: People make mistakes in conversation; people should not talk like a book. If someone talks as if he were writing, it's no good conversation.
7. The writer reveals his political inclination in this piece of writing. His attitude towards "the King's English" shows that he is a defender of democracy.

### III. Paraphrase

1. And conversation is an activity which is found only among human beings.
2. Conversation is not for persuading others to accept our idea or point of view. In a conversation we should not try to establish the force of an idea or argument.
3. In fact a person who really enjoys and is skilled at conversation will not argue to win or force others to accept his point of view.
4. People who meet each other for a drink in the bar of a pub are not intimate friends for they are not deeply absorbed or engrossed in each other's lives.
5. The conversation could go on without anybody knowing who was right or wrong.
6. These animals are called "cattle" when they are alive and feeding in the fields; but when we sit down at the table to eat, we call their meat "beef".
7. The new ruling class by using French instead of English made it difficult for the English to accept or absorb the culture of the rulers.
8. The English language received proper recognition and was used by the King once more.
9. The phrase, the King's English, has always been used disparagingly and jokingly by the lower classes. The working people very often make fun of the proper and formal language of the educated people.
10. There still exists in the working people, as in the early Saxon peasants, a spirit of opposition to the cultural authority of the ruling class.
11. There is always a great danger that we might forget that words are only symbols and take them for things they are supposed to represent.

#### IV. Practice with Words and Expressions

##### A.

1. *on the rocks*: (colloquial) in or into a condition of ruin or catastrophe
2. *get out of bed on the wrong side*: to be cross or in a bad temper for the day
3. *on wings (on the wing)*: flying or while flying; in motion or while moving or traveling
4. *turn up one's nose at*: sneer at, scorn
5. *in another's shoes*: in another's position
6. *come into its own*: to receive what properly belongs to one, especially acclaim or recognition
7. *sit up at*: (colloquial) to become suddenly alert

##### B.

1. *Ignorant* implies a lack of knowledge, either generally (an ignorant man) or on some particular subject (ignorant of the reason of their quarrel); *illiterate* implies a failure to conform to some standard of knowledge, especially an inability to read or write; *uneducated* implies a lack of formal or systematic education, as of that required in schools (his brilliant, though uneducated mind); *unlearned* suggests a lack of learning, either generally or in some specific subject (unlearned in science).
2. *Scoff* implies a showing of scorn or contempt as a manifestation of doubt, cynicism, irreverence, etc. (they scoffed at his diagnosis of the disease); *sneer* implies a display of contempt, disparagement, etc. as by a derisive smile or scornful insinuating tone of voice ("You call this a dinner?" he sneered.); *jeer* suggests openly insulting, coarse remarks or mocking laughter (the crowd jeered at the speaker); *gibe* implies a taunting or mocking, either in amiable teasing or in sarcastic reproach (he kept gibing at me for my clumsiness); *flout* suggests a treating with contempt or disdain, especially by ignoring or rejecting (to flout the law).

##### C.

1. No one knows how the conversation will go as it moves aimlessly and desultorily or as it becomes spirited and exciting.
2. It is not a matter of interest if they are cross or in a bad temper.
3. Bar friends, although they met each other frequently, did not delve into each other's lives or the recesses of their thoughts and feelings.
4. Suddenly a miraculous change in the conversation took place.
5. The conversation suddenly became spirited and exciting.
6. The Elizabethan writers spread the English language far and wide.
7. I have always had an eager interest in dictionaries.
8. Even the most educated and literate people use non-standard, informal, colloquial English in their conversation.
9. Otherwise one will tie up the conversation and will not let it go on freely.
10. We would never have talked about Australia, or the language barrier in the time of the Norman Conquest.

