A Research on the Combination of Translation Skills and Professional Computer Knowledge

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Abstract. In the field of professional knowledge translation, people have been discussing about one topic: Which is more important, English translation skill or professional knowledge? In fact how to combine the two appropriately is the most important point that we should study. By studying some typical English translation cases the writer analyzes the close relation between the two aspects and explores some strategies of translating professional documents.

Introduction

Do you know the reason why The Dream of Red Mansion by Cao Xueqin is as famous as Shakespeare’s works? It is not only because of his outstanding attainments in literature but also because of his encyclopedic knowledge on Chinese culture at that time. He was able to do and good at doing whatever he imagined, from costume to diet, from buildings to natural scenery, from etiquette in Qing dynasty to ancient poems, etc. Even from the coming back home of the imperial concubine Yuanchun to the adornments of the rich women and maids in Grand View Garden, Cao Xueqin described them vividly. It is obvious that Cao Xueqin combined his life experience and knowledge with his literature attainments so appropriately that the characters seem to be standing in front of you.

Like the literature works, the combination of language skills and professional computer knowledge is the same. Since there are great differences between the two, for the translator it is like leaping over a wide gap to translate professional computer documents from one language to another. In my opinion if we translate professional documents into a target language accurately, first of all we must have both the English language basic knowledge and the translation skills. Meanwhile we need to know deeply about the relevant majors and be able to link them together.

The Relation between English Translation Skills and Professional Background Knowledge

I think English translation is a kind of communication, an art and a re-creation. The translators are constructing a bridge between two languages connecting people of the two languages. A good translation of professional documents is like bridge piers because it requires both professional background knowledge and updated information. A perfect translation is like a piece of glass, through which you can see clearly the original meaning ignoring the existence of the glass. Professional document translation is an activity in which one language is expressed into another accurately and perfectly. It is also a scientific research in which we use the target language to present the original text. Therefore being a good translator he ought to be a linguist first, and then a scientist. A translator must be good at professional background knowledge and meanwhile know well about the updated information. It is very hard to do so. Nowadays professional knowledge on computer, art and so on is updating very fast, so a translator should do long-term research about the original text in order to get deep understanding of it. At the same time he must study constantly the target language so as to make the translation accord with the need of target language and professional language.
Chinese-English Translation Skills Applied in Professional Computer Documents

I think the translation of professional document including understanding the original text, translating into the target language and forming the final text can be divided into three steps. The following translation of two abstracts from articles about computers are the examples.

◆ Understanding of the original text

In the first step of professional document translation, the translator is required to understand the content of the original text, know the professional knowledge and relevant information updating status. The translator tries to grasp the original text writer’s creation intention and thought. From a technical term to a concept or point of view, the translator tries to study and deliberate carefully the integrality of the original document. Here let’s take two Chinese – English translated abstracts as examples:

Abstract 1 With the development of the testing technology used in malicious codes, the concealing technology has constantly been applied by the code users. Focusing on remote thread applied in two aspects Dll and rootkit, the writer does a deep analysis on malicious codes concealing technology and makes a proposal on how to test the concealing process. It is of great importance to enhance the security of computer system, protect important information and improve the anti-virus technology to prevent malicious codes.

While translating the above abstract, at first we need to understand two concepts correctly: malicious codes testing technology and concealing technology. The former one is the technology used for testing and preventing the unknown malicious codes and realizing the protosystem. The latter one refers to a method of concealing the confidential information in a large quantity of information without the opponents’ notice. Secondly we need to know the relation between the two kinds of technology, which is that the former one is the killer to the latter one. Finally we should know the importance of studying them: to keep the users’ information secure.

Abstract 2 At present, Trojan horse virus makers tend to use rootkit technology to conceal their process, damaging the security of information and internet. Aiming at the two patterns—the users and interior core—this article analyzes deeply the process concealing technology named Windows RootKit and proposes the comprehensive testing system based on process table. It has been proved by testing that only by applying a variety of processing table testing technology from the users and interior core can the testing of concealing process be performed safely and effectively.

In translating the above abstract, first of all, we should know what a Trojan horse virus maker is. He is a person who controls computers by a specific program—Trojan horse program. Then we should know what rootkit technology is and what its function is. That is how rootkit steals others’ private information, records others’ input information and does some operations. At last we should analyze its harm to the computer users and the security testing technology to prevent it. It is when we know well about the background knowledge that the abstract can be translated precisely, accurately and consistently.

◆ Re-expressing the text in another language

Re–expressing is the main period of translation. It requires an artist’s inspiration, a doctor’s conscience and a scientist’s preciseness as well as craftsmen’s technique and sweat. There is an old saying ‘A slight discrepancy may lead to a serious error’. So we must try to seek the words which are the most appropriate, accurate and faithful to the original. In our mind there is not only colorful language but also rich professional knowledge. Thus we can create the translated works with an effect of equal-value. In the course of translating the two abstracts we applied the following skills flexibly.

