Study on Translation Project Management Process of Translation Enterprises in the Post-epidemic Era

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Abstract

Since the new crown pneumonia epidemic in early 2020, the epidemic has had a huge impact on translation companies, and the operational risks of translation companies have further increased. This paper will take the overall translation project management process as a guide, grasp the main features of the project management process, apply the principles of project integrated management to optimize resource allocation, introduce risk management, Summarize the impact of the epidemic on the various process systems of translation companies, try to comprehensively analyze the project management operation of Chinese translation companies, and establish a risk management system to achieve risk response under the epidemic. The analysis points out that the epidemic has a huge impact and influence on translation companies in many aspects, and this paper will give countermeasures and relevant solutions from the perspectives of governance structure of translation companies and the establishment of translation companies' own risk management system.

Keywords

New crown epidemic, translation project management, risk management, resource allocation, translation risk

1. Research background

With the accelerating globalization process, especially since the new crown epidemic raged in the country in 2020, the national economic life has been seriously affected, and all industries have been greatly affected and challenged, and the translation industry is no exception. At present, the domestic epidemic has been repeated, but the situation is all positive, and during the epidemic prevention period, the epidemic has a significant impact on the domestic economy. Many translation companies have chosen to lay off staff, restructure their assets and reduce the scale of their companies. Due to the suddenness of the epidemic, the relevant translation companies failed to take effective measures in time, making many translation industries and contents stagnant. The translation project management content of translation companies is also not perfect at present, and this industry is not able to keenly identify changes in the external environment and has weak risk control ability, and there is a large degree of problem omission, so the translation industry is seriously affected by the epidemic and the industry has a big shock. The modern translation industry has a wide range of translation content audience groups and variable texts, which will generate a variety of translation needs. Under the influence of the economic downturn, the competitive environment of the translation market is more complicated than before the epidemic, translation companies will tend to translate more professional translations to obtain more revenue, and translators will choose larger companies for translation to pursue the guarantee of quality texts, which will lead to mixed and complicated effects of translation contents, and will greatly increase the possibility of loss of translation quality in the context of the complicated epidemic, making translation companies and In the context of the complexities of the epidemic, this will greatly increase the
possibility of loss of translation quality, making translation companies and individuals suffer. Translation project management is crucial in translation companies in the context of the epidemic and greatly affects translation practice activities. In the post-epidemic era, there is an urgent need to cultivate new types of translation project management talents and the development of composite talents so as to realize the controllability and transformation of translation industry projects. Therefore, this paper analyzes the various risks of domestic translation companies in this context, tries to find out the existing risks and give corresponding countermeasures, and provides relevant reference measures for translation enterprises encountering unexpected public events.

2. Analysis of translation project management concept

Translation science contains many translation theories and guiding principles, but the systematic research is in the initial stage, possessing a discipline development history of only about 30 years. The history of development is firstly influenced by the development of international trade, and translation reflects an increasingly obvious role, then the translation project management workflow and model are structured, and finally the relevant operation methods and strategies are defined in the translation project management process. The project object itself is temporary in nature, a work carried out to create a unique product, service or result, and the translation project object is also of this character. The translation work is intended to be an original knowledge product created to meet the client’s needs within an agreed period of time, and it falls under the project category. The project manager is required to apply knowledge, skills, tools and methods, plan and manage resources, and monitor budgets, schedules and quality to ensure that the project is completed according to the schedule and quality standards agreed between the client and the service provider (Basic Terminology for Localization Operations, 2011, p. 9).

In most cases, translation projects do not have a strict composition of members and an exclusive management level, and thus are randomly open and risky. And to a certain extent translation work is constrained by objective factors such as resources, time and cost, so there is a need to introduce the concept of project management to run through the overall translation activities and standardize the translation process. It also integrates the internal and external aspects of translation companies to build a comprehensive project management system and realize the overall functional division of translation companies, so as to achieve the functional objectives. From the perspective of data, according to the data of the "2011 National and Tianjin Binhai New Area Enterprise Language Service Talent Demand Survey” report, the highest ranking of enterprises' demand for talents is senior translation auditor, followed by translation project manager, senior translator and market manager (Wang Chuanying, 2012, p. 67), which indicates that translation project management has been developing rapidly in recent years and the demand is high. It shows that translation project management has developed rapidly in recent years and is in great demand. Undoubtedly, translation project management needs to be realized through scientific and systematic project planning, so that efficient management and control can be established in terms of cost, quality, scope, schedule or individual member communication and team collaboration of translation projects, and a certain level of standardized and comprehensive translation quality control monitoring can be established.

