

# Analysis and Reflection on Practice-based Translation Project Management

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## Abstract

This thesis is a report on the E-C translation project of a popular science books on renewable energy. In the perspective of the project manager, the author summarizes the strategies used in each stage of project management. General speaking, this translation practice report can be divided into four parts, the first part is the description of the translation task, including the background of the task, the client requirements, and task details. The second part shows the project process, including Project Start-up Phase, Project Plan Phase, Project Implementation Phase, Project Monitoring Phase and Project Final Phase. The third part showcases some typical problems in this translation project. The fourth part summarizes the deficiencies in the translation practice and related thinking as well as inspirations. In this translation practice report, the author combines practical translation experience with project management theories, and learns from mistakes, in order to optimize the translation project management process.

**Keywords:** Translation Practice Report, Translation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The language service industry has become a crucial support for China to go to the world, serve the world and influence the world. Most of the previous translation companies were general-purpose, but with the evolution of translation technology and the continuous development of machine translation, the translation companies are developing more and more quickly in more specific and detailed fields, getting deeper trust from customers [2]. In this case, translation project management comes into being, which involves the collaboration between front and back, company and company, department and department, and company and customer. In order to keep up with the development of modern language service industry, it is very important for companies to study translation project management. Translation project is often a continuous and complicated process, which is characterized by uniqueness, continuity and progressive explicitness [1]. In general, the translation project management process involves five major process groups (Project Start-up Phase, Project Plan Phase, Project Implementation Phase, Project Monitoring Phase and Project Final Phase), covers 10 knowledge areas (scope management, time management, cost management, quality

management, risk management, procurement management, resource management, communication management, interested party management and integration management). Based on the real energy translation project, this thesis analyses the strategies in the project management process, learns from mistakes and summarizes experience.

## 1. PROJECT OVERVIEW

### 1.1 Background

With the international efforts to deal with climate change and low-carbon energy becoming popular, countries become increasingly active in introducing policies and measures to promote the development of renewable energy industry. Therefore, the prospects of green energy industry are promising. At the same time, the International Energy Agency urged more countries to actively formulate effective energy policies to accelerate the transformation of the energy structure and promote the sustainable growth of the renewable energy industry. In this case, more and more people have a strong interest in the exploitation and production of renewable energy.

## 1.2 Client Requirements

This project is an E-C translation project of a popular science book on renewable energy. The client

asks the project team to translate the texts in plain language.

## 1.3 Task Details

(1)Language Direction: English (UK)→simplified Chinese;

	Task	Specific Task	Platform/Tool	Notes
5.23	(a)Project analysis;	(a)Preliminary analysis of the text	Wechat, various search engines	/
5.24	(b)Demand confirmation; (c)Assignment arrangement; (d)Risk assessment	(b)Team members search for relevant types of materials to learn; (b)Project manager confirm requirements of the client, and arrange assignments.		
5.25	Draw up the resource calendar and QA standard	A	Word,Wechat	The project manager should finish the resource calendar and quality standards, in the project team for publicity.
5.26				
5.27	Study out budget	A	/	Sixty yuan per thousand words
5.28				
5.29	Clean the document	A,B,C	Word	/

(2)Workload: 6,195 words;

(3)Source text format: PDF;

(4)Feature of the text: It has many technical terminologies and numbers. What's more, there are several special marks (such as superscript and subscript), which requires translators to pay more attention to the format. In addition, even though the original text has a number of difficult sentences, translation must strive to be concise and accurate, to avoid verbose and ambiguous sentences. And the text has many graphics, translator needs to use Photoshop and other tools for picture processing.

