

## Translation of Advertising in Cross-Cultural Background

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to explore how to achieve better advertising translation in a cross-cultural context. The paper consists of five parts. The first part is the introduction of current international economic situation and that of China, highlighting the increasingly important features of cross-cultural advertising translation. The second part analyses the factors that affect the translation process in the cross-cultural context from two major perspectives (geographical location and historical factors), reflecting the complexity of advertising translation in the cross-cultural context. In the third part, based on the consideration of the faithfulness of the original text, five kinds of translation methods are put forward. Among them, the re-create translation is an innovative created translation method after analysing the current social development trend; from the perspective of the cross-cultural background, the Skopos theory is proposed to test the translation results, and three principles of Skopos theory are introduced in details. At the end of this part, the changes of the current market and the new consumers' psychology are analysed, the advocate for combining the cross-cultural advertising translation with consumers' purchase psychology is advised, at the same time, introducing the contents of consumers' purchase psychology in detail, explaining why the two should be combined and the expected effects, and finally providing practical advice about how to combine them.

### 1. Introduction

The meaning of advertisement is to promote and tell, which is also called "selling skill printed on paper". Advertising is an art that integrates social, historical, psychological and art design disciplines.

The so-called cross-cultural refers to a fully correct understanding of the cultural phenomena, customs and habits with differences or conflicts in the national culture, and an inclusive attitude to accept and adapt on this basis. So cross-cultural advertising translation refers to the realization of the accuracy and effectiveness of advertising translation under the premise of understanding each other's culture, combining with various translation techniques or marketing contents, so as to achieve the goal of successfully selling goods or spreading commodity culture.

Cross-cultural advertising translation is not only the transformation between Chinese and foreign languages, but also the embodiment of consumption concepts and cultural customs among different countries. Cross cultural advertising translation is not only a means of commodity trading, but also a means of cultural communication and cultural exchange, and a way of commodity marketing across national boundaries. Due to the different cultures of different regions, people have their own ways of expressing the same thing or object. If the translator does not analyse the culture of the target region, it will cause misunderstanding. In order to improve people's acceptance of advertisements in different cultural backgrounds, cross-cultural background analysis is necessary, a good cross-cultural translation is necessary for successfully sell goods in other countries.

### 2. Influences of Cross-Cultural Environment on Advertising Translation

Generally speaking, cross-cultural factors refer to different cultural backgrounds, which are related to private geographical factors and historical factors. They are long-term formed unique customs. Different regions have different cultural factors. Maybe the meaning we want to express is

another meaning in another cultural environment. However, the good thing is that the commonality of thinking determines the commonality of different languages beyond their differences. It is the commonality of thinking and emotion that makes the transformation between non assimilative languages possible. English translation of commercial advertisements should minimize the impact of cross-cultural factors. So if we do the cultural decoding of the language advertisements when advertising across borders, it is quite possible to find what concrete factors that cause the semantic divergence and then we can put forward the corresponding solutions to settle the problems. The following part will analyse the factors that influence the translation of advertising under the cross-cultural background from two parts: geographical factors and historical factors. What's more, the author's explanation of these factors is the process of cultural decoding just mentioned

## **2.1 Geographical Factors**

The most direct manifestation of geographical difference is the location. Different geographical locations have different climates, which produce different ways of life and production, these various ways lead to different social systems in China and the West.

### **2.1.1 Different Location**

Locational factors, i.e. regional and environmental factors. Different regions and environments lead to different modes of production, which cause different civilizations, which determines people will hold different attitudes towards the relationship between human beings and products.

### **2.1.2 Different Social System**

Different modes of production produce different modes of business development, which finally evolve different social systems. As we all know, China is socialist system, while western countries are capitalist systems. To some extent, the impact of the differences between the two systems on people's lives is quite different so the direction of guiding values in China and western countries are different. This difference is mainly reflected in public service advertising.

## **2.2 Historical Factors**

Besides the geographical factors, the historical ones are also significant in making difference in understanding. When we talk about the historical factors, the first aspect that has to be mentioned is cultural difference. Different historical backgrounds will certainly produce different cultures. Different culture will lead people to have different psychology about advertisement and affect their expression in daily life. Next, the author will explain these three influences caused by different historical backgrounds: culture, psychology and expression

### **2.2.1 Different Culture**

Culture is a group of ideas formed in a certain period of time and all activities radiated by the group's overall consciousness. There are great cultural differences between China and the west. The most obvious differences lie in the mode of education, which influencing the ideological aspect of people very much, another difference lies in the belief of religion.