Translation projects gradually form the following characteristics in the process of development: firstly, translation projects are of a large scale, with a large amount of materials related to the original text of the translation, and a lot of human and financial resources are required for analysis and management. Second, the translation project team relies on process-oriented operation thus well organized, including resource extraction, workload analysis, task assignment, language resource reuse, engineering processing, translation, editing, proofreading, quality control, functional and linguistic testing, delivery to the project, and language asset management (Wang, H. Shu, 2016). Thirdly, in the post-epidemic era, big data and artificial intelligence will open a new era, and the new feature of combining translation with "cloud technology" will emerge. In recent years, the digital economy has developed so fast, radiated so widely, and had such a deep impact that it is becoming an important force in reshaping the economic landscape since the outbreak of the New Pneumonia epidemic. Under the application and development of "meta-governance", the digital capacity of the country will be improved as never before, and the information extraction capacity, data governance capacity and accurate decision-making capacity will be newly empowered for the country’s economic work. The relevant data blockchain technology can be applied to the translation field, enabling translation teams to realize complete data storage in the cloud and share translation data in a timely manner, so as to prevent the destruction of translation resources and the generation of translation risks. The characteristics of the translation project itself run through the overall translation project, and the reasonable operation between the translation project processes makes the translation project management highly reliable, and the interlocking translation
enterprises can quickly make changes to the terminology and assign tasks so that the translation work can be completed.

The nine elements of modern project management are time management, communication management, risk management, procurement management, scope management and integration management, cost management, quality management and human resources management, which together constitute a complete translation project management system. The term "risk management" was first introduced by Dr. Solomon Hübner of the University of Pennsylvania in 1930 to evaluate and actively address the risks faced by an organization. Risk management is one of the most important aspects of a translation project, and is one of the main objects of project managers, as well as the main research direction in this paper. Risk management basically consists of five procedures: risk identification and analysis; feasibility of different methods to cope with losses; selection of risk management measures; implementation methods; implementation of measures and evaluation of their effectiveness (Liu, Xinli, 2006, pp. 37, 39; Yan, Chunning, 2002, p. 11). Risk identification is the most important and difficult part of risk management. For translation enterprises, if they want to avoid translation risks and maximize benefits, they should first identify and analyze relevant risk contents, and then, at the project planning stage, they need to formulate perfect countermeasures for possible project risks in order to avoid, transfer and reduce the occurrence of risks. For example, in case of force majeure factors (disease, fire) default, the translation project provider proposes large changes to the commissioned translation requirements or withdraws the project order for other reasons (Qian Yang, 2016). For translators to reserve in advance and apply resource clouding, so as to avoid a series of chain reactions and reduce the generation of schedule risks.

3. Analysis of translation project management content

3.1 Single-project translation management work

From a microscopic point of view, single-project translation work can be divided into five stages: initiation, planning, execution, monitoring and closing, and each stage is cyclically related, among which, project managers need to analyze and evaluate each stage, coordinate and communicate, and reduce project risks. The initiation and planning stage guides the execution of the translation work and evaluates its situation. Monitoring is done throughout the project environment, from tracking the progress of the project to reviewing the translation and evaluating the client after delivery (Kerzner, 2009, pp. 38-54). Therefore, the project manager needs to analyze each phase, plan the proportion of resources to be invested, assess the risks of each part of the project, and coordinate the communication between relationships to avoid project conflicts to the greatest extent possible.