## 2. Project Procedures and Strategy Presentation

### 2.1 Project Start-up Phase

(1) Build the project team (the names of team members are replaced with letters to protect privacy)

①Project manager (\*1)[responsible for project analysis, planning and quality tracking] : A

②Typesetting (\*2)[responsible for graphic processing, formatting, etc] : B, C

③Proofreader (\*1)[responsible for revise and finalize] : A

④Performance Appraiser (\*1) [responsible for the collection of assignments and record the performance score]: D

Interpreters (6): A, B, C, D, E, F

### 2.2 Project Planning Phase

#### 2.2.1 Resource Calendar (excerpt)

#### 2.2.2 Project Duration Estimation

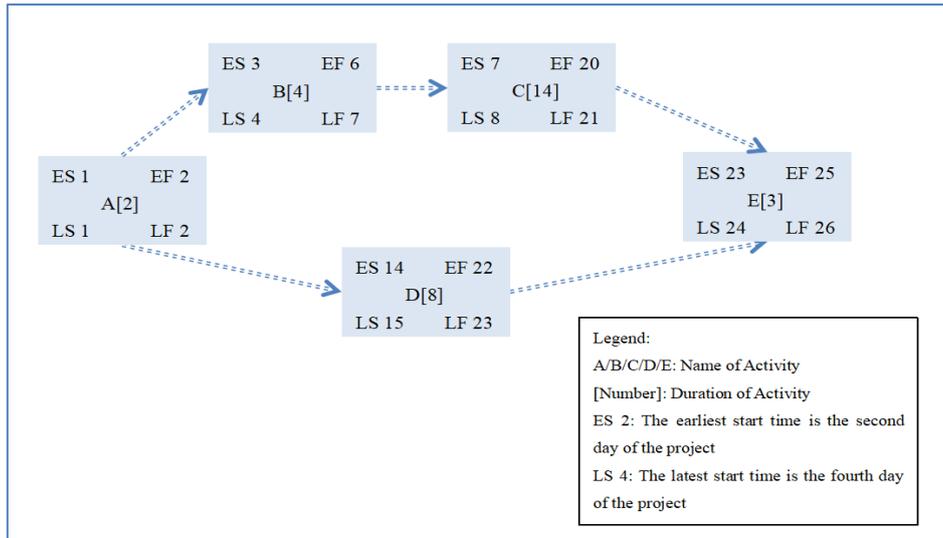
The most optimistic time ( $T_O$ ): the project is held over 23 days, from May 23, 2021 to June 14, 2021.

The most pessimistic time ( $T_P$ ): the project is held over 28 days, from May 23, 2021 to June 19, 2021.

The most likely time ( $T_M$ ): the project is held over 25 days, from May 23, 2021 to 16 June, 2021. According to the Beytagh formula:  $T_E$  (the estimated time)=  $(23 + 4 * 25 + 28)6 = 25.16$ (days)

#### 2.2.3 Develop a Project Schedule

Critical Path Method is a technique, which is used to estimate the shortest duration of a project, determine the schedule flexibility of logical network and create a schedule model. It is one of the progress network analysis techniques without taking resource constraints into account. There into, the earliest start time is ES, the earliest end time is EF, the latest start time is LS, the latest end time is LF, the total float time is TF, and the free float time is FF. According to the critical path method, the project can be presented as follows:



- A: Project Start-up Phase TFA=0, FFA=0
- B: Project Plan Phase TFB=1, FFB=0
- C: Project Implementation Phase TFC=1, FFC=0
- D: Project Monitoring Phase TFD=1, FFD=0
- E: Project Final Phase TFE=1

**2.2.4 Budgeting**

(1)Total revenue: 1239 yuan (200 yuan per thousand words, in consideration of typically professionalized terms, large amount of preparatory work, picture processing, high quality requirements and short time limit)

- (2)Gross margin: 15%, 185.85 yuan
- (3)The remaining 1,053.15 yuan was spent on the project as follows:
  - ①Interpreters(6): 70 Yuan per thousand words (the specific salary according to the number of words)
  - ②Proofreader: 50 yuan per thousand words;
  - ③Project manager: 50 yuan;
  - ④Typesetting staff: 70 yuan;
  - ⑤Performance appraiser: 30 yuan
- (4)Other expenses (for project coordination and bonus) : 89.75 yuan

	C	F	E	D	B	A
Word Count	746+450	848	1105	1069	1025+450	502
Estimated Wage (The actual wage shall be subject to the performance)	83.72 yuan	59.36 yuan	77.35 yuan	74.83 yuan	103.25 yuan	35.14 yuan

