

## 谈英语中“反正”表达法

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(外语部)

从逻辑上讲,肯定和否定是两个不容混淆、完全对立的概念,可是从语言形式上看,对这两种概念的表达方式却非常复杂。因为语言的形式与其所表达的思想内容并不总是绝对一致的。有的时候,英语里从正面表达的词或句子,译文中可以从反面来表达;相反,英语里有些从反面表达的词和句子,译文中又可以从正面来表达。这里所谓正面和反面的表达主要是指在英语结构里是否用no, not;是否用带有de-, dis-, im-, in-, un-, -less, non-等词缀的词以及是否用nothing, nobody, scarcely等含有否定意义的词;在汉语中是否出现“不”,“非”,“无”,“没(有)”,“否”等字。例如: 1) Much remains to be settled. 许多问题仍未解决。

2) In all our travels we had yet to see a place as beautiful as this city. 我去过那么多地方,还从没有见到过象这座城市这样漂亮。

3) Excuse my rising, gentlemen, but I am very weak. 一Kingkey. 先生们,请原谅我不站起来了,我实在没有劲。

以上这三个例句,英语结构中并没有否定词。也就是说结构形式是肯定的,(即从正面表达),但所表达的思想内容则是否定的,译文需从反面表达。相反,英语中的否定结构形式也可以表达肯定的思想内容。这种肯定和否定的相互转换属于引伸和修辞的范围,理解和翻译时需格外注意。关于肯定的结构形式和所表达思想内容之间的矛盾情况,笔者已在“间接否定的理解和翻译”(载工学院学报1983年第一期)一文中详述,所以此文旨在对英语的否定结构表达肯定思想内容的语言现象作以简单阐述,以供同行及英语学习者参考。

英语中有些句子,用了否定词但并不表示否定意义。这种特殊的语言现象包括的词类和结构范围很广。不仅包括动词、形容词、副词、名词等,而且也包括各种词组、短语以及从句。下面就此语言现象择其要者进行简述。

### 1 单个词

英语中有些作反面表达的词需从正面理解,翻译时也要从正面表达。也就是说英语结构中有带否定词缀的词,但译成汉语时往往不必用否定词。

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### 1.1 动词:

#### 1.1.1 He has undeceived his wife's carelessness in her work.

他使他的妻子认识到了她在工作中的粗心。

此句中的undeceive原义是“使不受迷惑”，但在此句中意思是“使醒悟”，译成“使……认识到”。

#### 1.1.2 The doubt was still unsolved after his repeated explanations.

虽然他一再解释，疑团仍然存在。

#### 1.1.3 If you behave like that, you'll get yourself disliked.

如果你的行为象那个样子，你会使人厌恶。

#### 1.1.4 The woman distrusted her husband's ability to do the job.

这个妇女对其丈夫做这项工作的能力感到怀疑。

#### 1.1.5 What he said discomposed her very much.

他的话使她心情极其烦乱。

#### 1.1.6 The sudden changes of the condition unsettled her.

情况的突然变化使她非常担心。

### 1.2 名词:

#### 1.2.1 It was said that someone had sown discord among them.

据说有人在他们中间搞挑拨离间。

此句中discord一词原义是“不和、不一致”，但在这里译成“挑拨离间”。

#### 1.2.2 Before liberation, she lived in dishonour.

解放前，她过着可耻的生活。

#### 1.2.3 There is a great disparity between red team and the blue one.

红队和蓝队之间力量悬殊。

#### 1.2.4 How great is the dissimilarity between the two plans!

这两个计划之间的异点多大啊！

#### 1.2.5 Generally she accepted the family life in all its crowded inadequacy.

在通常情况下，她还是能够忍受她那拥挤寒怆的家庭生活的。

### 1.3 形容词:

#### 1.3.1 He was an indecisive sort of person and always capricious,

他这个人优柔寡断，而且总是反复无常。

在此句中indecisive原意是“不决断的；犹豫不决的”，在这里转意为“优柔寡断。”

