



英文系名洋教授

寫信竟狗屁不通

指出弊端每項獲逾千元獎金(超過40項)

以下是香港某大學英文系主任所寫之信件 (A, B, C, X 為真實人名、文章標題和報章名稱的代號)：

Publication appearing in X X

I am in receipt of your letter reference CIV/01 of 1st June, addressed to my solicitor.

It would appear that my specific complaints have not been addressed. Therefore, I wish to state in my own words, as clearly as I can, precisely what it is that I am complaining of, so that your client has no doubt about the issue that they wish to be decided by the court.

On 1st May, there appeared in X X, a half-page advertisement headed "B", in which it was alleged that an official publication, contained a great number of syntactic and other language errors. The following day, I agreed to appear at a press conference, to speak on behalf of the KE, and explain why I considered certain of the published allegations to be misguided. Some of my comments were, however, incorporated into a report on page 2 of the X X X the following day, in an article by one John, entitled "C".

The remarks I identify tend to tarnish my reputation, and *ipso facto*, that of the department I manage, in the eyes of the general public, and specifically of those concerned with language education in Hong Kong.

The words of which I complain are not justified as true statement, as fair comment, or by virtue of privilege, but rather, constitute false insinuations and damaging personal imputations.

My qualifications and experience have already been outlined to you in my letter to you of 11th May. Suffice it to say here that my background and experience as a learner and teacher of languages, as a teacher trainer, and as a researcher in linguistics, have led me to set great store by the value of a classical education, and in particular of grammar in language learning. I am reported as having said at the KE press conference of 30th May. Grammarians describe patterns of occurrence, and induce the rules governing these. Grammar books and electronic grammar checkers as well as style guides (which often adhere to publishers' in-house conventions rather than delineate universals) do not legislate, they advise.

What I said has been misrepresented by A – confusing the circumstances of teaching English as a native language and as a foreign language – into the categorical statement. A 'feel' for language comes from an awareness not only of the technicalities of formal grammar, but also of the nuances of style and register appropriate to context.

By erroneously stating, without any evidence whatsoever, that I hold outdated and discredited opinions, and implying that thereby I am doing a disservice to my students by following a theoretical and practical approach with eschews the teaching and learning of grammar, A has cast aspersions on my professional integrity and attacked my good name.

I accept that your client "has every right" to offer constructive criticism; I do not accept that this right comports a licence to offer erroneous statements purporting to be fact, and thereby free rein to damage a person's reputation.

Your fourth paragraph begins, "Your client has criticized others on two previous occasions ..." I do not know the significance of this mention, nor do I know which "two occasions" are being referred to here, and so I cannot comment on them; but I fail to discern the relevance of this remark, or of allusion to the prizes I have won in previous competitions that A has advertised, to the matters at issue.

The second part of your letter concerns the contemptuous words "the blind leading the blind" which occurred in A's advertisement of 9th May, and which, in an analysis of the text, clearly refer to me as well as to the KE. I reiterate that I believe these words to imply that I, as one of "the blind" subjects, am incompetent, and this, in turn, reflects negatively on my employer, those who work under me, and those whom I teach.

As stated in my solicitor's letter to A of 6th June last, I shall be claiming, in addition to claims for general damages, those for aggravated damages, all costs, and interest.

I would ask your client to reconsider their position, and in view of the foregoing, reflect whether they really wish to defend before a court of law their statement that 'grammar books should ... otherwise you will ...' is "exactly the same theory" as that advocated by British educationalists "who thought that learning grammar destroyed creativity", and, further, that such a statement constitutes reasonable criticism.

Types of Mistakes: Tenses, articles, punctuation, disagreements, cliches, archaisms, ambiguity, pleonasm, redundancy, misplaced modifiers, obscurity, detached phrases and clauses, grammatical mistakes, dead wood, faulty parallelism, ambiguous antecedents, overuse of a word, self-invented usage, wordiness, etc.

Entry Requirements: Open to the public. No limit to the number of one's entries.

Adjudication Criteria: We judge entries on their writing to the point, and their arguments should be supported by authoritative sources. The entry with the best and the most exhaustive ideas will be the winner, and the decision of the English Society will be final. \$2000 for a difficult correction, \$1000 for a correction. (\$500 for an extra similar correction.)

Deadline for Entries: The accepted post mark will be 5 September 2001 or earlier dates.

Announcement of Winners: October 2001 in the same newspaper.

Note: Some less problematic parts of the original passage have been left out.

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