#### V. Translation

##### A.

1. 动物之间的信息交流，不论其方式何等复杂，也称不上聊天。
2. 聊天中常有争论，不过其目的并不是为了说服对方。聊天之中不存在输赢胜负。

3. 或许是由于我年轻时常常光顾英国小酒馆的缘故，我觉得酒馆里的聊天别有一番韵味。
4. 我不记得一起聊天的人是在什么情况下说出那句话来的——显然她不是有备而来，那也不是什么非说不可的要紧话——但是她那句话十分自然地融进了我们的闲谈里。
5. 每当上流社会想给“规范英语”制订一些条条框框时，总会遭到下层人民的抵制。
6. 词语本身并不是现实，它不过是用以表达现实的一种形式而已。标准英语就像诺曼人的盎格鲁式法语一样，也是一种对现实的阶级表达。
7. 让人们学着去讲规范英语也许不错，但不应当把它作为一条必须执行的法令，也不应当使它完全拒绝来自下层的改变。
8. 要是有人聊天时像写文章那样标点分明，或者像写一篇要发表的散文一样咬文嚼字的话，那他一定是个最糟糕的聊天者。
9. 看到福斯特笔下写出“当今时代的阴森可怖的长廊”时，其用语之生动及由此所产生的有力甚至可怖的形象不禁令我们心头一震。
10. 那天晚上，如果我们当场弄清了“标准英语”的定义，也就不可能有那一场交谈了。

#### B.

#### 第9段

有人举出了一个人所共知的例子，它至今仍然值得三思。我们谈到饭桌上的肉食时，使用法语词汇，而谈到提供此类肉食的牲畜时，则用盎格鲁-撒克逊语（英语单词）。在猪圈里的是猪，饭桌上吃的是猪肉（来自法语 *porc*）。在地里放养的叫牛，餐桌上的叫牛肉（来自法语 *boeuf*）。鸡变成禽肉（法语叫 *poulet*）。牛犊变成小牛肉（法语叫 *veau*）。即使为了避免所谓的高雅，我们的菜单不用法语，但它所用的英语仍然是诺曼式的英语。所有这一切向我们表明在诺曼征服英国后所存在的深刻的阶级裂痕。

#### 第10段

耕种土地、喂养牲畜的撒克逊农民吃不起肉，肉都到了诺曼人的桌上了。农民只能吃在大地上乱窜的兔子。既然这种肉很便宜，诺曼贵族自然不屑去吃。于是兔子肉和兔子用的是一个词，而没有变成法语 *lapin* 的某种翻版。

#### 第11段

当我们今天听着关于用两种语言进行教育的争论时，我们应设身处地为当时的撒克逊农民想一想。新的统治阶级用法语来对抗撒克逊农民自己的语言，从而在农民周围建起一道文化屏障。当英国人在“觉醒者赫里沃德”这样的撒克逊领袖带领下起来造反时，他们一定在文化上感到了莫大的羞辱。标准英语——如果那时候有这个的话——在当时已经变成法语。而九百年后我们在美国这儿仍然继承了这种影响。

## VI Read, Think and Comment

1. The topic sentence is “Life on the farm is an eternal battle against nature.”
2. The writer of this paragraph failed to develop the main idea properly.
3. This paragraph lacks unity and coherence. The writer of this paragraph has forgotten about what he had started out to say. Instead of being an “eternal battle,” life in this paragraph becomes a pleasant and exciting experience, which is just opposite to what the writer set out to prove.

## VII Translation of the Text (全篇译文)

### 酒馆聊天与标准英语

——亨利·费尔利

① 人类的一切活动中，只有聊天最宜于促进交流，而且为人类所特有。动物之间的信息交流，不论其方式何等复杂，也称不上聊天。

② 聊天的魅力在于它没有一个事先设定的话题。它时而迂回流淌，时而奔腾起伏，时而火花四射，时而热情洋溢，话题最终会扯到什么地方谁也拿不准。愉快闲聊之大忌是有人“要正经说事”。聊天中常有争论，不过其目的并不是为了说服对方。聊天之中不存在输赢胜负。事实上，善于聊天的人随时准备作出让步。也许他们会突然间觉得该把自己最得意的奇闻轶事拿出来抖一抖，但一转眼大家已聊到别处去了，这样的机会也就失之交臂，但他们丝毫不会觉得可惜。

