

Puzzles in Translation

# 最新英语翻译 疑难详解

何刚强·编著

华东理工大学出版社

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## 内 容 提 要

本书着重探讨现代英语中一批常见的词语表达应如何进行地道的翻译,其中不少汉语的对应现有参考书典中并不能完全查找到。本书每一词语表达的翻译探讨都以问答开始,然后举一反三,触类旁通。答疑和讨论以大量新鲜例证取胜,语料富有时代感。本书可供大学生,翻译工作者,英语爱好者及外事和外经贸人员等阅读鉴赏。

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## 序

这是何刚强同志继《现代英语表达与汉语对应》之后的第二部作品。

学向勤中得。作者孜孜矻矻，在繁忙的教学与行政工作之余，两年内写成二十几万字，成书两种，确属难能可贵。

诚如作者本人所言，本书以大量第一手的英语用法实例取胜。从事语言教学或研究的人都深知语言实例的重要。没有实例，何来规律？没有字句的形质，何来形而上的理论？而实例之价值，首先在于真实，在于撷采自实际使用的言语，而不是课堂、书斋里为某一特定目的杜撰或仿造的字句。如若此言不谬，本书的价值就是显而易见的了。

本书正文之后附有自习题 52 道，足见作者博观约取，言犹未尽。据此，我相信并期待作者从经验性的散篇闲话中更进一步，早日写出另一部作品，尽收“三部曲”之效。

——陆谷孙

## 前 言

现代英语随着国际政治经济格局的变化和科学技术的日新月异,正经历着比以往任何时期都更明显的演变和发展。除了新词语和表达不断涌现之外,原有许多词语和表达的内涵也在不断地得到丰富,成为引人注目的语言现象。

本书以大量第一手的英语用法实例取胜。笔者从客观的语言现实出发,对现代英语中一批出现频率较高的词语进行分析研究,着重探讨它们在不同语境场合理解与翻译的各种可能性。本书构思考虑到面向中高级英语学习者(包括大学生和各类涉外工作者),所以采用问答形式,逐一展开对这些词语的理解探讨。这些词语在实际运用中给中国的英语学习者带来或者可能带来种种疑难之点(有些问题乍看简单,细究起来,其实不然)。笔者既努力有针对性地解答问题,又围绕所提问题,引申出一番讨论,意在举一反三,触类旁通。笔者以为,一个英语词语表达在汉语里纵有各种表述形式,但都是直接受这个词语表达的宏观语义制约的。

笔者草稿此书常遇疑问,推敲难定。数番叩门求教陆谷孙教授,他都停止笔耕,欣然为我解惑,得益匪浅。书成之后,他又拨冗审阅并为之作序,对我进行鼓励鞭策。在此我对陆谷孙教授深表谢意。

薄薄一册小书断难涵盖所想讨论的语言现实。挂一漏万、牵强谬误之处,盼读者不吝赐教。

为读者阅读方便,书后附词汇表备查。

作者

1996年1月

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## 一、典型词例释疑

### 1. nightmare 并非都是“恶梦”

问：下面一句英语中有 a law-enforcement nightmare 这样一个词组，译成“执法恶梦”总觉有点不妥。不知对这个 nightmare 应该如何理解？

- (1) Barely three months after he took office, President Fidel Ramos is facing a law-enforcement nightmare that will not only test his credibility but could also have long-term repercussions on his country's economic growth.

答：这句英语译成中文大致应该是这样：

“菲德尔·拉莫斯执政不过三个月就已经碰到了执法的难题。这个难题不仅对他本人的信誉将是一个考验，而且还会对他国家的经济发展带来长远的影响。”

nightmare 在这个句子中显然不是“恶梦”，而是“难题”了。说起 nightmare 这个词的词源还挺有意思：它是从 nihtmare 这个词演化而来的。传说 nihtmare 是女人在梦中遇到的可怕淫棍，因而“恶梦”，“梦魇”，“令人恐惧的事物”等一类意思也就由此而生。nightmare 这个词在现代英语中出现频率是很高的，它也派生出不少别的解释。先从“恶梦”的解释说起：

- (2) Adolf Hitler was a victim of child abuse who suffered nightmares about beatings from his father while he committed his own monstrous crimes.

“阿道夫·希特勒小时候曾受虐待。后来在他犯下恐怖罪行时，他自己也频频做恶梦，梦见父亲毒打自己。”



- (3) The holiday boat trip turned into nightmare.

“乘船外出度假竟然会是一场恶梦。”

上面第二句中的“恶梦”其实已非梦了，而是指“可怕的经历”。因此，这个句子还可以理解为：

“乘船外出度假竟然会是一场灾难。”

下面是 nightmare 作为“灾难”解释的另外两个例子：

- (4) Uganda is beginning to emerge from its long nightmare.

