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Language resource management — Controlled human communication (CHC) —

Part 4:
Basic principles and methodology for Stylistic Guidelines in Localization (SGL)

ICS: 01.140.20

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Contents

Page

Foreword

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Language resource management*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 24620 series can be found on the ISO website.

Introduction

The science technologies, especially ICT (Information and Communication Technology), have evolved and changed the world in recent decades. People use the advanced technologies that were never taken for granted in their grandparent generations. Moreover, the speed of the progress in the science technologies and ICT is supposed to be accelerated in the future. While on the other hand, the technologies related to written communication including translation have not progressed compared with those science technologies. People have got, of course, the CAT (Computer Assisted Translation) tools such as Translation Memory and Machine Translation for their own use. However, the progress of those seems not to be sufficient or equivalent compared with tools of the other science technologies. People need some device or method to boost the communication all over the world. People can realize it by applying this document to their languages.

People may not have any objection about that English has currently evolved into the representative international common language: lingua franca. When browsing the internet, people can find so many English sites. According to the estimation made by W3Techs, English sites enjoy the considerable share, 52.4 % (2018) on the internet. Interestingly enough, ASD-STE100,[1] one of the representative Controlled English rule sets, has usually been downloaded by non-English native speaking countries (62 %, compared with 38 % of English-speaking countries [ASD, 2021]). This is natural if people think of the communication method with other countries. Nowadays, people ordinary communicate with other people in non-English speaking countries by using English through the internet such as email and social meeting systems. Therefore, it is necessary to make the communication tool (English) to be more understandable and translatable.

At the same time, almost half of the internet sites (47.6 %) are written in the languages other than English according to the W3Techs report. People may also need to make their language plain, concise, and understandable because so many counterparts are not good at English and stick to their own language. As a result, people will find that they need two languages: English and their own language. In order to facilitate the communication all over the world, it is necessary for people to make English and their own language plainer, comprehensible, and easily translatable: to make English and their language bi-directionally accessible.

However, languages have problems that make it difficult to understand in a language and between languages. Refer to “8 Annex A, Difficulties and matters to be solved in communication” for understanding each difficulty.

This means that people need to apply some rules to the grammar of English and their language to exclude unnecessarily difficult or misleading expressions. Their language should encourage the other people including the language learners who currently live in that country, to use it and make it work as an international common language, lingua franca, in that region.

This document is designed to cover documents in many languages of all business fields and written communication in daily lives. The basic concept of this document is “Inclusive design,” which is usually used in usability design that tries to lower the threshold for the accessibility of ordinary people and to include the people as the major readers. This document has prioritized understandability (not sophistication) for accommodating a wide range of general international readers in business fields and people in ordinary daily lives. The target readers consist not only of natives in each language but of average language learners: that is, not only E1(ENL English as a native language) but E2 (ESL English as a second language) and E3 (EIL English as an international language) in English, and also consist not only of university-students but of eighth grade level people (in other words, Standard [60-70] in Flesch readability scale in the USA). This document aims to achieve the above as much as possible. At the same time, this document allows to facilitate communication between countries by applying the rules of this document to improve translatability. It is advisable to apply this document to many languages and allow the readers to easily understand the documents.

Language resource management — Controlled human communication (CHC) —

Part 4:
Basic principles and methodology for Stylistic Guidelines in Localization (SGL)

1 Scope

This document establishes a set of “International common writing rules” in a language and among languages, facilitating communication in each language and language to languages. It is effective mainly in the business scenes and daily lives. It includes not only conceptual writing rules but specific grammar ones.

It functions similarly as the writing rules of Plain languages and Controlled languages that people usually find in the modern world. Plain languages and Controlled languages facilitate understandability of sentences by applying the rules to use plain and concise expressions. Plain languages are the activities that have been generated to raise the literacy of people in each country (for domestic native speakers). Controlled languages facilitate communication for international audience and sometimes used in a machine translation scene as HOCL (Human-Oriented Controlled Language). Each purpose and each methodology are a little bit different from each other and each has its own characteristics: advantages and disadvantages. (Refer to these writing rules, see “9 Annex B, Useful writing guidelines.”)

