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Book Review of A Textbook for Translating Texts of Science & Technology

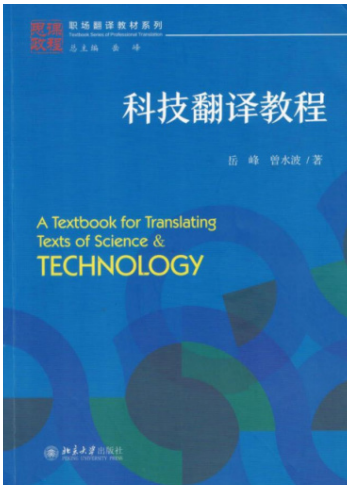
Zeyu Chen[1*], Feng Lin[2]
Fujian Normal University, Fujian, China
Fuzhou University of International Studies and Trade, Fujian, China
Corresponding author,e-mail:1044420721@qq.com

Abstract:

The demand for translations triggered by the international exchange of scientific and technical information has increased significantly. Practice-oriented translations involving more scientific and technical texts dominate the translation market. As a result, scientific and technical translation is becoming increasingly important in the contemporary workplace. In the face of the growing importance of scientific and technical translation, it is important to identify the expertise and terminology involved in translation and select appropriate translation strategies and techniques to facilitate the international dissemination of scientific and technical information. A Textbook for Translating Texts of Science & Technology responds to this concern. It consists of seven chapters highlighting the main features of scientific and technical translation, including the precise translation of specific terms or technical processes and the rules to be observed. The textbook's authors are committed to promoting an active exchange between translation theory and practice. The textbook avoids lengthy translation theories, explains the principles and skills of scientific and technical translation in detail through many cases, focuses on practicality, and is a concentrated presentation of the author's translation experience. Overall, the textbook is a breakthrough. It emphasizes the professionalism required for modern translation practice. This breakthrough is a positive response to the needs of the market and the times, providing translation learners with practical tools to guide them in solving difficulties in scientific and technical translation in today's multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary environment.

Keywords:

A Textbook for Translating Texts of Science & Technology; corpus; cases



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Economic globalization promotes the rapid development of science and technology, and exchanging scientific and technological information between countries creates a large demand for translations. Practice-oriented translations, such as business translations, tourism translations and MICE translations, which concern more or less scientific and technical texts, occupy most of the share of the translation market. As a result, the Science and Technology translation (hereinafter referred to as "ST translation") become more and more of a necessity in the modern workplace. The increasing importance of ST translation makes it imperative to clarify the professional knowledge and terminology involved in the translation and to choose appropriate translation strategies and skills to facilitate the international communication of scientific and technical information. A Textbook for Translating Texts of Science & Technology, based on a wealth of typical real materials from science and technology texts, is worth reading for learners interested in expanding knowledge and translation coping ability, especially those engaged in ST translation.

The book consists of seven chapters. The main features of ST translation include the need for accurate translation of specific terms or technical processes and an observance of an appropriate style. The two sections of Chapter 1 introduce the translation tools before translating texts of science and technology and matters that should be considered in translation preparation. The first section lists online dictionaries and a search engine commonly used in translation and their corresponding features. It covers various sources combed for information searching, including online and physical dictionaries, textbooks, monographs, and Internet searches, and their accuracy and credibility are evaluated.

Moreover, it also introduces the importance of English-English dictionaries in translation. It compares the use of punctuation in both Chinese and English. The second part presents some general requirements for the translation process. Translators need to pay attention to the consistency of terminology first. Many basic methods are suggested to help translators resolve translation difficulties and uncertainties in the translation process. The translator needs to inspect the translation again and ensure the conciseness of the translation before the translation is completed.

In Chapter 2, at the linguistic level, the principle of conciseness in news translation is introduced, then followed by a discussion of how the principle of conciseness, such as omission of minor or unnecessary components, use of acronyms, substitution of words and phrases, and shift of lexical and syntactic forms, can be applied to the translation of scientific and technological texts. At the syntactic and stylistic levels, the rest of chapter 2 presents techniques for tense, voice, syntax and expressions to convey neat and clear information with consideration of target readers' understanding.

