

# The Application of Structural Analysis in the Long Sentences Translation of French

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**Abstract.** Learning a language, they are bound to face to transform the language into their native language. In Chinese-French translation, long sentence translation of French is a difficult point, so this paper is mainly based on material collected by daily translation practice, probes into the declarative French articles, talks about the importance of sentence structure analysis in long sentence translation of French, together with the usage of broken up translation, subject switching translation, and word order translation adjustment.

**Keywords:** French long sentences; structural analysis; long sentence translation.

## 1. Introduction

Long sentences refer to those sentences with complex structure and many words and phrases. Chinese is an ideographic block of text-box and analytical language, and its grammatical relations are not primarily manifested through the inflections, but through the function words and word order, etc. While French is an alphabetic script and comprehensive language, and it is through the change of the form itself to express grammatical meaning.

The differences between Chinese and French led us to overcome obstacles during the process of translation, especially in the translation of long sentences. If there are too many modified and qualifying components in French sentences, we are required to analyze the sentence structure accurately and find out appropriate translation methods. We mention the so-called structure analysis, which originally starts from analyzing syntactic structural relation, sentence function or role, and understanding basic components (subject, predicate, object) and minor components (adverbial, complement).

In fact, scholars have written a great deal of related monographs, books, and papers on Translation Major. Besides, paper topics also involve quite a wide field. However, there is no too much papers which mainly investigate long sentence structural analysis of Chinese-French inter-translation and translation strategies. Based on the description above, we think it is necessary to study French long sentence translation. One is the analysis could make French long sentence structure clearer, take good practicability, and avoid wrong translation caused by understanding errors of structure in long sentence translation. Meanwhile, it also can let people take effective measures to improve the quality of translation.

## 2. The Differences and Application between Chinese Long Sentences and French Long Sentences

### 2.1 Differences in Sentence Structure

There exist great differences between Chinese and French sentence structure. Chinese sentences rely on the meaning of the sentence itself and contains no conjunctions. Chinese sentences, whose relationship between each component is not obvious but shows the internal connection, reveals brevity and simplicity. While, French sentences connect the meaning of each sentence mainly through conjunctions and pronouns. For example, in this Chinese sentence “你想走, 我也不想留下来”, we don't see a related connective, but there is an implicit internal relation: hypothetical relationship. Therefore, when dealing with Chinese-French translation, we need to make the implicit relationship explicit.

(1) Cette situation contribue largement au développement touristique, d'autant que s'y ajoute un riche patrimoine culturel.

Analysis: In the first place, we should understand what is “d'autant que”, which means ‘especially or particularly because’. And then analyze the structure of “s'y ajoute un riche patrimoine culturel”. “S'ajouter a + nom” means ‘add and supplement’, and “y” can replace “à + nom”, so the latter part of the sentence is actually an inversion, and the complete structure of two parts in the original sentence should be: (a) “Cette situation contribue largement au développement touristique.” This situation contributes large development to tourism. (b) “D'autant que un riche patrimoine culturel s'ajoute à cette situation.” Especially this situation also supplies with quite a rich cultural heritage. At last, this translated version should be: This kind of geographical structure, especially with its rich cultural heritage, contributes large development to tourism.

(2) Il s'agit d'un lieu archéologique sous l'eau dont la structure principale est un énorme menhir naturel d'une longueur de 1600 mètres. Sur la pierre, on trouve 165 paragraphes d'inscriptions anciennes.

Analysis: The first thing we notice in the first sentence is that the relative pronoun “dont”, which takes no changes of gender and number, generally has antecedent which refers to person or thing, and replaces “de + antecedent” in the subordinate clause. In this sentence, “dont” almost equals to “de ce lieu archéologique”, which means the original sentence can be transcribed into two sub-sentences, containing two levels of meaning. (a) “Il s'agit d'un lieu archéologique sous l'eau.” It is an underwater archaeological site. (b) “La structure principale est un énorme menhir naturel d'une longueur de 1600 mètres.” The main structure of the underwater archaeological site is a huge natural stone girder, the length of which is 1600 meters. In order to avoid the burden brought by repeated “underwater archaeological site”, we translate “la structure principale de ce lieu archéologique” as its main structure.

The literal meaning of the second sentence is “On the stone, 165 ancient inscribed segments were found by people.” In original French sentence, the subject is the generic pronoun “on”, which shows that the discoverer was not so sure. If we translate the original sentence into “On the stone, 165 ancient inscribed segments were found by people”, the meaning will be quite clear but not terse and concise. So, in Chinese translation, we will use adverbial “on the stone” as subject to make sentence more concise. The translation version - “On the stone, there existed 165 ancient inscribed segments” sound clearer. Besides, the sentence structure is greatly simplified.