Adverbial Preposed

In order to highlight the main clause and make it simple, the translator preposes the adverbial. Take the first sentence in Abstract 1 for example: With the development of the testing technology used in malicious codes, the concealing technology has constantly been applied by the code users. The first part is adverbial while the second part is the main clause. This translation not only accords with the language requirement but also makes the meaning of the main clause clear and simple. So
is the second sentence: Focusing on remote thread applied in two aspects Dlland rootkit, the writer does a deep analysis on malicious codes concealing technology and makes a proposal on how to test the concealing process. The part before the comma is the preposed adverbial while the one after comma is the main clause. It is much better to use this skill here. Aiming at the two patterns—the users and interior core, this article analyzes deeply the process concealing technology named Windows RootKit and proposes the comprehensive testing system based on process table. The above sentence is from Abstract 2, in which the former part is the adverbial preposed for drawing the readers’ attention to the main clause.

Postsubject and with it as a Form Subject

In English when a subject is long and the other part of speech is short, the sentence is written using a postsubject and ‘it’ as a form subject. Look at the sentence in Abstract 1: It is of great importance to enhance the security of computer system, protect important information and improve the anti-virus technology to malicious codes. From ‘to enhance’ to ‘malicious codes’ is the subject which is long relatively, but ‘is of great importance’ is the predicative which is short. If the subject is put at first, the sentence will seem to be imbalanced and peculiar. So by using postsubject and ‘it’ as a form subject can we avoid this kind of shortcoming. The third sentence in Abstract 2 is the same: It has been proved by testing that only by applying a variety of processing table testing technology from the users and interior core can the testing of concealing process be performed safely and effectively. If we write the subject first and then the predicative, the sentence structure will also be out of balance. Only by using the skill of postsubject can we make the sentence look balanced and perfect.

Use English Sentence Structures Flexibly

While translating Chinese into English, dividing long sentence into simple ones appropriately is one of the skills. In Chinese there is always a sentence with several commas. Sometimes a long sentence like this will form a paragraph. However in English a sentence is very simple with one subject and one verb. If there is a long sentence, it will include a main clause and one or two subordinate clauses. Based on this language habit, my suggestion is that it is better to divide the Chinese sentence into several simple ones while doing Chinese-English translation. The purpose is to make the sentences simple and easy to understand.

Another skill is to use different sentence patterns to emphasize some words or concepts, such as emphatic sentence, inverted sentence and so on. They are more highlighted and attractive so as to impress the readers. They will see clearly which part is more important than the other. For example, in the following sentence in Abstract 2: It has been proved by testing that only by applying a variety of processing table testing technology from the users and interior core can the testing of concealing process be performed safely and effectively. The underlined part is an inverted sentence, by which we can emphasize the ‘processing table testing technology’ and draw the readers’ attention to this point. The readers will understand the meaning of the sentence one layer after another.

◆ Check the translated text again and improve it

In this period we will check the text trying to choose the most suitable way to express accurately the information of the original text and the opinions of the writer. It is a kind of explanation in the target language. Checking is a period in which we revise the draft and improve the structure and word choice. The translation is like a piece of glass, through which the reader can see clearly the original meaning but ignoring the existence of the glass. It is also important for us to share the works with others’. By asking them to read the text, we listen to their good comments and suggestions, make some corrections and improve the works to meet the requirements of the target language.

Abilities Required in Translating Professional Documents

In translating professional documents, to link up the above three steps accurately, we are required to have four abilities. They are language ability, professional ability, understanding ability and expressing ability.
◆ **Language ability:**

It refers to our solid language basis in Chinese and English. It is like an ability to fill up the wide gap between Chinese and English. Language ability is the key element in understanding period, which comes from long-term translation practice.

◆ **Professional ability:**

Being a translator, mastering professional knowledge is no less than language basis. Professional knowledge is very important for us to understand the professional information and re-express it. Translation is a method of bilingual communication whose content is like the encyclopedia. The more background and professional knowledge we know, the more thoroughly we understand the original text and the more accurate effect we will achieve.

◆ **Understanding ability**

It is an ability to extract professional information and grasp new knowledge from the documents. It is also an ability to know the point of view that the writer wants to express. This kind of ability comes from our understanding of language and cognizing of professional knowledge. In a way understanding ability is a comprehensive ability to coordinate the two aspects well and combine different parameters both inside and outside the language system.

◆ **Re-expressing ability**

First of all it means a translator is able to master the target language. In order to re-express accurately and thoroughly the professional document, language is not enough. We must have strong ability to think logically and have the logical analyzing method which is effective, scientific and objective.

**Summary**

In the past while translating the professional document, we mainly pay attention to applying some language skills, such as word meaning, sentence structure, figure of speech, etc. meanwhile we lack detailed explanation about the translation skills for professional document. It is really insufficient. Therefore I think it is a long-term researching topic for translators to combine the language skills with professional knowledge perfectly. If translating one language into another is like constructing a bridge, completing the professional translation must be building solid pier for the bridge. These two elements are complementary and brace each other. It is a product of combining language skills with professional knowledge.

**References**