3.2 Translation management for multiple projects

Mature translation service providers are in the combination of multiple translation projects, and multiple translation projects are interlaced to form project sets and managed in combination. The combination management needs to analyze each translation project in multiple dimensions, and prioritize and reasonably allocate resources for each translation project according to the cycle length of each project and the human resources status of different languages, so as to achieve the overall strategic goal and the long-term development of maximizing the benefits of the translation company. Each project team should also overlap in terms of working time, task allocation and team members, and follow the principle of not putting all eggs in one basket to realize the task responsibility system and share the risks equally, so as to reduce the overall risks of the translation company. In multi-project translation work, the project portfolio manager needs to plan team building and work allocation globally, optimizing resources to allocate all translation project products and available resources. And still need to consider translation project portfolio management in the context of the actual situation, environmental factors, etc., to manage multiple translation project sets. A project portfolio is a combination of projects, project sets of other work that are put together to facilitate effective management and achieve strategic business goals. The projects or project sets in a project portfolio are not necessarily dependent on or directly related to each other (PMBOK Guides, 2008, pp. 4-54).

3.3 Translation project team management

The project team, as the main cadre, determines the success or failure of a translation project, so the issue of team staffing is critical in a translation organization. Traditional personnel function allocation tables and other methods can be adopted to coordinate working relationships, clarify function allocation, and realize communication and exchange in the overall translation project. Project managers can use traditional organization charts to show the
various positions and their interrelationships from top to bottom and use a work breakdown structure to show how project deliverables are broken down into work packages, which helps clarify responsibilities at each level (PMI, 2008, p. 50). Translation corporate service providers can also arrange a wrap-up meeting at the end of the project to analyze the reasons for project success or failure, assess project factors such as resource allocation, execution and planning, and achieve high efficiency in the translation project team.

4. Translation project research methods

Translation risk refers to the probability that the translation act fails to achieve the expected result and brings loss to the translator. Translation risk exists when translation activities are generated, which has high requirements for the detailed connection of each link of translation. As soon as translation starts, translation companies have the possibility of generating revenue and incurring failure, and if the translation products cannot meet the needs of customers, it will bring losses to translators or companies, so translation project risk management is needed. The research of translation project management system is not perfect at present, and the theoretical research related to translation project management system also needs to introduce theories related to risk management, improve the formation of the overall integrated management of translation projects, and at the same time form specific management methods for translation companies with the help of research methods of risk management. For example, when analyzing translation risks, the risk breakdown structure (RBS) method and the flow chart method can be applied in combination.

Risk breakdown structure is a management science and technology term published in 2016, which aims to graphically and methodically illustrate the hierarchy of identified project risks according to risk categories and subcategories that distinguish the various areas where potential risks exist and the multiple causes of their generation. The application of the risk breakdown structure method for translation activities possesses four main elements: (1) For translation project managers and project teams, it is a planning and design tool for describing ideas to effectively manage the project. (2) The decomposition structure has a clear logical structure that clearly indicates the structural relationship between the various translation project tasks. (3) The application of the decomposition structure method can present the overall translation project and plan in detail the translation targets that must be completed to achieve the completion of the overall project. (4) In project risk management, the decomposition structure method can report the project completion status to the senior management of the translation company and the client in a timely manner, and can often be used as a reporting tool for the project status.

The flowchart method can also be combined with translation activities. Translation activities can be seen as a process of processing products to be processed, essentially, from the receipt of a translation assignment to the final acceptance of the translation by the client. The risk of incurring failure may arise when the activity takes place, and in order to clarify the content of each translation step, a workflow diagram covering the entire act of translation is required. By applying the flowchart method, the specific flowchart of the translation project can be depicted under different conditions and purposes, and each link and step of the translation activity can be seen more clearly and comprehensively. Errors in any link can be quickly identified, and key links and potential risks can be identified after investigating each of the erroneous links, so that risk analysis of each link can be conducted and the possible consequences can be analyzed, thus avoiding the tedious and repetitive behaviors associated with analysis for different participants of translation activities. With the help of these two methods, we can look for risk factors that may lead to interruptions in the translation process, low quality of translation products, failure to deliver on time, etc., and conduct preliminary risk assessments to achieve comprehensive risk management planning and control for the purpose of risk avoidance.