### **2.2.2 Different Psychology**

Due to the differences of culture, people's views of and trust in advertising are also different. Here I call it psychological differences. There are two main psychological differences. First, Chinese people have certain psychological trust in authority. Therefore, most of the products in China tend to take the certification of an authority as the guarantee of product quality. However, authority in the advertisement of capitalist environment does not accord with the psychology of consumers, because people in that environment emphasize independence and personal value more. The second manifestation of psychological difference is that the traditional Chinese thought focuses more on collective consciousness and family concept, while the westerners' thought, especially the United States, pays more attention to individualism and advocates individuality and freedom.

### **2.2.3 Different Expression**

The difference of expression is the most direct continuation of cultural and psychological differences. Chinese traditional culture advocates implicit expression, which can highlight one's connotation and self-cultivation, while western culture is more direct and frank.

## **3. Effective Advertising Translation in Cross-Cultural Context**

After discussing the problems that influence translation of advertising under the cross-cultural background, the author will analyse how to properly solve these problems. The quality of advertisement translation is the key factor for the success of commodity trading in cross-cultural context. As mentioned above, there are too many factors that will affect advertisement translation, which can neither violate the seller's original intention, nor rigidly adhere to the original. In general, it is necessary to be faithful to the original but not be trapped by original. Therefore, advertising under the cross-cultural background really tests the translators' professional skills and flexibility of thinking.

Next, this paper will discuss the translation methods that can be adopted to be more faithful to but not limited to the original meaning of advertisement translation in cross-cultural context, as well as some methods to test whether cross-cultural factors are taken into account in translation results, so as to solve the problems mentioned in the previous part that will affect the translation and avoid translation errors due to cross-cultural reasons.

### **3.1 Faithful to the Original Version**

In order to maintain the faithfulness of the original text, the translator should choose appropriate translation methods after analysing the influencing factors faced by the advertising products, so as to achieve the cognitive consistency between the translation and the target audience as much as possible. There are five most proper methods.

Literal translation. It is not a simple word to word or sentence to sentence literal translation, but to achieve consistency in content and form. Literal translation is to translate words one by one, and transform the grammatical structure of the original language into the most similar corresponding structure in the target language, both the content and the form of the original are retained. That is to say, retaining the linguistic features of the original language can not only keep the sentence pattern consistent, but also express the literal meaning, as well as express the deep meaning clearly.

Free translation, it refers to the translation method that maintains the original content but does not maintain the original form. Free translation allows the translator to have certain creativity under the condition that the basic information of the original text can be accurately conveyed. This kind of translation method is more free, flexible and authentic, and its readability is stronger. It does not stick to the consistency of the structure of words or sentences, but expresses the meaning of advertising words by adding or reducing some words or structures. At the same time, it can make the translation vivid and attractive. In fact, free translation is a method of language environment transformation, which can vividly show the language characteristics and customs of the target advertising location. Free translation make the advertisements more in line with the internal needs of the consumers in the target location, and thus stimulate the consumers' purchase desire.

Corresponding translation, it is to use some structures of the target language to express our original meaning. These structures are mainly evolved from classical poems, idioms and ancient proverbs of target areas.

Transliteration, it is a form of translation based on the pronunciation of the original language. It is translated from the loanwords with similar pronunciation of the original language. It no longer contains the original meaning, but only retains the pronunciation or writing form. Transliteration is usually used for names of people, places, trademark, countries and so on. During the transliteration process, the translators should better ensure that the pronunciation of the target language is similar to the original. In addition, it is necessary to translate the advertising sound according to the aesthetic view of consumers, so as to improve the quality and effect of translation.

Re-Create translation, it is also called creative translation, which is basically out of the scope of translation. Re-create translation often keeps the “soul” of original version, but products completely different and creative new version.

To summarize the general function of this part is that, in the translation of cross-cultural advertising, different products are facing with different influential factors, so we should choose appropriate translation methods according to the characteristics of the products and the effects that the communicators want to achieve. But generally speaking, the classification of influencing factors has been summarized in the third part, and the commonly used translation methods have been elaborated in detail in this part. When translating, translators only need to analyse their own tasks to match the corresponding influencing factors, and then choose the appropriate translation methods.

### **3.2 Conform to Specific Culture**

In order to achieve cross-cultural semantic commonality as much as possible in cross-cultural advertising translation, so that the target audience can better understand the advertising and have a more appropriate feeling for the product, Vermeer's Skopos Theory is proposed to detect whether the advertising translation results achieve the maximum semantic consistency.

