

On the Translation Practice of English Text for Science and Technology

--- Taking the Translation of “Pressure relief valves for transportable refillable cylinders for LPG” as an Example Based on BS EN 13953:2003

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Abstract

The progress and development of science and technology have increased international cooperation, which makes science and technology translation increasingly prominent. This paper takes the translation of “Pressure relief valves for transportable refillable cylinders for LPG” as an example to explore the translation methods and strategies, so as to provide reference for scientific and technological translation practice.

Keywords: English text for science and technology; Translation practice; Analysis; Strategies

1. Introduction

English for science and technology belongs to a branch of English for special purposes, it has unique features compared with other English styles. In the opinion of the book of English Chinese Translation Course (2008,177), the stylistic of English for science and technology is precise, systematic and strict in logic. And the writing is concise, the key points are prominent, the sentence pattern is strict, and there are few changes. Therefore, all translation should be in accordance with its current context strictly while we are in the process of translation. This paper takes the translation of “Pressure relief valves for transportable refillable cylinders for LPG” as an example to explore the strategies for scientific and technological translation.

2. Analyzing the Sentence Structure and Dividing the Complex into the Simple While Translating Long Sentences

The book of Essentials and Techniques of Practical Scientific and Technological Translation (2012, 178) points out: the difficulty of English complex long sentences is that the sentence is long, the sentence core is not obvious, and it is not easy to distinguish. For its complex structure, it is not easy to catch the core meaning of the text, which sometimes blocks people’s thinking. If we simplify the complex sentence like the following example, we can understand the meaning easily.

“The British Standards which implement international or European publications referred to in this document may be found in the BSI Catalogue under the section entitled “International Standards Correspondence Index”, or by using the “Search” facility of the BSI Electronic Catalogue or of British Standards Online.”

This is a compound sentence with an attributive clause. Firstly we should find the subject and predicate of the sentence, then the adverbial of place, “The British Standards may be found in the BSI Catalogue” · then the core meaning of the sentence is clear. The attributive clause modifies the subject, and the prepositional phrase tells where the catalogue BSI can be found. The second “or” in the prepositional phrase link “of the BSI

Electronic Catalogue” and “of British Standards Online” is juxtaposed. The translation version goes like the following:

执行本文引用的国际或欧洲出版物的英国标准可在BSI目录中名称为“国际标准对应索引”一节中找到，或使用BSI电子目录或英国标准在线的“搜索”功能找到。(Zhixing Benwen Yinyong de Guoji huo Ouzhou Chubanzhu de Yingguo Biaozhun Kezai BSI Mulu zhong Mingcheng wei “Guoji Biaozhun Duiying Suoying” Yijie zhong Zhaodao, huo Shiyong BSI Dianzi Mulu huo Yingguo Zaixian de “Sousuo” Gongneng Zhaodao.

Compound sentence is a complex and changeable structure in English grammar. The book of Practical Scientific English Translation (2008, 233) have mentioned: there are various patterns like compound sentences with subject clause, compound sentences with object clause, compound sentences with attributive clause, compound sentences with adverbial clauses. Anyhow, no matter how the sentence pattern changes, we can be logical and clear in translation if we master the sentence structure.

3. Accurately Conveying the Connotation of Text Vocabulary

Translation should be faithful to the text, and do not arbitrarily expand or narrow the extension and connotation of the text concept for the sake of beautiful wording and rhyme. We should do the translation based on the context of the text. For example:

“Annexes A, C and D are informative, Annex B is normative”

In the text, “informative” and “normative” should be translated according to the context, not based on rhyme, then the translation version as following:“附件 A,C 和 D是告知性的(资料性的), 附件 B 是规范性的。”(Fujian A, C, he D shi Gaozhixing de (Ziliaoxing de), Fujian B shi Guifanxing de)

Another example: Connector, we have English meaning插头,插孔,插座(Chatou,Chakong, Chazuo), it also have the meaning of 连接器,接头(Lianjieqi, Lianjietou),sometimes it have both of the meaning, if we are not sure the exact meaning in the text, we would rather expand its meaning than narrow it. Therefore, we translate it 连接器 (Lianjieqi). If the context has obvious directivity, it will be translated into the exact meaning.

4. Using Formal Technical Language to Express in Line with the Habits of the Target Country

For example:

“The following minimum information shall be marked on the body of all pressure relief valves, except where the information is already included on the integral cylinder valve:” we translate the sentence as following:

所有压力泄放阀的阀体上都应标记至少如下信息，除非组合瓶阀上已经包含了这些信息：(Suoyou Yali Xiefangfa de Fatishang Douying Biaoji Zhishao Ruxia Xinxi, Chufei Zuheping shang Yijing Baohan le Zhexie Xinxi:)

The above example is a non-restrictive attributive clause. Both the subject clause and subordinate clause are the passive voice, and each of them has the pattern of subject-predicate-object. We adjust the language order to the active voice in order to conform to the habit of Chinese expression, which can make the meaning of translated sentence brief, at the same time it can highlight the key points, please to the target readers, but we must be faithful to the original text.

5. Be Consistent Throughout the Text in Translation of Proprietary Technology Names and Terms

In the text of “Pressure relief valves for transportable refillable cylinders for LPG” based on the standard of BS EN 13953:2003, all the abbreviation, technical terms and proprietary names are explained in one chapter.

In chapter “Terms, definitions and abbreviations”, about “Terms and definitions” it is stated like that: “For the purposes of this European Standard, the following terms and definitions apply” (对于此欧洲标准而言, 采用下列术语和定义 Duiyu ci Ouzhou Biaozhun Eryan, Caiyong Xialie Shuyu he Dingyi) :

“Nominal discharge capacity” translated into 公称排放量(Gongcheng Paifangliang)

“Minimum discharge capacity at the flow rating pressure expressed in cubic metres per minute of free air at STP rounded down to one decimal place.” Chinese version as following:

是指STP情况下每分钟自由空气立方米数表达的流率压力下的最小排放量, 圆整(四舍五入)到1位小数。(Shizhi STP Qingkuang xia Meifenzhong Ziyou Kongqi Lifangmishu Biaoda de Liulv Yali xia de Zuixiao Paifangliang, Yuanzheng (Sishe Wuru) dao Yiwei Xiaoshu.)

Each technical term in the text has a precise definition and description in order to avoid ambiguity. For example “nominal set pressure (公称设定压力 Gongcheng Sheding Yali)”, “flow rating pressure” (流率压力 Liulv Yali) ”ect, I will not repeat them here.

As for the abbreviations, the text also has the explanation:

①STP: Standard Temperature and Pressure (STP 标准温度和压力 STP Biaozhun Wendu Yali)

②BSI: British Standard Institution (英国标准协会 Yingguo Biaozhun Xiehui)

③LPG: Liquefied Petroleum Gas(石油液化气 Shiyou Yehuaqi)

There are a lot of technical terms, definitions and abbreviations in the text. As professional translators, we should keep on alert on those terms and definitions, in the process of translation, we must make them be consistent throughout the text. If there are some mistakes, it is easy for us to correct them through the whole text.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, English for science and technology usually has certain characteristics: ①widely used present tense and passive voice ②many long compound complex sentence and used post modifier frequently ③ present tense and a large number of non-finite verbs are widely used.

Translation of English for science and technology should be formal in style. The translation requires not only solid language foundation, but also translation skills and highly professional. The language being translated should be accurate, concise and smooth. for the established professional terms, we should follow its rules.

References

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Biography

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