

The Application of Functional Theory in Advertisement Translation

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Functional theory provides a theoretical basis for applied translation. In order to realize the inductive function of advertisement translation, this paper, based on the differences between Chinese and English advertisement texts in terms of genre conventions, puts forward some methods of advertisement translation from the perspective of function in view of cultural exclusive items and cultural default. As for the different genre conventions between English and Chinese advertisements and the phenomenon of cultural specific and cultural default, the author suggests strategies from the functionalist approach.

Keywords: appellative function, genre convention, translation of advertisements

The functionalist translation theory holds that the reference frame of the translator in the whole process of translation should not be the original text and its functions, but one or more communicative functions expected to be achieved by the target language in the cultural environment of the target language, and various translation strategies should be flexibly adopted according to the norms of the target language culture. Therefore, due to the objective language and cultural barriers, translation cannot be carried out smoothly (Zhang & Wang, 2005, p. 106).

Skopos rule means that translation behavior depends on the purpose of translation, and the result determines the method. Because the occurrence of any behavior has a certain cultural background and different cultures have different customs and values, translation is not a one-to-one language conversion activity. Sometimes, due to special needs, as the specific purpose of translation or the special situation of the target readers, we need to provide some information from the original in order to achieve the purpose of expression, and we should translate selectively and changefully from multi-source information. Skopos theory regards translation as a purposeful activity, and holds that the first consideration in translation is the purpose of translation, for whom the translation is done, not whether it is equivalent or not.

The principle of coherence means that the translation must conform to the standard of intralingual coherence. The translation must be comprehensible to the recipient and meaningful in the communicative environment and culture of the target language.

Text Classification of Advertisement

Reiss and several other German linguists classify texts into two categories according to communicative function and linguistic features or conventions: *texttypen* and *textsorten* (Reiss, 1989, see Zhang & Wang, 2005,

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p. 43). The two classifications are of guiding significance to functional translation, which enables the translation to achieve textual functions within the category of genre features.

Advertising is a kind of information dissemination activities; it makes people know a certain commodity or service, in order to persuade consumers to have the desire to purchase. Advertisements are concise, novel, vivid, and persuasive. The translation should be guided by the dominant norms of the target language and culture, trying to reproduce the content of the original accurately and completely.

Functional Types of Advertisement Translation

Different communicative functions require different translation strategies. Nord divides translation into two types: instrumental and documentary. As an information-based text, the introduction of scenic spots can adopt a tool based translation strategy, rewriting the functional identity with the standard of target language culture, so as to achieve the functional equivalence between the translation and the original text and achieve the purpose of attracting tourists. This rewriting is manifested in two aspects: On the one hand, according to the readers' different expectations of the genre with cultural characteristics, the translator adjusts the form of the text to conform to the textual and stylistic norms of the target culture; on the other hand, according to the readers' differences in cultural knowledge, the relationship between the explicit information and the implicit information in the text is adjusted (Nord, 1991, p. 23).

Genre Convention and Information Transmission of Advertisement Under Cultural Background

Genre Conventions

Genre classification is of great significance to functional translation. Convention is the default non mandatory rule of conduct, which is based on the common knowledge and expectations of everyone, that is, what others expect you to expect them to do under certain circumstances (Zhang & Wang, 2005, p. 69). Genre conventions are the result of the standardization of communicative activities. When a certain text is used repeatedly under certain circumstances, its functions are more or less the same; this text obtains the conventional forms, and sometimes these forms even rise to social norms. Therefore, genre conventions and norms play an important role in both text creation and text acceptance (Zhang & Wang, 2005, p. 69).

Due to cultural differences, readers of different languages have developed a kind of inherent trial psychology and appreciation habit under the influence of their specific language and cultural environment for a long time. This psychology and habit naturally restrict their attention to language stimulation and the way of using language, and also create their own unique language expression methods of tourism style and the forms that readers like to see and hear. They have different writing styles and aesthetic standards. Due to the differences in genre conventions between Chinese and English, translators can switch between them to make the target text conform to the conventions.