Based on all analysis above, the sentence can be translated as “This is an underwater archaeological site, and the main structure is a 1600-meter long natural stone beam. On the stone, there exists 165 ancient inscribed segments.” All the French-Chinese translation process shows that we should dare to break through the framework of the original text, and should base the correct understanding of the original text to make some adjustments, such as undertaking reasonable split across long clauses, switching subject, and breaking up the sentence.

## **2.2 Attributive Position Difference**

In Chinese sentences, attributive is commonly situated in front of modified ingredients. However, if it is too long, it will be redundant. While French is different, the attributive is usually put in the back of modified ingredients, adopting the form of the adjective, clauses, or even some clauses with subordinate clauses. Such as “She is a beautiful girl, with great humor and calmness.” In French sentences, we can directly use three adjectives to modify ‘girl’. When translating French long sentences, analyzing sentence structure, it is quite important to understand the logical relationship between various modifiers and modified ingredients. Below we will analyze the problems that should be paid attention to and the methods that can be adopted in the translation process through practical examples.

(3) En 2008, Bob Dylan a remporté une mention spéciale du prix Pulitzer pour « son profond impact sur la musique populaire et la culture américaine, marquée par des compositions lyriques de pouvoir poétique extraordinaire »

Analysis: The French sentence itself doesn't carry rarely-used words, but to make sense of it, we need to clarify its structure. The first difficult point is "preposition 'pour' + noun", which shows reason in translation, and the second one is the understanding of attributive clause leading by "marqué". For "pour+ noun", we can translate the noun phrase into a sentence to avoid the burden of having too many qualifiers and modifiers in a sentence. For the attributive clause leading by "marqué", there exists a detail- "marqué" ends with an "e", which means that it isn't used to modify "la musique populaire et la culture américaine". Besides, Bob Dylan is a singer, according to common sense we can infer the rest of the complete structure of this sentence should be "la musique de Bob Dylan est marquée par des compositions lyriques de pouvoir poétique extraordinaire", so that the whole sentence is very clear in structure and meaning.

So, we can conclude that this sentence holds three layers of meaning. (a) En 2008, Bob Dylan a remporté une mention spéciale du prix Pulitzer. In 2008, Bob Dylan won the special Pulitzer prize. (b) Cette mention spéciale est due à « son profond impact sur la musique populaire et la culture américaine ». The reason for award reveals that 'His music shows profound influence on popular music and American culture'. (c) La musique de Bob Dylan est marquée par des compositions lyriques de pouvoir poétique extraordinaire. His music is highly poetic and lyrical works.

According to the logical relationship of each part, we combine three layers of meaning together, and get the translation version- "In 2008, Bob Dylan won the Pulitzer special mention, and the reason is that he's extremely rich poetic lyricism in music to pop music and made a profound impact on American culture." In the process of translation, we will make some adjustment of the sentence order. We erase the traces of attributive clause leading by "marqué", and then use two Chinese sentences to express all causality and restricted relations of the three layers of meaning, making the translation concise and to the point.

(4) Lointaines héritières d'une variété préhistorique de guêpe dont sont également issues les abeilles, les fourmis - apparues il y a environ 140 million d'années - sont l'espèce animale la plus répandue sur la planète.

Analysis: This sentence still contains a relative pronoun "dont". We should clarify the original sentence structure first, and then analyze its meaning. The original sentence can be divided into four sentences, one of which is an inverted sentence. (a) Les fourmis sont les lointaines héritières d'une variété préhistorique de guêpe, Ants are descendants of a prehistoric species called wasp. (b) Les abeilles sont également issues des lointaines héritières d'une variété préhistorique de guêpe. The bee also derives from a wasp from prehistoric times. (c) Les fourmis sont apparues il y a environ 140 million d'années. Ants appeared 140 million years ago. (d) Les fourmis sont l'espèce animale la plus répandue sur la planète. Ants are the most widespread animals on earth.

Based on the logical relationship between each part, we unite all meanings of a,b,c,d together and get the translation version "Ants and bees both evolved from wasps in prehistoric times. Ants appeared 140 million years ago and are the most common animals on earth."

### 3. Summary

By four examples above, it is easy to see that in Chinese-French translation, long sentence in French, which is mostly complex sentence structure and takes great attributive qualifiers and modifiers, is quite commonly seen. Therefore, it is very important to understand the syntactic differences between two languages, to learn to analyze the sentence structure, and to clear up the logical relationship between the components. Correct sentence structure helps to understand the original text and ensure the accuracy of the translation. In addition, during the process of translation, we should not only be faithful to the original content, but also get rid of the shackles of the original structure when necessary. We can use the methods of sentence splitting, switching between subject translation and sentence order translation, so that the translation can conform the original content and Chinese expression habits, making it easier for readers to read.

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