SGL, targeting the people in business and daily lives of all over the world, is planned as a basic writing rule set for both Plain languages and Controlled languages. Also, SGL is created to be applicable to many languages. SGL helps people make their language an international common language.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
SGL (Stylistic Guidelines in Localization)
specifies the common writing rules applicable to many languages

3.2
technical communication
process of gathering information and developing and presenting technical content to a target audience in a usable form

[SOURCE: ISO 24183]

3.3
technical writing
logical and straightforward writing methods for business documents

[SOURCE: ISO 24183]

3.4
plain language
communication in which wording, structure, and design are so clear that intended readers can easily: find what they need; understand what they find; and use that content

[SOURCE: ISO 24495-1]

3.5
controlled language
language restricting the grammar and vocabulary to reduce ambiguity and complexity, and helping people to understand the content

3.6
keyword
word or phrase used to describe the contents (nouns and verbs) of a document in a consistent manner

3.7
part of speech
category to which a word is classified according to each syntactic function

EXAMPLE noun, verb, adjective

4 Prediction

There seems to be many common factors/rules among languages because languages should reflect people's inner mind: Mentalese, "we think in a meta-language, preceding any natural language" (Steven Pinker [2]). "Mentalese" may be common in a sense. If so, it is possible to create a set of writing rules that is applicable to many different languages. There is a good example below:

Acquiring colo(u)r words in the same order

Black and White > Red > Yellow/Green > Blue (Berlin and Kay, 1969)

Notwithstanding such cosmetic differences, Berlin and Kay rediscovered Geiger's 101-year-old sleeping beauty essentially unchanged and woke it up with a smacking great kiss. Of course, no one dreamed of calling it Geiger's sequence anymore, as Geiger's claims on it had been erased from the collective consciousness. Instead, the progression is now universally known as 'Berlin and Kay, 1969'. But matters of copyright aside, the sequence that had dogged the debate in the nineteenth century suddenly trotted back on stage and demanded explanation: why do so many languages acquire colour words in the same order, and why—underlying the variation—is there still so much similarity between the colour concepts of different languages? (Through the Language Glass: Guy Deutscher; Arrow Books)

This phenomenon shows one of the key proofs of the prediction above. When checking the languages based on the prediction, people will be able to find many similarities between languages. For example, consider the Plain and Logical Japanese 77 rules (Nakamura, Sep. 2015) [3] shown in "9 Annex B," which are linguistically far from English. It includes 43 effective English writing rules out of a total 77 Japanese writing rules.

5 Methodology—how to apply the rules

The matters to be applied can be divided into two groups: sentences and words. Sentences are involved in syntactic and grammatical issues, which may be applicable to all languages. While on the other hand, since words, or vocabulary, heavily depends on the language of each country, it is difficult to find and apply common rules.

This SGL concentrates on improvement by sentences, including clauses and phrases. The technics related to writing sentences can be solved by simply applying the 3C rules in technical writing and technical communication: Clear, Correct, and Concise. That is:

— Clearly showing sentence structure and not making the structure complicated;

— Telling facts and correct things and distinguishing between facts and opinions; and

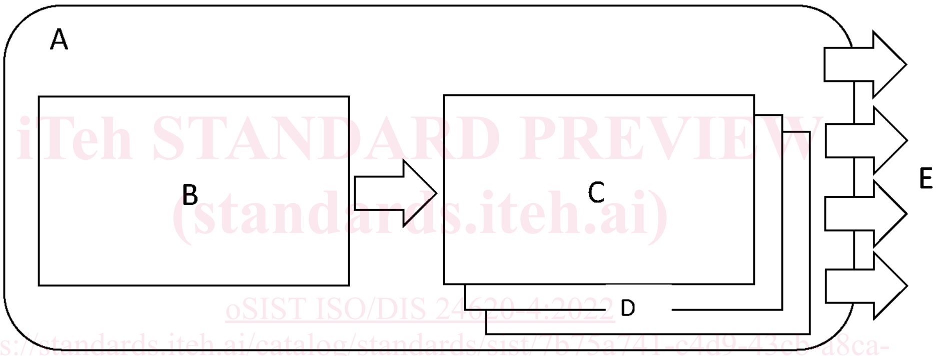
— Showing simple and concise expressions.

