

# 埃及人如此说汉语

## THIS IS HOW EGYPTIANS SPEAK MANDARIN

■ 吉祥波 (埃及开罗大学汉语教师志愿者)

Ji Xiangbo, volunteer Chinese teacher of Confucius Institute at Cairo University, Egypt

一直以来,就像很多外国人认为的那样,我也相信汉语是世界上最难学的语言。因为在我的印象当中,很少有外国人能说一口既流利又标准的普通话。

但是来到埃及以后,我发现自己不过是一只井底之蛙。走在埃及的大街上,到处都能听到熟悉的汉语。虽然只是简单的“你好”,但这足以让我感叹和自豪。有时进入旅游景点,经常会遇到埃及人跑到我面前,一边用手比划着,一边说着什么。仔细听,我才明白他说的是“清凉油”。第一次听到埃及人不停地和我说“清凉油”的时候,我着实吓了一跳。而当我把准备好的清凉油送给他们,埃及人就会竖起大拇指,说道:“China, very good!”埃及位于骄阳似火的非洲,而把清凉油涂抹在脑门上,有消暑、醒脑的功效,难怪埃及人如此钟爱来自遥远中国的清凉油。有人说过,在埃及,清凉油就是中国人的代名词,好比古代,瓷器是中国的代称。

如果埃及人说“清凉油”还不算什么的话,那哈里里市场里的见闻定会让你感慨良久。哈里里市场是埃及最古老、最悠久的市场,诺贝尔文学奖获得者,埃及人马赫福兹就是在这里的一家咖啡厅完成自己的创作的。这里每天都有成千上万来自世界各地的朋

友,购物的同时,每个人也都在亲身体验着拥有上千年悠久历史的古老埃及文明。这个市场我至少去过10次。有时候自己购物,有时候陪朋友,还有时候是为了去看看那里的埃及人说汉语……每当埃及人见到我们中国人时,他们就会吆喝道:“过来看看,这个很便宜,质量很好,过来看看,看看不要钱……”听到熟悉的汉语声后,我们就随店主进了铺子。有不少店主能继续用流利的汉语向你推荐自己的商品,虽然不是很标准,但不影响交流。能说一口这么流利的汉语,这样的店主莫非接受过汉语教育?打听之后才知道,这些中文都是在他们平常和中国人交流时一点点记住的。每次购物时我都不得不惊叹于埃及人的语言天赋。

相对于上面有声有色的“街头汉语”,埃及的小学和中学汉语教学几乎为零,但大学汉语以及社会上的汉语培训学校早已开展得如火如荼了。

埃及

的汉语培训学校主要有开罗中国文化中心和开罗友好交流协会举办的汉语班,以及最近两年刚成立的开罗大学和苏伊士运河大学孔子学院。文化中心的汉语班期期爆满,每次报名期间,中心的工作人员都邀请当地警察帮助维持秩序。与此同时,其它几个地方的汉语培训班也开展得有声有色。

在埃及高教部和中国教育部的长期扶持下,埃及的大学汉语教学已经具备较强的力量。其中,最早的艾因·夏姆斯大学中文系开设于1958年,在中东和非洲地区具有极高的知名度,也是中东和非洲地区规模最大的高等汉语教学基地,从教学到管理都已经拥有自己的一套完整的体系,在埃及的汉语教学中起着“龙头”作用。开罗大学和苏伊士运河大学中文系虽然成立只有几年时间,但凭借着中国老师以及小班教学的优势,学员近年来屡次在各种汉语比赛中折桂。而这种条件下培养出来的学生,无论听、说、读、写哪个方面,个个都是好手。

正是有着艾因·夏姆斯大学这样的老牌学校,以及开罗大学和苏伊士运河大学这样的新鲜血液,埃及汉语教学的明天一定会更加美好。■



Like many foreigners, I had always thought that, of all the languages in the world, Chinese is the most difficult to learn, for it had been my impression that few foreigners are capable of speaking mandarin Chinese fluently and properly.

However, when I came to Egypt, I realized that I had been a mere “frog in a well” all along. The familiar sound of Chinese is heard everywhere in the streets of Egypt. An utterance as simple as “nǐ hǎo” (hello) is enough to impress me and make me proud. At tourist sites, I often run into Egyptians who come up to me talking and gesticulating. The first time an Egyptian came up to me like this, I had to listen carefully before I could understand that he was talking about “essential balm”. I was really a bit scared when I heard the man relentlessly repeating the name “essential balm”. When I give Egyptians essential balm as a gift, they raise their thumbs and say “China, very good!” Egypt is in sun-baked Africa. When applied to the forehead, essential balm can effectively mitigate heat and soothe the brain. It’s no wonder that the hospitable Egyptian people are so fond of the essential balm which comes from faraway China. It is said that, in Egypt, essential balm is a nickname for Chinese people the way porcelain used to represent China in ancient times.

If you are not impressed by Egyptians who can say “essential balm”, you will surely be amazed by what you see and hear in the Khan el-

Khalili Bazaar, Egypt’s oldest market. It was in one of the coffee shops there that Naguib Mahfouz, Egyptian winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, completed his work. Every day thousands of friends from all over the world come there to shop and to get a taste of the ancient Egyptian civilization of thousands of years. I have visited this market at least 10 times, to shop for myself, to be a shopping companion, or simply to hear Egyptians there speak Chinese. When Egyptian shop owners see Chinese approaching, they call out: “Come over and take a look. This is cheap but of very good quality. Come over and take a look. It won’t cost you anything to look.” Hearing the familiar sound of Chinese, we follow the owners to their shops. Many shop owners continue to speak fluent Chinese, using it to promote their items. Though not very authentic, their Chinese is good enough for the communication task at hand. Speaking Chinese with such fluency, did these shop owners receive education in Chinese? A little inquiry told us, however, that they had learned Chinese bit by bit through daily conversations with Chinese visitors. Every one of my shopping trips there has been filled with amazement at the language ability of these Egyptians.

Compared to the lively “street Chinese above, Chinese at nese” described teaching of primary and

secondary schools amounts to almost zero. However, it flourishes at universities and Chinese language training schools, of which the major ones include a Chinese class jointly organized by Chinese Culture Center in Cairo and Sino-Egyptian Association for Friendly Exchanges and a two-year-old Chinese class jointly organized by Cairo University and Suez Canal University. The one at the Chinese Culture Center is always packed full. Every time before a new class starts, so many people want to register that the Center’s staff have to ask local police to help maintain order. Classes at the other locations are also prosperous.

With the continued support of Egypt’s Higher Education Ministry and China’s Ministry of Education, teaching of Chinese is already relatively strong at Egypt’s institutions of higher learning. The Chinese Department of Ain Shams University, established in 1958, is the oldest in the country. As the largest Chinese teaching base at the higher education level in the Middle East and Africa, it is eminently famous in these regions. With its own comprehensive system of teaching and management, Ain Shams University Chinese Department plays the role of “dragon’s head” in Egypt. The Chinese Departments of Cairo University and Suez Canal University are just a few years old. However, it seems that being younger also means taking more initiatives, for they have, in recent years, frequently won prizes at all kinds of Chinese competitions – thanks to teachers from China and to the smaller sizes of their classes. Facilities like these produce students who are good at listening, speaking, reading, and writing. With big old universities such as Ain Shams University and new players such as Cairo University and Suez Canal University, Chinese teaching in Egypt is sure to have a future that is even brighter. ■

