

Error Analysis of Petroleum Enterprise Profile Translation

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Abstract: Different translation errors exist in petroleum enterprise profiles; these problems not only led to the failure of enterprise publicity, but also had a bad influence on their reputation. Therefore, the quality of English translation of enterprise profiles is badly in need of improvement. This paper intends to analyze some common errors existing in petroleum enterprise profiles to improve the quality of translation and the image of the enterprise.

Keywords: Analysis Petroleum Enterprise Profiles; Translation

1. Introduction

Errors may occur at any levels of language, this thesis will take the language errors from the English translation of petroleum enterprise profiles as cases to study, and the error analysis will be confined to the word level and the sentence level.

2. Errors at Word Level

Error analysis at word level in this thesis will be demonstrated from the perspective of redundancy, capitalization, misspelling and wrong collocation.

2.1 Redundancy

Redundancy exists widely in C-E translation. This problem has caught the attention of Chinese scholars from different areas. Wang Jinbo (2002:1) has explained the reason why redundancy exists.^[1] He says, “In intralingua communication, redundancy refers to the information that fits in well with the channel capacity of its receptors and thus guarantees the success of communication”. However, in interlingua communication, if the redundancy appeared in the source language is carried over to the target language intactly, it will no longer match the channel capacity of the target receptors and therefore impedes communication. However, in the English translation of petroleum enterprises, examples of redundancy exist widely. Therefore, it is urgently needed to be improved.

Example 1: In the mean time, to speed up the pace of oil and natural gas exploration in basins out of Shaanxi province, the corporation reorganized its strength to set up two special exploration divisions--petroleum exploration division and natural gas exploration division. (<http://english.sxycpc.com>)

In the above example, the expression “to speed up the pace of” is a typical example of redundancy. Speed itself means to accelerate the pace of something, thus the original expression should be changed into “to speed up oil and natural gas exploration”. Next, “reorganized its strength” is also a case of redundancy, thus strength should be omitted. Lastly, the repeated appearance of “division” violates the concise principle of English; thus the original translation should be better corrected.

2.2 Wrong Collocation

According to Mona Baker, words do not occur randomly by themselves, but strung together with other words under the governance of some rules. As Chinese and English vary a lot in their collocation rules, various translation problems exist in C-E translation. The following sentence is a typical example of improper collocation.

Example 2: Exploration of Yanchang Petroleum began in 1905 and gained plentiful and substantial achievements in the more than 100 years experience of exploration and exploitation. (<http://english.sxycpc.com>)

In example 2, the underlined part “in the more than 100 years” is a wrong collocation, the preposition “in” refers to the period after a particular length of time, but the author here refers to the time within a period of time. Thus, the original expression should be corrected as “within more than 100 years’ experience”.

2.3 Capitalization

Generally speaking, the first letter of an English sentence should be capitalized; the name of a proper noun should also be capitalized. However, capitalization in this thesis refers to the cases that letters are put in their upper cases where it is unnecessary. This kind of error was not in a small number in English translation of enterprise profiles although it does not influence the target readers’ understanding of the text. However, it may leave a bad impression on readers; what’s more, readers may suspect the enterprise due to their poor translation of the profiles. Therefore, this kind of problem is urgently needed to be solved. The following example which manifests the errors of inappropriate capitalization are taken from the English translation of petroleum enterprise profiles^[2]

Example 3: Enterprise spirit: “Contribute to Chinese society and Invigorate the petrochemical industry” (<http://www.sinopecgroup>).

com)

Example 4: In February 1982, the China National Offshore Oil Industry was established, and Qin Wencai, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Petroleum Industry, was appointed as President. (<http://en.cnooc.com.cn>)

According to Wikipedia, nouns such as philosophies, theories, doctrines, and systems of thoughts do not begin with a capital letter unless the name refers to a proper noun, or the word is the beginning of a sentence. Based on these two rules, the verb “Invigorate” which is placed in the middle of the sentence is unnecessary to be capitalized, on the contrary, a lowercase is needed. In addition, the noun phrases such as “Deputy Minister, President” in example 4 are all capitalized, the translator may intend to stress these people or positions through this way. However, it violates the rules of capitalization in English, thus should be given place to a lowercase.

2.4 Misspelling

English words are formulated by some of the 26 letters with different combinations; however, the wrong order of any two letters may result in the misspelling of words. Although this kind of error could be avoided if translators are careful enough, there are quite a few errors caused by misspelling in English translation of petroleum enterprise profiles after the author’s survey to these materials.

Example 5: In order to create favourable premisesfor China’s offshore oil industry to make the full Second Leap Forward, we have been operating soundly whileaddressing and tackling any issues or challenges coming our way and grasping a firm hold on the currentindustrial development trends and opportunities. (<http://en.cnooc.com.cn>)

In the above example, all the underlined words are misspelled. Among these words, except “favourable” are misspelled due to the wrong place of some letters, the other words are all misspelled as the translator forgot to leave a space between two words, thus errors occur. The causes to these errors are mainly due to the translator’s carelessness and irresponsibility; otherwise, these errors can be completely avoided.^[3]

3. Errors at Sentence Level

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, “sentence refers to a set of words expressing a statement, a question or an order, usually containing a subject and a verb”. In written English, sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, a question mark or an exclamation mark. That is to say, a correct English sentence includes several elements, such as subject, verb, object, etc, lack of which will definitely result in incomplete sentences. However, various errors exist at sentence level in the English translation of petroleum enterprise profiles. The following are some examples.

3.1 Ambiguous Sentences

Ambiguous sentence in this thesis refers to the sentences that can be understood in more than one way or having different meanings, it is mainly caused by the inaccurate expression or improper choice of words. The following example is a case in point.

Example 6: Our priority is the health of our workers and the creation of a sound working environment. (<http://www.sinopecgroup.com>)

By example 6, the source text originally indicates that the corporation pays great attention to the health of their employees, thus a sound working environment was created. However, the original translation can be understood as “they have a group of employees whose health is their priority, so is their working environment”. This translation definitely violates the original meaning of the source text, thus should be better revised as the following:

Revised example 6: We attach great importance to the health of our workers, thus a sound working environment was created.

3.2 Incomplete Sentences

As has been mentioned above, a complete English sentence should contain a subject and a verb, otherwise it would be incomplete. The following example is a typical one of incomplete sentences.

Example 7: In 1905, Yanchang Petroleum Factory was established; In 1907, drilled the first oil well in mainland China. (<http://english.sxycpc.com>)

There is no verb in the above example, thus it is incomplete, and the better version should be:

Revised version 7: In 1905, Yanchang Petroleum Factory was established. In 1907, the first oil well in mainland China was drilled.

3.3 Modifiers at Improper Positions

English modifier should be put right in front of the noun it modifies.

Example 8: In 2012, Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum (Group) Co. Ltd. ranked No.89 among top 500 Chinese companies. (<http://english.sxycpc.com>)

As has been mentioned above, modifiers are placed right before the word it modifies. However, in the example 8, “top” is used to modify the Chinese companies, thus should not be put before the number 500. The above example is better to be corrected as:

Revised version 8: In 2012, Shaanxi Yanchang Petroleum (Group) Co. Ltd. ranked No.89 among the 500 top Chinese companies.

4. Summary

From the above analysis, we could see that there are mistakes existing at both word level and sentence level. However, these are all elemental problems caused either by translators’ carelessness or irresponsibility. Given enough attention, all these mistakes can be avoided. Subsequently, the presupposed function and purpose of the source-text could be fully achieved.

References:

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