The 3C rules are applicable to any language and have been applied to many writing guidelines for Plain languages and Controlled languages, which are shown in "9 Annex B, Useful writing guidelines."

SGL in one language can be created immediately by applying this English version to that language. Of course, some grammatical or syntactic ingenuity may be required.

6 Steps to create a Stylistic Guidelines in Localization (SGL)

There are two necessary phases to complete SGL: internationalization and localization. The illustration below shows and explains the relation of the two concepts:



Key

A globalization (G11n)

B internationalization (I18n) or generalization

C localization (L10n)

D translation (T9n)

E simultaneous shipment

Fig 1 — Terms used in Globalization

"Internationalization (I18n): is the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. Internationalization takes place at the level of program design and document development." (LISA [4])

Based on the SGL rules (English), create the own language rules corresponding to each of the English rule. In that case, consider it more internationalized, or generalized, instead of finding differences from each other, but finding common points.

"Localization (L10n): is the process in taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold. The term derives from "locale": a place where something particular happens or is done. Translation (T9n) is one of the activities in Localization." (LISA)

After internationalization, the production stage moves to the language specific matters: localization. A dictionary specific to the language selected, including the approved words and deprecated words, may

be necessary ("vocabulary control"). Of course, creating a dictionary is not mandatory. If it seems to take much time to create the dictionary, starting with just the writing rules is possible.

7 Stylistic Guidelines in Localization (SGL)

0 Types of rules

The list below shows the available SGL rules, a total of 58. SGL is configured with 8 sentence-length rules, 8 paragraphize rules, 14 construction rules, 6 modification rules, 12 terminology rules, 3 article/number rules and 7 other rules.

1 Sentence Length

SGL Rule 1.1: Write a short and concise sentence.

No The research lab, located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy, has developed the device that has a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (44 words)

Yes The research lab has developed the device that has a self-diagnosis function. (13) The function is usually seen in the neural medication field that has gradually been increasing its presence. (17) The lab is located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy. (20)

* The information enclosed by commas is additional, not-essential information. Place the additional information at the end of the sentences. See Rule 3.13 for the order of sentences.

SGL Rule 1.2: Divide essential information from ancillary information. Write the essential information first.

No The research lab, located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy, has developed the device that has a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (44 words)

Yes The research lab has developed the device that has a self-diagnosis function. (13) The function is usually seen in the neural medication field that has gradually been increasing its presence. (17) The lab is located in the ancient capital city of Nara in Japan and famous for its unique management policy. (20)

* The information enclosed by commas (underlined sections) is ancillary, not-essential information. Place the ancillary information at the end of the sentences. See Rule 3.13 for the order of sentences.

SGL Rule 1.3: Divide a compound sentence that does not share the subjects and predicates.

No Press the SHIFT button and then the device automatically detects the difference.

Yes Press the SHIFT button. The device automatically detects the difference. (Nakamura)

SGL Rule 1.4: Divide a sentence with complicatedly nested constructions into simple sentences with clear structure.

(for example, The rapidity that the motion that the wing has has is remarkable. [Pinker]).

No When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded if the operation is in the Lock mode.

Yes The operation is engaged in the Lock mode. When the linkage is complete, the inner domain is recorded. (Nakamura)

SGL Rule 1.5: Separate overlong modification(s).

No ABC research lab has developed the device that has a self-diagnosis function, usually seen in the neural medication field, which has gradually been increasing its presence. (20)