

舊約中希伯來成語的翻譯初探 ——與身體有關的成語

Exploring the Translation of Idioms
in Hebrew Scripture with Focus on Body Parts

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摘要

成語 (Idioms) 和慣用語 (Idiomatic expressions) 是語言中相當有趣的現象，它的意思和字面意義通常不同，總是別有所指。例如中文「三長兩短」意思是遭遇不測，又如英文 It's raining cats and dogs. 是傾盆大雨的意思。前者如果理解為「three longs two shorts」，後者譯成「下雨了，正在下貓下狗」，就會不知所云。

聖經翻譯著重「忠於原文」，傾向於按「前後一致」的原則來翻譯原文相同的詞句。但成語的翻譯必須考量該語言使用者的習慣用法及語意，有時上下文、該詞句所屬的體裁，或使用該成語的年代，都會對其意義有決定性的影響。

本文探討舊約中與身體各部位有關的希伯來文成語如何翻譯，包括手、頭、眼、耳、鼻、口、臉、頸、心、腰、腿、腳等，歸納出中文聖經翻譯的三種模式：(1) 按字面翻譯，(2) 把意思直接翻譯出來，(3) 採用受眾語的成語來翻譯。比較理想的作法，是先了解各個成語在當時社會文化背景下的原意，配合受眾語的特殊用法作適切的調整和表達。作者希望藉此拋磚引玉，也期待更多先進斧正，以提升中文聖經翻譯的水準。

關鍵字：聖經翻譯，希伯來成語，慣用語，身體部位

Abstract

Idioms or idiomatic expressions are interesting phenomena in languages. They usually have exocentric meanings, which are quite different from the apparent meanings. For example, in Chinese, “three longs two shorts” (三長兩短) means people come across unexpected disaster or even death. And “It’s raining cats and dogs” means raining heavily in English. If translated literally, they might deviate from the original meaning and misguide audience’s understanding.

Traditional work of Bible translation emphasizes “being faithful to the original text”, which usually uses the same term on translation to preserve consistency. But to translate idioms, one needs to consider the conventional usage of the speakers of the source language. Furthermore, the context, the literal style they belong, and the timing of these idioms sometimes also play decisive roles in determining their meanings.

In this essay, I explore how the idioms in Hebrew Scripture are translated into Chinese, with focus on the body parts, including hand, head, eye, ear, nose, mouth, face, neck, heart, loin, leg, and foot. After surveyed the translations from different Chinese Bibles, I found three models of translating Hebrew idioms: (1) literal translation, (2) translating the meaning, not the word, of the idioms, (3) using the corresponding Chinese idioms. Since idioms involving body parts are usually influenced by the sociocultural factors, the translator had better identify specific term or idiom in the target language with similar implications. Future studies are needed to incorporate more ancient idioms into translation of Scriptures for a comprehensive understanding of the Bible.

Keywords: Bible translation, Hebrew idiom, idiomatic expression, body parts