“乌干达正开始从长期的灾难岁月中摆脱出来。”

- (5) Some analysts favour the idea of a unipolar world, saying that collective solutions to world problems are unreliable and that rivalry among many superpowers would be a nightmare.

“有些分析家赞成单极世界的观点。他们说，不同国家共同来解决世界的各种问题是靠不住的；假如许多超级大国竞相争雄，那更将成为一场可怕的灾难。”

nightmare 既然与“可怕”，“恐惧”相联系，那么它在各种具体的语境中又可产生诸如下面一类的引申表达：

- (6) Some Japanese are even having nightmares about the prospect of an influx of refugees.

“一些日本人对大批难民可能涌入日本现在就已惊恐万分了。”

- (7) The manufacturers' nightmare: that Europe will go the way of the US., where Japan holds a share, now 25%, that is still rising.

“令(欧洲汽车)制造商们最担惊受怕的是欧洲会重蹈美国的覆辙。日本在美国的股份已达 25%，而且还在继续增加。”

- (8) To go from one of Seoul's outlying towns to another, one has to go through the capital itself, compounding the traffic nightmare there.

“驾车从汉城的一个卫星城到另一个卫星城就必须穿越汉城，这使得汉城市内可怕的交通塞阻又雪上加霜。”

- (9) Bankers said yesterday that the chaotic conditions that followed Iraq's invasion at the beginning of the month had receded. But they have been replaced by the bureaucratic nightmare of dealing with all the regulations issued by different countries to prevent Iraq syphoning off Kuwaiti-owned financial assets.

“一些银行家们昨天说,本月初伊拉克入侵科威特后出现的银行混乱状况已经平息了下去,但是取而代之的是令人生畏的繁文缛节;处理各不同国家发布的(货币)管理条例。这些条例旨在防止伊拉克抽走科威特拥有的金融资产。”

- (10) Leading conservationists yesterday said that urban areas had become a nightmare and unveiled a strategy for green cities, calling for wildlife reserves, lakes and woodland to be built into new housing and office developments.

“昨天,一些自然资源保护主义的头面人物说,城市地区已变得面目可憎,令人生畏。他们披露了一项绿化城市的计划。这项计划要求在新建住宅和办公楼宇时要把野生动植物保护区、湖景和林地都考虑进去。”

此外,nightmare 还可表示某种“难以对付”或“难以处理”的事物。这样,“难题”,“麻烦”,“棘手”,“伤脑筋”,“令人头痛”等一类解释又是这个词的引申之义了。

- (11) September's Olympic Games in Seoul are a security nightmare for Japan as well as South Korea.

“九月在汉城举办奥运会,其安全保卫工作不仅对韩国,而且对日本都构成一个大难题。”

- (12) The prospective deal, though obviously no longer politically controversial, has nonetheless produced sharply divergent views in defence circles. Those against the MIG-29m argue that the aircraft's short service life, tricky maintenance record and unfamiliar engineering will render it a logistical nightmare.

“预期之中的这笔交易虽然明显不会再有政治上的争论,但在防务界却产生了几种绝然不同的看法。反对购买米格-29m 飞机的人士认为,这种飞机服役期短,维修记录上多有疑难故障,加上发动机操纵法又与众不同,这些会给后勤部门造成极大的麻烦。”

- (13) The hospital, one of the largest in London, employs 3,200 staff and receives more than 10,000 visitors a day. With its scores of unlocked doors and a rabbit warren of offices, wards and corridors, it has become a security officer's nightmare.

“这家医院是伦敦最大的医院之一,有医务人员三千二百多人,每天接待门诊超过一万人次。医院不上锁的门有几十处;办公室、病房和走廊都相互紧挨,密密而排。这种情况对负责医院保安的官员来说真是十分棘手。”

- (14) According to experts, almost everything about Mr Bush's looks and character are an image-maker's nightmare.

“据专家说,布什先生从容貌到性格,几乎每个方面都令其形象设计师大伤脑筋。”

- (15) The prospect of a massive influx of refugees from the Far East is a political nightmare for Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

“若是大量难民从远东地区涌入英国,对玛格丽特·撒切尔首相来说是一件政治上最头痛的事。”

- (16) The UN General Assembly voted in November against Moscow by 123 votes to 19, bringing new pressure upon the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov to conclude a war that has become a nightmare for Soviet strategists.

“联合国大会十一月以 123 票对 19 票通过谴责莫斯科的决议。这个决议向苏联领导人米哈伊尔·戈尔巴乔夫施加了新的压力,要求他结束一场苏联军事战略家们深感头痛的(侵略阿富汗的)战争。”

当然,上面谈到的这些解释也并非完全包括了 nightmare 的意思表达。有时,为了正确地表述原文的含义,对这个词的词意还可作进一步的合理引申或联想,例如:

- (17) Some police, however, have described guarding the Thatchers as a nightmare.