5. Analysis and response of risks existing in current translation projects

5.1 Translation project risk management categories

Effective risk management of translation projects is applied to the process of translation project activities, and its main contents encapsulate the level, method and visibility of translation enterprise risk management matching the degree of translation project risk, and the importance of translation projects to the organization and other related parties, etc. In the process of translation project risk management, numerous individual translation project risks constitute the overall translation project risk, with the following distinctions.

(1) Individual translation project risks, the occurrence of which will generate uncertain events or conditions,
which will inevitably have a positive or negative impact on one or more translation project objectives. The uncertainty of individual translation project risks constitutes the overall project risk, and the degree of impact on the overall translation project is the range of positive and negative variances of translation stakeholders on the results of the translation project they face. Translation project risk management is to utilize or strengthen the positive risks generated by translation activities and avoid or mitigate the related negative risks. It reduces the likelihood that a translation company's failure to properly manage a threatening issue will have a negative impact on the development of the translation company, such as translation schedule delays, related translation labor cost overruns, and poor performance or damage to the company's reputation. In contrast, individual translation project risk management, if managed well, can yield additional benefits for the company, such as shorter translation schedules, savings in labor and material costs, improved performance, or enhanced company reputation in the translation field.

(2) Overall translation project risk can also be positive or negative. Managing overall project risk aims to keep project risk exposure within acceptable limits by weakening the drivers of negative variation, strengthening the drivers of positive variation, and maximizing the probability of achieving overall project goals. Risks continue to occur throughout the project lifecycle, meaning that translation risks are present throughout the translation activities, so project risk management practices should also be carried out without interruption throughout the overall project management. Risks should be initially addressed during translation project planning by adjusting the relevant strategies. Then, as the project progresses, translation risks are monitored and managed to ensure that the project is on track, with priority given to addressing unexpected risks in the interim to achieve a near-perfect translation project management process. Within the overall translation risk project, there are specific translation risks, and to effectively manage project-specific risks, the translation project team needs to know exactly what the acceptable risk exposure is relative to the project goals to be pursued. This is often defined in terms of measurable risk thresholds.

5.2 Identification of risks in current translation projects

Risk identification is the first basic step in risk management, and for translation companies, potential project risks or threats need to be judged and analyzed, and risks identified and categorized before translation projects are undertaken. The scope of project risk management will be much broader in the post-epidemic era, and to ensure that translation companies consider all types of risks and understand the meaning of project risks, this requires translation risk transfer. The main forms of risk transfer are contracts and insurance, in most cases by entering into contracts that transfer the risk from the transferor to the transferee. The analysis of a translation project is based on the conclusion of a translation contract and the preparation of the relevant translation knowledge (analysis of the original text, creation of proprietary names or specialized glossaries), which allows the transfer of some or all of the risks to one or more other participants in the project. For example, a contract with the translator protects the translated material belonging to the company from leaks, and a contract with the translation client reduces the cost loss due to a broken contract, thus significantly reducing the translation company's own level of risk in a translation project. For the translation company itself, the protection brought by insurance can also help the translation project team to eliminate or reduce the risks arising from the translation project. Currently, the source of risk is mainly influenced by the performance of both parties to the contract. The translation contract is the agreement on translation time, translation cost and translation quality, which have a direct impact on whether the translation can be completed successfully, and are also the "three issues of most concern to clients" (Zhu Xianchao & Han Ziman, 2006, p. 43).

Translation companies under the influence of the New Crown epidemic also need to identify non-event risks and sudden risks in order to finally integrate risks, constitute a perfect translation risk management system, and improve their adaptability to overall changes in the general environment or sudden changes in the environment.

5.2.1 Non-event risks

The risks that most translation projects focus on as uncertain future events that may or may not occur, which include variability risks and ambiguity risks: (1) Variability risk. Uncertainty in some key aspects of all planned events, activities or decisions is likely to make it difficult for translation companies to perform successful translation acts due to the lack of relevant corpus storage within the translation company, which affects the project's ability to achieve its goals, resulting in variability risk. The professionalism, attitude and dedication of the translators and the translation strategy developed by the project manager to reduce the risk of delayed delivery of the translation will also add to the uncertainty. During the epidemic period, although epidemic prevention and control has become normalized, the risk of variability still exists in translation companies, and the delivery time of translations.

