

THE WAYS TO TRANSLATE "NEGATION"(I)

The Chinese and the English-speaking people often think in different ways and have different customs. These differences in ways of living and thinking often express themselves in speech. Sometimes the difference is so great that the Eastern and Western people think and speak just in the opposite way. What is affirmative in one language may be expressed negatively by another, or vice versa. Every language has its peculiarities in negation.

Hence great caution must be taken in translating English sentences implying negations so as to avoid ridiculous errors, especially when you translate materials about medical instrument, if you express negation as affirmative or vice versa, for the patients who use this instrument, you really put their life in danger, or “kill” them. So the translator must carefully consider whether an English sentence should be converted into negative or affirmative, and how it is expressed in idiomatic Chinese. Correct translations save life.

1. Transfer of the negative

1. Transfer of the negative from the main clause to the subordinate That-clause.

A strange feature of the syntax of subordination in colloquial English is the transfer of the negative from a subordinate that-clause. Thus “I think he will not come” is less often seen than “I don’t think he will come.” In Chinese, however, we usually say “他不会来” instead of “我认为他不会来”, hence the

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Example:

No modulated signal is detected.

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When gasoline burns, nothing visible remains.

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He gave me not even a moment to collect my thoughts.

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The whole subject is so obscure, that I have succeeded in throwing hardly any light on it□

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