

编者按:钱绍昌教授毕业于上海圣约翰大学医学院。毕业后入广慈医院(现瑞金医院)外科,后任烧伤科主任。1958年,广慈医院抢救钢铁工人邱财康成功,引起全国轰动。著名作家柯灵将此事写成剧本,1959年由天马电影制片厂拍成电影。钱教授当时为三名参加抢救的医生之一。由于他的医术高超,为我国灼伤医学领域作出贡献,1965年,钱绍昌曾赴京参加全国青联代表大会,受到毛主席、刘主席、周总理和邓总书记等中央领导的接见并合影留念。

钱教授不但是一名医学专家,也是一名杰出的翻译家。2004年中国译协授予他“资深翻译家”荣誉证书。在20年中,他共翻译了700多部(集)影视剧,有著名影片《鹰冠庄园》、《大饭店》、《成长的烦恼》、《根》、《荆棘鸟》、《卡萨布兰卡》、《浮华世家》……其中3部获全国电视译制片一等奖。在20世纪90年代,钱教授还翻译了很多(中译英)科技片,其中《冠心病》获意大利国际电影节的金奖,《逆火》获德国第16届柏林电视节大奖——“亚洲未来奖”。1993年,上海的远东出版社出版了他的《英语科技论文写作概要》一书。

钱教授从1980年初,开始执教于上海外国语大学的国际新闻系。

浅议医学英语 ——医学专家并非英语专家

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摘要: 鉴于许多医生,包括不少医学专家,所撰写的英语医学论文在英语表达上常出现很多错误,以实例分析了医学论文英语写作中的欠妥之处,简述了英语医学论文写作ABC,并指出,医生们在学术造诣精深的前提下,还应努力提高自身的英语水平。

关键词: 英语; 医学英语; 医学论文

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A Tentative Discussion on Medical English —Medical Experts are not English Experts

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Abstract: In view of the fact that many Chinese doctors, including a lot of experts, are making numerous language mistakes in their English language medical articles, the author analyses with concrete examples those mistakes commonly made in English medical articles and discusses the ABC of Science writing. Meanwhile, the author hopes Chinese doctors will improve their English language skills.

Key words: English language; medical English; medical articles

记得1954年,当我刚从医学院毕业被分配到上海广慈医院(现瑞金医院)外科时,除了医疗工作外,

老师们经常派给我一项任务,那就是把一些学术论文译成英文。由于我的中学和大学都是在洋学校念

的,英文程度较佳,这任务就落到我的头上了。那时《中华医学杂志》有英文版,是向全世界发行的。这里面什么科的文章都有:内科、外科、儿科、妇产科、五官科等等。因为各分科没有条件各自出一本英文杂志,就只好全混在一起了。上英文版的文章一般是质量比较高的。你若有文章上英文版,就说明你的水平比较高,评起职称来自然也有用处。

到了改革开放以后,许多人就直接把文章寄到国外的杂志去,主要是美国杂志,当然得先译成英文才行。来找我翻译的人就更多了。那时我已离开医院到上海外国语学院执教,业余也做一些翻译工作,不过主要是文学和影视翻译,而对于医学翻译我已不感兴趣。可有时情面难却,也不得不译一些。为什么有那么多人来找我呢?当然是自己翻译有困难。本文就是打算来议一下这个问题。

曾看过许多国内医学专家写的英语医学论文,其中英语错误之处实在不少。有些专家还是从国外留学归国的,口语也还可以,但文章写出来却很糟糕。因为尽管他们是医学专家,却并非英语专家,英语毕竟不是他们的母语。

一、举例

曾有一位医学专家用英语写了一篇关于肝癌治疗的文章。文章在学术上价值很高,但在英语表达上却存在着许多欠妥之处。一般英语学术论文中讨论(Discussion)最难写,最易在文字上出错。该文的讨论有9段之多,现仅取其中的一段为例:

“Many concepts and principles currently accepted in the management of HCC (hepatocellular carcinoma) have to be revised in sub-HCC, namely: (1) Combined analysis of serial change of AFP and ALT alone or added with angiogram or B-sonogram instead of enzymology and scintiscan have become more important for early diagnosis; (2) The role of surgery has become greater in which 48% of sub-HCC could be successfully resected, while it was only 17.7% in clin-HCC; (3) Based on the fact that 83.6% of sub-HCC associated with cirrhosis and 74.3% with tumor seating in right lobe or hepatic porta, local resection rather than classical lobectomy in surgical management of sub-HCC has yielded higher resectability, lower operative mortality and similar 5-year survival. It seems that local resection of minute HCC with 1-2cm surrounding liver

parenchyma can be agreeable as radical resection, since the tumor has not yet broken through the capsule as well as invaded to intrahepatic veins; (4) Reoperation for subclinical recurrence and solitary lung metastasis after a radical resection seems acceptable with further prolongation of survival and no longer a contraindication; (5) The much higher percentage of single nodule HCC, the more frequent normalization of AFP after resection of tumor and the more favorable survival in sub-HCC attested that unicentric origin was not scarcely encountered in early stage patients of HCC even coexisting with cirrhosis. Moreover, evidence of single nodule HCC, well encapsulated tumor, without tumor emboli, immunostatus and survival indicated that intrahepatic spreading rather multicentric origin may play a more important role in the multinodular pattern of huge HCC, thus strongly supported to the policy of aggressive surgical intervention to sub-HCC.”