**2.2.5 Risk Identification**

**(1)SWOT analysis**

- ①Advantages: Firstly, the project has excellent team. Project manager and members own rich experience, scientific and rigorous project schedule, strict and effective performance evaluation standards. Secondly, the project has convenient technical assistance (the project depends on the YICAT platform). Thirdly, the reputation of the client is good, so the external risk possibility is low.
- ②Disadvantages: Firstly, the project has short time limit. Meanwhile, it has many typically professionalized terminologies and complex sentence structures. Thirdly, the project group has no experience in this filed, that is to say, the group needs to build a new terminology database. Fourthly, typesetting staff need to deal with complicated picture processing.
- ③Opportunity: The project is likely to have a surplus. And the total revenue is expected to be 1239 yuan, which is enough to support the operation of the project.

④Threat: Firstly, translators and typesetting staff may make mistakes and the project may be reworked. Secondly, terminologies may be inconsistent.

**(2)Risk Handling Measurement**

- ①Sign contract before the implementation of the project in order to clearly define relevant issues, and clear responsibilities of two parties;
- ②Indicate corresponding compensation in the event of one party break the contract;
- ③Receive a sum certain of money before the start-up phase of the project and regularly receive partial payment in the process;
- ④Establish a strict evaluation system, expel unqualified interpreters without delay and claim compensation from them;
- ⑤The project is planned to adopt measures of stage revision to monitor the quality of translation. And the interpreter should make amendments according to the proofreading opinions;

- ⑥ There are four times of proofreading: the first stage proofreading, the second stage proofreading, the general proofreading, and the language beautification stage;
- ⑦ Select a substitute interpreter in advance in case of emergency.

## 2.3 Project Implementation Phase

### 2.3.1 Quality Assurance

#### 2.3.1.1 QA Standard

	Type of Error	Level of Error	Deduction
1	Mistranslation	Serious	-10
2	Missed Translation	Serious	-10
3	Inconsistent Terminology	Serious	-10
4	Punctuation Error	Slight	-5
6	Faulty Wording	Slight	-5
7	Over-reliance on Machine Translation	Slight	-5
8	Faulty formulation	Slight	-5
9	Mismatch	Slight	-5

#### 2.3.1.2 Execution Process Analysis

(1) Text cleaning: Because the original text is in PDF format, the team uses WPS for format conversion and for modification or removal of garbled codes.

(2) Terminology Search and Unification

- ① Division of labor among members  
② Glossary (excerpt)

A	C	F	D	E	B
P1	P2-3	P4-5	P6-7	P8-9	P10-11
Terminology integration and proofreading: A					

acid rain	酸雨
afforestation	造林
anaerobic bacteria	厌氧菌
anthropogenic greenhouse gases	人为温室气体
aquifers	蓄水区

(3) Proofreading

① Periodic proofreading: in order to ensure the quality of translation and monitor the progress of the project, the project group sets up a “periodic proofreading” system and conducts two stages of revision;

② General review: According to the proofreading suggestions, the translators should revise the texts and submit it for general review before the deadline. The general review focuses more on logic, coherence and cohesion.

③ Typesetting: The typesetting staff’s main work can be separated into two parts. One is translating the words in the chart, and the other is embedding words and processing pictures.

### 2.3.2 Managing the Project Team

#### 2.3.2.1 Project Performance Evaluation

	Score in Phase I		Score in Phase II		Overall Score	Weighted Score
	Score	Type of Error	Score	Type of Error		
C	45/100	Mistranslation*1 Over-reliance on machine translation*2 Mismatch*1 Inconsistent Terminology*1 Faulty Formulation*4	20/100	Faulty Formulation*5 Mismatch*2 Missed Translation*1 Mistranslation*3	100/100	73/100

## 2.4 Project Monitoring Phase

### 2.4.1 Implementation of Overall Change Control

(1) Description: After the first stage proofreading, the project manager found that most translators did not pay attention to the special marks (numerical superscripts, etc.), and the use of punctuation was not uniform (such as the use of “-” and “—”)

(2) Overall Control

① The proofreader sent private messages to interpreters to point out errors and then emphasized the importance of punctuation;

② The proofreader precisely set up using rules of punctuation and posted it in the Wechat group. And

then interpreters made their own corrections and paid more attention in the next stage.