Skopos theory is a translation theory put forward and developed by Germany translologist Hans Vermeer, in the late 1970s. In this theory, translation has its purpose and the most important factors determining the purpose of translation is the target recipient, translators should choose proper translation methods according to the target receiver. It closely combines translation with cross-cultural context, so it's quite suitable to test whether the translation results are fully considered the cross-cultural factors. Skopos theory includes Three rules: Skopos Rule, Coherence Rule and Faithfulness Rule.

Skopos rule: Skopos means “purpose” in Greek. It requires translators to be clear about the purpose of translating the advertisement of the product and analyze the influencing factors the product faces, then to choose proper translation methods.

Coherence rule: The original text must be interpreted to be consistent with the situation of the target text receiver. It requires us to consider cultural background when translating, it's consistent with the main idea of Skopos theory, so it is the most important rule.

Faithfulness rule: Intertextual coherence, the context should be continuous, it also called “cohesion”. This rule usually used in long and detailed explanation of commodities.

When the translator completes the classification of the influencing factors proposed in the third part, then uses one or more translation methods mentioned in the fourth part to finish the translation, finally, the translator should use the three rules of Skopos theory to test whether the results are qualified in turn.

### **3.3 Combination with Consumers' Purchase Psychology**

Why to combine? The international market has changed a lot, in the past, the economic mode changes from “one country economy” to “world economy”. Besides, the market was a “seller's market”. People buy whatever the market had, but now it is different, the market has become a “buyer's market”, the market sells whatever the people need. What's more, people's purchase concepts changes from rational consumption to perceptual consumption.

How to combine and Expected Effects:

Firstly, paying attention to the aesthetic emotion of consumers. Human emotions have many dimensions, from happiness, anger, sorrow, joy to moral sense, sense of achievement, sense of honor, etc. But the most common emotions in commercial advertising is the sense of beauty. The pursuit of beauty is a common mentality. Therefore, if we are good at emotional appeal with beauty, it is possible to obtain emotional and moving effect. In the translation of commercial advertisements, the translator's aesthetic consciousness is very important. If the translation of commercial advertisements violates the aesthetic psychology of consumers, it will affect the market of products.

Secondly, paying attention to consumers' cultural background. Consumers' purchase behaviour is not only material demand, but also a kind of cultural consumption. “Behind the brand is culture”, brand without culture is short-lived, while brand with strong cultural heritage is eternal. With the

increasing differentiation, diversification and complexity of consumer demand, modern society has entered an era in which people pay more attention to “emotional value” than “functional value”, that is, people pay more attention to the satisfaction of personality, spiritual pleasure and cultural taste. Therefore, in cross-cultural advertising translation, we should not exaggerate the function of the product itself, but reflect or increase certain brand cultural content, so as to give the audience good feeling of cultural belonging.

Thirdly, creating a specific mood that can induce consumers' emotional behaviour, touch consumers' emotional factors. Emotional transmission is one of the important part of cross-cultural advertising translation, arousing the emotional resonance of the target audience is necessary. Through the description of artistic conception to show a certain idea and emotion, express as much as possible in finite words.

Fourthly, highlighting the position of consumers and pay attention to the readers' care, emphasizing the principle of “customers first”, because it can make the advertisement face the customer directly and communicate the emotion, besides, it can also show the respect and satisfy the self-esteem of consumer. Taking customers as the starting point to narrow the distance between products and consumers.

Fifthly, reflecting the appeal of humanistic care with commercial advertising translation. The use of commercialized forms is not wrong, but if it is not measured, it may make the advertising form become a symbol of money, and cause opposite effect. Therefore, the commercial colour in the form of advertisement should be appropriately weakened, the humanistic emotion should be added (Yu Xianjun, 2013). Advertising translation should “keep pace with the times”, embody humanistic care as much as possible, and highlight the spiritual needs of consumers.

#### **4. Conclusion**

By analysing the influence factors of cross-cultural context on translation, we can locate the problems faced by every product, and then selectively use five translation methods: literal translation, free translation, corresponding translation, transliteration and re-create translation, which can combine cross-cultural factors with advertisement translation well and make the translation results more accurate. Following Vermeer's Skopos theory can help us to use a variety of translation methods comprehensively, so that the meaning of advertising itself can be presented, and people in various cultural backgrounds can correctly and vividly understand the meaning of advertising. Finally, combining with consumers' purchase psychology, translated advertising will deeply root in the customers' mind and stimulates their strong purchase desire.

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