

Research on Advertising Language Translation Skills and Principles

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Abstract: *With the acceleration of economic globalization, advertising language is becoming more and more international and common in our daily life. It is used repeatedly in advertisements for a long time in order to strengthen the targeted impression of an enterprise, product or service. In this context, the translation of advertising language is of great importance. A good translation of advertising language can not only stimulate consumers' strong desires to buy, but also convey the good cultural information of enterprises and establish brand effect. However, the translation of advertising slogan has obvious purpose, so it needs to adopt appropriate translation skills and principles to make the translation have the same or similar effect as the original text. The research of translation skills on advertising language can help consumers better understand the new products of the enterprises, promote purchase and improve the visibility of enterprises and products so as to form brand preferences. Thus, it has great research significance.*

Keywords: *Advertising language; Translation skills; Translation*

1. Introduction

With the continuous development of China's reform and opening-up to the outside world, The way people get information in social life is also more diverse. Translating advertising language is a complex and artistic activity, which is recreated on the basis of the original text. To sum up, during the process of translating advertising language, following the original meaning and mastering its unique purpose are of great significance. Only by combining them with the relevant translation skills and principles, can the advertising language be translated accurately. In this process of translating these advertisements, attention should be paid to the differences in the cultural background, then choosing the appropriate translation skills and making the language natural, accurate, concise and easy to understand in order to cater to the different psychology of consumers and thus realize the purpose of advertising language. What's more, translating the advertising language is supposed to choose appropriate skills according to the concrete material and should comply with the related translation principles.

2. Translation skills for advertising language

The advertising slogan itself is full of rich imagination as well as great creativity. In the process of translation, due to different social culture, language, national psychology and other factors, it is not just a corresponding code conversion, but to restructure the superficial form of the original language on the premise of maintaining the basic semantic equivalence and similar functions of the deep structure. Therefore, when translating advertising statements, it is necessary to use a variety of translation skills and multi-level processing from different perspectives in order to achieve the expected translation effect of meaning and vividness. Advertising translation is a process of recreation. There are four kinds of translation skills that can be used through long-term induction and summary so as to make the translation more in line with the customs of the target language and easier for readers to accept.

2.1. Literal translation

It refers to the direct translation of the original into Chinese, which is also known as foreignization. This kind of translation skill is simple and convenient. It does not change the meaning of the original and is not easy to cause people to misunderstand, but we should pay attention to the translation process, especially we cannot violate the Chinese language norms and does not cause wrong associations. During the process of translating the advertisement, we can maintain the metaphors, images, national

characteristics and local customs of English idioms. That is to say, it is faithful to both the original content and form. The advantage of literal translation is that the style and content of the original can be relatively complete, and the meaning of the original can be expressed concisely and effectively. The advertising language is clearly understood by the consumers through free translation.

The example is the Money magazine's advertising language: "If you leave alone 'Managing Money', money will manage to leave you alone." This is an advertisement for the famous magazine Money. In the process of translation, the translator boldly uses literal translation. As a result, the meaning, sentence pattern and rhetorical devices are not only equivalent to the original, but also conform to the English language expression habits. Finally, adopting literal translation is suitable to translate the advertisement. And the translation of the advertisement generates the positive effect and leaves better expression on consumers.

All in all, literal translation means translating the source language into the target language based on retaining the structure and preserving the "original flavor" of the source language. By doing so, readers can personally experience the "exotic flavor" of the source language. For some advertisements with simple sentence patterns, literal translation is a common and useful translation skill. By doing so, consumers will not misunderstand the translation of the advertising language and they can realize the background and cultural meaning of the enterprises' products. Through the good translation, it is helpful for the enterprises to spread and promote the product as well as establish the products' brand effect as soon as possible.

2.2. Free translation

Free Translation is a kind of translation skills that is faithful to the content of the original and not confined to the form of the original. The translation means that when the translator is limited by the target language, he or she has to abandon the literal meaning of the original in order to catch the meaning and function of the original. Free translation is a flexible translation skill that consciously omits, adds or adjusts the order of the original and generally adopts vivid and euphemistic language to attract reader^[1]. Free translation is also a translation skill through the substantive meaning and structure of the origin as the most similar way to express the final message of the advertising language.

The example is Maxwell Coffee's advertising language: "good to the last drop. Translating this advertisement adopts the skill of free translation, which turns the original English sentence and the translated meaning into a perfect match. If adopting literal translation, the translation will be obscure and difficult to understand, which may cause mistakes. While adopting free translation, the translation will convey the proper meaning of the advertising language and make it useful to the development of the enterprise.