二、分析及改写

对这段文字的英语表达予以分析如下。

第一句指出现在许多关于治疗肝癌的观念在治疗亚临床肝癌中应加以改变。文中“namely”后面的5条,语法上应该是“Many concepts and principles”的同位语,可是看其内容却是作者提出的新观点,因此这一句应改为:“Many concepts and principles currently accepted in the management of HCC should be replaced by new ones in sub-HCC treatment.”在“sub-HCC”后加上“treatment”,使意义较清楚。

其次,在(1)中,该句的主语“analysis”是单数,可是谓语动词却错用复数;又“added with”应改为“together with”。

在(2)中,“which”不知何所指?可能是指“surgery”,但也讲不通。“it”又是指什么?作者的意思应该是指可切除率(resectability),但此词在文中尚未出现过。所以此句应改为:“As 48% of sub-HCC could be successfully resected while the resectability of clin-HCC was only 17.7%, the role of surgery has become greater in the treatment of sub-HCC.”

在(3)中,“fact”后面是同位语从句,应该有完整的主语和谓语。因此,“associated”应改为“were

associated”, 后面的 “74.3% with tumor seating in” 应改为 “74.3% had the tumor seated in”。“seating” 之所以改为 “seated” 是因为 “seat” 作为不及物动词只指机器安装, 而 “be seated” 才解释 “位于”。

“in right lobe or hepatic porta” 应改为 “in the right lobe or around the hepatic porta”, 因为肿瘤不是在肝门 “里面”, 而是在肝门 “周围” 的。因此, 这句应改为 “based on the fact that 83.6% of sub-HCC were associated with cirrhosis and 74.3% had the tumor seated in the right lobe or around the hepatic porta...”。下句中 “agreeable” 宜改为 “accepted” 或 “considered”; “as well as” 应改为 “or”; “invaded to” 应改为 “invaded”, 因为 “invade” 是及物动词。

在 (4) 中, “further prolongation of survival” 是 “reoperation” 的结果, 又是 “acceptable” 的理由。因此, 这句应改为 “As reoperation for subclinical liver recurrence and solitary lung metastasis after a radical resection may lead to further prolongation of survival, it is no longer a contraindication and has become acceptable.”

在 (5) 中, “even coexisting with” 应改为 “even with coexisting cirrhosis”; “without tumor emboli” 应改为 “absence of tumor emboli”; “supported to” 应改为 “supporting”, 因为 “support” 是及物动词, 况且这里应该用现在分词。

因此, 这一段可以改写为:

“Many concepts and principles currently accepted in the treatment of HCC should be replaced by new ones. (1) Combined analysis of serial changes of AFP and ALT alone or together with angiogram or B sonogram instead of enzymology and scintiscan has become more important for early diagnosis. (2) As 48% of sub-HCC could be successfully resected while the resectability of clin-HCC was only 17.7%, the role of surgery has become greater in the treatment of sub-HCC. (3) Based on the fact that 83.6% of sub-HCC were associated with cirrhosis and 74.3% had the tumor seated in the right lobe or around the hepatic porta, local resection rather than classical lobectomy in surgical management of sub-HCC has yielded higher resectability, lower operative mortality and similar 5-year survival rate. It seems that local resection of minute HCC along with 1-2cm surrounding liver parenchyma can be accepted as

radical resection, since the tumor has not yet broken through the capsule or invaded intrahepatic veins. (4) As reoperation for subclinical liver recurrence and solitary lung metastasis after a radical resection may lead to further prolongation of survival, it should be an acceptable practice and no longer a contraindication. (5) The much higher percentage of single nodule HCC, the more frequent normalization of AFP after resection of tumor and the more favorable survival rate in sub-HCC attested the unicentric origin was not scarcely encountered in early stage patients of HCC even with coexisting cirrhosis. Moreover, evidence of single nodule HCC, well encapsulated tumor, absence of tumor emboli, immunostatus and survival rate indicated that intraheptic spreading rather than multicentric origin may play a more important role in the multinodular pattern of huge HCC, thus strongly supporting the policy of aggressive surgical intervention in sub-HCC.”

