

# Study of the English-Chinese Translation of Coca-Cola Advertisements From the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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**Abstract:** Advertising is an indispensable part of our daily life. Consumers can understand the information of goods through it, and manufacturers can not only stimulate consumers' purchase behavior through it, but also can establish a good brand image and convey the company's operation concept and spirit. With the continuous development of economy, commodities are gradually going abroad, and advertising translation comes into being. Accurate translation of advertisements is conducive to the promotion of commodities and brings economic benefits. From the perspective of Skopos theory, this paper analyzes the advertising slogans issued by Coca-Cola since its foundation and summarizes their translation methods, hoping to provide some references for the translation of relevant texts.

**Keywords:** Skopos Theory; Coca-Cola Advertising Slogans; Advertisement Translation

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## 1. Introduction

In the context of economic globalization, various countries are assisting their products to go abroad, promoting economic exchanges around the world, and bringing economic benefits to their own countries and the world. Translation is a crucial part of helping products go global, and advertising is the label of the product, which provides consumers with product information and stimulates their purchasing desire. Therefore, the translation of advertisements is of great significance for products to go abroad. The purpose of advertising includes attracting attention, arousing interest, creating desire, and triggering action. Good advertising can easily attract consumers' attention and stimulate their purchasing desire, and the characteristics of Skopos theory determine that using Skopos theory to guide advertising translation is most appropriate. This article adopts the Skopos Theory of the German Functional School to guide the translation of Coca Cola advertising texts. It analyzes the advertising language of Coca Cola Company over the years since its establishment, summarizes its translation methods, and hopes to provide reference for the translation of relevant texts.

## 2. Skopos Theory and Advertising Translation

The characteristics of Skopos theory include: 1) the process of translation no longer solely considers the original text, 2) more considerations of the translation itself and the target audience, and 3) the principle of Skopos is the highest principle of translation. [1](Duan Ling, 2015:120) The ultimate goal of advertising translation is to stimulate consumers' desire to purchase, which requires that the translated text of the advertisement be pleasing to the target language readers, that is, the original text is only the source of information for the translator, and the translation is the top priority. To achieve good product sales, the translated text of the advertisement must meet the public's taste. Based on Skopos theory translation, the final translation method can be determined based on the expected communicative purpose, considering the cultural background of the target language readers. The organic combination of teleology and the translation of highly purposeful texts such as advertisements can better leverage the promotional effect of advertisements and achieve the ultimate goal of stimulating consumer consumption through advertising. Skopos theory suggests that translators should pay attention to the background of the translated text before translating, namely the purpose of the translation, the reasons for the translation, and the function of the target language text.[2] (Munday, 2007:112) Vermeer believes that translation is a motivated and purposeful human behavior that occurs in a specific context.[3] (Nord, 1991:11) He also pointed out that any translation behavior has its purpose, and translation behavior needs to adhere to three principles: the principle of purpose, the principle of coherence, and the principle of fidelity. The theoretical core of Skopos theory lies in the purpose of translation and the function of the translation, emphasizing that translation is the purposeful behavior of the translator to achieve the expected function of the translation based on the analysis of the original text and the customer's requirements.[4] (Fang Mengzhi, 2018:38) In advertising translation, the purpose of translation is not only to accurately reproduce the original text, but more importantly, to achieve the ultimate goal of advertising and trigger consumer purchasing behavior. So when translating advertising texts, it is often necessary to break away from the form of the original text and, based on a thorough understanding of the original text,

adopt the language form of the target language to cater to consumers' tastes and stimulate their consumption.

### 3. Translation Methods of Coca-Cola Advertisements From the Perspective of Skopos Theory

Coca Cola is a famous beverage company in the world with a history of over 100 years. It brings refreshing and wonderful experiences to people around the world every day. Its advertising slogan is classic and deeply rooted in people's hearts. Coca Cola can go abroad and go international, and the translation of its advertisements is crucial. Taking the Chinese translation of advertisements released by Coca Cola over the years since its establishment as an example, from the perspective of Skopos theory, appropriate translation methods are adopted to accurately translate it and achieve the ultimate goal of advertising.

