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STUDY ON LEXICAL TRANSLATION OF AUTOMOBILE ADVERTISEMENT FROM THE
PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSLATION AESTHETICS

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ABSTRACT

With the acceleration of globalization and the high-quality development of China's economy, more and more imported products have become consumers' choices. Advertisement of imported products has become important for enhancing consumers' purchasing desire. Therefore, the Chinese translation of advertisement plays an important role in product promotion, and high-quality automobile advertisement is beneficial for promoting automobile sales. This paper selects the official advertisement language as the research object to analyze the advertisement translation. From the perspective of translation aesthetics, this paper studies the lexical translation of automobile advertisements and analyzes how translators convey the aesthetic information, which hopes to better achieve the transmission of beauty and improve the quality of automobile advertisement translation.

Keywords: translation aesthetics; lexical translation; automobile advertisement; aesthetic information

Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization and the improvement of living standards, more and more international products have attracted the public's attention. As an important channel to stimulate consumers' purchasing desire, advertisement is very common in daily life. It is obvious that advertisement makes a difference in product distribution, because it can convey product information, attract consumers' attention, and successfully build a bridge between products and customers. Therefore, the quality of advertisement translation affects the effectiveness of consumers' acceptance of products. Automobiles are special products that are durable and expensive, and the design of advertisement language should better capture consumers' attention while conforming to the characteristics of the advertising language. This paper selects the original text and translation of automobile advertisement slogans as the research objects, which come from the official websites of various automobile brands. These brands include Jaguar, Mercedes Benz, BMW, Toyota, Audi, NIO, Ford and Mitsubishi. Based on the basic framework of translation aesthetics, the research analyzes the aesthetic information of Chinese translation of automobile advertisements at the lexical level in the formal system. The paper studies how to achieve the transmission of beauty in Chinese translation of automobile advertisements and the aesthetic means used by translators, which provides a different analytical perspective for automobile advertisement translation and hopes to improve the quality of advertisement translation.

1. Introduction to Translation Aesthetics and Advertisement Translation

1.1 A Brief Introduction to Translation Aesthetics

Translation aesthetics needs to study the aesthetic subject and object of the target language and the source language, which is what many translators need to pay attention to. In *Introduction to Translation Studies*, Liu Miqing (2012) elaborates on the aesthetic thinking of Chinese translation theory, including the aesthetic origins of translation studies, the aesthetic objects and subjects of translation. He thinks translation aesthetics is the aesthetic representation of the translator and the aesthetic subject's perception of the aesthetic object. Liu Miqing mentions that the beauty of language is embedded in two systems of language, the formal system and the non-formal system.

Liu Miqing (2012) thinks the so-called "form" has two prominent characteristics in aesthetics. Firstly, form is always associated with sensibility. Secondly, form is a relative and composite concept. Therefore, in aesthetics, there are always three gradually deepening levels of form: external form, internal form, and conceptual form. From the perspective of sensibility, the external form appeals to the natural sensibility, the internal form appeals to emotional sensibility, and the conceptual form appeals to the symbolic sensibility. The external form is the perception layer of the aesthetic object, the internal form is the intermediary layer of the aesthetic object, and the conceptual form is the meaning layer of the aesthetic object. The relativity and complexity of form are also related to the content. Form is the external configuration of the aesthetic object, while content is the rational connotation of the aesthetic object. The formal system refers to the decoding of the set of aesthetic symbols, which includes aesthetic information at the phonetic level, lexical level, and syntactic level.

At the lexical level of the original language, Liu Miqing (2012) points out that the basic means of carrying aesthetic information can be covered in "diction", which involves issues such as word choice, register, and collocation. Another aspect is to utilize various rhetorical devices of words, which is a positive means of carrying aesthetic information at the lexical level. Words are one of the basic units in language that can carry aesthetic information, and are the most important basic unit. Because words are the combination of characters, morphemes, and syllables, which also are the combination of form, meaning, and sound, their capacity to carry aesthetic information is very strong. Words can comprehensively and effectively reflect the basic characteristics of language symbols, namely linearity, arbitrariness, generativity, systematicity, and stability. Liu Miqing (2012) puts forward the "ABC" principle, and it refers to appropriateness (abbreviated as "A"), beauty (abbreviated as "B"), and compactness (abbreviated as "C"). Appropriateness refers to the use of words accurately, with two layers of meaning. One is to express the original meaning accurately, and the other is to accurately adapt to the rationality of context, grammar, and logic, as well as the appropriateness of usage habits. "Beauty refers to the quality of being able to great pleasure to the mind or sense proposed by Descartes" (Liu,2012). Compactness refers to refinement, and the opposite of compactness is procrastination. It is a principle advocated by Mo Bu, a master of Chinese and Foreign Rhetoric, that words should be concise and avoid useless exaggeration and exaggeration.

