

A Brief Discussion on the English Translation of "Jiedi qi"

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Abstract. "Jiedi qi" belongs to the northern dialect, has long been used among the folk people. In recent years, with the popularity of social networking in the country, it is now widely used in all fields of society. But there is no corresponding entry of "Jiedi qi" in the traditional authoritative dictionaries, the emerging online translation websites and the online communities, some translations are far-fetched, some are superficial. As the word "Jiedi qi" has similarities with "down-to-earth" in the meaning of "people first" and "people-oriented", it is often used in political reporting. What is more, it is close in meaning with "keep/have feet on the ground, common touch, be bound up with the masses (people)" from the sense of "close to life", those English equivalents are available for daily communication and translation according to the circumstances.

网络热词“接地气”英译浅谈

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关键词: 热词; 接地气; 语境

中文摘要.“接地气”系北方方言, 一直为民间长期地使用。最近几年, 随着社交网络而在全中国走红, 现被广泛地应用于生产生活的方方面面。但无论是传统的各权威词典字典, 还是新兴的在线翻译、网络社群, 或未见对应词条, 或牵强附会, 流于表面, 难免偏颇。由于“接地气”一词的在“亲民”、“以民为本”等含义上与“down-to-earth”神似而常常用于政治报道中; 在“贴近生活”、“不‘端着’”、“不‘飘着’”等含义上又与“keep/have feet on the ground, common touch, be bound up with the masses (people)”等词互译较为贴近, 也可供日常交流和翻译时酌情选用。

“接地气”是老北京话, 即接地中之气。如从农村的火炕到城市的楼房一样, “接地气”也从辞海的“地中之气”演变出了新的含义, “旧词”新用。“接地气”被今日的媒体更多的解读为: 用大众的生活习惯、用语等, 踏踏实实, 深入人心, 遵循自然规律。多用来形容一些政府官员及名人人士, 比较亲善大众[1]。

在中国文化走出去的大背景下, 怎样将“接地气”这一新词热词译成英文, 并贴切地表达其实际语用内涵, 值得译者关注。然而, 笔者翻阅了诸多汉英词典未见对“接地气”一词英语翻译的相关条目。

一些代表性的在线词典和媒体对“接地气”作出如下翻译: grounding gas[2], grounding qi[3], affable[4], amiable[5]和 folksy[6]等。笔者在免费在线英英辞典(the free dictionary)中, 并未查到对 grounding gas 和 grounding qi 的解释, 也无相关词条。二者均是对“接地气”一词的字面译文, 并不在新词热词的语义范畴内。Affable 为形容词, 与 pleasant 同义。从英文的释义来看, amiable 与 affable 语义相近, 以下媒体材料中同时用到了这两个词:

How US leaders, public view the Chinese president

A report from New York Times once said that Chinese President Xi Jinping has become a part of Chinese people's life, as many netizens write songs for him, create cartoons for him and have nicknamed him "Xi Dada" – all of which reflect the people's love for and trust within the president.

This is also how the American general public views the Chinese president - as amiable and affable. [7]

在以上媒体语料中，同时用到了 affable 和 amiable 来形容中国的领导人，其强调的是“亲切的，和蔼可亲的”，显而易见与上下文的政治语境不搭配。

Folksy 在非正式的用法中与 affable, friendly 相近，但需注意此词有贬义，易于引起歧义，在正式场合使用中需注意语境。

那么，“接地气”该怎样翻译才算地道呢？在众多英语词典和英美期刊中，笔者找到了答案：

Down-to-earth 一词的基本意思是：“practical and direct in a sensible honest way” [8]、“practical and realistic [9]和“现实的，务实的，实际的；朴实的，不高傲的” [10]。如：“down-to-earth spirit”可译为“务实的精神”。

根据以上释义，其词义和语用相比汉语中的“接地气”并无二致，将汉语语境中的“接地气”译为“down-to-earth”在中外英语报刊及媒体中的实际用例俯拾即是，以下实例佐证之：

①On November 22, CCTV1 premiered a variety show called The Great Challenge. It's down-to-earth style has drawn a large segment of the youth audience.

In the past, it could be described as China's national news broadcast. But now, it has added entertainment to its list of specialities.

The success wasn't a predictable one. After all, none of the stars in The Great Challenge are superstars or top celebrities. But the production team says it is their strategy to choose cast members based on qualities other than fame. [11]

②China Needs More Innovative, Down-to-earth Researchers Like Nobel Laureate Tu Youyou: Official

A Chinese expert says that the country needs more innovative and down-to-earth researchers like Nobel laureate Tu Youyou.

President of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Cao Xuetao, said China has made a lot of breakthroughs in medical science in recent years. [12]

③Jennifer Lopez: I will always be down-to-earth

Singer-actress Jennifer Lopez says she is "very normal" and will always be "down-to-earth" despite her superstar status. The 46-year-old 'On The Floor' hitmaker, who has seven-year-old twins Emme and Max with ex-husband Marc Anthony, said her superstar status hasn't affected her modest nature, reported Female First.[13]

不难看出，以上诸例中“down-to-earth”所使用的语境，与汉语语境中的“接地气”在语用内涵上相同，是“接地气”一词较为理想的对应表达，体现了“接地气”一词的本质含义，实事求是，反映最底层普通民众的愿望、诉求、利益。本文中，笔者讨论的正是“接地气”一词的这一释义。

随着语境的变化，若一味地使用“down-to-earth”来翻译，未免偏颇。

根据以形容的主体的不同，选择如“keep/have feet on the ground, common touch, be bound up with the masses (people)”等词句来因地制宜的解读才能做到灵活又不失准确。

其中，“keep/have feet on the ground”这一搭配的主语通常为人，意为“脚踏实地”，“common touch”也常用来修饰人，表示“平易近人，亲近和睦”。各举一例，简单说明。

“He's done extremely well and I am so pleased with his progress,” Jones said. As long as he keeps his feet on the ground and keeps working hard he will definitely end up a Rolls-Royce.[14]

People queuing up to take a bite of what the Chinese President had for lunch in Qingfeng

Steamed Bun restaurant .

“I came to experience his common touch. The visit has shown that he’s being thrifty.”
Beijing citizen said.[15]

“be bound up with the masses (people)”指“联系大众”，但并不常用，在书面语的翻译中可用。

随着社交网络把这世界变得越来越小、越来越近，也把文化现象变得更多元，更有活力，正如这旧词“接地气”也被赋予新的含义与内涵。作为超级读者的译者，需将字里行间的含义准确又不失生动的传达，正如这“接地气”的老词新译一般，也许只有接地气的翻译，才能做到罢。

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