#### 4. Literal Translation

The literal translation refers to the translation that maintains both the content and form of the original text. Among the numerous advertising slogans in Coca Cola, most of them are concise, clear, and thought-provoking. The use of literal translation can not only faithfully and accurately express the original meaning, but also achieve the purpose of translation. For example:

Example 1:

Source text: Drink Coca-Cola. (1886 年)

Target text: 请喝可口可乐。

Example 2:

Source text: Delicious and Refreshing. (1904 年)

Target text: 美味畅爽。

The advertising language is concise and concise, so imperative sentences, simple sentences, and elliptical sentences are often used.<sup>[5]</sup> (Zhang Zhe, 2023:37) German scholar Vermeer believes that the Skopos Principle of Skopos Theory is a fundamental principle that requires the expected purpose or function of the translation to determine the translation method and strategy.<sup>[4]</sup> (Fang Mengzhi, 2018:30) So, according to the principle of purpose, the expected purpose of the translation, i.e. the purpose of advertising translation, requires that the translation be concise and can promote consumer consumption. Therefore, under such a premise, adopting a literal translation method to translate the original text can achieve a good effect. Example 1 literally translates the source text as "请喝可口可乐". By using a few simple words to let people know about Coca Cola, and it can make the target language readers feel respected by the Coca Cola company, achieving the purpose of advertising and better promoting consumption. Example 2 literally translates the source language as four characters "美味畅爽", although simple, it does not lose its connotation. Not only is it faithful to the original text, but it also effectively stimulates consumers' taste buds and can stimulate their shopping desire.

#### 5. Free Translation

Free translation refers to the translation that only maintains the original content and does not maintain the original form.<sup>[6]</sup> (Feng Qinghua, 2002) In advertising translation, free translation refers to the use of authentic target language expressions to correctly process the original text and flexibly translate advertisements.<sup>[7]</sup> (Li Kexing, 2010:106) Sometimes, in order to better convey the information of the original text, free translation can be used to attract consumers' attention and achieve the best effect of advertising promotion.

Example 3:

Source text: Things Go Better With Coke. (1963 年)

Target text: 心旷神怡, 万事如意。

Example 4:

Source text: Open Happiness. (2009 年)

Target text: 畅爽开怀。

Example 5:

Source text: Coca-Cola. Enjoy. (2000 年)

Target text: 可口可乐, 尽享此刻。(押韵)

The purpose of advertising translation is to make consumers accept products and pay for them through advertising translation activities. In order to achieve good translation results, flexible translation methods can be used to highlight the core theme of the advertisement.<sup>[8]</sup> (Wei Zhenhua, 2022:1156) When encountering creative advertising slogans, sometimes literal translation is not the best translation method. Although the meaning of the original text can be expressed, it may lose the style of the original text, and even cause

confusion among the consumers, thus failing to achieve the purpose of the advertisement. So, in order to achieve this goal, under the guidance of Skopos theory, the translation method of free translation can be adopted. Example 3 abstracts cola and replaces the original word "Coke" with "心旷神怡", echoing the "万事如意", resulting in good results. Example 4 uses the free translation method to translate into the four character form of Chinese words, which is straightforward, easy to understand, and better realizes the function of the translation. It can also stimulate consumers' shopping desire and achieve the purpose of advertising. In Example 5, "Coca Cola" can be directly translated as "可口可乐", while "joy" requires careful consideration. On the basis of fully understanding the original text, the method of free translation can be used to translate "joy" as "尽享此刻", which echoes the previous text and makes the translation catchy and appealing through rhyme, in line with the target language context.

## 6. Conclusion

Commercial advertising is not only a channel for consumers to obtain product information, but also a tool used by manufacturers to stimulate consumer purchasing behavior. In order to achieve this goal, accurate translation of advertisements is crucial. The purpose of advertising language text is clear, and the use of Skopos theory to guide its translation can better enhance the promotional effect of advertising. This article analyzes the advertising language of Coca Cola Company over the years and summarizes the translation methods of such texts under the guidance of Skopos Theory. When translating such texts, translators need to have a thorough understanding of the original text. This requires translators to fully understand the purpose of advertising, the purpose of translation, and the reasonable use of translation methods, so that the characteristics and advantages of the brand are presented to consumers, achieving the ultimate goal of advertising.

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