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may be affected by the epidemic, and if translators are quarantined, there may be poor communication and tired of supervision, and the risk of variability is higher than before; (2) Ambiguity risk. There is uncertainty about what may happen in the future. Translation companies' own financing development plans are not perfect, and they are not clear about the development direction of a certain translation project management, then all of them will cause ambiguity risk. Being influenced by the epidemic policy under the development of the epidemic will create unpredictability for the development of the translation industry and translation companies. At the same time, there is uncertainty in the cooperation between translation projects and customers, whether the translation time of the translation will be prolonged in the case of epidemic and whether there is a match between the word count of the original text and whether it is closely related to the needs of customers. And to manage the risk of ambiguity, that is to learn first, understand the shortcomings that exist in the process of company development, make a practical plan to fill the shortcomings based on practice, supplemented by external expert opinions, and also to reduce the risk by using incremental development, simulation building and other methods.

5.2.2 Sudden risks.
In times of epidemics, sudden risks are the majority. Such risks are temporary in nature and are usually discovered only after they occur, and when conducting translation project management, sudden risks are dealt with by strengthening the resilience to the risks brought about by epidemics. For example, in the event of an epidemic, the translation content may be poorly matched, and the translation should be carefully discussed and approved with the client in order to prevent the client's temporary reversal and bankruptcy. Under the epidemic, the translators will be affected by force majeure factors to a greater extent, and staff shortage events will occur from time to time.

5.2.3 Integration risk.
Translation projects exist within the overall translation company organization as part of individual project sets or portfolios. At these levels of projects, project sets, portfolios and organizations, there are different risks that need to be assumed and managed at each organizational level. Certain risks identified at higher levels will be delegated to translation project teams to manage, while certain risks identified at lower levels may be escalated to higher translation project levels to manage. The adoption of a coordinated cross-linkage approach to managing enterprise risks ensures a unified and efficient regional level risk management effort, allowing for a higher level of efficiency in the structure of the project set and project portfolio, and facilitating the creation of maximum overall value for a given level of risk exposure.

5.3 Risk response for translation projects under the new crown epidemic
Every translation project is at risk on two levels, both individual risks that have the opportunity to affect the project's ability to achieve its goals, and overall project risks that result from the combination of individual project risks and other sources of uncertainty. The uncertainty created by the epidemic forces the translation project management period to learn to consider both the individual project risks and the overall project risks of a translation project, and to learn to equalize the total value of risk, so start by prioritizing and prioritizing the risks of individual translation projects. In essence, the translation environment has its own uncertainties, whether affected by the epidemic or not, and dealing with translation uncertainties requires an adaptive approach to managing translation projects. Risks should be identified, analyzed and managed across the board as a translation project proceeds, and the translation project management requirements document should be regularly updated and work reprioritized at any time. In the event of an emergency, translation projects can also develop a stable response mechanism from their own identification by virtue of improving inherent processes.

5.3.1 Early warning mechanism
To establish a risk management system, translation companies should be realistic, select an appropriate risk management system according to their own situation, build an enterprise risk early warning mechanism, and create a suitable translation project management environment, so as to effectively adapt to changes in the epidemic environment. At the same time, we should increase professional capital investment and establish a controllable risk management system and budget mechanism to prevent a larger range of risk losses. In addition to setting out specific risk budgets for known risks, set aside reasonable contingency budgets and time for unexpected risks, and reserve personnel in advance. The planning of talent pool for each translator, the establishment of personnel resource pool, the judgment of translation experience value for each translator, etc.
5.3.2 Coping mechanism

(1) Overall resource allocation for translation project management. Resource pool allocation for clients, resource allocation for corpus, resource allocation for personnel cooperation, reasonable partner allocation for some revisers and translators, etc. Adopt a flexible project process, including strong change management, in order to maintain the right direction towards the project goals, and develop a backup mechanism in advance, using cloud-based, to reduce the risk of schedule damage and loss of data.