Chapters 3 and 4, each with two sections, feature typical expressions in Chinese and English, respectively. The former chapter first lists Chinese conjunctions and phrases that are frequently but improperly used and often mistranslated. Each error, in its specific context of the example, is analyzed. The connotations and extensions of words vary greatly between languages and cultures, so the following section gives examples of common expressions with Chinese characteristics and their corresponding English translations. The latter chapter exemplifies typical expressions in English, such as the use of particles and the independent subject structure. It also analyzes the meanings of commonly misused words, focusing on multiple or uncommon meanings of words, near-synonyms and some abbreviations.

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Chapter 5 provides solutions for common translation difficulties in words and sentences. English abbreviations, one of the translation difficulties, appear frequently in ST translation. Hence, the authors first categorize the rules of English abbreviations and propose corresponding methods of inspection and translation. Then, the search method by word is introduced, which mainly focuses on words whose meaning is difficult to determine in the original text and chooses the most accurate translation by referring to the context, dictionaries, Internet or logic. In addition, a series of specific methods, such as back translation, corrections of errors in the source text, and translation of proper nouns to help grasp the full understanding of the sentence, are illustrated with numerous examples to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

Chapter 6 introduces other related skills and knowledge in translating scientific and technical texts. The first section describes that when encountering the illegible original text in PDF or image format, one can find relevant information through keywords to speculate the original text. In the case that the text is barely recognizable, "XXX" and other symbols can be used instead. The next section explains the writing conventions and common translations of numbers, units of measurement, and abbreviations of common standards, directives, regulations, and associations related to science and technology texts. Some common expressions are listed for reference to improve translation efficiency at the end.

Chapter 7 analyzes cases from different fields such as management, mechanical engineering, chemical industry, and petroleum. This chapter integrates the different translation techniques mentioned in the first six chapters. It comprehensively analyzes these cases, with the corresponding analysis process, explanations, and related knowledge presented in the footnotes.

First, I have been impressed by the many typical cases in this book, all of which come from the authors' long-term translation experience. After each case, a detailed analysis and translation process can be found in addition to the standard translation version offered by authors. Some cases deal with specialized scientific and technical knowledge; the authors demonstrate how to verify such expertise. Secondly, I think this is a functionally accessible book. There is no tedious or lengthy theory in the book. The content deserves to be a collection of the authors' translation experience. It is a workplace-oriented textbook for readers, which both beginners and experienced professional translators can efficiently master. Finally, the book emphasizes details in line with the preciseness of ST translation. It adds various details compared to the other textbooks on the market. For example, the first chapter introduces a search tool by word, which many mistakenly believe is unnecessary in a tutorial book. A translator's performance is measured not only by their translation skills but also by their ability to identify information. Translation theories can indeed assist translation learners in improving their ability. In this age of information explosion, however, searching for information to testify its authenticity and decode messages before translation is of primary concern.

Overall, this book proves that modern translation practice needs more than translation theories; it also needs professional competence. This book is a breakthrough, a response to the needs of the market and the times. The breakthrough of this book is that it fully explains the principles of translating scientific and technological texts based on a sufficient number of case studies. The breakthrough of this book is that it fully explains the specific skills of translating scientific and technological texts convincingly based on a sufficient number of case studies. These skills are generated from the authors' day-to-day translation and proofreading. They can be readily applied in translation practice. No theory can be enough to translate scientific texts because no

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theory available so far can be professionally specific. Theories are good for research but not for very special translation, partially because, generally, theorists are not engaged in such professional translation. This textbook is like a reference tool that can guide translators to solve difficulties encountered in ST translation in this multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary world today. Finally, the authors try to shift the closed conversation of how theory is applied to practice in translation studies to an active exchange between theory and practice.

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