③ 或许是由于我年轻时常常光顾英国小酒馆的缘故，我觉得酒馆里的聊天别有一番韵味。酒馆里的朋友对彼此的生活并无太多的了解，他们只是临时凑到一块儿，而非亲朋密友。他们之中也许有人面临婚姻破裂，或恋爱失败，或碰到别的什么不顺心的事儿，但这些都无关。他们就像大仲马笔下的三个火枪手一样，虽然朝夕相处，却从不打探彼此的私事，也不去揣摸别人内心的秘密。

④ 有一天晚上，人们漫无边际地东拉西扯，从最普通的凡人俗事谈到对木星的想法。谈了半天也没有一个中心话题，事实上也不需要一个中心话题。可突然间大伙儿的话题都集中到了一处，闲聊的话题奇迹般地出现了。我不记得一起聊天的人是在什么情况下说出那句话来的——显然她不是有备而来，那也不是什么非说不可的要紧话——但是她那句话十分自然地融进了我们的闲谈里。

⑤ “几天前，我听到一个人说‘标准英语’这个词语是批评用语，指的是人们应该避免使用的英语。”

⑥ 此语一出，闲聊立刻热烈起来。有人赞成，有人反对，还有人则拒绝接受。当然像在所有这种类似的场合一样，大家说定次日一早去查证一下。于是，问题就可以解决了。不过，酒馆聊天并不需要解决什么问题，大伙儿仍旧可以不明不白地继续闲扯下去。

⑦ 告诉她“标准英语”应如此定义的原是个澳大利亚人。得悉此情，有些人便说起尖酸刻薄的话来，说什么囚犯的后代这样说倒也不是为奇。这样，在五分钟内，大家便像是到澳大利亚游览了一趟。在那样的社会里，“标准英语”当然会受到抵制。每当上流社会想给“规范英语”制订一些条条框框时，总会遭到下层人民的抵制。

⑧ 看看撒克逊农民与征服他们的诺曼统治者之间的语言隔阂吧。于是话题又从19世纪的澳大利亚囚犯转到12世纪的英国农民。孰是孰非，都没有关系。聊天热火朝天地进行着。

⑨ 有人举出了一个人所共知的例子，它至今仍然值得三思。我们谈到饭桌上的肉食时，使用法语词汇，而谈到提供此类肉食的牲畜时，则用盎格鲁-撒克逊语（英语单词）。在猪圈里的是猪，饭桌上吃的是猪肉（来自法语 *porc*）。在地里放养的叫牛，餐桌上的叫牛肉（来自法语 *boeuf*）。鸡变成禽肉（法语叫 *poulet*）。牛犊变成小牛肉（法语叫 *veau*）。即使为了避免所谓的高雅，我们的菜单不用法语，但它所用的英语仍然是诺曼式的英语。所有这一切向我们表明在诺曼征服后英国文化所存在的深刻的阶级裂痕。

⑩ 耕种土地、喂养牲畜的撒克逊农民吃不起肉，肉都到了诺曼人的桌上了。农民只能吃在大地上乱窜的兔子。既然这种肉很便宜，诺曼贵族自然不屑去吃。于是兔子肉和兔子用的是一个词，而没有变成法语 *lapin* 的某种翻版。

⑪ 当我们今天听着关于用两种语言进行教育的争论时，我们应设身处地为当时的撒克逊农民想一想。新的统治阶级用法语来对抗撒克逊农民自己的语言，从而在农民周围建起一道文化屏障。当英国人在“觉醒者赫里沃德”这样的撒克逊领袖带领下起来造反时，他们一定在文化上感到了莫大的羞辱。标准英语——如果那时有这个词的话——在当时已经变成法语。而九百年后我们在美国这儿仍然继承了这种影响。

⑫ 那晚闲聊过后，第二天一早便有人去查阅了资料。这个词语在16世纪某个时期开始使用。纳什作于1593年的《截获信函奇闻》中就有过“标准英语”(Queen's English)的提法。1602年德克写到某人时说：“汝把‘标准英语’(King's English)弄简单了”。莎士比亚作品中是否也出现过这一提法呢？如出现过，那就证明这个词在当时即已普遍使用。他用过一次，在《温莎的风流娘儿们》中，快嘴桂嫂在讲到她家主人回来后将会有的盛怒情形时说：“……少不了一顿臭骂，骂得鬼哭神愁，伦敦官话(即“标准英语”)不知要给他糟蹋成个什么样子啦”(注：朱生豪译)。此话不谬。

