Redundancy in English Translations of Chinese Patent Abstracts and its Effects on Accuracy, Readability and Reader Perception, and Implications for Quality Assurance in Professional Practice

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ABSTRACT

Recent developments in international patent applications have heightened the need for patent translators. The quest for quality translation has been pursued in many Patent Offices, but the need to translate patent documentations in accordance with regulations and the aim to provide information in a way that is acceptable to the target reader result in contradictions. This is particularly evident in patent abstracts, where the heavy information load within a limited space makes it hard for the readers to digest. As an essential documentation in patent application, a patent abstract compiles and summarizes technical information of an invention, and such information will be published online once the patent right is granted. This further explains the importance of translation quality.

The main objective of this research is to examine patent text quality in order to improve the quality of published translation. This thesis addresses the characteristics of patent language and its effects on the translation; it investigates how readers perceive patent documentation language and patent translation with the use of an evaluation mechanism devised especially for this research; it analyzes areas where improvements could be made. Analysis of the patent abstract text quality has been carried out using a range of approaches. From an integrated quantitative analysis and qualitative study, it is found that pleonastic use of words in the patent abstract impedes readers' overall impression of the text and lowers text readability. An analysis of pleonasm in patent language is provided in this research.

KEYWORDS: patent abstract, patent translation, readability, redundancies, translation quality assessment.

Yvonne Tsai, abstract of Ph.D. thesis.