“然而有些警察则把为撒切尔夫妇执行警卫任务说成是一份紧张吃力的苦差使。”

- (18) The massive displacement of people—with the attendant urban crowding, poor hygiene and general disruption of the social order—is giving municipal authorities nightmares.

“伴随大量流动人口而来的是:城市变得很拥挤,卫生状况堪忧,整个社会秩序出现混乱。这些给市政当局造成巨大的压力。”

- (19) Speed limits have become something of a joke along the Seoul-Pusan corridor. Six years ago, it took about seven hours to cover the 420-kilometer distance; now it takes as much as 14 hours. And according to the projections of government planners, the trip will become a 28-hour nightmare by the turn of the century unless the government acts decisively to relieve congestion.

“汉城——釜山走廊的车速限制变化真有点令人发笑。六年前,跑完这段四百二十公里路程大约需要七个小时,现在则要多达十四个小时,而据政府规划人员预测,除非政府拿出决断性的措施来缓解交通拥塞,到本世纪末,这段路程行车将是长达二十八小时的煎熬。”

## 2. the lion's share (of) 的含义

问:下面一句英语中 the lion's share of... 这个词语表达的确切含义是什么? 它在汉语中应作怎样的表述?

- (1) Although the United States opened the way for the commercial exploitation of space, Western Europe is now taking the lion's share of the benefits.

答: the lion's share 这个词语表达源于《伊索寓言》的一则故事。狮子与其他几个动物外出捕食,满载而归。当要分战利品时,狮子提出的方案是,一分为四:它作为百兽之王应得一份;它具有超群的勇敢精神,又应得一份;第三份应归其配偶及幼狮所有;至于第四份则可由其他动物与其据理相争。换句话说,狮子几乎是独吞战利品。the lion's share(狮子得到的份额)就转意为“最大的或最主要的部分”。这个词语表达频频出现在现代英语中,因为它生动而简练。就汉语的对应而言,恐怕只能根据具体的语境来确定。当然,不管汉语的表述是什么,都不应偏离 the lion's share 的核心含义。上面提到的句子可以这样理解:

“虽然美国开辟了对宇宙进行商业开发利用的途径,而正在从中获得最大好处的却是西欧。”

一般来说,the lion's share of 常与“钱,财,物”或“利益好处”等一类词汇相搭配,这在现代英语中可以说是俯首皆是:

- (2) The main hubs and new projects have reaped the lion's share of funds, while provincial airports and those in economic backwaters have been starved of resources.

“(国家)主要枢纽工程和新的建设项目占去了大部分的资金,而各地特别是经济落后地区修建飞机场却是财力匮乏。”

- (3) The South-east of England stands to gain the lion's share of the benefits from the Channel Tunnel.

“英吉利海峡隧道开通,英国的东南地区一定会从中获得最大的益处。”

- (4) The country has devoted the lion's share of its scanty foreign aid to the assistance of 45 friendly African states.

“该国对外援助的数目很小,而且绝大部分都提供给了四十五个

非洲的友好国家。”

- (5) But analysts believe the central authorities will still fund the lion's share of investment — about two thirds of total costs.

“但是分析家们认为，中央政府仍将提供大部分的投资——约占总费用的三分之二。”

- (6) These corrupt officials were pocketing the lion's share of the peasants' agricultural tax payments, overcharging them for electricity and allowing relatives to use the village's best communal land.

“这些腐败的官员把农民所缴的农业税款的大部分都中饱私囊。他们多收农民的电费，还让自己的亲戚占用村里最好的公用土地。”

- (7) The farms are two showpieces which have received the lion's share of technical inputs.

“这两个农场是起展示作用的，它们获得了整个技术投入的大部分。”

- (8) Local governments used new economic resources to encourage lucrative local processing and ensure that their new plants receive the lion's share of locally available raw materials.

“地方政府利用新的经济资源来促进获利甚丰的地方加工业，并确保新建的地方加工厂能得到绝大部分当地的原材料。”

- (9) Tomorrow there will be heavy showers, with Scotland and Wales receiving the lion's share.

“明天有暴雨，主要集中在苏格兰和威尔士地区。”

此外，the lion's share (of) 也正越来越多地与其他名词，特别是一些抽象名词搭配，由此使这个词语表达的使用场景又拓宽了许多。请看以下的几个例子：

- (10) The president deserves the lion's share of the credit for the changes that occurred during the last years of his life.

“这位总统在世最后的几年里，国家进行了一系列变革，这主要应归功于他。”

- (11) While the investigators assigned blame to various members of city government, the lion's share of criticism was leveled against Gates for misleading other city officials into believing an adequate response plan was in place and ready to go.