(2) Empower a project team with clear objectives and trustworthiness to complete the work within agreed limits, build a sound translation project management team, determine basic translation strategies, select professional translators, set translation project schedules and progress management, and establish communication methods and frequency with clients. Always watch for early warning signs and identify unexpected risks early. Pay special attention to detailed translations that may pose high risks, numbers, proper nouns, sensitive words, etc. that involve the interests of the client when reviewing.

(3) The management of translation companies should pay extreme attention to the internal control of project management, build a good translation reputation, cultivate a positive corporate culture, and play the role of internal control to promote the long-term development of translation companies.

(4) Good translation project management can promote the improvement of the translation enterprise system, and while paying attention to project management, choose the appropriate financing plan and strengthen the credit accumulation with banks and other financial institutions.

(5) Strengthen the risk awareness of translators. Translators constitute the whole project and even the whole company, and employees with high standards and quality can only effectively reduce the risk level in the process of translation work. In the post-epidemic era, the translation project management team is required to strengthen the training of professionalism of translators, and the management of translators should be strengthened and the selection of personnel should be screened.

(6) Translation enterprises need to regularly evaluate risk management activities, quantitatively evaluate risk management programs after they have been implemented for a period of time, establish corresponding evaluation indexes, compare and analyze data, and finally arrive at results and make corresponding improvements.

5.3.3 Long-term mechanism

Quality supervision risk management exists in translation projects from the beginning to the end. Before a project is undertaken, translation enterprises should carefully evaluate whether their own capabilities can meet the quality requirements of customers and clearly seek translation quality opinions from translation enterprises’ related parties in order to clarify the areas in which the scope or strategy of translation projects can be adjusted to cope with unexpected risks. These include whether their own resources such as translation review terminology database meet the needs of customers; whether translation layout and information technology are carried out in accordance with the needs of customers and can be completed within the specified time; whether the project management team can be effectively organized; whether the translation post-translation service attitude is good and whether the translation is corrected in accordance with the requirements of customers. To reach a standard with the client on various factors that may affect the quality of translation, the terms and conditions stipulated in the contract can be referred to, thus avoiding disputes. In the translation project, the translation team should implement quality risk management throughout the whole process, focusing on the implementation of the project manager responsibility system, real-time monitoring of each link, timely detection and problem solving through tracking and inspection, so as to effectively manage the translation project risks. The risk threshold of the translation project, the acceptable level of variation in the project objectives is determined and communicated to the project team.

6. Conclusion

Today's era has given translation project management new features and requirements, and the demand for translation project management is increasing at this stage. The overall translation project is required to be fully prepared before translation, to be followed up in a timely manner during the progress of translation, and to have multiple assessments of translation quality after the translation text is completed. In translation project management, if risks in translation activities can be identified and the causes and potential consequences of the risks can be analyzed, risk management measures can be taken in a targeted manner so that the interests of enterprises can be protected to the maximum extent. It is hoped that the application of translation risk management has an influential role in the development of translation project management. The RBS risk structure method and flow chart method mentioned
in this paper is extremely useful for the identification and response of translation risks. According to the production process of translation products, it is possible to note the key links that may lead to the translation not being delivered on time or not being accepted by the client in the end, etc., so as to reduce the loss of various interests of the translation company. Accordingly, risk prevention measures can be consciously taken in each link of the translation process and risk management can be done well, which can minimize the probability of risk occurrence. This paper analyzes the concept of translation projects, relevant characteristics of translation risk management, applies risk management to translation projects, puts forward the concept of risk response of translation companies, reflects the requirements of translation enterprises for translation risk management in the general environment of the epidemic, summarizes and proposes the action direction of translation enterprises' risk management and the choice of relevant risk management strategies. Thus, it enhances the understanding of translation enterprises in coping with the changes of epidemic and other risk management, and provides another solution idea for the translation industry to enhance the awareness and ability of related risk prevention.

References