

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TRANSLATION EDITING

Lecture 4

Language Rules in Editing. Types of Errors. Methods of Correcting LanguageErrors

Slide 2

“During the ten years between 1536 and 1546, three famous translators met their death. One was tortured first and then burned at the stake in that great center of civilization, Paris. The second was strangled and then burnt in the city of Antwerp. And even though our third colleague died more naturally, it wasn't because half of Europe didn't long to see him hanged, drawn, quartered, and impaled in pieces.

In the most dramatic of these cases, the ostensible reason for the translator's execution was that he had inserted three extra words in his translation, words not clearly present in the original.”

(Gross A. 1536 - 1546: Ten Years that Changed the Perception of the Translator// ATA Chronicle, December, 1995).

1. Language Rules in editing

Slide 3

In the long history of translation, such notions as **accuracy, correctness, or well-formedness** have played an important role in assessing the quality of a translation. Depending on what is understood by translation, these notions have been given different significance.

Slide 4

One of the concepts that has been used differently within translation studies and whose value has been both asserted strongly and called into question, is the concept of rules. Rules are related to assumptions and expectations about correctness and/or appropriateness.

Language and language use can be judged as correct from a phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic point of view. There is also a difference between what is possible in a language, regardless of context (described by rules), and what is considered appropriate in a given context (described by conventions). When conventions are enforced with normative power they are considered to be rules.

Rules are binding, and their violation usually arouses disapproval of some kind among the community concerned. The force of a norm is built up in the relationships between norm authorities, norm enforcers, norm codifiers, and norm subjects. For example, grammar books and lexicons provide models for correct linguistic forms, a language teacher corrects wrong or inappropriate communicative behaviour, or a teacher of translation judges a text to be a good or a bad translation.

The concept of rules is important in two respects in linguistic approaches to translation. On the one hand, they are concerned with the linguistic rules of the two languages, i.e. how to produce utterances and texts that are correct according to the respective rules. On the other hand, the relations and regularities between the two linguistic systems that were discovered on the basis of contrastive analyses were 'translated' into guidelines or rules for the translator, mostly with prescriptive intent (cf. frequently encountered formulations such as 'translators must (not) ¼, should ¼', etc.).

Translational rules are understood as internalised behavioural constraints which embody the values shared by a community. All decisions in the translation process are thus primarily governed by such rules, and not (dominantly or exclusively) by the two language systems involved.

Slide 5

There are three kinds of Rules: (1) preliminary Rules, which decide the overall translation strategy and the choice of texts to be translated, (2) initial Rules, which govern the translator's decision to adhere primarily to the source text or to the target culture, and (3) operational Rules, which control the actual decisions made during the act of translation.

Slide 6

Language Rules are the traditionally established rules for using language means, i.e. rules of generally recognized model pronunciation, usage of words, word combinations or sentences.

In the English-speaking community, the generally recognized Rules are based on the Standard Educated English or the Queen's English, whereas non-conventional language is referred to as Non-Standard English or Uneducated English.

As compared with other Rules, language Rules are the most numerous ones. Language Rules correspond to the generally distinguished language levels. Thus,

there are pronunciation, spelling, morphological, word-building, lexical, phraseological, syntactic, textual, discourse, and punctuation Rules.

Slide 7

Errors vs. Mistakes

Normally, editors distinguish between errors and mistakes

An error is a deviation from accuracy or correctness. A mistake is an error caused by a fault: the fault being misjudgment, carelessness, or forgetfulness.

e.g. A mistake occurs, when a translator knows the correct language but incorrectly retrieves it from his/her memory. An error occurs, when a translator has incorrectly learned or does not know yet the correct language unit.

A **gaffe** is a stupid or careless mistake, for example when you say or do something that offends or upsets people. It may come from saying something that is true, but inappropriate.

Slide 8

The reasons for errors may be

- Language 1 interference
- Overgeneralisation of rules from Language 2 (application of a grammatical rule in cases where it does not apply)
- Distraction or Overload of Processing Capacity
- False attractor (cross-association, mingling two unrelated things)
- Material induced

Slide 9-10

Editor's Checklist

Slide 11

Types of errors

Spelling errors may cause a lot of confusion in English translations. A lot of words are almost identical in terms of spelling, but are totally different in their meanings. Even though we can use a spell-checker, many errors may still remain unrecognized, e.g. in case of confusion between

acceptvs except

advicevs advise

affectvs effect

a lotvsallot

bought vs brought

councilvs counsel

desperatevs disparate (несоизмеримый, несопоставимый).

Slide 12

The most commonly encountered **morphological errors** are reflected in the use of a hyphen when using two words to act as one adjective.

Wrong: *The college student sample was smarter than the high school sample.*

Right: *The college-student sample was smarter than the high-school sample.*

Wrong: *A completely-new product was put on the market today.*

Right: *A completely new product was put on the market today.*

Morphological errors may also consist in the incorrect agreement of a constituent in the context or between constituents in the context, or incorrect conjugation of a verb.

The language of scientific and technical texts tends to be objective, precise, unemotional, and devoid of any individuality. This is primarily achieved through lexical means. Therefore, the inappropriate use of lexical means causes much confusion in translations.

In general, the science lexis consists of common use words, bookish words and a wide range of special terms. Common use words are those used both in oral and written speech, such as *to work, to know, new, well*, etc.

Slide 13

Bookish words fall into several groups:

1. Words used in scientific literature in meanings different from those in which they are commonly used, such as:

	scientific literature	Fiction
to happen	Виявлятися	траплятися, відбуватися
to offer	чинити (опір) – to offer resistance	пропонувати
to attack	приступати до вирішення (завдань)	нападати
State	стан, положення	державна
point	Проблема	крапка

These words usually mislead, if they are not known in the required meaning.

