THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY IN TECHNICAL TRANSLATION

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ABSTRACT

Technical translation is a type of specialized translation involving the translation of documents produced by technical writers (owner's manuals, user guides, etc.), or more specifically, texts which relate to technological subject areas or texts which deal with the practical application of scientific and technological information. While the presence of specialized terminology is a feature of technical texts, specialized terminology alone is not sufficient for classifying a text as "technical" since numerous disciplines and subjects which are not "technical" possess what can be regarded as specialized terminology. Technical translation covers the translation of many kinds of specialized texts and requires a high level of subject knowledge and mastery of the relevant terminology and writing conventions. As technology creates easier and faster means of communication and the world moves toward becoming a global community, the need to communicate with people from multiple language backgrounds also grows. Technical Translation Requires Specific Skills. Technical translation is an area that needs specialization to ensure that the correct technical flow is in place. This specific type of language service is never easy, despite appearing to be direct or even literal. The nature of the texts to be translated often requires an above-average understanding of the topic. For example, general translators wouldn't necessarily know the correct terms to describe electrical or mechanical items regardless of their language skills.

Key words: technical, specifically, application, specialized, disciplines, multiple, terminology, mastery, relevant, communicate.

INTRODUCTION

As a field, technical translation has been recognized, studied, and developed since the 1960s. Stemming from the field of translation studies, the field of technical translation traditionally emphasized much importance on the source language from which text is translated. However, over the years there has been a movement away from this traditional approach to a focus on the purpose of the translation and on the intended audience. This is perhaps because only 5–10% of items in a technical document are terminology, while the other 90–95% of the text is language, most likely in a natural style of the source language. Though technical translation is only one subset of the different types of professional translation, it is the largest subset as far as output is concerned. Currently, more than 90% of all professionally translated work is done by technical translators, highlighting the importance and significance of the field.

The importance of consistent terminology in technical translation, for example in patents, as well as the highly formulaic and repetitive nature of technical writing makes computer-assisted translation using translation memories and terminology databases especially appropriate. In his book *Technical Translation* Jody Byrne argues that technical translation is closely related

to technical communication and that it can benefit from research in this and other areas such as usability and cognitive psychology.

In addition to making texts with technical jargon accessible for a wider ranging audience, technical translation also involves linguistic features of translating technological texts from one language to another.

Translation as a whole is a balance of art and science influenced by both theory and practice. Having knowledge of both the linguistic features as well as the aesthetic features of translation applies directly to the field of technical translation.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The role of the technical translator is to not only be a transmitter of information, but also to be a constructor of procedural discourse and knowledge through meaning, particularly because often, the technical translator may also take on the role of the technical writer. Research has demonstrated that technical communicators do, in fact, create new meaning as opposed to simply repackaging old information. This emphasizes the important role that technical translators play in making meaning, whether they are doing technical translation in one language or in multiple languages.

Much like professionals in the field of technical communication, the technical translator must have a cross-curricular and multifaceted background. In addition to grasping theoretical and linguistic orientations for the actual translation process, an understanding of other subjects, such as cognitive psychology, usability engineering, and technical communication, is necessary for a successful technical translator. Additionally, most technical translators work within a specialized field such as medical or legal technical translation, which highlights the importance of an interdisciplinary background. Finally, the technical translators should also become familiar with the field of professional translation through training.

RESULTS

Technical translation requires a solid knowledge base of technological skills, particularly if the translator chooses to utilize computer-assisted translation (CAT) or machine translation (MT). Though some technical translators complete all translation without the use of CAT or MT, this is often with pieces that require more creativity in the document. Documents dealing with mechanics or engineering that contain frequently translated phrases and concepts are often translated using CAT or MT.

Translators might read the document to understand what they will be translating, and determine the context of the text. In technical translation, the register and tone would then be determined based on the type of text and the context, although generally the tones of technical texts are neutral. The register can be very formal and scientific, or made to be easily understood by the general public. A translator might also need to use documentation techniques find resource materials as aids in order to translate the text.

CONCLUSION

Translators may bounce back and forth between steps, depending on their time constraints and their experience in translation. For instance they might revise at the same time as they are

translating. A translator may also go through their reference materials and research depending on how familiar they are with the type of text. If they need to find the closest matches for clients, they may use translation memories or machine translation software. The translation process also depends on the laws and ethics codes put into place in certain regions, as well as any censorship, which might affect the outcome of the text. Not only does an excellent technical translator know the technical terminology, but they also understand the subject and make sure that the translation is easy to understand as a whole. Furthermore, every industry that relies on technical translation services operates with specific terminology and sometimes industry jargon. People with no connection to the niche won't be able to deliver accurate translations. That's simply because they aren't familiar with the terms used by doctors, engineers, constructors, so on and so forth.

Revision may depend on the translator's experience or nature of the text. In translation agencies, revisers may be hired to do the revising, but a freelancer may have to revise their own work. In the case of a pharmaceutical text, depending on the laws, it would require revision since the information in the source text could cause potential harm if mistranslated. There also may be certain style guides that the translation agencies may use that must be followed.

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