

BBC Learning English – Q & A of the Week 127

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A Fish Out of Water 如鱼失水

Feifei: 大家好, 欢迎收听由 BBC 英语教学为您制作的《你问我答》节目。我是冯菲菲。

Rob: And I'm Rob. Thanks for joining us. Let's hear today's question shall we.

Feifei: Good idea.

Insert

*Hi. Please can you explain the saying a fish out of water? Thanks.
Victor Tsui in Hong Kong*

Feifei: 来自香港的 Victor 想请我们给他解释 a fish out of water 这个表达的意思。Can you help?

Rob: Of course. I love talking about fish. Big fish, small fish, fish and chips.

Feifei: But this is just a saying Rob. It's not really about a fish. It's an idiom.

Rob: Oh yes, I knew that! Idioms are sayings that cannot be taken literally.

Feifei: Yes. 英语里的成语和汉语里的一样, 通常不能直译。Not literally.

Rob: That's right. Now if a fish was out of the water it would not be comfortable or happy. So if you're like a fish out of water then you are in an unfamiliar situation that makes you feel uncomfortable or awkward.

Feifei: 如果说某人是一条离开水的鱼, 那么我们其实在间接的说这个人正处在一个新的、生疏的环境中, 所以感到不舒服, 不适应 uncomfortable or awkward. So what kind of situations are these?

Rob: For example, being asked to do a different job that you're not trained to do. Or having to speak in another language that you've only just started to learn.

Feifei: So you don't want to speak Chinese today?

Rob: No. I'd be a 离开水的鱼。 Here's another example.



Insert

I spent most of my life living in a village but now I've moved to the city. I don't know anybody here and I keep getting lost. I feel like a fish out of water.

Feifei: 上面的这位男士说他从小镇搬到了一个大城市里，环境不熟悉，也没有朋友家人，所以他就有如鱼失水的感觉。That's a big change so it's bound to feel a bit strange.

Rob: Maybe he'll get used to it and then he'll be like a fish in the water!

Feifei: Ha! 水里的鱼。Rob, this isn't the only fish related phrase people use?

Rob: That's right. Have you ever been fishing for a compliment?

Feifei: 搜寻捕捉称赞？Fishing for a compliment? How would I do that?

Rob: A bit like this...

Insert

I went to the hairdressers this morning. Have you noticed anything different about my hair mmm?

Rob: She's dropping a hint that she's had her hair styled and wants to be complimented on it. She's fishing for a compliment.

Feifei: I know the feeling! 我们通常在刚做过一个新发型后都会告诉身边的同事、朋友，希望大家能注意到，更希望能受到大家的称赞。这就是 fishing for a compliment 希望能听些赞美、赞扬的话。Actually Rob, have you noticed my beautiful new shoes?

Rob: Hmm, they're a bit...red. I think I'd have to drink like a fish before I compliment you on those.

Feifei: Drink like a fish? 和鱼喝酒喝得一样多？Do fish drink?

Rob: Yes, lots and lots of water actually. If I drink like a fish then I drink lots too but not water. Listen to this.

Insert

Will drank two bottles of wine with his dinner. He sure can drink like a fish!

Feifei: 如果说某人 drinks like a fish, 其实就是说这个人特能喝酒，而不是水。So Rob, you need to get drunk before you compliment me on my new shoes?

Rob: Yes I'm afraid so. Now finally, have you heard people describe something as being fishy?

Feifei: Fishy? 鱼腥味？You mean something is smelly?

Rob: Not literally. We describe something as fishy when it is suspicious, doubtful, or questionable.

- Feifei:** Fishy 这个词可以表示可疑的，值得怀疑的。A bit like your Chinese pronunciation?
- Rob:** Actually I thought my Chinese was 提高。
- Feifei:** Stop fishing for compliments Rob!
- Rob:** Well, I hope we've given Victor some examples of using fish idioms in English conversation.
- Feifei:** Yes and I hope he's now hooked on listening to Question and Answer of the Week.
- Rob:** Ha ha! Hooked. I like that. Just like catching a fish.
- Feifei:** 欢迎大家发邮件给我们来提出你在英语学习中遇到的问题。邮箱地址是 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk
- Rob:** Right, I'm off fishing now.
- Both:** 再见。