

Study on the Lexical and Syntactic Features and Translation Strategies of Ice Hockey English

Jiahui Yuan

College of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Electronic Technology, Guilin Guangxi, 541004, China

Abstract

Translation is essential to the popularization of and international exchange activities about ice and snow sports. This paper, through analyzing the features of vocabulary and syntax in the text of ice hockey, finds that specialized words terms and abbreviation are widely used in the texts and passive sentences as well as long sentences are frequently adopted in the texts. In addition, this paper takes IIHF OFFICIAL RULE BOOK as an example to discuss the strategies and methods applied in translation practice, hoping to provide some enlightenments for the translation practice in the field of ice hockey.

Keywords

Ice Hockey English; Ice Hockey Rules; Linguistic Features; Translation Strategies.

1. Introduction

The successful hosting of the Beijing Winter Olympic Games and the Winter Paralympic Games has presented the unique charm of ice and snow sports to the Chinese people and created good opportunities for the development of the ice and snow industry. In 2022, the value of ice and snow sports in China will reach 800 billion yuan, which is expected to account for one-fifth of the total value of China's sports industries in 2025, showing its significant economic and social value. In the context of the country's active promotion of ice and snow sports and the realization of "driving 300 million people to participate in ice and snow sports", ice hockey, as one of the ice and snow sports, has huge development potential in China. Translation plays an important role in the process of introducing and promoting ice hockey sports. However, when "ice hockey English", "ice hockey terminology" and "ice hockey terminology translation" are used as keywords to search on the Internet, the research focus is: training of translation talents for the Winter Olympics, research on ice hockey sports news corpus, etc., and there are few studies of targeted translation strategies based on the lexical and syntactic features of ice hockey English. Therefore, this paper will summarize the lexical and syntactic features of ice hockey English, and on this basis, explore targeted translation strategies, hoping to provide some inspiration for the popularization of ice hockey and snow sports in China and the translation practice in its related fields.

2. Lexical Features and Translation Strategies of Ice Hockey English

2.1. Lexical Features

"As English and Chinese belong to different language families, their language differences are significant, especially in their lexical meaning.[1]" Therefore, when translating ice hockey English texts, understanding their vocabulary characteristics is the premise to ensure the quality of translation. Ice hockey English vocabulary has the following characteristics:

2.1.1. Specialization of Common Words

"Common words are often applied into the field of sports science and technology, and given new meanings. In sports science and technology English, there are a large number of words with different meanings from common words. We need to accurately judge their actual meanings according to the context" [2]. In ice hockey English, there are many professional words. These words have different meanings in different specific fields. In order to reflect this feature more intuitively, this paper has selected some specialized words in the field of ice hockey, such as:

Table 1. Polysemy of Ice Hockey Words

Word	Ordinary Meaning	Meaning in the Ice Hockey Context
lift	抬起; 举起	挑球
direct	指示	引导 (球)
deflect	(使) 转移; 改变	反弹
breakaway	脱离	突破
clipping	剪切物	扑倒拌人
spearing	用矛刺	杆刃刺人
dive	潜水	假摔
interference	干预	无球干扰
solo	单独; 独自	一条龙得分

2.1.2. Frequent Use of Terminology

"Technical language is a special vocabulary in professional competitions and an indispensable part of sports English. [3]" Like other sports, one of the characteristics of ice hockey English vocabulary is the frequent occurrence of terminology. For example:

Table 2. Excerpt of Terms of Ice Hockey

Word	Meaning in Chinese
bodycheck	身体冲撞
icing	死球
backhand	反手 (射门或传球)
breakaway	单刀突破
hybrid icing	混合型死球
faceoff location	争球点
center-ice spot	中心争球点
cross-checking	横杆推阻
bench-minor penalty	队小罚

2.1.3. Frequent Use of Abbreviations

In ice hockey English, abbreviations are frequently used to enhance the readability of relevant articles and make the expression concise.

For example, in ice hockey English, "NHL" means "National Hockey League"; "NHLPA" means "National Hockey League Players' Association"; "MVP" means "the most valuable player"; "IIHF" means "International Ice Hockey Federation". Due to the fuzziness and uncertainty of abbreviations, abbreviations of the same form have different meanings in different fields, so they need to be screened in the application.

