

Research on the Translation Strategy of Advertising Slogan under the Skopos Theory

Hui Liu, Chenxin Huang

Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an 710065, China.

Abstract: If one product wants to stand out from the crowd of products and quickly attract customers' attention, a quality advertising slogan undoubtedly plays a very important role. In this paper, we will analyze from the aspects of the Skopos Theory, the characteristics of advertising slogan, the necessity of using Skopos Theory in advertising slogan translation, and the translation strategy based on Skopos Theory.

Keywords: Skopos Theory; Advertising Slogan; Translation Strategy

1. Skopos Theory

Functionalism thought was most put forward by Katharina Reiss, a German translation theorist, in 1978. After that, her student Hans Vermeer made a breakthrough on the basis of Reiss and put forward the founding theory of Functionalism——Skopos Theory. He believed that translation should be detached from the original text, and that any translation is based on the original text and in the purpose and result to decide the translation process, the audience directly affects the form of translation. Finally, Christiane Nord, one of the main advocates of the German functionalist theory of translation, perfected this theory.

Skopos Theory advocates that the purpose of the translated text should be determined before determining translation process. Generally speaking, the Skopos Theory consists of three principles: the principle of purpose, faithfulness and coherence.

The principle of purpose is the core principle of the Skopos Theory, which means that the translator should always be clear about the purpose, and determine the translation process, methods and techniques by the purpose, i.e. the result determines the process; the principle of coherence is a common principle in all translation theories, which emphasizes that the translated text must be intralingually coherent, in other words, the translated text must be comprehensible for the recipients with the communicative environment and knowledge background of the target language; like the principle of coherence, the principle of faithfulness is also a common principle, which emphasizes that the translated text must not be separated from the original, or it can not be called a translation. According to Nord, "the translator should keep the translation as consistent as possible with the original in terms of linguistic features, provided that the intended function of the translation can be achieved."

2. The Characteristics of Advertising Slogan

2.1 Oralization

In order to attract the target masses in a short time, the advertising slogan needs to be concise and easy to understand, so that the audience can understand it at a glance. Therefore, most of the advertising slogans are colloquial expression in order to be closer to the audience.

(1) My goodness! My Guinness!

This slogan is from Guinness, the world's largest black beer brand, which uses the colloquial expression "my goodness" to express surprise, which makes the audience feel very novel and impressed.

2.2 Use more simple sentences

In the advertising slogan, the effect of simple sentences is significantly better than compound ones. Take the very hot short video as an example, we are more inclined to the short video within 15 seconds, Longer videos tend to be accompanied by lower views as well as completion rates, because people do not have enough patience. As a result, compound sentence slogan will bore the audience and lose its value. Another reason is that most advertisements nowadays charge according to the number of words, the more words the higher the charge. Therefore, the use of simple sentences can also reduce the cost of business.

(2) Make dreams come true. (Disney advertising slogan)

(3) Let us make things better. (Philips advertising slogan)

2.3 Use more Interrogative Sentence

According to the data, one out of every 30 advertisements is an interrogative sentence. Because interrogative sentences can arouse the audience's interest and stimulate them to learn about the product.

(4) Where's beef? (advertising slogan of Wendy's Burger, an American catering company)

In 1984, Wendy's, a fast-food restaurant in the U.S. restaurant industry, filmed an advertisement satirizing competitors Burger King and McDonald's for their lack of burgers.

The old lady in the ad sits in the other burger restaurant and angrily asks "Where's the beef?", the advertisement brought a huge profit to the business, and the expression has been widely used since then, such as in the U.S. presidential candidates' campaigns or in the business world when discussing the real value.

The ad was repeated during the 2020 epidemic when Wendy's was experiencing a beef shortage.

As the slogan caught on, the Wendy's brand caught on worldwide, greatly increasing its popularity and bringing it great revenue and commercial value.

2.4 Use more rhetorical devices

Wanting to make the slogan more visual and interesting, many advertisers use some rhetorical techniques when designing slogans, which make the products more likely to attract the audience. Some of the most common types of rhetorical devices are metaphors, similes and puns.

(5) Light as a feather. (advertising slogan of Featherwater brand eyeglasses)

This is a metaphorical rhetorical device, comparing the glasses to a feather, to illustrate that the Featherwater brand glasses are very light, and to make the audience feel comfortable wearing this brand of glasses.

(6) They will stay on the job longer than most employees. (advertising slogan of Volvo car)

The rhetorical device of anthropomorphism is used here to anthropomorphize the Volvo car and show that it can stay on the job longer than most employees. It makes the ad more vivid and the audience more interested in learning about this product.

(7) Start ahead. (advertising slogan of Rejoice shampoo)

The original text of this advertisement is "成功之路，从头开始", and the English translation uses the rhetorical technique of pun, which not only expresses that if you want to succeed, you have to start from washing your hair with Rejoice shampoo. It also has another meaning, when we meet with setbacks and are in a daze, we can start afresh.