笔者在从医时曾有机会阅读过许多医学专家写的英语医学论文, 文章的学术水平都是很高的, 但英语的水平实在不敢恭维。我们不期望医学专家全成为英语专家, 只是希望他们的英语论文少出一点错误, 多下点功夫把英语学好。

三、论文写作 ABC

英语医学论文写作 ABC, 即 Accuracy(准确)、Brevity(简短)、Clarity(清晰)。

缺乏 Accuracy 的医学文章会害死人。

缺乏 Brevity 的文章啰啰唆唆, 废话连篇, 读起来累死人。

缺乏 Clarity 的杂乱无章, 颠三倒四, 念起来累死人。

1. Accuracy

医学论文不同于文学作品, 不要求词藻华丽, 描写细腻。但它要求词能达意, 并且表达得十分准确, 使读者不致琢磨不准甚至产生误解。讲话应直截了当, 开门见山。例如, 下面这句话就不是很好:

“As far as the study goes, the results tend to show an approximate relationship between growth rate and dietary intake.”

最好改为:

“The results show a weak relationship between

growth rate and dietary intake.”

在医学文章中,一些带有主观性的词语除了在 Discussion 中偶可出现外,一般不宜应用,例如 perhaps, maybe, likely, suggests, it seems, possibly, probably 等。

描写程度的词不要随便使用,如: Substantial, adequate, considerable, actually, really, quite, rather, fairly, extremely, mostly, relatively, comparatively 等,能用数字表达的则尽量用数字。

不要用比喻,包括明喻(simile)和暗喻(metaphor),因为比喻不可能百分之百确当,反而会歪曲原意。

英语中同义词(Synonyms)特多,例如 big 的同义词便有 large, great, grand, huge, immense, enormous, gigantic, colossal 等好多个。在文学中往往大量使用同义词使文章不致枯燥,但在医学文章中切莫这样做,因为医学上许多词往往有特定的含义,不能任意更换的。例如 symptom 和 sign 在非医学文章中可以互相换用,但在医学文章中则绝对不行。又如 significant 在非科技文章中可解释为“有意义的”、“重要的”、“有效的”、“值得注意的”,而在科技文章中只是指“统计学上显著的”。又如 approximately 在科技上是指数值十分近似的,若只是一个很粗略的估计就不能用它,而只能用 about 或 roughly。

下面列举的这些成对的词常易被互相错用。心中无把握的作者在使用前最好查一下词典,并阅读其中例句:

Alternatively, alternately; centre, middle; degree, extent; either, both; except, unless; generally, usually; homogenous, homogeneous; lengthy, long; limited, slight; major, great; minor, little; natural, normal; optimistic, hopeful; optimum, highest; provided that, if; quite, rather; several, some; similar, same; rare, singular; often, in many places; sometimes, in some places; superior, better than; view, opinion; virtually, almost; volume, amount; weather, climate; while, although.

2. Brevity

任何文章都要求写得简短些,科技文章尤其如此,特别要求避免噜唆冗长(verbosity)、空话(emptiness)、套话(cliche)、长话(wordiness)、大话(pomposity)。下面这个句子是从国内一本科技英语

教材中找到的:

The onset of chronic leukemia is frequently so insidious that it is accidently discovered when a blood count is obtained for other reasons or when the patient reports to his physician that he has noted a few enlarged lymph nodes or felt, while bathing, a firm left upper quadrant abdominal mass.

它完全可以简化成:

The onset of chronic leukemia is often insidious. It may be accidently found when a blood count is obtained for other reasons. Sometimes the patient's own discovery of enlarged lymph nodes or a firm left upper quadrant abdominal mass may lead to its diagnosis.

The English language is about one-half redundant. (英语中约有一半是赘言)

其实这句话本身有一半是赘言,它可以改成:

English is half redundant.

这方面的例子多不胜数,随便举一些例子如下:

During the month of May 可简化成 in May; on an experimental basis 可简化成 by experiment; for a further period of ten years 可简化成 for another 10 years; It consists essentially of two parts 可简化成 It has 2 parts 等等。

3. Clarity

文章表述清晰,首先在于作者思维的逻辑性和文章的条理性,不论用汉语或英语写文章都有这个要求。

1973 年美国出版了一本专门为非英语国家的医生学习医学英语而编写的教材,其中有这样一段话:

Prior to admission, the patient had a history of aching right upper quadrant abdominal pain of three months' duration, which was rather sporadic in occurrence.

这句话完全可以简写成:

Before admission, the patient had occasional right upper abdominal pain for 3 months.

科技文章要能清晰地传达信息往往需要用图表来说明,因此应尽量使用图表。医学文章有一个很坏的传统,就是晦涩难懂,让外行人看不懂。医生的处方传统是用拉丁文,就是让患者看不懂。我们必须改一下这个文风。