2.2. Translation Strategies of Ice Hockey Words

Combined with the lexical features of ice hockey English mentioned above, translating words in this field requires certain translation skills and strategies to achieve accurate conversion between English and Chinese.

On the one hand, definitions of some common terms can be found in online dictionaries. For example, entering "interference" in Youdao online dictionary presents the following definitions: "the act of interfering; to clear the way for the player with the ball by blocking players from the opposing team; interruption of a radio signal; conflict, etc.". Obviously, the second one is a correct interpretation in line with the context of ice hockey.

On the other hand, due to the limited size of the online dictionary corpus, the definitions of some terms may not be contained in the corpus. For example, filling "convey" into Youdao online dictionary presents the definition of "the act of escorting while in transit; a procession of land vehicles traveling together", while the correct definition of "convey" in ice hockey English is "screen".

Therefore, to ensure the accuracy of the translation of ice hockey words, translators should first carry out certain information retrieval, instead of catching the meaning of words literally from the context. When necessary, translators should inquire professionals in the industry to obtain accurate definitions of terms in this field to improve the quality of translation.

3. Syntactic Features and Translation Strategies of Ice Hockey English

3.1. Syntactic Features

Peter Newmark, a British translation theorist, put forward that "Context is the overriding factor in all translation, and has primacy over any rule, theory or primary meaning" [4]. Due to the wide scope of "Ice Hockey English", its syntactic features vary in different contexts and styles. For this reason, this paper will take the *International Ice Hockey Federation Official Rule Book 2021/2022* as an example, which is a representative hockey text, to discuss the syntactic features of Ice hockey English.

3.1.1. Modal Verbs

"Standard modal verbs such as shall, must, may, and shall are used in laws and regulations texts to express the permission and prohibition of laws, so as to fully demonstrate the supreme authority of laws" [5]. In view of the similarity between the rule text and the legal text, the author preliminary calculated the frequency of modal verbs in the *International Ice Hockey Federation Official Rule Book 2021/2022* (hereinafter referred to as the *Official Ice Hockey Rule Book*). Among them, the most frequent occurrence is "shall", 987 times in total, followed by "must" and "may", 336 times and 206 times respectively.

3.1.2. Passive Sentences

In the *Official Ice Hockey Rule Book*, the passive voice is widely used, which firstly, can minimize the subjective and emotional tone of the text to make it objective and fair, conforming to the strictness characteristics of the rule text; Second, the passive voice is used to emphasize an action itself when the doer of the action is irrelevant or distracting, which shows the objectiveness of the content.

3.1.3. Conditional Adverbial Clauses

Both the rule texts and the law texts have the characteristics of standardization, which means the guidance of sports participants according to different premises. Therefore, conditional sentences are commonly used in sports rules. In the *Official Ice Hockey Rule Book*, conditional adverbial clauses introduced by "if", "unless", "provided that", "as long as" are frequently used.

3.1.4. Long Sentences

"The core of the rule is to elaborate the precedents in a variety of complex situations" [6]. Because there will be a lot of definitions and explanations of complex situations in the rules, ice hockey English in this context includes conditional adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases and other qualifying elements to ensure the comprehensiveness, accuracy and standardization of the rules to the greatest extent. Therefore, long sentences are a key point in ice hockey English translation.

3.2. Chinese Translation Strategy of Ice Hockey English

British translation theorist Peter Newmark divides text function into expressive function, informative function and vocative function [7]. According to this theory, ice hockey English rules are informative texts with informative and normative functions. Therefore, when translating ice hockey English text, the translator needs to focus on the integrity, authenticity and accuracy of information transmission. Translate ice hockey English text into Chinese accurately and smoothly by using translation techniques such as syntactic linearity, voice transformation, division, etc. Taking the Official Rules of Ice Hockey as an example, the following part will introduce several methods and techniques of the translation of ice hockey English texts.

3.2.1. Syntactic Linearity

The logic and expression of some English sentences are similar to that of Chinese. In this case, the original sentence can be translated according to the English word order without making major structural modification.

Case 1 Original Text: If a puck other than the one legally in play appears on the ice during game action, game action will not be stopped until a change of possession occurs or if the illegal puck is erroneously played in place of the game puck.

