Research on the Linguistic Characteristics and Translation Methods of Advertising English

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Abstract: With China’s accession to the WTO, the deepening of trade ties between enterprises in various countries, business English advertising is especially important in international trade exchanges, especially in opening up foreign markets. Enterprises in various countries are facing the problem of advertising translation, and the research on advertising English is also showing a white heat. The differences in advertising English are mainly reflected in the choice of words, sentence construction and rhetorical means. This paper analyzes the linguistic characteristics of advertising English from four aspects: style, lexical, syntax and rhetoric. At the same time, its translation method is analyzed. According to its linguistic characteristics, the methods of literal translation and paraphrasing, addition, subtraction, paraphrase and focused translation are mainly discussed.

Keywords: Advertising English, Linguistic features, Translation method.

1. Introduction

In the modern society with a highly prosperous commodity economy, commercial English advertising has become a major means for enterprises to export sales and develop overseas markets. Moreover, with China's accession to the WTO, a large number of foreign advertisements have poured in, and it has become an important source for Chinese enterprises and consumers to obtain commodity information. As an applied language, advertising English has gradually developed into a professional language. It has its own unique linguistic characteristics and many differences from ordinary English. With the development of advertising, the advancement of the times, the advancement of science and technology and the changes in society, enterprises in various countries are facing the problem of internationalization and globalization of advertising. It is worth noting that advertising translation must fully consider the language habits and cultural accumulation of the target of product sales, so it is particularly important to be familiar with the language characteristics and translation strategies of English advertising.

2. The Features of Advertising English Language

Advertising is the art and economy of a language. The inherent purpose and characteristics of advertising always strive to spend the least amount of time, conveying more content, attracting more attention, and maximize the impact in the most refined form and space. Therefore, excellent advertising language requires readers to obtain the main information of advertising in the shortest possible time. 

1.1 Stylistics

Mastering the style of English advertising plays a crucial role in the production of advertising, the language conception of advertising and even the success of advertising. The following sentences describe the main English advertising styles and their characteristics.

1.1.1 Remember the entity

This is the most traditional and common expression in advertising style. This style is often straight to the point, directly telling or indicating the purpose of the advertisement. Some use a lot of space to describe the performance, advantages, use and operation of the product. 

1.1.2 Novel style

Sometimes an advertisement in English is like a story that includes characters, plot conflicts, and endings. The designer of advertising moves readers and consumers through vivid plots and touching language, so that readers unconsciously accept the content promoted by advertising, and this style can do advertising of various contents.

1.1.3 Poetic style

Sometimes English advertising reads like a poem. It often paints a moving picture to readers through poetic language, vivid imagery, and symmetrical sentences, so that readers can appreciate the poetic and picturesque general advertising while also having a strong sense of identification with the product.

1.1.4 Conversational style

Sometimes English advertising comes in the form of dialogue, giving people a natural, vivid experience in the form of dialogue. Consider, experience, and feel from the consumer's point of view. This tends to achieve a multiplier effect with less effort.

1.2 Vocabulary

As the saying goes, a single word is worth a thousand pieces of gold. This is apt to use in advertising language. Advertising as a means of disseminating information aims to achieve certain economic benefits. It is necessary to fully promote and introduce the product, but also find ways to save time and space, so the advertising words should be concise, vivid, eye-catching and appealing.
1.2.1 The words are simple and catchy

In order to make the advertising language concise and vivid, the content is clear at a glance. Advertising English often uses some monosyllabic verbs, this advertisement does not directly describe the performance and characteristics of the product, but advises consumers to evaluate themselves through their own feelings, giving consumers full freedom and making them feel respected.

1.2.2 Greetings

In order to connect the emotional bond between advertisers and consumers, giving consumers a sense of trust and empathy, and at the same time increasing the authenticity of advertising and consumer participation, many pronouns are often used in advertising English. Usually the first person refers to the advertiser, the second person refers to the consumer, and the third person refers to the person or thing that the reader is familiar with, admires, or likes.

1.2.3 Strong Pertinence

In order to let consumers know as much as possible about the product, the creator will grasp the main features of the product and express it in vivid language, so that consumers can remember the product unintentionally.

1.3 Syntax

Ad language needs to be concise, clear and attention-grabbing. Therefore, advertising English has its own unique syntax characteristics compared to other English styles.

1.3.1 Sentence Characteristics

In the use of sentence patterns, use more simple sentences and less compound sentences. Advertising is for the public, so it requires concise sentences that can capture people's attention and hearing at once and arouse people's interest. Complex and lengthy sentences are often annoying and difficult to achieve the purpose of advertising. In order to resonate with people, simple sentences are generally adopted in colloquial language, which are catchy and intimate to read.

1.3.2 Temporal Characteristics

The tense is dominated by the present tense, and encouraging consumption is the result of most advertisements expecting promotion. Even if it does not trigger consumers' immediate consumption behavior, cultivating their good feelings and promoting their understanding of the product or company is also the goal of advertising promotion. Therefore, the present tense is mainly used in advertising slogans. In order to achieve special promotional effects and marketing strategies, other tenses are sometimes used in slogans, mainly future tenses and past tenses.[4]

3. Translation Methods

Today, with the development of international commodity trade, advertising is also increasingly international. Advertising translation is a process of re-creation from one language to another. The translation of advertisements should not only retain the essence of the original text, reflecting the linguistic characteristics of advertisements, but also conform to the psychology of consumers. It is necessary to use comprehensive knowledge of language, marketing and aesthetics, and select appropriate translation methods according to the characteristics of specific advertisements. The translation methods of advertising English include literal translation, free translation, omission, amplification, transcreation and focused translation.