Slide 14

The meaning of the sentence “**The matter of interplanetary travel received a good deal of attention**” turns out to be distorted, if the word “matter” is translated as “матерія” instead of “проблема, питання”.

Another example:

Concrete dams have performed extremely well when subjected to earthquakes.

The word “concrete” used in fiction may mean “реальний, певний, визначений”, whereas in technical texts it will mean “бетонний”.

Slide 15

Another group consists of words mainly peculiar to written bookish language.

to consider	розглядати, вважати
to specify	точно визначати
to design	Конструювати
to assume	передбачати, набувати (форми)
to average	в середньому дорівнювати
Conclusion	Висновок
Standpoint	Погляд
Promising	Перспективний
Inherent	Властивий

Slide 16

Finally, the translators’ false friends constitute the third group of words that can mislead if translated incorrectly:

Actual	≠/= актуальний	Фактичний
Original	≠/= оригінальний	первісний, початковий
Progressive	≠/= прогресивний	Поступовий
Actually	≠/= актуально	Фактично
Originally	≠/= оригінально	Спочатку
Progressively	≠/= прогресивно	поступово, все більше
Specific	≠/= специфічний	Питомий
Technique	≠/= техніка	метод, методика, процес
Procedure	≠/= процедура	методика, метод
Figure	≠/= фігура	малюнок, цифра, число

Object	=/= об'єкт	мета, предмет
Subject	=/= суб'єкт	питання, предмет
Extra	=/= найвищої якості	додатковий, зайвий

Slide 17

Phraseological errors are non-intentional deviations from the phraseological Rules fixed in phraseological or terminological dictionaries.

Slide 18

Syntactic errors are those in the word order or the use of constructions. Syntactic errors distort the logical relationship between ideas. The logical relationships are those of addition, comparison, contrast, place, purpose, result, summary or repetition, and time.

In order to make the writing coherent and the transitions between the ideas smooth, one must clearly express or imply the logical relationships between the ideas. If you fail to do so, one idea is simply placed near another, and readers are left to make the logical connections for themselves. In this situation, experienced readers will suspect that you have not clarified the logical relationships between your ideas because you don't know what those relationships are, or worse, because there aren't any.

There are a variety of ways to express or imply logical relationships; some of the smoothest and most subtle use the very structure of the sentence. For example, you can use the principle of order and emphasis to indicate that one part of the sentence is more important than another; you can use subordination to indicate that one idea is less important than (or subordinate to) another; and you can use parallelism to indicate that two or more ideas are of equal importance.

You can also use punctuation to indicate the logical relationships between ideas. For example, you can use a colon to indicate that what follows is a further explanation of what's just been said; you can use commas to indicate whether or not a clause restricts the meaning of the sentence; and you can use dashes to indicate that the enclosed material is important to the discussion and should be emphasized.

Slide 19

By discourse-level errors, we refer to errors which 1) influence the understanding/processing of subsequent text and/or 2) require the previous discourse context to be taken into account in order to be identified and/or corrected. The errors which fall into this class range in severity from making the text seem

“choppy” or awkward to making the text incomprehensible (due to the reader’s inability to resolve pronouns, for example).

Slide 20

Punctuation errors are those encountered in the use of commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, parenthetical elements, ellipsis dots, hyphens, apostrophes, quotation marks, question and exclamation marks.

Slide 21

Methods of control

Depending on the types of errors, different methods may be applied to identify and eliminate them.

As previously discussed, to identify errors methods of control shall be applied. These methods include parametric, list, pattern or template, structural, analytical, cognitive, regulatory, comparative and special methods. For more details, please refer to the following source: Партико З.В. Загальне редагування: нормативні основи. – Л.: Афіша, 2006.

Slide 22-23

The methods of correcting language errors are classified as follows:

- Formalized methods (non-creative):

Rearrangement of components

Elimination (removal) of components

Replacement of components

Insertion (addition) of components

Special corrections applied mostly to non-textual components

- Non-formalized (creative) methods:

Reduction

Elaboration

Alteration (remaking)

The above methods cover all language levels.

Slide 24

The final stage of translation editing is the Linguistic Quality Assurance Procedure

Many translators attempt to do self-proofreading and copy editing, and this is a real challenge. However, it is very important that the linguistic editor and the proofreader are not the same linguists who did the original translation.

Simply running a spell-checker and reading the entire text again by the same person who did the translation is definitely not enough to guarantee the highest quality for the final translated deliverable.

Translation AND editing is a two-step process performed by at least two different linguists. During this process the editor checks and proofs the work of the original translator for completeness and accuracy. Then, the translation and editing must be followed by a proof/linguistic quality assurance step (LQA), which is the final quality control step performed by native linguists in context.

LQA is intended to review the work for proper use of linguistic phrasing, i.e., terminology, local terms, idiomatic expressions and cultural accuracy. This is done so that the final translation is the perfect rendition for the target locale (the country or region where the language will be used) and “sounds” as natural to the target audience as the source language text did for the original audience. LQA also ensures that the content does not sound like a stilted and awkward “literal” translation.

Last but not least, during the Linguistic Quality Assurance phase we must review the translated content for “industry accuracy”, (for example, lodging and hospitality, food and beverage, tourism, health, technology, etc.) in order to guarantee that the corresponding terminology the specific subject matter is used consistently throughout the whole text.

The Linguistic Quality Assurance procedure is primarily based on the established language rules.