⑬ 我们有理由认为这个词语就是那个时期产生的。经过前后五百年的发展和与诺曼人、安茹王朝及金雀花王朝的法语的竞争，英语最终同化了法语。被征服者征服了征服者，英语开始名正言顺地为国王所使用。

⑭ 这样便有了一种值得引以自豪的“标准英语”。伊丽莎白时代的人像吹蒲公英的绒毛头那样传播标准英语，使其远走高飞，遍及世界各地。“标准英语”不再带有今天所谓的种族歧视的色彩了。

⑮ 不过，那个澳大利亚人说的话也有一定的道理。下层阶级在使用这个词语时总带着一点贬损甚或滑稽的味道。人们觉得，就连快嘴桂嫂——一个仆人——也说她的主人凯厄斯大夫会控制不住自己，讲起平民百姓们所讲的那种粗话。如果说标准英语就是所谓的“规范英语”，这种说法常常会受到下层人民的嘲笑讥讽，他们有时故意开玩笑地把它说成是“规反英语”。下层民众对文化专制的反抗由此可见一斑。

⑯ 正如卡莱尔所说，始终存在的一种危机便是，“对我们来说，词语会物化成具体的事物”。词语本身并不是现实，它不过是用以表达现实的一种形式而已。标准英语就像诺曼人的盎格鲁式法语一样，也是一种对现实的阶级表达。让人们学着去讲规范英语也许不错，但不应当把它作为一条必须执行的法令，也不应当使它完全拒绝来自下层的改变。

⑰ 我一向对词典有着永无止境的喜爱——奥登说过，一个作家的全部所需就是一支笔、够用的纸张和“他能买得起的最好的词典”——但我更赞同另一种说法，即词典是表达常识的工具。标准英语是一种典范——一种内容丰富而有指导作用的典范——但不是金科玉律。

⑱ 由此我们可以回到我开头的话题。即便是那些学识渊博、满腹经纶的人，他们所讲的标准英语在聊天中也常常会离谱走调。要是有谁聊天时像写文章那样标点分明，或者像写一篇要发表的散文一样咬文嚼字的话，那他一定是个最糟糕的聊天者。看到福斯特笔下写出“当今时代的阴森可怖的长廊”时，其用语之生动及由此所产生的有力甚至可怖的形象不禁令我们心头一震。但假若福斯特坐在我们的起居室里说“我们大家正一个接一个地步入当今时代的阴森可怖的长廊”时，那我们完全有理由请他走人。

⑲ 常常有一些愚人要求大文豪们聊天写作都一个样。也有一些人对18世纪巴黎文艺沙龙里那些才智出众之士的高谈阔论啧啧称颂。可是，说不定那些才智出众之士在那里也不过是聊天，对酒食的质量品头论足哩。当时的法国最高法院第一庭庭长埃诺在德芳侯爵夫人的沙龙里作客时就曾大声抱怨“沙司糟透了”，接着还说侯爵夫人家的厨子和总厨师长布兰维利耶之间的唯一差别只不过是用心不一而已。

⑳ 会客厅里和餐桌上是无需摆放词典的。聊天过程中不要查证任何东西，到第二天上午再说。否

则，聊天会受到阻碍，不能如行云流水般无拘无束海阔天空地进行。那天晚上，如果我们当场弄清了“标准英语”的定义，也就不可能有那一场交谈了。我们也就不可能一会儿聊起澳大利亚，一会儿很快扯回到诺曼征服的时代。

②1 而且，如果我们当场弄清了“标准英语”的定义，我们也就没有什么可以留待第二天上午思考了。或许尤为重要，大家就不会对那位引出话题的“火枪手”感兴趣，想多了解她的情况了。教黑猩猩说话之所以费劲，其原因就在于它们很可能老想着要讲出正儿八经的话来，致使聊天完全索然无味。

(选自《华盛顿邮报》，1979年5月6日)