

Translation Methods of Advertising Text in English and Chinese with Rhetorical Features

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Abstract: The word advertising is originated from the Latin *advertere*, which means a means of drawing the attention of the public to something and persuade them to make a decision. It is also a marketing campaign that draws the attention of the public to a target product. In order to achieve the aesthetic feeling and publicity effect of attracting customers, advertisements often use rhetorical devices to enhance the impact of language, and various kinds of rhetoric techniques are frequently used in advertising text in English and Chinese. Therefore, exploring the rhetorical features of advertising text in English and Chinese will be of great help for us to understand the commercial value of advertisements, and it can also improve our appreciation of the advertising language. This paper analyzes the rhetorical devices applied in advertising language in English and Chinese and introduces their semantic functions and the aesthetic feeling achieved in the target reader as well as explores the translation methods of advertising text in English and Chinese.

Keywords: Advertising text in English and Chinese; Rhetorical features; Translation methods

1. Introduction

The purpose of advertising is to create attitudes and behaviors that are conducive to sales. The British linguist Torben (1985) summarized the functions of advertising as 1) to disseminate information; 2) to create an image; and 3) to persuade customers to take action. Communications of different forms have different focus on two parties involved in the communication. In literature, the focus is on the expression of the author's feelings; in science and technology, the focus is on the reader's understanding instead of on the reader's taste; in advertising, everything is aimed at the target audience (i. e. potential consumers), and the target audience's understanding and reaction to the advertising message can often determine the success or failure of a costly advertising campaign. Therefore, the choice of language in advertisements is crucial, and vivid and charming language can arouse the attention and interest of the target audience to the products, and then stimulate their passion to buy. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the characteristics of advertising language with rhetoric, and suggest the translation methods of advertising text in English and Chinese with rhetorical devices.

2. Translation Methods of Advertising text in English and Chinese with Rhetorical Features

2.1 Literal translation

Literal translation means that in the process of translation, the sentence is treated as the basic unit of translation while the discourse and the context of the language are taken into account and the original sentence structure and the original rhetoric features are preserved so to reproduce a version equivalent to the original in the form, content and style. ^[1](Liu ZhongDe, 1994) The literal translation method is often used to translate advertising text.

(1) We put the brains of iPhone 11 Pro in the body of iPhone SE. (Advertisement for iPhone)

我们把 iPhone 11 Pro 的芯, 放到了 iPhone SE 的身体里。

(2) Good design is good for the planet. (Advertisement for iPhone)

好设计, 让地球也受益。

(3) Two just-right sizes. (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

两款称手尺寸。

(4) Let there be light. And shadow. And contour. (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

要光有光, 要影有影, 要轮廓有轮廓。

(5) Lots to love. (Advertisement for iPhone)

Less to spend.

称心称手, 超值入手。

In example (1), the original text uses personification to compare the storage of mobile phone as the brain of man and the body of mobile phone as the body of man so that audience can better understand the function of the mobile phone. This rhetorical device can relate the function of the mobile phone to the function of the body organs of human beings which is familiar to the audience so as to achieve a good advertising effect. The translation directly retains the form and structure of the original text and rhetorical techniques, achieving rhetorical effect and semantic equivalence.

In example (2), the planet in the original text is hyperbole in which the planet is a reference to the earth. The translation retains the structure and rhetoric of the original text. The meaning of the original is also literally presented.

In example (3), “just and right” in Two just-right sizes have the last letter “t” rhymed. This rhyming pattern can achieve the melodious effect on the audience and also emphasize the suitable size of the mobile phone. The target language adopted literal translation and retained the structure and expressed the meaning of the original.

In example (4), the original sentence pattern "Let there be something. and shadow. and contour. " is similar to the sentence in the Bible where God says “let there be light”. There are a large number of people in English-speaking countries, particularly in the United States and Britain, believing in Christianity and they are so familiar with this sentence since they have to repeatedly read the bible. Therefore, the original sentence has the punning effect to associate the mobile phone with the image of God. The literal translation retains the implied pun and the meaning of the original.