To sum up, Free translation is usually used when the grammatical structure, word order and rhetoric of the original are very different. Through free translation, the general meaning of the original advertising language is expressed clearly. Besides, the translation is polished. By doing so, the content expressed in the sentence can be full and perfect. And this way can also make the intended meaning more creative. Moreover, many free translation methods will be adopted especially when translating English advertising words into four-word idioms, which can not only better fit Chinese culture, but also make the sentence more literary, thus the translation includes both its own meaning and other extended meaning. However, when choosing free translation, it is necessary to grasp the general idea of the sentence itself, rather than distort the meaning. Meanwhile, reasonable adjustments should be made according to the national characteristics and the general group of consumers in order to make the advertisement more influential. It is also a part of the English advertising words to use paraphrase to imitate some allegorical words, proverbs or famous sayings. Free translation makes the advertising words more deeply rooted in the hearts of consumers through the sense of closeness and familiarity, so that consumers can have "photographic memory" of the advertising words.

2.3. Transliteration

Transliteration is a kind of translation skill. Pure transliteration is the only phonetic translation, a form of translation based on the pronunciation of the local language of the original. That means finding the content of similar pronunciation for alternative translation according to the pronunciation of the original language content in the target language. It is commonly used in the translation of names, enterprises, place names and countries. Some of the spells in Harry Potter are transliterated. When trying the transliteration to translate advertisements, there are several benefits of this translation skill. Firstly, nouns

or terms with their own strong attributes will be transliterated, and these nouns or terms will not emphasize the differences in content, commonly used is the name, place name and country name. Secondly, transliteration can remain the exotic flavor of the original language and enrich the native language. This is especially true in open languages, for example, English is so eclectic that it absorbs a great deal of foreign words. Thirdly, transliteration of cultural words^[5] can avoid cultural loss or semantic insufficiency caused by improper free translation or literal translation.

When it comes to this situation, adopting the transliteration to solve the problem is reasonable. Transliteration is the translation of a Chinese language that sounds similar to a foreign language. This method of translation is straightforward and retains the pronunciation of the original language, which is the most direct way to reflect the translation principle of “faithfulness”. “Coca-Cola” is one of the most successful transliterations, which keeps its clear pronunciation while using positive words to express the meaning of the product and arouse the consumers’ interests.

When translating the name of a commodity in the advertising language, being difficult to find the correspondence between Chinese and English is often encountered in translation. Usually, if the trademark is a surname, a company name, or a coinage and there is no corresponding word in the target language, we can adopt transliteration. Pierre Cardin, Kodak, Philips all are the examples of transliteration. By doing so, the product is memorized by the consumers quickly and is helpful to deepen the expression.

2.4. Corresponding translation

Corresponding Translation replaces some key words according to the fixed translation mode to realize the translation process. The translation is also known as sets translation, applying the fixed mode of Chinese and English. Translation advertisements is done on the basis of not destroying the original effect. Because of the cultural differences between English and Chinese, the maximum extent and the most ingenious application and imitation of the corresponding sentence structure and expression of English and Chinese can make the target language conform to the psychological habits of consumers, respect the cultural traditions and language expression habits of the recipient language, and maintain the image of the product when translating advertising language. In the process of corresponding translation, successful English and Chinese advertising styles, English and Chinese verses, proverbs all can be applied or imitated.

The example is Toyota’s advertising slogan: “Where there is a way for car, there is a Toyota”. It uses the English proverb, “Where there is a will, there is a way”, which is related to the Chinese version of the slogan borrowing from the Chinese saying. Such slogans tend to be easy to read even remember, and can successfully arouse the emotional consensus of different society members, thus they are interested in further learning the product for more information. And the translation becomes interesting and attractive to consumers, thus the product easily enter their public view.

In a word, corresponding translation means using traditional and fixed expression patterns in the target language such as poems, idioms, slogans to implement translation basically without changing the semantic expression and information transmission of the original. The use of this skill in translating advertisements is extensive because it fully presents the respect for cultural traditions and customs of the target language country. More importantly, it is because of the use of the fixed expression mode in the target language that advertising language translated by this method can be fully in line with the reader’s psychology, giving them kindness. And this kind of translation method can make the translation clear and easy to remember, therefore, leaving a deep impression. And these are all the key factors of advertising marketing.