#### 1.3.2 For him the wheel of slumber was wont to turn noiseless and slick and swift.

对于他睡眠的轮子习惯于转动的静悄悄的, 滑溜溜的, 十分迅速的。

1.3.3 While spending my summer holidays in Peking I stayed in a friend's unused apartment.

我在北京渡暑假时, 住在一个朋友暂时空着的房间里。

1.3.4 It was an unusual unit, set off by itself, flying an easily identifiable aircraft.

这是一支异乎寻常的部队, 显得与众不同, 乘的是很容易辨认的飞机。

1.3.5 It was disingenuous of him to praise me just because he wanted money from me.

他相当诡诈, 称赞我只是为了向我讨钱。

1.3.6 The fact that she hasn't received any letter from her son for four months is disquieting.

她已四个月没接到儿子的来信了, 此事使她非常焦虑。

1.4 副词:

1.4.1 To my great surprise, she answered so important a question unthinkingly.

使我惊奇的是, 她很轻率地回答了一个那样重要的问题。

此句中unthinkingly 原义是“无思想地; 未加思考地”, 这里转意译成“轻率地”。

1.4.2 “I don't know if I ought to have come”, she said breathlessly, grasping phyl's arm.

“我不知道我该不该来”, 她一把抓住菲儿的胳膊气喘虚虚地说。

1.4.3 She carelessly glanced through the note and got away.

她马马虎虎地看了那张便条就走了。

1.4.4 He is disgustingly mean with his money.

他对金钱的吝啬令人憎恶。

1.4.5 John came by a fortune of around two million pounds dishonestly.

约翰靠欺骗手段得到了一笔约二百万英镑的财产。

1.4.6 He unreservedly told us what had happened to his family.

他坦白地告诉了我们他家里所发生的一切。

## 2 短语

英语中还有些短语其本身带有否定词, 但常常表达肯定的意思, 所以译文中不应出现否定词。

2.1 He didn't half fear death. 他怕死得要命。

此句中的“not half”照字面上的解释是“少于一半地”, 但在俚语里意思是“多于

一半地; 非常”的意思。常用来表示强烈地肯定。

**2.2** Your father won't half be angry when he gets to know of this.

当你父亲得知此事, 他会非常生气的。

**2.3** Only just a minute, I'll be back in no time to see you home.

再等一会, 我马上就回来送你回家。

**2.4** Don't lose time in writing your composition.

赶快把你的作文写好。

**2.5** Students, with no exception, are to hand in their papers in three days.

三天后学生统统要交书面作业。

**2.6** Jim was no end up set because he couldn't go swimming.

吉姆非常不高兴, 因为他不能游泳。

除了单个词汇以及短语外, 英语中还有一些句式和固定搭配也属于这种情况, 通常是通过曲折的方法来表示肯定。

### 3 修饰疑问句 (Rhetorical questions):

否定结构的修饰疑问句, 通常是加强语气, 以否定形式来表达肯定内容的一种手段。所以理解与翻译时需要注意。

**3.1** Won't you stay a little longer?

请你多坐一会好吗?

**3.2** Won't you have some more? 请再吃点。

例句1、2这样的句子, 从意义上看已转变为祈使句了, 事实上这是一种有礼貌的祈使句, 表示客气或委婉的请求。

**3.3** Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

你应该为自己感到羞耻。

**3.4** Is no one going to defend me? —Qirk

肯定会有人来保护我的。

**3.5** Can't man change the world?

人是可以改造世界的。

**3.6** Do not most of you seeing people grasp casually the outward features of a face and let it go at that? —Helen Keller.

