

# Translation Theory and Techniques in Optometry Literature: A Case Study of the “Optoform 80 Installation and Maintenance Manual”

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Translation of specialized documents in optometry presents unique challenges, requiring a deep understanding of the professional context, terminology, and adherence to specific translation styles. This paper delves into the translation theory and techniques employed in the English-to-Chinese translation of the “Optoform 80 Installation and Maintenance Manual”, serving as a case study. Emphasizing Nida’s theory of functional equivalence, the paper explores the complexities of translating professional optometry literature, focusing on key points and common issues in translating installation and maintenance manuals for optometric devices. Special attention is given to the translation of professional terminology, employing methods such as addition, omission, conversion, and repetition. The translation process aims to meet specific requirements, ensuring accuracy and coherence while aligning with Chinese language conventions. The paper also analyzes translation methods and techniques concerning terminology, prepositions, conjunctions, and handling parallel elements based on practical insights from the Optoform 80 Manual.

*Keywords:* optometry translation, functional equivalence, installation and maintenance manual translation

## Introduction

The specialized nature of optometry documents poses challenges for translators engaged in research and English-to-Chinese translation within this field. Therefore, it is essential to systematically analyze and study translation techniques in this domain. This paper represents a constructive attempt to provide insights for scholars and translators in the field by summarizing common difficulties encountered in the translation of optometry literature. Taking the “Optoform 80 Installation and Maintenance Manual” as a case study, this paper aims to analyze and explore such texts.

## Translation Theory and Key Points of the Installation and Maintenance Manual for Optometric Devices

Translating optometry literature requires a deep understanding of its professional context, comprehension of the original text, and mastery of the appropriate translation style. After translation, it is crucial to proofread for omissions and mistranslations. In the translation of the “Installation and Maintenance Manual”, the author employed Nida’s theory of functional equivalence, which posits that the primary function of the translation is to

convey the spirit of the source document, ensuring consistency in the reader's understanding and response to both the source and target documents while maintaining natural fluency (Nida, 1998).

Given the demand for English in the optometry medical industry, this paper focuses on key points and common translation issues in the English translation of optometry equipment installation and maintenance manuals. By doing so, it systematically summarizes the theory and techniques employed in the translation of optometry equipment installation and maintenance manuals from English to Chinese.

The emphasis in translating the installation and maintenance manual for optometric devices lies in the translation of professional terminology. Various translation methods, such as addition, omission, conversion, and repetition, can be employed to translate relevant professional vocabulary in the manual. Omission can be applied to conjunctions, pronouns, prepositions, and articles; conversion involves transforming adverbs, articles, prepositions, participles, and adjectives into verbs, while some words can also be converted into nouns in specific contexts; repetition allows for the appropriate repetition of verbs, nouns, prepositions, and parts omitted in the original text, adhering to the rhetorical expressions customary in Chinese grammar (Yu, 2012).

The translation of the installation and maintenance manual should meet specific requirements. Due to its distinctive writing style, different from literary works, the manual adheres to a set of professional and accurate translation standards. The English version of the manual is primarily intended for foreign customers, and the quality of the translation into Chinese depends largely on whether the translator possesses a professional foundation, can accurately understand the original text, meet the specific requirements of the manual's users, and simultaneously adhere to the professional English translation standards of the installation and maintenance manual (Li & Zhu, 2019). Throughout the translation process, the core focus is on ensuring the accuracy of meanings, avoiding information transmission errors resulting from translation mistakes.

Therefore, in the process of translating the manual, attention should be paid to the following points: The translation should strive to avoid direct translation from the English original, instead aligning with Chinese language conventions in terms of expression; the translator must ensure the coherence of the translated sentences and, to better reflect the expressive meaning of the original text, and may judiciously add certain words during the translation; to maintain the writing style of the installation and maintenance manual, the translation should preferentially use passive constructions with inanimate nouns as subjects.

### **Translation Methods and Techniques of the Installation and Maintenance Manual for Optometric Devices**

The author, based on the translation practice of the "Optoform 80 Installation and Maintenance Manual", analyzes "how to translate" in terms of terminology, prepositions, conjunctions, and handling of parallel elements.

#### **Understanding and Expression of Terminology**

When consulting relevant terminology, it is observed that the same vocabulary may have multiple expressions in Chinese. For example, "latch" can be translated as "插销, 挂钩; 锁存器; 锁住, 闩锁 (locking mechanism on the control rod drive mechanism)". In such cases, the choice of translation is highly arbitrary. Terminology also exhibits polysemy; for instance, words like "remove" and "clearance" should be translated differently in various contexts. "Clearance" can mean both permission and a gap, while "remove" can be translated as "清除" in specific contexts, such as "remove adhesive (清除粘胶)". To address terminology issues,

it is advisable, conditions permitting, to establish a terminology database. The database should ensure accuracy and correctness, with indications of different meanings in various contexts if applicable, and abbreviations in the Chinese translation should be noted.

### **Handling of Prepositions**

To avoid sentence elongation causing difficulties in comprehension, the choice of words and sentence construction in the installation and maintenance manual should minimize the use of prepositions. While translators can employ techniques like modifying verbs or omission on the translation level, the challenge lies in correctly interpreting the intended meaning of prepositions—their abstract semantics make it challenging for translators to grasp their intended meanings. To enhance the accuracy of preposition translation, the author suggests two approaches: firstly, reading parallel texts, especially bilingual parallel texts, which are excellent materials for learning aircraft maintenance manuals. Translators can learn from predecessors how to handle prepositions, summarizing their experiences for better translations; secondly, seeking guidance from maintenance personnel, who are the users of aircraft maintenance manual translations. Consulting with them not only provides insights into the maintenance and replacement of aircraft components, but also serves as a validation of the correctness of the translation (Guo, 2023).

### **Handling of Parallel and Connecting Elements**

Sometimes, due to a lack of background knowledge, translators may make judgment errors in dealing with parallel elements. For example, in the phrase “...at the upper and lower rear sections of the air filter”, the translator needs to determine whether “upper and lower” or “upper and lower rear” is the intended connection. Additionally, in translating texts, translators need to handle conjunctions flexibly, striving to align with Chinese expression habits in the Chinese translation. To handle parallel and connecting elements effectively, the author believes that translators should first strengthen their foundational English skills, continue learning grammar, and understand sentence structures. Simultaneously, unclear comprehension of sentence meanings may stem from a lack of relevant background knowledge and vocabulary. Therefore, translators should enhance their knowledge and vocabulary reserves. Moreover, improving search and retrieval capabilities can save time, enhancing efficiency in the translation process.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the intricate process of translating optometry literature, particularly installation and maintenance manuals for optometric devices. The application of Nida’s functional equivalence theory proves beneficial in conveying the source document’s spirit while maintaining fluency. The emphasis on translating professional terminology highlights the importance of employing diverse methods to ensure precision and coherence in the translated text. The paper underscores the significance of avoiding direct translations, aligning with Chinese expression conventions, and utilizing passive constructions to maintain the manual’s writing style. Furthermore, the analysis of translation methods for terminology, prepositions, and connecting elements, based on the “Optoform 80 Manual”, offers practical strategies for overcoming challenges in the translation process. Ultimately, this study contributes to the knowledge base for scholars and translators engaged in the intricate field of optometry translation, offering valuable guidelines and techniques for effective and accurate cross-cultural communication in this specialized domain.

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