

英语中部分含有BUT句型的理解与翻译

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【摘要】本文归纳了英语中部分含有“BUT”的句型,从其句型的构成和表达方式入手加以分析和探讨,以达到易于理解,从而更好地翻译这些句式。

【关键词】句型;双重否定;翻译

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“BUT”是英语学习中使用频率较高、搭配能力很强的词。在“BUT”的用法及翻译上有时难免出错。由此,正确理解和翻译含“BUT”这个词的句型,是我们学习英语过程中必须重视的一个问题。本文主要将英语中部分含有“BUT”的句型的理解和翻译作一些探讨。

1 cannot...but... (=cannot help/choose but)

此句型中的but为介词,相当于more than,后接不带to的动词不定式作宾语,help/choose可以省去。全句形成双重否定,含义为“have no choice but to; must; cannot do otherwise than; be compelled or obliged to 不得不,禁不住,只好”。例如:

Though you knew he was perfectly worthless you could not but enjoy his company.

尽管你明知这个人一钱不值,你还是情不自禁地喜欢和他在一起。

She couldn't choose but accept the proposal.

她不得不接受那个建议。

I could not help but realize that something was wrong.

我这才真地意识到出了什么事了。

I cannot but believe that he is right.

我不得不承认他是正确的。(我只能承认他是正确的。)

2 nothing but...

but在此句型中用作介词,相当于except, apart from(除了……外别无它法),也可用more than代替,用在nothing, nobody, none一类否定词之后,与之构成双重否定,常译为“只不”,“只有”,“简直”等。例如:

Many of those paperbacks are junk. Nothing but sex and violence. They are very boring.

很多平装书都是没有价值的,只有性爱和暴力的描写,无聊透了。

It was nothing more than a shower.

只不过是一场阵雨。

Nobody but you could be so selfish.

只有你才这么自私。

None but the brave deserve the fair.

英雄才能配美人。

值得注意的是当but前面有do(did)而后面紧跟动词时,一般用不带to的动词不定式。例如:

We could do nothing but just sit there and hope.

除了坐等之外,我们毫无办法。

3 never...but + clause

but在这里是连词,意味“而不,除非”,引导的从句相当于that/who/ which...not,也可用without代替,含否定意义。其主句中的否定词never用来加强语气,有时因强调不一,可用其它否定词impossible, hardly等代换。这类双重否定表示:“要是做…的话,则一定…”。常译为“每…必…”,“一…就…”。例如:

I never pass my old house but I think of the happy years I spent there.

(I never pass my old house without thinking of the happy years I spent here.)

我每过故居,必然会想起在那里度过的幸福岁月。

Hardly a week passes but she receives several invitations.

(=Hardly a week passes in which she does not receive several invitations.)

几乎每周她都会收到几个邀请的。

The children never played but that a quarrel followed.

小孩们每玩必起争吵。

It was impossible but she should see it.

她一定明白此事。

4 no...but...

这里的 *but* 是关系代词引导一个含有否定意义的定语从句, 相当于 *that...not (or who...not, which...not)*, 与前面的否定词构成双重否定。no 也可用 *not a* 或 *scarcely a* 代替。常译为汉语的双重否定“无论什么样的...都能..., 没有...不..., 不管...都会...”。例如:

No country is so wild and difficult but men will make it a theatre of war.

一个地方, 无论多么荒凉, 多么难以进入, 人们都能把它变成战场。

There was no choice next morning but to turn in my tale of the Belleville supper.

第二天上午, 我别无选择, 只好把我为自己而写的贝尔维尔晚餐的故事交了上去。

There is no father but wishes to please his children. (=Who does not wish...)

没有一位父亲不希望让孩子们欢愉。

There is not a single word but what I know.

没有我不认识的字。

There was scarcely a family but had at least one relative among the wounded.

几乎没有哪个家庭不是至少有一个亲属受伤。

5 not so/such...but

这个句式与上一句式相似, *but (=that...not)* 引导的含否定意义的定语从句与主句构成双重否定。含义为“不是如此...以致于不...”, “没有...如此...以致于不”, 通常可译为“无论...(只要)...”, “所有(一切)...(只要)...”。例如:

He is not such a fool but he can tell a friend from a foe.

他不是蠢至不能分友敌之人。

He was not so stupid but he could drive a hard bargain.

他还不至于笨得连讨价还价都不会。

Nothing is so beautiful but it betrays some defect on close inspection.

无论多么完美的东西, 只要仔细观察都会显现某些缺陷。(一切美的东西, 只要仔细观察都会显现某些缺陷。)

6 not/疑问词...but/but that/but what

but, but that, but what 用在 *say, think, conclude, believe, know, see, be sure, persuade, deny, doubt, question, fear* 等动词的否定或疑问词之后, 相当于“*that...not*”的意义, 并与之构成双重否定, 语义为

“不能说(不能认为, 不相信等)不是...; 毫无疑问”等, 通常译为汉语的肯定句。例如:

But that I saw it, I could not have believed it.

若不是我亲眼所见, 我决不会相信。

I could hardly believe but (but that/what) it was all real.

我几乎不相信那并非都是真的。(我几乎相信那都是真的。)

Take the money——there is no saying but (but that/what) you will need it.

拿着这些钱吧, 说不定你会需要的。(不能说不需要了)

He was not sure but that there were other people involved.

他不信没有其他人卷进去。

There is not a question but what the data is reliable.

毫无疑问, 这数据是可靠的。

His (=Newton's) old grandmother, I suppose, was never weary of talking about him. 'He'll make a capital workman one of these days', she would probably say. 'No fear but what Issac will do well in the world and be a rich man before he dies.'

(我想, 他的老祖母一定是在不厌其烦地讲她孙子的各种事情, 她也许会说: “我孙子过些日子将会是个优秀的工匠。艾撒克很有出息, 日后准会成为富翁。”)

Who in the world does not know but that he has yielded to temptation.

(Everyone knows that...)

还有谁会不知道他没有经受住诱惑?

7 not that...but that

此句型相当于“*not because...but because*”不是(因为)...而是(因为)...。其中 *not that* 的变形有 *not for because, not but that, not but what*。Not that 可以补充为“*I do not say that, ...but I say that*”等。例如:

Not that she forgot to do her homework, but that she was busy nursing a sick classmate.

不是她忘记了做作业, 而是她忙着照顾一个生病的同学。

Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more.

并不是我爱凯撒不深, 而是因为我爱罗马更深。

time.
不是因为我不愿意,而是因为我没有时间。
A mountain is not famous because it is high, but because it has some spirit dwelling in it.
山不在高,有仙则灵。

8 not but what/that

此句型中的 that (or what) 往往省略。not but that 可看作“it is not but that”或者“not to say but that”的省略形式。其含义为“nevertheless; although 虽然…但是;虽然”。例如:

I can't do it; not but what a younger man might be

able to do it.
我不能做;但是一个比我年轻的人也许能做
He is extremely strong.—not but that (=though) he will catch a cold at times.
他非常强壮——虽然他间或也感冒。
Not but what her father always wanted her when there was letter writing.

不过她父亲有信要写时总是要她写。(请她写)

以上仅涉及了英语中部分含有 BUT 的句型,翻译这类句子时必需仔细推敲,以免误解或译错。笔者不揣肤浅,还望翻译界专家、同行及朋友们赐教。

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An Analysis on Some English Sentence Patterns of “BUT” and Their Translation

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Abstract: This paper deals with some English sentence patterns which are composed of “BUT”. These patterns are analyzed and discussed from the composing and expressing patterns so as to be easily understood and exactly translated.

Key words: Sentence pattern; Double-Negative; Translation

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