

Assessing the Influence of Structural Ambiguity in Technical Translation with Special Reference to Administrative Documents in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Ambiguity is a crucial problem that translators often encounter when translate documents from Source language (SL) to Target language (TL). Each language is comprised of system of linguistic elements (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics) which arranged to a proper sequence in a way that a clear meaning is derived by the users. However, due to some improper arrangements of these linguistic elements, perhaps the message intended to be delivered can be misinterpreted in several ways. In the context of structural ambiguity, Tuggy (1993) defines it as a “result of two or more syntactic structures that can be attributed to one string of word or sentence.” This research aimed to assess the influence of structural ambiguity in technical translation with special reference to administrative documents in Sri Lanka. The study was conducted in line with qualitative approaches observing English version of administrative documents including the gazettes, circulars, and amendments. The results indicated that the ambiguity was associated by 2% out of all the selected text, and 80% of which has appeared as a result of modification while the rest has come in the form of co-ordination.

Keywords: Translation, Ambiguity, Modification, Co-ordination