BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
Question and Answer of the Week 你问我答
什么是"oxymoron"矛盾修辞法？

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Jiaying
大家好，欢迎收听"BBC 英语教学"的"你问我答"节目，I'm Jiaying.

Beth
And I'm Beth. Hello, everyone.

Jiaying
本期节目中我们要回答的问题是这样的：

Question
Could you give me some examples of 'oxymoron' in English?

Beth
Thank you for this great question! An oxymoron is a word or phrase that is made up of two words or parts that contradict each other.

Jiaying
在英语中，"oxymoron"指"矛盾修辞法"，也就是"将两个相互矛盾甚至完全相反的词语放在一起，来描述一件事情"，这种反差可以起到引人入胜的效果。

Beth
Indeed. So, to give you some examples and explanations, we're going to hear a dialogue.

Jiaying
请大家听下面这段使用了"oxymorons"的对话。边听边想两人是什么关系。

Dialogue
A: Have you spoken to Lili? I don't know if anyone else knows…
你最近和丽丽交流过吗？我不知道其他人知不知道这件事情……

B: She's pregnant! Yes, I thought it was **an open secret**! You know, a secret that everyone in the office knows.
她怀孕了！我以为这是个公开的秘密呢！就是大家都心照不宣。

A: Oh, well, I didn't know! It's **bittersweet**. I'm sad that she'll be leaving us for a while but it's really exciting for them.
哦，我还真是不知道！现在有点悲喜交加。她要离开我们一段时间了，不过这对他们一家人来说真是好消息。

B: It won't be easy! I was walking round like the **living dead** when I had my son. I hardly got any sleep in his first few months.
生孩子可不容易！我儿子刚出生的时候，我就像行尸走肉一样，累得不行。头几个月里，我基本上没怎么睡过觉。

Beth
The conversation we just heard is between two work colleagues – they said 'everyone in the office knows' and talked about someone 'leaving' because she is pregnant. Let's look at our first oxymoron – 'open secret'.

Dialogue
A: She's pregnant! Yes, I thought it was an **open secret**! You know, a secret that everyone in the office knows.
她怀孕了！我以为这是个公开的秘密呢！就是大家都心照不宣。

Jiaying
音频中的女士以为办公室里的人都知道同事怀孕的秘密，所以使用了搭配"an open secret"。

Beth
That's right. 'A secret' is something that other people don't know. But, 'open' means not hiding anything, or being easily available. The two parts are opposite. And that's why this is an oxymoron.

Jiaying
"Secret（秘密）"和"open（公开的）"搭配使用，构成"an open secret（人人皆知的秘密）"。大家都知道这件事情，只不过没有公开地说出来而已。

Beth
In this oxymoron, 'open' is an adjective and 'secret' is a noun. It's written as two separate words, unlike our next example.

Jiaying

好了，我们接着来看音频中第二个使用了"oxymoron"的地方，那就是形容词"bittersweet（苦乐参半的）"。

Beth

'Bittersweet' is an adjective made up of two parts, 'bitter' and 'sweet', but it's written as one word.

Dialogue

B: It's **bittersweet**. I'm sad that she'll be leaving us for a while, but it's really exciting for them.

现在有点悲喜交加。她要离开我们一段时间了，不过这对他们一家人来说真是好消息。

Jiaying

"Bittersweet"用来形容一件事情是"苦乐参半的"。

Beth

Yes. And 'bitter' is the sad part, and 'sweet' is the happy part.

Jiaying

音频中的男士因为同事要暂时离开大家而感到难过，却又为同事一家喜迎新成员而感到高兴，所以是"bittersweet"。

下面，我们再来讲讲"the living dead"，这里也用了"oxymoron"。音频中的女士是这样说的：

Dialogue

A: I was walking round like the **living dead** when I had my son. I hardly got any sleep in his first few months.

我儿子刚出生的时候，我就像行尸走肉一样，累得不行。头几个月里，我基本上没怎么睡过觉。

Beth

'The living dead' describes a person or animal that can move and is alive, but looks or feels like they have died! It's very often used when someone isn't getting enough sleep, so they look tired and might have difficulty doing normal activities.

Jiaying

是的，音频中的女士就像"the living dead"，意思是"因为睡眠不足而感觉很累、很难受"。在"the living dead"当中，形容词"living"的意思是"活着的"，"dead"指"逝者"，看似矛盾，却形象地比喻了某人像行尸走肉一般的样子。

好了，我们来总结一下前面讲过的"oxymorons"："an open secret"指"一个公开的秘密"；形容词"bittersweet"表示"苦乐参半的"；搭配"the living dead"指"虽然醒着却感到筋疲力尽、无精打采的人"。

Beth
Remember, if you have a question about the English language you'd like to ask us, please send us an email. Our email address is: questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk

Jiaying
你也可以通过微博向我们提问。我们的微博账号是"BBC 英语教学"。Bye, everyone.

Beth
Bye!