你们这些有视力的人中间, 大多数都是随便地抓住一张脸的外部特征而就适可而止了。

例句3—6是用否定结构的修饰疑问句来表示强烈的肯定内容。

### 4 祈使句 (Imperative Sentences):

有些祈使句中常常带有 if 引起的否定从句, 这种结构也是一种曲折地表示肯定的方法。

**4.1** See if I don't work harder from now on, mother.

妈妈，从今天起我一定努力工作。

4.2 Blow me if it isn't snowing? 一定下雪了。

4.3 Catch me if I don't get up early in the morning.

我早上一定早起。

## 5 特殊疑问句 (Special Questions):

否定结构的特殊疑问句，也是一种曲折表达肯定思想内容的方法。

“Who+否定”等于“everybody+肯定”的加强语气说法。

5.1 Who does not love his own country?

人人都爱自己的国家。

5.2 Who does not hope to be good? 人人都想做好。

“What+否定”是“肯定+every thing”的加强语气表达法。

5.3 What should I not give to have such a cow?

能够得到这样一头牛，我什么都愿给。

5.4 What has he not got as to cause and love?

爱情、事业他全得到了。

“When+否定”的结构等于“肯定+all time, always”所表达的意思。

5.5 When is she not willing to be together with her boy friend?

她每时每刻都愿和其男朋友在一起。

5.6 As a leading cadre, when can he not be seen among the masses?

作为一个领导干部，经常能看到他和群众在一起。

“Where+否定”是“肯定+every where”的加强语气表达方式。

5.7 Where will I not go with you?

和你在一起，天涯海角我都愿去。

5.8 Where can you not put your umbrellar?

你的雨伞放哪都行。

“Why+否定”的结构也属同样的情况，用来表示一种请求或催促。

5.9 Why don't you take up the matter with him?

你该与他交谈这件事！

5.10 Why can't we kiss and be friend? —Mangham.

我们完全可以相吻为友。

5.11 Why not go and try again?

你应该去再试试。

## 6 双重否定句 (Double Negative Sentences):

带有两个否定意义的词群的句子，叫做双重否定句或叫二重否定句。按照标准英语的习惯用法，双重否定相当于肯定。其作用有些是表示加强语气，有些则是委婉曲折的说法

**6.1** I'll take it then. Not for nothing. I'll give you something in return. —A. Cronin.

那么我就拿了。但是有代价的，我将回敬你一些东西。

当然这种结构也可以翻成双重否定句。句中“是有代价的”可译成“不是没有代价的”。

**6.2** This captain took a fancy to my conversation, which was not at all disagreeable at that time. —D. Defoe

船长颇喜欢同我交谈，因为当时那确是一件称心的事情。

**6.3** He was never dissatisfied with my work.

他对我的工作一向是很满意的。

**6.4** At the beginning of learning English he could not speak it without making mistakes.

开始学习英语的时候，他讲英语肯定会有错误。

**6.5** Bassanio, in his grief, replied that there was nothing he could not sacrifice. —Ch. Lamb.

巴萨尼奥非常悲痛地答应说他什么都可以牺牲。

## 7 否定词 + like + 名词（或动名词）：

这个结构也不表示否定意义，而是为了突出名词或动名词要表达的意思。

**7.1** There is nothing like reading in the early morning as a means of studying English.

学习英语最好的方法是早读。

**7.2** There is nothing like blue serge for men's wear.

蓝色哗叽最适合男子穿。

**7.3** No nation like Japan has so sought out and used the best from other societies.

日本是最善于寻觅并采纳别国最佳之物的国家。

**7.4** There is nothing like jogging as a means of exercise.

锻炼身体的最好方法是漫步。

## 8 “否定 + but”：

这个结构也常用来表示肯定的思想内容。

**8.1** There is nothing in the world but teaches us some good lessons.

世界上的一切都能给我们好的教训。

**8.2** Nothing but socialism can save China.

只有社会主义能够救中国。

**8.3** No leader worthy of the name ever existed but was an optimist.

值得做首领的人都是乐观主义者。

8.4 I never think of summer but I think of my school days.

每想到夏天就想到我的学生时代。

8.5 He is one of those young men who have no ideal in life but to eat, drink and play.

象其他一些青年一样,这个青年人的人生观只是吃喝玩乐。

8.6 It was impossible but he should see it.

他一定看到那个了。

## 9 否定 + until ( till ) :

这个结构通常不照字面译为“直到……为止,……不”,而要译成“直到……才”或“要……才”,把否定译成肯定才合乎汉语习惯。

9.1 It was not until the next day that I learned the truth.

直到第二天我才明白事实的真相。

9.2 Some take no thought of money until they come to an end of it and many do the same with their time.

有一些人要等着钱用完了才考虑到钱的事,而大多数人对于时间也是这样。

9.3 The central fact of biology, evolution, was not established until modern science had been in existence for over two hundred years.

