

Research on Translation Techniques of Business English Contracts in International Trade

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Keywords: Translation techniques, Business english contracts

Abstract: Since the reform and opening up, the international communication has become more frequent, especially in business activities. In the process of international trade, contract is a significant factor to stipulate how things go and protect the interest of parties involved with binding legal effects. Therefore, Business contract translation has become an important factor in promoting the development of international trade. The effective translation and the key points of translation involved in the process of business contract are closely related to the comprehensive benefits of the legal rights and responsibilities of the parties to the contract. This article focuses on the 3 translation principles that ought to be obeyed: 1) accurate translation 2) smooth expression 3) maintaining cultural differences. And three translation techniques are promoted: 1) keep a rigorous structure 2) keep accurate wording 3) perfect the contract.

1. Introduction

Under the background of economic globalization, translation, as a bridge in the international trade, has been playing an increasingly prominent role. With the deepening of China's reform and opening up, especially under the "Belt and Road" initiative, international trade activities between China and other countries and regions have become more and more frequent, and international trade contracts have worked as an important tool during the international economic communication.

Article 85 of the "General Principles of Civil Law of the People's Republic of China": A contract shall be an agreement whereby the parties to establish, change, and terminate their civil relationship. The international business contract, as one of the most important forms of contracts, refers to a contract involving business of two or more countries. There are many types of international business contracts, which involve a wide range and complex content. The types of China's international business contracts are mainly classified as follows according to the nature and content of trade models. (1) Sales or purchase contracts. (2) Technology transfer contracts. (3) Joint venture or joint venture contracts. (4) Compensation trade contracts. (5) International engineering contracting contracts. (6) Agency agreements. (7) Contract processing contracts. (8) Contracts that combine multiple trade methods. (9) Foreign-related credit contract. (10) International BOT investment contracts. (11) International lease contracts.

International trade contracts usually are involved in economics, finance, insurance and other fields, containing a large number of professional terms, and are highly professional and logical. Therefore, the translation of international trade contracts is very important. If the translation is not

rigorous or accurate, it will affect the interests of one or both parties in the trade and adversely affect the effectiveness of international trade activities. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to make the appropriate translation of business English contracts in international trade to protect the interests of both parties to the contract and the interests of the countries involved in.

2. Principles in the Translation of Business Contract

2.1 Accurate Translation

When translating a business English contract, the accuracy of the translation should be considered as the priority. There is no need to use gorgeous words, but it should be guaranteed that the accurate terms should be used to fully express the meaning of the content in the contract. Ambiguity should be avoided especially for the translation of some professional terms. More attention must be paid to prevent mistranslations, which may have adverse effects on the economic activities. If any uncertain terms appear in the texts, to ensure that both parties to the trade can clearly understand each other's needs and prevent unnecessary misunderstandings, it is suggested to turn to the professional help or some professional tools.

The grammar of the contract translation can focus on the following two principles: (1) to ensure that the composition is highly logical, which means that the key content should be prominently expressed and strengthened on the basis of conveying the complete meaning. The refined and effective words are preferred in expressing the contract. (2) to appropriately simplify the content of the Chinese contract language, such as polite language, ending greetings, etc., to avoid excessive repetitive expressions, and strive to improve the logic of business English.

2.2 Smooth Expression

Because there are different cultural backgrounds in different countries and regions and business English contract is involved in various fields, it is important for the translators to ensure the smooth expression of the translation based on the accuracy. Only with smooth expression can both parties understand the translation correctly as the unclear sentences will prevent people from clear understanding. The business English contract requirements are very strict, and there must be no flaws. The translator must express the content rigorously and concisely, so that both parties in the trade can understand each other's goals accurately, which will facilitate the international trade activities.

2.3 Maintain Cultural Differences

The third is the principle of maintaining cultural differences.

Translation is converting information in one language into information in another language. It is not only the mutual conversion between two languages, but also the exchange between two cultures. Due to the cultural differences between different countries and regions, language, as an indispensable part of culture, reflects the cultural background and cultural customs of the related countries. Therefore, in the process of translating business English contracts, translators should fully understand the differences between different cultures and language environments, and minimize the impact of cultural differences, so that the respective interests of both parties in the trade can be effectively protected.

Translators should recognize the differences in the language expression and business thinking in various countries, and strive to ensure the equivalence of language between different countries so as to avoid deviation of understanding. Therefore, in the process of business contract translation,

translators should strive to master the language and have knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of different regions, and efficiently transmit the information to both parties to the contract on the basis of a comprehensive understanding of the culture of other countries.

3. Techniques of Translating Business English Contract

3.1 Keeping a Rigorous Structure

The syntactic feature of contract language is rigorous structure, emphasizing the completeness and rigor of sentence structure. And omissions or omitted words, such as “etc”, “like”, are seldom used. The words “大约” that mean “about” are also seldom used to prevent ambiguity. Due to the different thinking and expression modes of the two languages, English contracts often have long sentences, which make the transmission of contract content more detailed and precise. When these long sentences are translated into Chinese, they cannot be translated directly. The meaning of the phrases, modifiers, and conjunctions in the sentence should be understood clearly and the central idea of the sentence, the time sequence and logical relationship should be expressed in Chinese. Here is an example:

The prices stated are based on current freight rates, any increase or decrease in freight rates at time of shipment is to be the benefit of the buyer, with the seller assuming the payment of all transportation charges to the point or place of delivery.

“合同价格是以现行运费计算,装运时运费的增减均属买方。卖方则承担至交货地的全部运费。”

The example sentence conveys three meanings: the calculation of the contract price, the buyer's responsibility for the freight, and the seller's responsibility for the freight. These three meaning are closely connected, one after another. According to English expression habits, the third meaning and the first two meanings are closely connected by the “with” preposition structure, which constitutes a tight structure. Taking into account the differences in Chinese and English expression habits, the sentence can be cut off from “with”, and this long sentence can be translated into two independent sentences.

3.2 Keep Accurate Wording

Accurate wording is very important in the translation of business contracts.

For example, “Agreement” and “Contract” have completely different meanings. An agreement is made orally or in writing on related matters that have been done or prepared to be done after negotiation and consultation. A contract shall be an agreement whereby the parties to establish, change, and terminate their civil relationship.

Although the concepts of contract and agreement are similar, the scope of application is different and cannot be interchanged at will. Contract is an important part of agreement. All contracts must be agreements, but not all the agreements are contracts. It can be said that an enforceable agreement that meets the requirements for contract is a contract.

Another example is that when using the words “may”, “shall”, “must”, “may not”, etc., in a contract, the translators should be extremely cautious. The agreement of rights and obligations constitutes the main body of the contract. If words are chosen improperly, it may cause disputes in the later activities.

3.3 Perfecting the Contract

After the translators complete the text translation of the international business contract, in

addition to identity whether it sticks the principle of accuracy, whether there are any mistakes or missing, the most important thing is to carefully assist in dealing with the content of the contract. International business contracts are where the interests of both parties to the transaction are involved deeply. If the contract is formulated too simple or not rigorous enough, it is easy for one party to take advantage of it, and the other one will suffer heavy losses. Therefore, it is one of the translators' responsibilities to help improving the terms of the contract.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, international business contract works as an important tool to facilitate the international trade and it is highly related to the the interests of the related parties. Therefore the correct and proper translation of the contract can help both the parties protect their legal rights in the transactions. To make good translations in business contract, it is necessary to stick in three principles: accurate translation, smooth expression and maintaining cultural differences. And there are also three translation techniques promoted in the article. The first one is to keep a rigorous structure, the second one is to keep accurate wording and the third one is to perfect the contract.

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