### 2.4.2 Progress Control

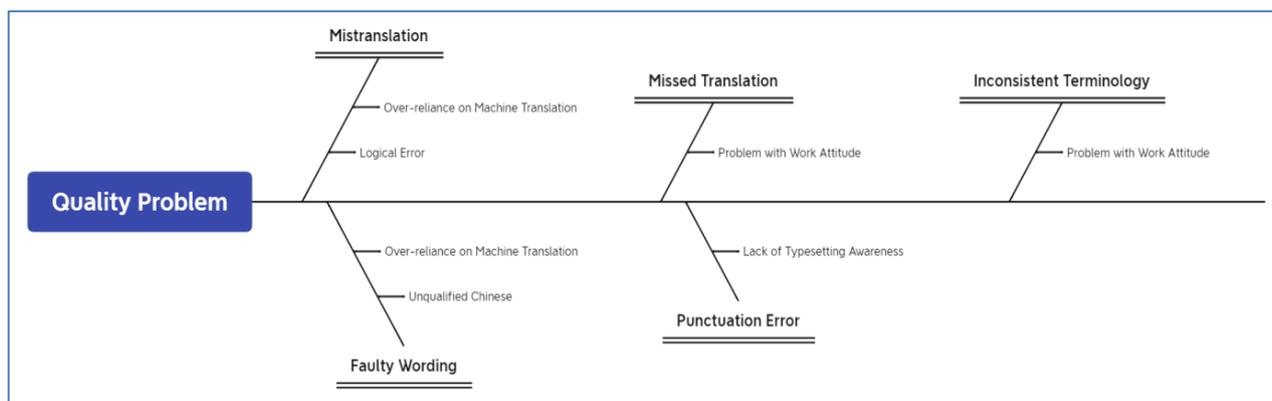
(1) Fast Tracking

① Description: Due to the large number of defects (punctuation, sentences, etc.) in the first stage of translation, the translators is required to rework. The implementation phase of the project was therefore delayed by two days.

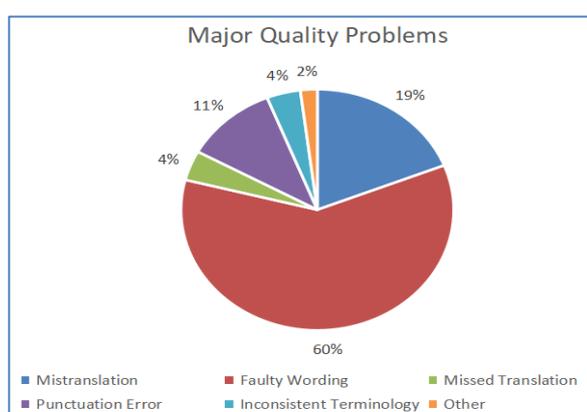
② Solution: The proofreader adopts the method of “fast tracking”, which can quickly follow up the second revision of the first translation stage while the interpreter is in the second one.

### 2.4.3 Quality Control

#### 2.4.3.1 Ishikawa diagram



Pie Chart



### 3. Typical Problem Presentation

#### (1) Unidiomatic usage

Original text: Thus, from a purely energetic viewpoint, the value of the operation is questionable, although on economic grounds it can be profitable since, effectively, low-value natural gas (of which Canada has plenty) is converted to high-value liquid fuels (see gas-to- liquids, Section 2.1, Chapter 2).

Translated text: 因此，从纯粹的能源观点来看，该操作的价值是值得商榷的。尽管从经济角度来看，它可能是有利可图的，因为实际上，在这个过程中大量低价值的天然气被转化为高价值的液体燃料，而这种低价值天然气在加拿大有着丰富的储量。（见第二章 2.1 节，气变液）。

Comment: In this text, “从纯粹的能源观点来看” is not in line with Chinese idiomatic usages. Please revise to “单纯从能源角度看”。

#### (2) Over-reliance on machine translation

Original text: Not only do the emission restrictions proposed at Kyoto for developed countries imply a marked reduction in their use of fossil fuels, particularly coal, but also such restrictions are not

immediately achievable by burning biomass and waste, two of the most promising renewables in the short term.

