

Q and A of the Week 你问我答

Impact, influence or effect

三词详解



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Yang Li: 大家好欢迎收听《你问我答》节目。 I'm Yang Li.

Chris: And hello I'm Chris. So Li, we need to start with a question.

Yang Li: I know Chris and you'll be pleased to know, I have one ready to answer. It's all about the different names for cheese and...

Chris: ...really? Couldn't we try my question? It's much more interesting and it's quite easy to answer.

Yang Li: Really? Are you trying to persuade me to use your question? Chris 可真有劝说别人的能力!

Chris: Well...yes, I'm trying to influence you to choose this question from Shuai Yu. Let's hear it and you'll see why...

Insert:

Hello! I have a question. What's the difference between impact, influence and effect? How can I use them in different situations? Thanks.

Yang Li: 谢谢 Shuai Yu 同学的问题.听上去她希望我们帮助解释一下 impact, influence and effect 这三个英语单词有什么区别, 因为这三个词在汉语中似乎都有影响的意思。 Well Chris, you have certainly influenced me to use this question.

Chris: I'm glad my influencing skills worked. These words all have similar meanings but also subtle differences. They all involve affecting something, a person or group of people.

Yang Li: 不错, 这三个词都有影响的意思但是它们的微妙区别是什么? But Chris, where are these subtle differences?

Chris: Let's start with impact. This is a particularly strong effect or influence. Using the word as a verb, it means someone does something that causes someone else to drastically change what they do or what they think. And this effect can be quite sudden.

Yang Li: 也就是说 Impact 这个词表示一种很猛烈的冲击力和巨大的影响力。It's a bit like the smell of your aftershave – strong and sudden! Let's hear some examples:

Examples:

-The subjects you choose to study at school may impact your whole career.

-The loss of several staff has made a real impact on the company's output.

Chris: So impact is strong – it has a major effect whereas influence is a more subtle effect. It's a sort of power that can change how people think or act and do.

Yang Li: 相比之下 influence 这个词在力度上更为缓和一些，比如汉语里说的近朱者赤，近墨者黑表示一种潜移默化的影响 we sometimes hear about 具有影响力的人- influential people - don't we?

Chris: Yes. Influential people do things that cause us to change our behaviour or what we think. We are influenced by them sometimes without really thinking about it.

Yang Li: And if I encourage you to start eating healthy food like me, then you can say I am a good influence on you?

Chris: I could say that but I would have to do it first! I think it's far easier to hear some examples:

Examples:

-That salesman really influenced me to buy a 42 inch screen TV and not the 32 inch one.

-Salesman can be so persuasive!

-The offer of a promotion and more money influenced him to leave us and move to London.

-My style of music was influenced by the punk rock bands of the 1970s.

Chris: Hopefully Li we've persuaded or influenced you to think there are differences between the words impact and influence.

Yang Li: Yes Chris you have been very influential. But what about the word 'effect' ?

Chris: Well, effect is the result or consequence of an action. If the result is big, we can say it has a big effect. This can also be described as a major impact.

Yang Li: 这么说，effect 强调的是结果，比如某种政策的效果，某种榜样的作用和影响等等，总的来说这个词强调的是因果关系中的果。

Chris: Yes and if we are influenced by something or someone the effect – or result - is softer or more subtle.

Yang Li: Well the effect of today's programme is that hopefully, Shuai Yu is clearer on the subtle differences between impact, influence and effect.

Chris: I hope so. If you want to make an impact on this programme why not send us a question?

Yang Li: 没错，凡是学习英语的人都会碰到各种各样的问题。请大家记住我们的邮箱 questions.chinaelt@bbc.co.uk 尽管把你的问题发过来，问题嘛当然是越具体越好。我们一定尽力解答。

Chris: We look forward to hearing from you. Bye.

Yang Li: 谢谢收听 Bye bye.