TRANSLATION SKILLS OF LONG SENTENCE

During translation, we would encounter many long sentences, especially in the technical and law articles. Meanwhile one main sentence would include several clauses which belong to the range of complex structural sentence.

Generally speaking, such long sentence phenomenon can be explained by three reasons: 1). too many modifiers; 2). too many Parallel compositions; 3). Multiple level of language structure;

In the process of analyzing long sentences, we could take following methods:

1). Finding out the subject, predicate and the object, so that the main structure of the long sentence can be understood as a whole.

2). Finding out all the predicative structures, the nonfinite verbs, the prepositional phrases and the guide words of clauses in the long sentences.

3). Analyzing the function of clauses and phrases; for example, to figure out whether belongs to the subject clauses, the object clause, or the predicative clauses; If worked as an adverbial modifier, to understand whether represents time, cause, consequences, or condition.

4). Analyzing the interrelationship between words, phrases and clauses, for example, which antecedent is used for the attributive clause
5). Paying attention to the parenthesis and other components.

6). Understanding whether fixed phrases or set structures existed in the sentence.

With regard to each long sentence, there is not only a translation skill applied, but comprehensive application of multiple translation skills. While translating the long sentences, first of all, do not fear of handling long sentence, because no matter how complex of the sentence, it is still composed by some basic components. Second, we should understand the syntactic structure of the source file, to identify the central contents of the whole sentence as well as the meaning of each separated layer. And then analyzing the interrelationship between the meanings of each layer and finding out the logical relationship. In accordance with characteristic and the way of expression in Chinese, translated the original sentence correctly, but no need be bound in original form rigidly.

Cite one example and illustrate how to analyze a long sentence:

For a family of four, for example, it is more convenient as well as cheaper to sit comfortably at home, with almost unlimited entertainment available, than to go out in search of amusement elsewhere.

Analysis:

1). The main structure of this sentence is typically a comparative construction as “it is more... to do sth than to do sth else.” and the comparison is restricted between two infinitives.

2). There are three predicate structures in the sentence, it is the formal
subject and the real subject is “to sit comfortably at home”, and compared with “to go out in search of amusement elsewhere”.

3) At the beginning of the sentence, “for a family of four” takes as an adverbial modifier, indicates as a condition. In addition, there are two prepositional phrases worked as the parenthesis “for example, with almost unlimited entertainment available” in which the second preposition phrase acts as the accompanied adverbial modifier which used to modify “to sit comfortably at home”.

Translation: 对于一个四口之家来说，舒舒服服地在家中看电视，就能看到几乎数不清的娱乐节目，这比到外面别的地方去消遣又便宜又方便。

Also there are two stages and five steps to figure out the main idea of a long sentence per my understanding. Stage I Comprehension. Step 1: presenting the long sentence in a skeleton form; Step 2: inferring the main idea from the context and the whole text; Step 3: distinguishing between the principal and subordinate elements and find out the interrelations between principal and subordinate clauses; Stage II Presentation with Step 4: entering on a tentative translation of each sentence division; Step 5: rearrangement and finishing touches;

It is not fearful to translated long sentence in English, and learn to analyze the sentence, identify the backbone of the sentence and also figure out the relations between various branches; According to language habit in Chinese, divide the long sentence into small meaning fragments, reorganize the sentence per our basic skills of language. Meanwhile to find all types of long sentences for translation would make you get half the result with twice the effect.