1.2 A Brief Introduction to Characteristics of Advertisement

Peng Chaozhong (2019) puts forward that advertisement language has the characteristics of conventionality, ambiguity, popularity, artistry, simplicity, and media applicability. The conventionality of advertisement language refers to its application being subject to some normative constraints. Because advertisement typically requires the use of mass media for information dissemination, with a wide audience and significant influence, advertisement language must be subject to supervision and constraints from relevant laws and regulations. The ambiguity of advertisement language is mainly analyzed through pronunciation and vocabulary. Firstly, at the phonetic level, language ambiguity is caused by the uncertainty of speech in people's daily communication, and the phenomenon of homophones and partial tone of vocabulary in various ethnic languages. Secondly, at the level of vocabulary, the ambiguity is mainly reflected in the application of pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and numerals. Popularity means that advertisement language is different from academic language, and should not use too professional words or complex sentence structures. Regardless of the language of the advertisement, the use of words is generally simple and clear, and the choice of language is mostly close

to people's lives. The artistry of advertisement language refers to the ingenious use of language by advertisement creators, who skillfully apply grammar rules and rhetorical devices, and sometimes even break grammar rules and people's thinking patterns, effectively moving consumers and causing emotional resonance. Simplicity means that the amount of words used in advertisement is directly related to the advertisement costs. In addition, concise advertisement language can also effectively reduce the reading burden on the audience. Media applicability refers to the physical and audio-visual characteristics of different media forms. In order to achieve the optimal communication effect, the application of advertisement language must be adapted to the media used in advertisement.

1.3 A Brief Introduction to Characteristics and Principles of Advertisement Translation

Peng Chaozhong (2019) mentions that the academic community generally categorizes advertisement translation as non-literary translation, because advertisement translation has both obvious practicality and even utilitarianism. Advertisement language is often very concise and rhythmic, with beautiful words and sentences, and has similar characteristics to poetic language. Therefore, advertisement translation also has the characteristics of poetic translation in literary translation. Firstly, excellent advertisement translation generally has certain characteristics of poetry, and they are innovative ideas, concise language, sonorous tones, and vivid imagery. Secondly, advertisement translation has considerable flexibility and doesn't require superficial loyalty or formal correspondence. Thirdly, advertisement also has characteristics of anonymity. The anonymity of advertisement translation is closely related to the characteristics of advertisement creation.

The text typology oriented by translation proposed by Reiss who is the founder of the German functionalist school, has important guiding significance for translators to analyze the characteristics of different types of texts and determine corresponding translation principles and strategies (Liu and Wang, 2012). Peng Chaozhong (2019) believes that advertisement translation should also have more specific and practical guiding principles. He also thinks that based on the creative requirements of advertisement, the characteristics of advertisement language, and the particularity of advertisement translation, the principles of advertisement translation should be summarized as follows. They are seeking unique creativity, seeking similar functions, and seeking smooth translation. Seeking unique creativity is the first guiding principle, and translators should strive for innovative creativity. The principle of seeking similar functions means that the target text and the source text should share the same function. From a macro perspective, advertisement style must bear the promotional function of advertisement. From a micro perspective, any advertisement has its unique features, so each advertisement has its specific function. The principle of seeking smooth translation has two meanings. The first is smoothness, which has a similar meaning to "expressiveness" proposed by Yan Fu. The second is domestication, which conforms to the language and cultural habits of the target text.