(8) Everyone needs an apple. (Apple's Advertising slogan)

This is a double meaning rhetorical device, on the one hand, it expresses that apples, as a kind of nutritious fruits, are a necessity in everyone's life, and on the other hand, it expresses that Apple's products are also a necessity in everyone's life, which is a double meaning.

3. The Necessity of Using Skopos Theory in Advertisement Translation

Different genres use different theories and strategies in translation. The purpose of advertising slogan, which is relatively colloquial and simple, as well as good at using a variety of rhetorical devices, is not to make the target audience do an intensive reading of just one sentence, but to make consumers interested in a limited time, and ultimately be able to pay for his interest. Therefore, the translation of advertising slogans should also follow the strategy and method consistent with its language characteristics.

According to the characteristics of the advertising slogan, it can be learned that the traditional theoretical translation method is not applicable to its translation, and the Skopos Theory is the best guide. In the translation process, the translator need not stick to the meaning of the original text itself, but translate the original text flexibly according to the characteristics of the product and the characteristics and needs of the target group, and always start from the purpose of selling the product, so as to make the translation attract the audience's attention, deepen their impression and ultimately increase their desire to buy it. This is the purpose of advertisement translation, and also the reason why the Skopos Theory is chosen as a guide.

4. The Translation Strategy of Advertising Slogan based on the Skopos Theory

4.1 Literal Translation

(9) Life is a journey, travel it well. (United Airlines advertising slogan)

人生如旅程，应尽情游历。

(10) So come into McDonald's and enjoy a Big Mac Sandwich. (McDonald's English advertising slogan)

所以走进麦当劳吧，尽情享受大号的三明治。

In the above two examples, the slogan translation is almost the same as the structure of the original text. Although it is not flexible, it can retain the content of the original text to the maximum extent, which plays the role that the advertisement slogan should play.

4.2 Free Translation

(11) The who, what, when, where, and Y of Basketball Shoes.

包含一切的篮球鞋

This is the advertising slogan of a certain brand of basketball shoes, in which the five w's (Y is equal to why here) originally referred to a news article of a reporting nature that should have a series of elements such as the time, place and people of the incident. But in this case, it means that this brand of basketball shoes has all the advantages of basketball shoes on the market, such as comfortable wearing, innovative style, cost-effective, and can enhance sports performance, etc. Therefore, the free translation is more understandable than the literal translation.

4.3 Corresponding Translation

The Corresponding Translation, also known as the absolute literal translation, is used to translate idioms that are completely or basically equivalent in two languages. For example, there are a lot of similar proverbs in Chinese and English, so the translator can use the corresponding translation to express the corresponding proverbs in Chinese with the proverbs in English. This is easier for the target readers to understand and respects the cultural tradition.

(12) Where there is a way for car, there is a Toyota. (English advertising slogan of Toyota)

车到山前必有路，有路就有丰田车。

This phrase comes from the slogan of Toyota car. The English version is based on the English proverb "Where there is a will, there is a way", while the Chinese version is based on a familiar Chinese proverb "车到山前必有路，船到桥头自然直". This slogan is not only easy to understand, but also can leave a deep impression on the target group, respecting the cultural traditions of the target language countries and arousing their emotional resonance, which will lead to a stronger interest in Toyota vehicles.

5. Summary

This paper explores the application of Skopos Theory in advertising slogan translation, listing translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation and corresponding translation. Skopos Theory provides a suitable theoretical basis for the translation of advertising slogans, aiming to achieve the effect of advertising slogans by stimulating the purchasing behavior of the target masses. Therefore, in advertising slogans translation, the Skopos Theory should have the highest priority.

References

- [1] Liu H, Tian LD. A practical tutorial on English-Chinese mutual translation [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Jiao Tong University University Press, 2015.
- [2] Liu MQ. Style and Translation [M]. Beijing: China Foreign Publishing Company, 1985.
- [3] Chen HW. Fundamentals of Chinese-English Translation [M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 1998.
- [4] Zhu YH. Advertising English Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Purpose Theory [J]. Journal of Huanggang Institute of Vocational Technology, 2018, 20(6):79-82.
- [5] Zou YK. Advertising English language features and its translation strategy [J]. Read the world (comprehensive), 2019(6):268.
- [6] Yan LL. The Application of Purpose Theory in the Translation of Tourism Publicity Materials [N]. Journal of Henan University of Technology, 2011.
- [7] Wang LL. Advertising Translation under the Perspective of Purpose Theory [N]. Journal of Shanxi Economic Management Cadre College, 2016(4).

About authors: Liu Hui (1967), female, Han, Xi'an Shiyou University, Laiyuan City, Hebei Province, Professor, Translation
Huang Chenxin (1997), male, Han, Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, Master Degree, Translation