Difficulties of Post-editing on the Translation of Power Company Qualifications

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Abstract: With the burgeoning development of economic globalization, China has increased its ties with the world after proposing the going-global strategy, which has encouraged numerous companies to seek opportunities in the international arena. Electric companies are among them. Based on a project in translating the qualification of an electric company, founded in Baoding, Hebei province, this paper investigates the common errors faced by translators during post-editing. The limitation of Machine Translation requires translators' to possess critical thinking in distinguishing errors of terminologies and collocations. The paper concludes that despite the helpful role Machine Translation plays in translating technical texts, translators still have to value day-to-day accumulation.

1. Introduction

Under the impetus of going global strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative has gained momentum. With the development of science and technology, the power industry is one of the key realms. Thus, translating company qualifications for power enterprises has become increasingly more important. The paper is based on the 2020 version of a power company's qualification, with content such as company profile, the patent for invention, representative projects, etc. The document is 74 pages in length, with a total of 11,383 words. Using the platform of a translation management system, the project is completed in 20 working days. After project delivery, 3 types of quality errors have been picked, that is, inconsistent style, incorrect formation, and poor readability. The paper will give examples respectively.

2. Machine Translation and Post-Editing

The idea of machine translation (MT) was first put forward by Weaver in 1949 in the Memorandum on Translation. Over the time course of 60 years, machine translation has made great progress. However, it still adopts phrase-based and syntax-based models, i.e. machine translation is carried out in phrases rather than words. The advantage of phrase alignment is that it reduces the number of units in a sentence and facilitates sequencing, thus reducing the chances of introducing errors.

The Skopos of technical texts lies in its accuracy instead of beautiful languages. Thus, to cut time

and labor costs, a translator could adopt machine translation followed by human proofreading, known as post-editing (PE). According to the definition of ISO, MT is defined as an automated translation of text or speech from one natural language to another using a computer system, and PE is defined as checking and correcting MT output.

However, as defined by Huashu Wang, we are in the era of translation technology 3.0 where machine translation still has its limitations. It is human beings that translation relies mainly on and machines only come as assistance. This translation project has many examples to testify differences in idiomatic expressions between Chinese and English For example when describing locations, English often putting smaller ones followed by a bigger location. Therefore, "State Grid Hebei Baoding Power Supply Branch" (strictly under the Chinese sequence) should be revised to "Baoding Supply Branch, State Hebei Electric Power Supply Co.".

2.1 Translation of Terminologies

Terminology is a collection of conceptual designations expressed in a specialized field to mark things, phenomena, characteristics, relationships, and processes in various fields of technology, science, art, social life, etc.. Generally, terminologies have merely one fixed meaning. Yet terminologists also argue that the boundaries between terms and ordinary words are not fixed and that they can exchange roles in different contexts. Even though some words occur with high frequency, they still do not count as terminologies in a strict sense. Regarding this, it is proposed that translators should not only build a Terminology Base (TB), but also a High-frequency Word Base, which is achievable through linguistic software such as AntConc.

Considering the power company's business scope, a large number of professional terms are needed in the qualification profile. Typical examples include voltage transformers, grounding devices. etc. To form a unified translation style, it is, therefore, necessary to spend time on building an exclusive TB for this project.

There are two methods to build TB for small-scale translation projects. One way is to use a terminology management platform, like LingoSail TermBox, to automatically extract the terms specific to one document and export them; another way is to manually select terminologies and check with official platforms, such as Term Online, China Terminology, and published books, such as Standard for Basic Terms of Electric Power Engineering (2018), An English-Chinese Dictionary of Electric Power Technology (2014). With the development of computer technology, the terminology automatic identification and extraction system is gaining maturity and contributed dramatically to cutting costs. Using linguistics research methods, the latter mainly identifies, extracts, and confirms terminologies manually to secure accuracy

Terminology management is carried out throughout the translation process, and translators are expected to update the TB whenever errors in terminology are found or new terms are discovered. For example, the phrase "user run report" appears frequently in the machine-translated version from the platform's paid plug-in, but run as a verb is inappropriate here. After careful checking, the phrase could be translated as "user operation report" instead. If a translator identifies such a problem, he or she should share it with other translators and add the new term to the TB to standardize the translation throughout the text. In addition, the translation of terms varies in different professional contexts. In the context of this project, the real meaning of term "所用变" is "house-serviced transformer", where "变" is an abbreviation of "transformer"("变压器" in Chinese).

2.2 Translation of Phrases

Newmark (1988) classifies translation methods into eight categories, depending on whether the

focus is on the source language (SL) or the target language (TL). Word-for-word translation is the method that relies most on SL. However, this translating method ignores the socio-cultural context of the TL and the logical connections of the SL. Examples of phrases and sentences mistranslation are given as follows:

In this project, the phrase "碧水蓝天" was translated word-for-word by machine as "blue water and blue sky". However, Chinese and English have different use of verbs, nouns, adjectives, and pronounce. The word-for-word translation ignores the collocation of words into which it was translated. After consulting the Government Report 2021, the translator put the word unity in the first place and changed the translation to "clear water and blue sky".

Not only is the choice of words in phrases easy to miss, but due to the complexities of syntax, logic, and structural errors, the logic in long phrases in technical English is often confused. The individual phrases in a sentence are arranged in a confusing order, which has the least likelihood of being solved by a phrase or syntax-based machine translation system. During the project, if the term "一种配电变压器不平衡自动检测装置" is directly translated as "A distribution transformer unbalance automatic monitoring device". Although the words correspond to each other, the translation is neither fluent nor accurate. In Chinese, it is customary to put the subject at the end of the sentence, with all the modifiers stacked in front. However, translators should pay attention to the logical links in English and try to change some parts of the speech. Therefore, the translation should be better changed into "a device monitoring the unbalance in distribution transformers".

3. Critical Thinking of Translators

The role of translators is to facilitate bilingual or multilingual communication. Hence, translators should take the initiative to point out errors in the text even haven't been asked to do so. [9] They should think critically about the documents provided by their clients and communicate their ideas with clients in time. In the case of this project, two mistranslations occurred in the original text and were changed after consultation with the client. Examples are as follows.

Firstly, in the text provided by the client, the company's slogan is translated as "Respect, care, honesty, pioneering, and heart, so that customers moved!" It is consistent with the original text in terms of word order, but owing to a large number of nouns, the translation wasn't clear enough to understand. After careful analysis of logical links, the translation was changed to "With respect, care, integrity, enterprise, and devotion, we shall get our customers moved! Five nouns in the original version were changed into prepositional phrases, and the subject "we" is added to the unattributed clause.

Secondly, the company's slogan is given on the cover of the original document as "Clean energy, low carbon life, enjoy blue water and blue sky!" However, the slogan is intended to convey the tenet that the company has adopted a low carbon lifestyle which has no negative impact on people's lives and is beneficial to the environment". After referring to parallel texts in official websites of State Grid, which writes "Power Your Beautiful Life, Empower Our Beautiful China", small changes are made to the original one as "Power Your Beautiful Life, Empower Our Pleasant Environment".

4. Conclusion

As a technical text, translation of the electric power industry should be expressed precisely, without any need for literacy grace. With an accurate importation of TB, machine translation has greatly improved productivity, however, due to context differences, the same word that appeared in the different contexts should be given different translations. Therefore, translators need to put out their subjective initiative while translating. Using critical thinking, it is preferable to reduce the word-by-

word translation of texts in machine translation while adding logical words that are missing in Chinese. They also need to pay attention to daily accumulation and immersed themselves in bilingual culture to learn fixed collocations.

Acknowledgments

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