APPLYING THE IDIOMS IN THE TRANSLATION OF LEGAL ENGLISH

The idiom is a fixed word group or phrase, which people habitually uses since long ago, and it is the language’s essence. The idiom is concise and comprehensive, vivid and distinctive, which makes the idiom with some thick national characteristics and local colors.

It is not only an important rhetoric method in language, but also the concentrated expression of each rhetoric method. The idiom formed by four-character structure primarily in Chinese is extremely rich and its structure is rigorous, refined, pregnant with meaning, and harmonious in the tonality.

If we apply Chinese idiom into the translation of the legal English appropriately, the quality of the translation will be improved obviously with a good expression.

“Legal English” refers to the general written English in law circle (including law, the laws and regulations, rule, the rules and regulations, agreement, the determines and rules and so on) and it particularly means language attorney used in drafting legal documents (contract, regulation, agreement, the contract and so on)[1]. After China’s entering into WTO and integration of world economics, the contact between China and the world is getting closer and closer.

The translation of legal document will be able to act an important role in
society. In order to translate legal documents excellently from English into Chinese, we must understand some characteristics of legal English.

This article attempts to induce several kinds of situations that Chinese idiom applies in the translation of legal English through the elaboration of legal English’s characteristics, then, discusses the skills and the strategies of applying Chinese idiom in the translation of legal English.

Applying the idioms in the translation of legal English, the translator should grasp the massive Chinese idioms. Lacking of the source material, the creation will be a natural prattle. We should have a thorough understanding to the original text, and also ponder over the accurate meaning of the Chinese idiom.

Moreover, we should have a complete comprehension to the law. Otherwise it will affect the quality of translation. When applying idiom concretely, we also should pay attention to following five aspects:

a. Quoting idiom, we must have a thorough understanding to the meaning. If we fail to search for the deep understanding and content with superficial understanding, we will be apt to make mistakes.

In recent years, there have been published many valueless papers in journals of law.

(“不刊之论”is describing the article is very well, means“无甚价值的文章”,which counters exactly to the meaning of the original text恰恰与原文的意思背道而驰。If we can not find a suitable word, we’d better translate it into“无甚价值的文章”)

b. Quoting idiom, we should consider the rationality in logic.
It is well-known that English barristers enter the profession as members of one of four Inns of Court, which are combinations of a school and professional organization.

(In some situations, “it is well-known” can be translated into“众所周知”, but here, on logic, using it is not very rational, because the number of people who understand the situation of Palestine lawyer's operation is limited, which is not a general knowledge, we should translate into“十分清楚”)

c. The most remarkable characteristic of legal English literary style is accurate, Therefore quoting idiom, we must consider the discretion in degree, neither exaggerating nor reducing the original intention.

In this country, it is not uncommon for a convicted murderer sentenced to life imprisonment escapes and kills again.

(“it is not uncommon” which is translated into“司空见惯” will exaggerate the intensity, should be translated into“并非罕见”)

d. Quoting idiom, we must pay attention to the sentimental color of writing.

Lawyers who practice in the smaller cities or in the country towns do not, of course, have the same opportunities for court work, but they usually have various matters to handle.

(The word“形形色色” have a derogatory sense, but we can not infer it from
e. When quoting Chinese idioms, we should avoid imposing idioms with strong Chinese national characteristics to the original text, the same is true as using the uncommon idioms.

The state constitution provides that it is lawful for the citizens to carry guns. In recent years thousands of innocent people have died of this and one need not look far for a lesson.

(We should avoid using the word “殷鉴不远”, which comes from《诗·大雅·荡》, has strong Chinese national colors and is uncommon relatively, we’d better not use it. It can be changed to the word“教训历历在目”)

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