2. Introduction to Automobile Advertisement Translation

Ji Mingyang (2017) mentions that advertisement is characterized by communicating and using advertisement language, which aims to instill a certain concept in people and persuade them to purchase a brand of product. Therefore, advertisement mainly provides consumers with product information, utilizing language charm to arouse consumers' liking for a certain brand. Automobiles are special products with high durability and high prices, and automobile advertisements have their characteristics. Firstly, the language is concise and powerful, making it easy to remember. Translation of automobile advertisements often uses simple and powerful words and sentence structures, and the translation is concise and not cumbersome. It aims to convey the most important automobile introduction information in the shortest possible time, and has a shorter processing time in the audience's mind, making it easy to remember and impressive. Secondly, using more popular language of the times. The current popular internet slang is also a means that can be adopted in translation. Online buzzwords come from social hot spots and often convey the attitudes of netizens through humorous and concise language. They are full of vitality, spread quickly, and have a wide range, ultimately becoming familiar and well-known. Automobile advertisements use popular language, which is easy for people to quickly understand the meaning conveyed. Thirdly, making more use of classic idioms and allegorical sayings in the target language. When translating automobile advertisements, idioms and allegorical sayings show the

essence of different countries' languages and cultures. If translators can find equivalent idioms with the same meaning in the target language, and the translation can convey the meaning of advertisements more concisely and comprehensively, and enable the target language readers to quickly understand the connotation of advertisements. Fourthly, using more rhetorical devices, such as metaphors, personification, puns, etc. By using metaphorical and anthropomorphic rhetorical techniques, automobile advertisement language becomes more vivid, mobilizing various senses and associations to participate in advertisement memory, achieving the role of advertisement promotion.

3. Study on Lexical Translation of Automobile advertisement From the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

He Xuegeng and Tan Xiaoli (2007) believe that advertisement often conveys its pragmatic calling function through external formal beauty, arousing readers' purchasing desire and realizing the value of advertisement. Therefore, the highest level of pragmatic translation in advertisement is to reproduce the formal beauty of the original advertisement as fully as possible, while interpreting its pragmatic calling function. In the *Introduction to Translation Aesthetics*, Liu Miqing (2012) mentions aesthetic information at different level in the formal system. This section analyzes the transmission of aesthetic information at the lexical level through the device of diction and rhetoric.

3.1 The Device of Diction

This part studies the diction in the translation based on formal system of translation aesthetics. It analyzes the aesthetic information of the Chinese translation of advertisements from the aspects of word choice, register, and collocation.

3.1.1 The Aesthetic Information on the Level of Word Choice

The diction that carries aesthetic information is the most common material corpus in words. The diction with aesthetic value is clearly selected by the author of source text, which usually complies with the "ABC" Principles.

Example 1

Source Text (ST) : Don' t dream it, drive it.

Target Text (TT) : 告别梦想 · 尽情驰骋

This advertisement belongs to Jaguar Cars, calling people to take action on their dream cars. Jaguar's advertisement slogan cleverly uses alliteration, and the use of "dream" and "drive" with a rich sense of rhythm. The choice and combination of words convey a complete meaning that is unforgettable. The creator of the English advertisement slogan uses two simple imperative sentences to tell consumers that owning a Jaguar Car is not a dream. Jaguar cars bring people speed and passion. The source text is very experiential and can stimulate buyers' desire to purchase. The translator also fully considers and uses the same sentence structure, choosing the words "告别" and "驰骋" to tell buyers to take action immediately and enjoy the ultimate experience that Jaguar cars bring to car owners. Not only does it achieve the transmission of the beauty of the original words, but it also achieves the economic function of advertising.

Example 2

ST: The Ultimate Driving Machine.

TT: 登峰造极

This is an advertisement for BMW. If translator uses Chinese four-character phrases and symmetrical structures to translate it into "宝马系列 · 车中极品", the advertisement is too colloquial to express the nobility and dignity of BMW cars. By using translation method of omission, cutting "Driving Machine" and selecting Chinese idioms to translate it as "登峰造极", which means "reaching the pinnacle or achieving profound and

exquisite proficiency” in Chinese. The translated language is concise and easy to remember, highlighting the characteristics of BMW’s “Ultimate” and accurately conveying the aesthetic information of the original text.

3.1.2 The Aesthetic Information on the Level of Register

Halliday puts forward that register as a situational and usage-related variant, which can be understood as transcending the levels of grammar, vocabulary, terminology, and phrases. Register refers to the language we speak or write that varies depending on the context. Qin Xiubai (1991) believes there is a very close relationship between the use of language and the situational context in which it is used. The scope, the mode, and the tone of discourse are the three variables of situational context, which contribute to the formation of different situational types, resulting in different discourse types, namely registers.

