Scientific Translation

الترجمة العلمية

University of Al-Mustansiriyah

College of Arts

Translation Department

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4th stage/ Morning classes

Lecture 2: Theoretical Part

Time: 10:30

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Scientific Language

In scientific language, subject matter takes priority over the style, which aims at expressing facts, experiments, hypotheses, etc. The reader of a scientific work does not read it for any pleasure which a reader of a literary work usually seeks, but he/ she is after the information it contains.

Scientific or technical language is a language where terms of different fields of science are found such as: mathematical, geographical, chemical terms, etc.

The Features of The Language of Science

The question is put, what makes this language different from any other language used in any other discipline? Each discipline has to have a certain amount of specialized vocabulary, but is the language of science more than this?

Strevens in a survey article (1977: 153-4) says that scientific discourse uses a lot of words, roots and affixes of Greek and Latin origin, and uses, or has access to, symbols, numbers, names of chemicals which are largely international in character. therefore the style of the scientific language can be explained not in terms of the basic components of the language, but in terms of:

*The statistical properties of the mixture in which they occur, and the intention, the purpose, behind their selection and use.*

(p. 153)

The features of scientific prose for Strevens are:

1. The use of noun-phrases (Long and complicated).

***electromagnetic theory****, anti-allergic drug, basal cell layer,* *tissue culture, genetic engineering, plant nutrition and growth, genetically modified crops, reliability-centered maintenance, break-even time*

1. The frequent use of passive constructions.

*The infection is caused by…….*

*Potential energy is seen…....*

1. The selection of items of specialized vocabulary.

*contact, occupational, composition, interactions*

4- The frequent use of the following conjunctions.

*consequently, hence, moreover, thus*

5- The use of specific verbs. In medicine, for example, there's the frequent use of the following verbs:

*cause, determine, result in, protect, take, allow, store*

Widdowson, on the other hand, (1974: 288) stated that scientific language avoids using the first and second person. The passive voice is also used:

*It is important to recognize that the 'depersonalized' statement of the scientist represents a way of referring to phenomena in a 'non-ordinary' manner which is as much an essential part of science as is the 'subject matter.'*

(p. 289)

Let us examine the following examples:

*The drug is used for symptomatic treatment of allergic conditions.*

*The Abdomen region contains your stomach and other digestive organs.*

*Space is the boundless three-dimensional extent in which* [*objects*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_body) *and events have relative position and direction.*

*Geography (from* [*Greek*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek)*: γεωγραφία, geographia, literally "earth description") is a field of* [*science*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science) *devoted to the study of the lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena of the* [*Earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) *and* [*planets*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solar_System)*.*

To sum up, the language of a scientific work is characterized by impersonal style, use of acronyms, and clarity. The words (or scientific vocabulary) in a scientific text are usually used with a precise signification. Each word usually has one well-defined meaning that is nor ambiguous, or likely to change whenever it occurs.

References:

Strevens, P. (1977). *Special Purpose Language learning: a perspective*. Language Teaching & Linguistics Abstracts Vol. 10 (3), p145-163.

Widdowson, H.G. (1974) *Literary and scientific uses of English*. English Language Teaching Journal. Vol. 3 (28), p282-292.

المراجع:

الترجمة من العربية إلى الإنجليزية: مبادئها و مناهجها. تأليف جيمز دكنز، ساندرو هارفي، إين هكنز*؛* ترجمة الدكتور عبد الصاحب مهديعلي.