Genre Conventions of Chinese and English Advertisements

Western English advertisements often take "individuality" and "independence" as the theme, take the personalized feeling of promotional products as the selling point, persuade the target customers according to their personal tone, and use a lot of imperative sentences. According to the statistics of linguists, more than a quarter of the independent sentences in advertisements are imperative sentences. Imperative sentence itself

contains the meaning of request, order, advice, and call on people to do something, which is just in line with the purpose of commercial advertising to persuade and urge consumers to take action. Like Nike's "just do it".

The value of collectivism in China is reflected in the creation of advertising language, and conformity psychology is the main factor to promote purchasing behavior. Many advertising copywriters try their best to persuade consumers in heterogeneous markets to buy the same product, such as "suitable for people of all ages", "loved by all", etc.

In view of the differences between Chinese and English advertising genres, the translator should appropriately convey the information in the source language to the target language readers according to the specific situation. Common methods include:

(1) On the premise of grasping the meaning of the original text and according to the characteristics of the target language, the sequential translation method adjusts the language structure of the original text to make it conform to the habits of the target language. Maxwell: good to the last drop. (Macintosh coffee)

(2) The method of translation refers to the fixed expressions in the target language, which can be ready-made advertising idioms, idioms, poems, lyrics, and so on. Parody can also be used to change the fixed expressions in the target language to make them more appropriate to the original, such as: Where there is a way for car, there is a Toyota. There must be a road to the front of the mountain, and there must be a Toyota. Think different. (Apple)

(3) Supplementary translation means that in order to express the purpose of advertisement more clearly, the deep meaning of the original text is excavated or the necessary cultural information is filled, so that the meaning of the translated text is obviously more than that of the original text. Elegance is an attitude (advertisement of LongQin watch) (Zhang, 2004, p. 23).

Cultural Information and Guidance Function

On the basis of Bühler's three textual functions (referential function, expressive function, and inductive function), Nord added the function of greeting. The inducement function is used to arouse readers' interest. Advertising plays a leading role in the source language and target language. The realization of inducement function is closely related to the society in which readers live, and the social model depends on cultural concepts and traditions (Nord, 1991, p. 41). The culture specific items closely related to cultural concepts and traditions may lead to errors in the realization of text induction function.

Influenced by their respective historical traditions, customs, and economic development, China and the West have formed quite different aesthetic tastes. What is respected in one culture may not resonate in another. Advertisement translation is both language translation and cultural translation. In translation, attention should be paid to the aesthetic connection between the target language and the target language, so as to reproduce the creative effect of the original advertisement.

Culture specific items refer to certain items that appear in the text. Because there is no corresponding item in the target reader's cultural system or it has a different text status from the item, it is difficult to translate its function and meaning in the source text into the target text (Aixela, 1996, see Zhang, 2004, p. 189). In order to solve this problem, the translator can adopt the "substitution method", that is, when the equivalence of culture specific items cannot be found in the target language, it can be replaced by similar and unambiguous concepts or expressions in the target language. "Dragon" is a symbol of totem of Chinese nation, which means power, auspiciousness in Han culture. In English culture, it embodies a terrible monster. Westerners turn pale when

talking about “dragon”, so Dongfeng “Citroen” is cleverly translated as citron. Kiss Me brand lipstick in Westerners: kind, natural, humorous, and romantic. “Kiss me”, most Chinese will feel embarrassed or even offended. Transliteration as “Knight beauty”, the United States also highlights the effect of lipstick on women’s charm (Zhao, 1996, p. 34).

If we cannot deal with cultural differences in advertising translation, we can easily get inaccurate and sometimes wrong advertising information. In the eyes of Americans, obesity reducing tablets are specially prescribed for obese people, which goes against the psychology of buyers. It is translated into slimming pipes, which opens up a market. Another example is the “white feather” pen made in Shanghai. In Chinese culture, white means purity. If translated into English, “white feather”: to show the white feather, it means weakness and timidity, and running away.

Conclusion

The English translation of advertisement can adopt the instrumental translation strategy to make the translation conform to the genre conventions of the target language. Correctly handling the cultural information can make the translation consistent within the text, realize the guidance function of the text, and achieve the purpose of attracting foreign customers and expanding sales.

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