Example 3

ST : The best or nothing.

TT : 不极致, 则平庸

In 2010, Mercedes Benz launched this advertisement slogan on the occasion of its 125th anniversary. The use of “best” and “nothing” in the source text directly expresses two evaluations of cars. The concise choice of two conveys Mercedes Benz’s brand concept of “only the best”, which is a confidence unique to car inventors. The meaning of “极致” in Chinese is to reach the highest level, and the meaning of “平庸” is ordinary and common. There is a saying that goes like this: to do one thing to the extreme is better than doing ten thousand things mediocly. The advertisement of register and word usage are matched, which can show consumers’ first impression of the Mercedes Benz brand is their pursuit of quality and superior products. The translation achieves the transmission of the beauty of the original language information. greatly attracts consumers’ attention.

Example 4

ST: Where there is a way for car there is Toyota.

TT: 车到山前必有路 · 有路必有丰田车

This advertisement is for Toyota, and it can be seen that the form of the English advertisement is similar to the form of “Where there is a way, there is a will”. Firstly, in terms of advertisement English design, it cleverly borrows familiar idioms, making it easier for people with a foundation in English to understand the meaning. Secondly, when translating advertisements into Chinese, it also borrows the Chinese common saying “there is always a way to the mountain”, which is very suitable for the background of automobile advertisements and reflects the universality and importance of Toyota cars. It has achieved the function of transmitting information and promoting products. The same sentence structure creates different contexts, expanding the scope of discourse and forming different registers, at the same time bringing readers into a familiar register to better understand the product.

3.1.3 The Aesthetic Information on the Level of Collocation

Collocation is also an important means of disseminating aesthetic information. Conventional collocations focus on meeting the “ABC” Principles, and collocations that don’t conform to the “ABC” Principles can’t create a sense of beauty. However, unconventional combinations usually contain a certain aesthetic intention, and intend to construct a certain aesthetic image. Idioms are stable word combinations in language and a form of diachronic optimization and combination. In addition to idioms, proverbs, and allegorical sayings are also important aesthetic information that cannot be ignored.

Example 5

ST: Poetry in motion, dancing close to me.

TT: 动态的诗 · 向我舞进

It is also an advertisement for Toyota Motor, which gives people more artistic beauty. It can be imagined that when one drives a Toyota car on the road, it will feel poetic and picturesque. Comparing car driving to dancers dancing, as if accompanied by wonderful music, riding in a car is comfortable and beautiful. By combining “动态” and “舞进”, the translator vividly portrays the dynamic beauty of driving a car, making consumers feel like they are in it, creating the ultimate artistic beauty of advertisement. Appropriate word combinations accurately convey the aesthetic information in the original text.

Example 6

ST: Advancement through technology.

TT: 突破科技, 启迪未来

This advertisement is a brand slogan proposed by Audi employees fifty years ago, which has always symbolized Audi's continuous drive for innovation and is still used in Audi advertisements. The Chinese translation adopts the translation method of amplification to fully express the concept of advertisement. The breakthrough in technology represents Audi's continuous innovation and progress, and the focus of “启迪” is that “迪” means enlightenment and inspiration, representing Audi's actions for the future, as well as its core goal of sustainable development. The combination of “突破” and “科技”, as well as the combination of “启迪” and “未来”, vividly demonstrates Audi's idea. The translation accurately conveys the aesthetic information of the original text, and achieves the economic function of the advertisement.

3.2 The Aesthetic Information on The Using of Rhetorical Devices

Liu Miqing (2012) proposes that rhetorical devices can carry aesthetic information, and the rhetorical devices in the source language are aesthetic objects. Therefore, applying rhetorical devices in the target language also requires more attention. Rhetoric devices are mostly aesthetic means of expressing words, some of which belong to the phonetic or syntactic levels, and many are comprehensive expressions of form, sound, and meaning.

3.2.1 The Aesthetic Information on The Using of Pun

Pun is a type of rhetorical device. It refers to the use of polysemy and homophonic relationships in language to make a sentence related to two meanings. On the surface, it refers to one meaning, but in reality, it expresses another meaning. There are two types of puns of homophonic pun and meaningful pun.