Translation: 在比赛过程中, 如果场内出现合法比赛用球以外的另一个球, 比赛不会停止, 直到球权发生转换或(球员)意外打到非比赛用球。

The structure of the original text seems complex, but its logic is similar to that of Chinese, therefore the method syntactic linearity can be used to translate this sentence. Putting "during game action" at the beginning of this sentence can produce a translation vision conforms to the expression habit of Chinese.

Case 2 Original Text: Although a skater may bat at the puck with his glove or catch it and place it on the ice immediately, he is not allowed to palm the puck (i.e., keep it in his glove), hold it for longer than it takes to put it on the ice.

Translation: 尽管球员可以使用手套击球或者抓住球后将其立即放在冰面上, 但是不允许球员将球藏于手掌(例如: 将球握在手套里), 握球时间也不得长于放在冰上所需的时间。

The original sentence contains an adverbial clause of concession, and the word order of the translated text is basically consistent with that of the original text. Apart from the method of conversion of words is used in translating the last sentence, syntactic linearity is the main translation method used in the translation.

3.2.2. Voice Transformation

English texts of ice hockey rules include lots of passive sentences. Comparatively, Chinese emphasizes parataxis and uses less passive sentences. Based on this difference, if the text is translated literally without voice transformation, the translation may not conform to the expression habit of Chinese. For the translation of passive voice, Professor Miqing Liu proposed "ten specific translation methods of passive voice, such as conversion it into active voice, conversion of subject, use of generic subject or no-subject sentence" [8].

In translation practice, translators should choose appropriate translation strategies according to specific situations and text characteristics.

Case 3 Original Text: Any objects on the ice that are not directly related to them or their equipment, or the puck, are strictly forbidden.

Translation: 冰面上严禁任何与队员/护具/冰球无关的物件。

"Any objects on the ice that... are strictly forbidden" of the original text is translated with the change of subject, into "冰面上禁止.....", which avoids passive sentences in the translation and is more consistent with the expression habit of Chinese.

Case 4 Original Text: There are three permissible types of protection which can be attached to the front of a skater's helmet: cage, visor, and full visor.

Translation: 球员头盔前可以附有三种形式的保护: 全护面罩、护目镜和全护目镜。

If the original text is translated word for word, into "可以有三种形式的保护被附在球员的头盔前: 全护面罩、护目镜和全护目镜", which will seriously affect the readability of the translation. In order to make the translation more faithful and readable, the subject should be changed.

Case 5 Original Text: No team official is allowed onto the ice without the consent of an on-ice official.

Translation: 未经场内裁判许可, 不允许队伍官员上冰。

"Many passive sentences in English do not clearly indicate the person who made the act, but just emphasize the act itself. English passive sentences can be translated into no-subject sentences in Chinese, namely imperative sentences. [9]" In the original sentence, the emphasis is the act "someone is not allowed to do something without the consent of someone", not the subject who sets this rule. Therefore, translating it in to an imperative sentence conforms to the stylistic features of ice hockey English texts in this context.

3.2.3. Division

English texts of Ice hockey rules are intensively informative, which can be manifested by frequent use of conditional adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases or restrictive attributive clauses. In addition, there is difference between Chinese and English, which can be manifested by frequent use of long sentences, while the structure Chinese sentences is relatively loose, which is a "bamboo structure" [10]. Given these features, to make the translation conform to the expression habit of Chinese, and avoid misunderstanding and unclear logic, long English sentence can be divided into several short sentences in translation to make the translation more suitable for target language readers.

Case 6 Original Text: No goal will be allowed by a team during a game if one of its players on the ice at the time his team scores is ineligible and the referee has been notified or the error to the ensuing faceoff at center ice immediately after the goal.

Translation: 比赛期间, 如果队伍进球时该队某位在场的队员没有参赛资格, 并且进球后裁判在中心点争球前被告知, 进球无效。

With a long conditional adverbial clause, this sentence is long. In translation, it is divided into to separate parts and new sentences are created. At the same time, the translation puts the conditional adverbial clause in front and the result in the back, which follows the Chinese expression habit.

