On Translation of Terminology in Specialized or Professional Texts in English

Zheng WANG\textsuperscript{a}, Yangqiong LIN\textsuperscript{b}

Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College
\textsuperscript{a}email:vivian@xujc.com, \textsuperscript{b}email:amylin@xujc.com

Keywords: translation; terminology; Specialized; Professional; texts

Abstract: Specialized or professional texts in English refers to English used in one particular occupation or profession, such as technical English or English for science and technology, medical English or English for medical professionals, legal English or language of the law, travel English or English for tourism, aviation English. One of the characteristics of the specialized text is that there are a large number of the technical terms or terminology in the texts that are difficult to understand and translate. In other words, terminology translation is where most practical problems lie in technical and scientific translation. This paper mainly explores the importance of terminology translation, one of the most commonly encountered difficulties during technical translation and meanwhile offers useful suggestions of how to use effective approaches to refine terminology translation.

Characteristics of Specialized or Professional texts in English

Specialized or professional text, as with any language used for specific purposes, will usually refer to English used in one particular occupation or profession, such as technical English or English for science and technology, medical English or English for medical professionals, legal English or language of the law, travel English or English for tourism, aviation English, to name just a few. Here are some examples of specialized or professional texts in English cited for illustration.

New HSR and Maglev would have all-new, state-of-the-art train control systems. The Accelerail options were estimate with train control systems providing speed and authority enforcement.

新型高速列车 或 磁浮列车 须配置全新的、造型精美的列车操纵系统，可供选用的列车操纵系统必须能提供高速和 强大的加速力。 (Yang Shoukang, 2003)

If an oscillatory motion was superimposed on steady shearing, the maximum torque on the top plate during the combined motion was scarcely more than the torque in steady shearing alone; the minimum was considerably less.

如果往稳恒剪切上叠加 振荡运动 , 则在联合运动过程中作用于顶板上的最大转矩很少大于仅 稳恒剪切时的转矩 , 而最小转矩则比后者小得多。 (Yan Qingjia&Yan Wenpei, 1992:7)

This is promulgated for the purpose of standardizing negotiable instruments, protecting the legal rights of the parties concerned in negotiable instrument activities, maintaining the socialist market economy.

Granisetron is potent and highly selective 5-hydroxy tryptamine (5-HT3) receptor antagonist with anti-emetic activity。(For Intravenous Infusion KYTRIL(r),Smith Kline Beecham Pharmaceuticals,1994)

ST: 为了规范 票据行为 , 保障 票据行为活动 中当事人的合法权益，维护社会经济秩序，促进社会主义市场经济的发展，制定本法。（《中华人民共和国票据法》2003: 1）

Granisetron is potent and highly selective 5-hydroxy tryptamine (5-HT3) receptor antagonist with anti-emetic activity。(For Intravenous Infusion KYTRIL(r),Smith Kline Beecham Pharmaceuticals,1994)

From the examples listed above, we can see that one of the characteristics of the specialized text is that there are a large number of the technical terms or terminology in the texts that are not well known to the general public and translator as well. Therefore, that’s why terminology is where most practical problems lie in translation.
The Importance of Terminology Translation in Specialized Texts

Terminology, in its general sense, simply refers to the usage and study of terms — words and compound words generally used in specific contexts. Terminology is defined by context, the study of terms primarily concerned with organizing them by the context in which they are used. These contexts may include: technical terminology, military terminology, political terminology, scientific terminology, medical terminology [5].

It appears that comprehension difficulties in the translation of specialized text arise from the Nominal Entities, or we put it in a more common word, terminology, which are the type of words and word groups most generally used to denote technical referents (Rey, 1979). When it comes to terminology translation, as the source language and target language vary greatly in terms of wording, especially specialized texts and technical terminologies etc, some difficulties in terms of comprehension of specialized texts or texts with many technical terminologies are most likely to happen during this process. Therefore, the most commonly encountered difficulties in translation lie in terminology translation. The importance and difficulty of terminology translation of specialized texts can never be overstated.

The questions are: How can we cope with difficulties in translation of technical terminologies?

Effective Approaches to Terminology Translation

The Aid of Online Database. If we only look up all kinds of dictionaries for translation of the above-mentioned technical terms, it will be a great waste of time and energy because the terms mentioned above can only be paraphrased according to its context and some can not be found in dictionaries. Here we can resort to a very professional and up-to-date data base on the internet. By using search engine and online database, we can find the technical terms in different contexts with different meanings. Searching engine is much more efficient than dictionaries in terms of finding out meanings of terms. The information contained on the internet is far more than what printing materials can carry. Actually, the information contained on the internet is most infinite and most up-to-date, which made retrieval of contextual meaning of each terminology become possible through the help of obtained data base information.

The Aid of Translation Memory Software. Translation memory technology is particularly useful to specialized text that contains specialized terminologies related to a particular industry. Terminology translation receives special attention among translation problems because of its relevance to those translation genres in highest accurate demand (legal, medical, and technical), and because translation memory software neatly facilitates accurate translation of terminology. A translation memory (TM) is a database that stores "segments", which can be sentences, paragraphs or sentence-like units (headings, titles or elements in a list) that have previously been translated, in order to aid human translators. The translation memory stores the technical term in the source text and its corresponding translation in language pairs called “translation units”. The translation memory is, in principle, a simple database of fields containing the source language segment, the translation of the segment, and other basic information.

The Preparation of Genre Knowledge. Indeed, there is a growing body of research that interrogates the relationship between knowledge structures and translation practice. The genre approach stresses the importance of genre knowledge in terminology translation and therefore genre is central to translation pedagogy (Swales 1990). Genre knowledge enables translation to frame messages according to the expectations of target readers (Hyland 2003). In order to build a genre knowledge base, textual samples are evaluated and reconstructed by translators (Swales 1990), while connections between form and context are explored. The aim is that explicit knowledge of a genre’s linguistic and rhetorical conventions will facilitate the process of translating effectively (Tardy 2009, 102). More importantly, according to the research, genre knowledge will greatly improve the accuracy of translation of terminology.
Conclusion
Terminology translation is where most practical problems lie in technical and scientific translation. Therefore, the successful translation of specialized text lies in terminology translation. In order to refine terminology translation in specialized or technical text, translators may resort to effective approaches introduced in this paper. In addition, for the limited pages in the thesis, the author cannot present strategies and approaches to all types of terminology translation in details. To make a good translation of specialized texts, a translator has to make more translation practice to probe into more effective strategies and approaches to terminology translation.

References