Example 7

ST: Blue Sky Coming.

TT: 蔚来已来

As one of the representatives of domestic new energy vehicles, NIO has been very clever in the design of advertisement slogans. As a domestic brand, it has designed English advertisement slogans that are simple and easy to understand. The Chinese advertisement uses a rhetorical device of pun to present two layers of meaning. The blue sky gives people a sense of openness and beauty, and the Chinese translation is “蔚来已来”, which can be understood as the arrival of the blue sky, reflecting the persistence of environmental protection, and integrating the car brand name into it. At the same time, it can also be understood that the era belonging to NIO has arrived, giving NIO Automobile a beautiful development future. Chinese translation uses rhythm and partial tone, which is catchy and reflects the beautiful expectations of NIO's cars, and also conforms to the pursuit of beautiful meanings by Chinese consumers. It accurately conveys the aesthetic information of the original language and realizes the social and economic functions of advertising.

Example 8

ST: Better ideas, driven by you.

TT: 更好的理念, 由你驾驭

This advertisement is for Ford Motor. This advertisement embodies rhetorical beauty. Firstly, it is pointed out that the design of this car has a good design concept that can meet the needs of buyers. The term “driven” is cleverly used, and “驾驭” means full application and utilization in Chinese. The translation uses puns to express two meanings. It can refer to driving a car safely and comfortably on the road, as well as driving a Ford car to enjoy multiple functions and a good driving experience, leading to a better life through better ideas. This advertisement slogan conforms to the characteristics of the advertisement. The target text conforms to translation principles, and accurately conveys the aesthetic information of the original text.

3.2.2 The Aesthetic Information on The Using of Parody

Parody is the creation of new words, sentences, and articles by imitating existing familiar words, sentences, and articles, forming a novel form of expression. The use of parody helps to reveal the internal contradictions of the expressed things, enhance persuasiveness, and make language lively and humorous.

Example 9

ST: The 1999 BMW 7 Series and its closest rival: a side-by-side comparison.

TT: 不管是黑马还是白马·领先的总是宝马

This is an advertisement for the BMW 7 series, which directly states the model of the car. It can be translated as “1999宝马系列七与其最强对手进行肩并肩的对比”. Compared with the official translation, the latter is easier for consumers to understand, stimulates their purchasing desire, and plays the economic role of advertisement in stimulating consumption. And the translation is similar to the well-known proverb “不管黑猫白猫抓到老鼠就是好猫”, which adopts the rhetorical device of parody makes it easy for everyone to understand the meaning of the translation. It indirectly illustrates the super high-quality of BMW cars, and reflects the beauty of meaning. By imitating familiar sentences for readers, it makes it easier for readers to understand the performance of the product, and intuitively conveys the aesthetic information of the original text.

Example 10

ST: Not all cars are created equal.

TT: 昔有千里马·今有三菱车

This is the advertisement used by Mitsubishi Motors to promote its products to the American market. It was created by imitating the first sentence of the *Declaration of Independence*, which is “All men are created equal”. The advertisement designer changes the “men” in the original sentence to “cars” to highlight the desired goal of the advertisement. Changing the affirmative sentence structure of the original sentence to the negative sentence structure highlights the superior performance of Mitsubishi Motors. In Chinese translations, the words “昔有” and “今有” are often used in various advertisements or titles, and successful parody is beneficial for achieving the economic and promotional functions of advertisements. Through familiar language expression, it accurately conveys the language information of the original text.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper concludes that the lexical translation of automobile advertisements should present the same aesthetic information as the original text at the lexical level to achieve the function of advertisement promotion. According to the study on lexical translation of automobile advertisement based on the theoretical framework of translation aesthetics, the main research results are as follows. Firstly, translators should maintain the characteristics of advertisement language to the greatest extent during the translation process, making the translation concise and powerful. Secondly, translators should put more effort into word choice, register, and collocation to convey the same aesthetic information as the original text, and translators can use some translation methods to improve quality of translation. Thirdly, translators should adopt different

aesthetic means which are rhetorical devices including puns, parody, and metaphor to achieve aesthetic representation of original text information.

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