Translated text: 在京都为发达国家提出的排放限制不仅意味着它们对化石燃料，特别是煤炭的使用显著减少，而且这种限制不能通过燃烧生物质和废物立即实现，而生物质和废物是短期内最有希望的两种可再生能源。

Comment: The sentence is not smooth, which is caused by over-reliance on machine translation. Please revise to “《京都议定书》要求发达国家限制排放量，这不仅意味着发达国家要大大削减对化石燃料，尤其是对煤炭的使用，而且该限制不是靠燃烧生物质和废物就立刻实现的，而生物质和废物是短期内前景最好的两种可再生能源”。

#### (2) Identifying cognitive errors

Original text: Coal is not a unique commodity like natural gas, but exists in many different grades and qualities. The grades include in terms of increasing carbon content - lignite (or brown coal), soft bituminous coal, anthracite. Each type of coal is suitable for different applications.

Translated text: 不同于天然气，煤炭并不只有一种，可以被划分为不同的等级和质量。例如，根据含碳量，从高到低可以依次划分为褐煤、软烟煤、无烟煤。不同的煤炭适用的场合也不同。

Comment: According to research, the carbon content of lignite is 70-80%, and that of anthracite is 90%. Therefore, “从高到低” is wrong. Please revise to “按照碳含量从低到高排列，依次为褐煤、软烟煤、无烟煤”。

#### (3) Punctuation Error

Original text: For this reason, over the past 30 years or more, world reserves have been repeatedly

quoted as being sufficient to meet the demand for the next 10-25 years.

Translated text:因此, 在过去 30 年或更长时间里, 世界油气储备一再被认定足以满足未来 10-25 年的需求。

Comment: In Chinese text, we often use “—” to link two number. Therefore, please revise “10-25” to “10—25”.

## 4. REVIEW AND REFLECTION

### 4.1 Merits

(1)The project has an accurate and reasonable plan. The Project Start-up Phase and the Project Plan Phase are finished excellently, which is based on the outstanding risk factor assessment and feasibility analysis in the Project Start-up Phase and reasonable schedule control in the Project Plan Phase. These two components are the important foundation of the success of the project.

(2)The project has effective monitoring and orderly evaluation of performance. The project monitoring has been carried out from beginning to end. Both daily monitoring and emergency response have made good performance. The whole process of project monitoring is mainly counted by the performance appraiser, and finally the project manager makes a comprehensive performance evaluation sheet.

(3)The project focuses on communication and interaction. Good project communication is embodied in two aspects. One is the communication with customers. Before starting the project, the team actively identify the needs of the client. And in the medium term, the team timely report the latest progress to the customer. The other is the communication between the project manager and the members. Although there were difficulties in the project, the team finally solved the problem by actively communicating.

### 4.2. Shortcomings and Lessons

(1)The project does not have a clear style guide. In this project. Owing to lack a strict and detailed style guide in the initial stage, translators made a lot of mistakes in punctuation, layout and terminology, leading to a delay. In the future, the project manager should set up the style guide at the beginning of the project, including the style of translation, using rules of punctuation and typesetting, etc.

(2)The translators lack the basic ability of text editing. In the quality monitoring of this practice, “punctuation error” accounts for 11% of total errors, which shows that the translators lack the consciousness and basic ability of text editing. In today’s translation projects, typesetting and text editing skills are becoming increasingly important, and translators should be carefully trained to improve these skills.

(3)The project lacks buffer time. In the progress control of this practice, the actual project time is two days later than the expected one, increasing the cost of the project. In the future, the project manager must place a buffer time at the end of each critical chain and at the junction of the non-critical chain and the critical chain, in order to protect critical chains from postponing caused by delays of non-critical chains.

## 5. SUMMARY

In short, a good project management process is the solid foundation of a successful translation project. By analyzing the project of a popular science book of renewable energy, this thesis wants to optimize the management process. Through this practice, project managers should pay more attention to typesetting and style guides, and set buffer time for projects in the future.

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