Case 7 Original Text: If the puck carrier maintains control of the puck while his skates cross the blue line ahead of the puck, he is considered onside provided that he first had control of the puck with both skates in the neutral zone and that he kept the puck on his stick until the puck fully crossed the blue line.

Translation: 如果带球者保持控球，他的两只冰刀早于球进入蓝线，将不被视作越位，前提是他的两只冰刀在中区时就已控制住球权，并保持运球直到球整体越过蓝线。

This sentence is a long-complicated sentence with three conditional adverbial clauses. In translation, it is divided according to the logic and expression habits of Chinese, and "provided that" is translated into "前提是", so in this way the two conditional adverbial clauses introduced by it can be moved to the end of this sentence. It is to avoid putting all clauses at the beginning of the sentence and resulting in the top heaviness of the translation, helps convey the information of the original text to Chinese readers clearly.

4. Conclusion

According to Eco-translatology, translation refers to a selective activity of translators to adapt to the ecological environment. The translator should make adaptive choices from the dimensions of language, culture and communication, and translate the original text in a language ecological environment, so as to make the translation easier to understand and accept. In the translation of ice hockey English texts, the differences between English and Chinese, between Chinese and Western cultures, and the acceptability and communication effect of the translation shall be taken into consideration. Translators need to choose translation strategies according to its lexical and syntactic features, so as to produce high-quality translations with cross-cultural communication effects.

Ice hockey English combines knowledge of ice hockey operation, knowledge of English language and knowledge of rules and regulations, with distinctive language characteristics. This requires the translator to have the idea of deep translation. One of the core concepts of deep approach advocates the deep integration of inter disciplinary, inter disciplinary and transdisciplinary knowledge. Therefore, translators should strive to integrate the English related knowledge of ice hockey to find the best English translation strategies for this industry, so as to produce a translation that is easier for the target language readers to understand and accept.

References

- [1] Li Zhang: Features of English Terms in Water Conservancy and its translation, Chinese Science & Technology Translators Journal, Vol. 34(2021) No.4, p. 8-9.
- [2] Ming Liu: Characteristics of English for Sport Sciences and Its Translation into Chinese, Journal of Hebei Institute of Physical Education, Vol. 30 (2016) No.6, p. 55.
- [3] Qinhua Xiao: A Study on the Stylistic Features of Sports English, Think Tank Era, Vol. 54 (2017) No.7 p. 212.
- [4] Newmark Peter: Approaches to Translation (Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, China 2001).
- [5] Kaiyue Deng, Zhikun Bao: A study on the English Translation of Modal Verbs in Chinese Legal Texts, English Square, (2020) No.118, p.45.
- [6] Fei Yang: A study on the Translation Methods of Sports Confrontation Rules --Take Basketball Rules as an Example, Journal of Human University of Science and Engineering, Vol.35 (2014) No.6, p. 179-180.
- [7] Newmark Peter: Approaches to Translation (Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, China 2001).
- [8] Miqing Liu: Style and Translation (China Translation & Publishing Corporation, China 2019) p.256-263.
- [9] Ya Wang: A Simple Analysis of Differences of Passive Forms and E-C Translation of Passive Sentences, Overseas English, (2015) p. 125-126.

- [10] Mengdi Huang: Research on Adult Business English Translation Teaching Strategy Based on Economic Integration, *Language Art and Sports Research*, (2017), No. 181, 375-376.
- [11] Gengshen Hu: *Translation as Adaptation and Selection* (Hubei Education Pres, China 2004).
- [12] Xiang Long, Yimeng Liu: Deep Comparison of C-E Translations of *White Drinking (V)*: from the Perspective of Eco-translatology, *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, Vol. 30 (2022) No.1, p. 109-114.
- [13] Xiang Long: An Analysis of Deep Education and General Education in Foreign English—A Review on Tochon's World Languages and Cultures, *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, Vol. 27 (2019) No.4, p. 62-64.
- [14] Xiang Long, Fang'an Ju: Study on Theory and Practice of Deep Education in Foreign English :A review on Help Them Learn a Language Deeply: Deep Approach to World Language and Culture, *Technology Enhanced Foreign Languages*, Vol. 192 (2020) No.2, p. 93-96.