“尽管调查人员把事件归咎于该市大大小小的官员，批评的主要矛头还是针对着盖茨，说他使其他官员误认为一项完善的应变计划早已落实，且随时可以付诸实施。”

- (12) War news may be hot in the US, but Bush's free-trade plan is getting the lion's share of Mexican's attention.

“(海湾)战争的新闻在美国也许是个热门话题，但是布什的自由贸易计划在墨西哥却成了大多数人关注的焦点。”

- (13) The lion's share of this impressive export growth (of Vietnam) came from marine products and crude oil.

“(越南的)出口有了显著增长，其中海产品和原油占主要比重。”

- (14) The most pressing problem the majority of American women face isn't rape or sexual harassment. It's the fact that, in addition to holding down fulltime work, they still are burdened with the lion's share of parenting and housework responsibility.

“大多数美国妇女面临迫切要解决的麻烦并非是强奸或性骚扰，而是这样一个现实：她们除了全天上班外，还要承担养育孩子和操持家务的大部分责任，拖累甚重。”

### 3. embrace 从“拥抱”到“支持”，“拥护”等意

问：在平时的英语阅读中经常碰到 embrace 这个动词，有时感到这个词的意思似不好捉摸。例如下面两句中的 embrace 不知应怎样理解才对？

- (1) The Soviet government that once exiled Andrei D Sakhorov for his outspoken defence of human rights sought to embrace him in death Friday as President Mikhail S Gorbachov mourned the country's loss of "a man of conviction and sincerity".
- (2) Across Western Europe, mainstream politicians are scrambling to embrace the cause of the endangered environment as small ecological parties register startling electoral triumphs.

答: embrace 在现代英语中也是一个日趋活跃的动词。与其搭配的宾语有各种各样的情形,有时确实令我们英语学习者难以捉准其含义。上面提出的两句中,embrace 的用法在现代英语中是比较典型的。这两句英文大致可翻译如下:

“曾经因安德烈·D·萨哈罗夫直言不讳为人权辩护而流放过他的苏联政府试图在他死后肯定他。星期五米哈伊·S·戈尔巴乔夫总统对他表示了哀悼,说国家失去了一位信念与真诚兼备的男子汉。”

“(欧洲)一些生态保护主义党团在选举中取得的胜利令人吃惊。在这种情况下,整个西欧的主流政治家们都纷纷争先恐后地表示投身于保护濒危环境的事业。”(或:都纷纷争先恐后地举起了保护濒危环境的大旗。)

embrace 作为动词用,其首要意思为“拥抱”或“搂抱”,这是我们都非常熟悉的:

- (3) He embraced and kissed his wife.

“他拥抱亲吻了妻子。”

当你拥抱一个人的时候,你表示了对这个人的亲热,热爱,情感上的相互一致等。embrace 由此便引申出若干意思表达,其中有“加入”,“支持”,“接受”,“赞同”,“信奉”:

- (4) and an agreement will be reached for Labour to embrace Euro-  
pean monetary union.



“工党将会就(英国)加入欧洲货币联盟一事达成一致意见。”

- (5) That position was also embraced by Washington, which has never recognized Soviet control over Lithuania.

“这个立场也得到华盛顿的支持。美国对苏联主宰立陶宛从未给予承认。”

- (6) Despite the refusal of some Japanese politicians to acknowledge past horrors, like the rape of Nanjing, Chinese leaders were happy to embrace Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita's wish to invest heavily in China's coastal areas.

“尽管有些日本政客拒绝承认日本过去犯下的像‘南京大屠杀’那样的恐怖罪行,中国领导人还是乐意接受竹下登首相对中国沿海地区大举投资的意愿。”

- (7) Many other evangelical preachers and some Catholics have joined up, embracing a new idea; that the fight against abortion is today's equivalent of the fight for black civil rights a generation ago and so justifies any means to its ends.

“许多其他的福音派传教士和一些天主教徒参加了进来,他们赞同这样一个新的观点,即今天的反堕胎斗争与上一代人为争取黑人民权的斗争可以相提并论,因而为了达到这场斗争的目的,采取任何方式都是正当的。”

- (8) But these days even government leaders play down those fears, pointing out that after the upheaval in the Soviet block, blacks are unlikely to embrace the discredited Soviet model.

“但是如今就连这些政府的领导人也没把这些担心害怕看得很重。他们指出,苏联集团出现动荡激变之后,黑人已不可能信奉声誉扫地的苏联模式了。”

embrace 还有一个直接引申的含义就是“包括”(包含),它也是使用颇频的一种表达。下面是两个例子。请注意,第二句中的 embrace,“包括”之意的表述有所变通。