3. Principles of advertisement translation

In the process of advertisement translation, words, paragraphs and texts play an important role, so we should apply translation skills and principles to guide advertisement translation. The best principle is the equivalent translation theory of Eugene Nida^[2], one of the authorities of western translation theory. Nida put forward that “the focus of translation should not be the expression of language, but the reaction of readers to the translation.” Therefore, when translating the differences in understanding must be properly dealt with and the equivalence with the original should be found. Meanwhile, the lexical, syntactic and rhetorical features of the original should also be taken into account. Therefore, translators must understand the characteristics of English advertisement and change or adjust its form according to

different responses so as to achieve information transformation. That is to say, the advertisement translation should achieve the perfect combination of sound, shape and meaning with the original text. During this process, translators are supposed to follow specific principles below to make the translation vivid.

3.1. Fidelity to the original slogan

Translation is an important part of cross-cultural communication. Yan Fu, a Chinese famous translator, advocates that translation should be trustworthy, accurate and elegant. This “trustworthy” requires the translation to be faithful to the original, in other words, the translation should be basically consistent with the source language in meaning. Advertising translation is no exception. Although it is necessary to recreate the original advertising language in the process of advertisement translation, the original text is always the basic foothold of translation. As an advertisement, there are generally two kinds of situations: one is to promote their products, another is to improve the image of the company. The information contained in these two cases is nothing more than the product’s brand, performance, reputation, the company's service concept and other content, which is critical to the success of the product sales. Readers of the original and readers of the target should receive the same information when facing the same product introduction. Therefore, in any case, translating the introduction of product information in the advertisement should be completely faithful to the original to ensure the correct transmission of product information and achieve the expected purpose of the advertisement.

3.2. The concise, elegant and catchy translation language

Most of the advertising language is refined and beautiful, which can give the audience the strongest impact and impression in the shortest time. Advertisement translation is an art. This art gives people the enjoyment of beauty. Excellent advertisement translation enables the audience to appreciate the advertising language and feel the charm and influence of language while obtaining information. When translating, translators can use the popular expressions public expect, such as, rhyme harmony, gorgeous rhetoric to render poetic language, or humorous and funny language style^[4] to enhance the persuasion and appeal of advertising slogan, leaving a deep impression on consumers, and successfully create a very strong sense of powerful and attractive language. At this time, elliptical sentences, widely used in English, is a good choice. Sometimes, due to rhetorical needs, some element are omitted in the sentence, which can also express the full meaning in the end. In daily life, people often use elliptical sentences to save space and to render feelings. The use of elliptical sentences in English advertisements can shorten the length, highlight the key information and enhance the publicity effect. It is not only simple and compact, but also vivid and powerful.

3.3. Respect for cultural context

Language is the carrier of culture, there are great cultural differences^[3] in thinking, expression, values, customs and so on. If an advertisement wants to be accepted by people, it must conform to their own thinking and cultural background. The same thing may have different cultural meanings in different cultural backgrounds. If we ignore this point, blind translation will often backfire and make jokes. Cultural differences are inevitable, so cultural exchange is necessary. Each culture has its own unique charm and significance. It is also necessary to make translated advertising slogans easier to be understood and accepted by the target language people. At this time, we should follow domestication and foreignization, two major means of translation. Domestication is to localize the source language, which requires the translator to get closer to the readers of the target language. Foreignization refers to accommodating the linguistic characteristics of foreign cultures and respecting foreign expressions in translation. For some factors containing religious or political color, public facilities, it is suggested to use the techniques reasonably to avoid some unnecessary troubles.

4. Conclusion

Advertising language has its unique aesthetic value in terms of vocabulary, syntax and rhetoric. It integrates aesthetics, wisdom, marketing and innovation. The characteristics of advertisement also determine the difficult task of translation. Fully understanding the language characteristics of English advertisements is necessary, and on the basis of the principles of translation fidelity, language simplicity and respect for cultural background, fully mastering and flexibly use translation skills such as literal

translation, free translation, transliteration and corresponding translation to keep pace with the time and constantly improve personal professional ability, so as to create high-quality translation works. Moreover, shouldn't only focus on the product itself, but to magnify and render the advantages of the product. In the process, we should keep in mind the two principles of "fidelity" and "smoothness", so that the words are appropriate, smooth and simple, which is conducive to the understanding of foreign cultures and other different cultures as well as the publicity of world cultural exchanges.

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