生物学上主要事实的进化论,直到近代科学产生二百多年以后才建立起来。

9.4 True friendship is like health, the value of it is seldom known until it is lost.

真正的友谊就象健康一样,其价值要到失去之后才知道。

9.5 He did not arrive in India till more than a year after he had left England.

他离开英国一年多才到达印度。

在这种结构中,till和until两词意义和用法并没有太大区别。如,英国近代作家Charles Dickens(狄狄斯)爱用until,而Thomas Hardy(哈代)则喜欢用till。平时因till简短所以口语中用的较多。until则多少带点强调,故常用于句首,如:Until he told me, I had no idea of it.(直到他告诉我,我才知道此事。)此外,美国人似乎有喜欢用until的倾向,而英国人用till更为经常。

## 10 否定 + short of:

这个结构中的“short of”是形容词。整个结构所表达的是肯定的内容,意思是“简直可以说是”。

10.1 He is little short of a genius.

他简直可以说是个天才。

10.2 His escape was little short of a miracle.

他的逃跑几乎是奇迹。

10.3 Her conduct was nothing short of madness.

她的行为简直是发了狂。

10.4 Sleep was out of the question; for even if they dared to stay, they knew that to lie down on the ground was little short of certain death.

睡眠是不可能的, 因为即使他们敢于留下来, 他们也知道睡在地上, 简直会死的。

## 11 No less than:

这个句型是由 no+差比句式构成的, 是用减少的否定词以加强肯定的意思。此结构的意思是“不少于……”。这是用曲折的方法来表达“相等”或“近似”的一种说法。

11.1 It is no less than blackmail to ask such a high price.

要这样的高价, 简直的敲诈勒索。

11.2 China's women, no less than men, are participating in all kinds of work in the socialist construction of their country.

中国妇女和男子一样, 正在参加祖国的各项社会主义建设工作。

11.3 The writer is no less a personage than a prince.

那位作家的名望正如一个王子。

11.4 In Japan he is famous already, a personality no less in the public eye than the Crown Prince or the slugging first baseman of the Tokyo Giants.

在日本他早出了名, 在一般人的眼中, 他简直像皇太子或是东京巨人棒球队的第一垒击球手一样的名人。

11.5 She is no less diligent than her elder sister.

她跟她姐姐一样用功。

## 12 Leave + 否定:

这种结构也是一种曲折表达肯定的方法。

12.1 Your work leaves nothing to be desired.

你的工作令人满意。

12.2 His speech leaves nothing to be desired.

他的演讲好极了。

12.3 The telephone service at Singapore leaves nothing to be desired.

新加坡的电话服务完善的很。

12.4 This steamer leaves nothing to be desired so far as comfort and luxury are concerned,



在舒服和豪华方面，这轮船可为尽善尽美了。

### 13 Cannot...too

Cannot...too或cannot over+verb 这种结构往往被误解为具有否定意义。事实上这种结构对事物的否定达到极端程度，接近于否定之否定，因此最后导致肯定。这个结构形式可以改变，但万变不离其宗，即中心意义是：过分否定，导致肯定。抓住这个中心意义，便可举一反三，由此及彼。

**13.1** A book may be compared to your neighbour, if it be good, it cannot last too long; if bad, you cannot get rid of it too early.

一本书好比你的邻居；如果是本好书，保持的时间越长越好；如果是本坏书，处理掉越早越好。

**13.2** The importance of scientific study cannot be over valued.

科学研究的重要，估价的越高越好。

**13.3** Good manners cannot be too much valued.

礼貌是值得尽量尊重的。

**13.4** It is impossible to speak in terms of too high praise of his merits.

他的功绩应大加赞扬。

**13.5** Such window can never be more than half opened.

这种窗户最多只能开足一半。

注意：例句4和例句5是此结构的变体形式。例句4改变的是此结构的前半部分；相反，例句5改变的则是此结构的后半部分。但它的中心意思不变，仍是物极必反，过分否定导致肯定。

以上所述是英语中常见的一种特殊的语言现象。由于这种结构的形式与所表达的思想内容极不一致，因此处理不当会影响对作者意图的理解。