3.1 Literal Translation and Free Translation

Literal translation or free translation has always been the focus of debate in the translation community. free translation refers to translate according to the general meaning of the original text, without word-for-word translation. It is usually used more when translating sentences or phrases or larger translation groups, and free translation is mainly used when the original language and the target language reflect a huge cultural difference.

From the perspective of intercultural language communication and cultural exchange, free translation emphasizes the relative independence of the translation language cultural system and the original language cultural system. A large number of examples show that the use of free translation reflects the differences between different linguistic peoples in many aspects such as ecological culture, language culture, religious culture, material culture and social culture. It can better reflect the linguistic characteristics of the ethnic group.

In the translation process, if it can be literally translated, it will be translated. If it cannot be literally translate, it will be translate according to it’s own meaning. When it needs to be combined with direct meaning, it will be translate on the basis of literal translation.[5]

3.2 Amplification and Omission

What is amplification? We can determine its definition in this way. In order for the translation to faithfully express the meaning and style of the original text, and to make the translation conform to the expression customs, it is necessary to add some words in meaning (rhetoric) and syntax, which is called the addition method. English and Chinese, due to the different expressions of the two languages, may not only convert the meaning of words when translating, but may increase or decrease the number of words. Sometimes, in order to be clear, emphatic, or vivid, it is also necessary to repeat some key words, such as verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, words that indicate the plural of nouns, words that express tenses, and so on.

As with everything else, translation is a matter of increasing and decreasing. After understanding the method of amplification, it is natural to move something to subtract the translation method, which is the opposite of the addition method. Taking the same translation example, if the English translation into Chinese uses the amplification method, it will naturally use the omission method in the Chinese to English. With regard to omission, it is important to remember the
general principle that subtraction means that some words in the original text are not translated in the translation, because the translation has its meaning even though it is not a word, or it is self-evident in the translation. In other words, omission is the deletion of words that are dispensable, or that are cumbersome or contrary to the customary expression of the translation, but omission does not mean deleting certain ideological categories of the original text. In addition, articles, conjunctions, pronouns, relational adverbs are often used in English, but they rarely appear when translated into Chinese. Amplification is to excavate the meaning of the original text, and give play to the deep meaning of the original text, so that the meaning of the translated text obviously exceeds the original text. omission is to omit certain words in the original text under the premise of being faithful to the original text, so that the translation is simple and easy to understand.[6]

3.3 Transcreation

Most people know that translation is translation. But in the current industry, the terms localization and transcreation are very popular. The definitions of the three terms overlap and sometimes there is no strict distinction in their use. Translation, which is the conversion of one language to another, focuses on a piece of content, and needs to achieve parity between the two languages as much as possible. Localization goes beyond the scope of content and text, focusing on more diverse objects. Localization must consider the purpose of the brand, the style of the brand, and the culture that caters to the audience. For example, a brand might invite cricketers to promote in India and some fresh meat in China. Localization also includes avoiding offending audience culture, local laws, and more.

Transcreation is a compound word for translation and creation. Translators need to be more creative and have sufficient control over the text in the translation process.

In my opinion, transcreation can be classified as a localization service, which focuses on finding the best way to use another language and culture to get the audience to respond to what you want.[7]

Transcreation is not just direct translation or localization of text. In order to adapt the source language to suit the reading needs of the target language audience, transcreators focus on grasping the persuasive or emotional function that the original text is intended to express. Transcreation is often used for marketing and promotional materials, and is written in the target language of the buyer. Its immediate purpose is to adapt the source language to suit the reading needs of the target language audience, transcreators focus on grasping the persuasive or emotional function that the original text is intended to express. Transcreation is often used for marketing and promotional materials, and is written in the target language of the buyer. Its immediate purpose is to effectively convey information, promote purchases, and spread images.

The brand marketing of enterprises is generally comprehensively planned by professional marketing companies or advertising companies, which is expensive. Companies in China generally plan content based on Chinese, but when it comes to multilingualizing their content, people's attitude is often casual. In fact, this is a big mistake. Although the cost of transcreation and writing is much cheaper than the original idea, the mechanism of creation is the same. This work requires re-creation in the native language of the target language based on a full understanding of the product, market and creative background of the original language, and if it is translated verbatim by a translation company, it is impossible to effectively convey the message and achieve the purpose of marketing.[8]

As you already know, transcreation is a newly introduced term and most of the people still don't have a clear understanding about it. In fact, they are not aware about the importance of transcreation and they tend to go for translation services and end up with hassle as a result of it. Translation would only convert text from one language to another as it is. However, transcreation can add more value to the content that is being converted. It can give life to a creative piece of work at the end of the day. How to create a meaningful message through transcreation? Transcreation is associated with creativity. As a result, the content can be fine-tuned in order to make them blend perfectly well with specific markets. In other words, information can be presented in a unique and an innovative manner in order to create interest within the minds of readers. It is done without changing the core meaning of the original content. Therefore, it would be like asking someone with a creative mindset in order to rewrite something in his/her own words. If you are looking forward to add some creativity into translated content, transcreation is the best option available out there.

4. Conclusion

As an applied language, advertising English has gradually developed from ordinary English into a specialized language for its special utility. It can be said that it is formed by many factors such as linguistics, psychology, economics, marketing and even aesthetics, and is a condensed, comprehensive and commercial art. Therefore, when translating an advertisement, it is first necessary to understand the linguistic characteristics of the advertisement itself. Second, the criterion should be considered whether the translated text achieves the same publicity effect as the original text. And pay attention to the differences in cultural background and language habits, choose appropriate translation methods, and make the language natural, accurate, concise and easy to understand, so as to cater to the psychology of different audiences, and then achieve the ultimate purpose of advertising.

References

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