In example (5), the original text "Lots to love. Less to spend" is antithesis, and the translated version retains the parallel form in structure and preserves the meaning.

2.2 Sense-for-sense translation

A translation method that is free from the structure of the original language and translates only the meaning. ^[2] (Ye Zinan, 2010) Sense-for-sense translation is a translation method that puts more emphasis on the content of the original text and less on the form of the translation, without being bound to the form of the original text. ^[3] (Zhuang Yichuan, 2019)

(6) 满屏精彩, 一展而来 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Unbelievable Views

(7) 一眼即知, 花样“屏”出 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

All You Need Up Front

(8) 识别手势 它很有一手 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Follows your lead

(9) 心中有你 眼中是你 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Stay in Focus

(10) 好身段, 伸展自如 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Flexibility in Shape and Performance

(11) 一个眼神 心有灵犀 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Fun at a Glimpse

(12) 美好放慢 慢放好美 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Wait, Take it Slow

(13) 一生万物, 万物归一 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Enter a New Interface

In example (6), the original text “满屏精彩, 一展而来” contains “ai” as an end rhyme, which also can remind the audience of the familiar Chinese saying "If you are wonderful, butterflies will come by themselves", and the translation into English uses the adjective “unbelievable” to modify “views”, which conveys the meaning without preserving the form.

In example (7), the word “屏” in the original text is a homophonic pun of the word “频”, but the translation into English

does not retain pun since it is difficult to apply the same rhetorical device in the translating this sentence, and the meaning of the original is presented without being bound to form.

In examples (8) (9) (10) (11), all the original text adopted the rhetorical device of personification to personify the function of mobile phones. In example (8), “识别” and “有一手” are all actions that can be done by human beings but they are used to describe the mobile phone’s intelligence of recognizing user’s need free of touch. In the target language, the word “follow” is also an action of man. The target version expresses the meaning of the original without adopting the same form. In example (9), the original text has “你” rhymed at the end of each four-character structure, and the camera of the mobile phone was personified as “心” and “眼” of the human being. In the target language, the sense-for-sense translation is adopted to deliver the meaning of the original. The same interpretation of the appreciation of the original and translation technique can be applied to example (11). In the example (10), “好身段, 伸展自如” is a personification to vividly describe the convenience of the foldable mobile phone, and the target version use sense-for-sense translation to convey the meaning of the original text.

Example (12) “美好放慢, 慢放好美” and example (13) “一生万物, 万物归一” are both rhetorical techniques of anadiplosis and loopback. The target text here conveys the meaning of the original text without preserving the rhetorical techniques of the original text.

2.3 Creative translation

When the form imitated by the source text does not have a corresponding form in the translated language, if the translation is rigid according to the requirement of semantic equivalence, the creativity of the source text will be destroyed and the publicity effect intended by the source text will not be achieved. In this case, the translator should not stick to the principle of “semantic equivalence”, but should adopt various translation strategies under the guidance of the theory of purpose to achieve functional equivalence. The so-called creative translation means that the translator does not have to abide by the form of the source text, nor does he or she have to pursue the semantic equivalence, but can adopt better creativity and strive to present the ideological connotation of the source text in a new form to achieve better publicity effects.^[4] (Zhang Xiaofen, 2012)

(14) 片刻休息, 又活力满满 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Speed Freed Super Charge

(15) 眼里有世界, 也有细节 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Wider, Sharper, Better

(16) Mate 陪你, 从清晨到夜晚 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Time-tested Trust

(17) 这颗芯 震撼人心 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

The Tinier, The Mightier

(18) 远超所见 所见超远 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Push Further, Discover More

(19) 天边, 海边, 一镜到边 (Advertisement for Huawei mobile phone)

Near, Far, Aim for the Stars

(20) Super Portrait, Super Pro, Survives splashes, sloshes, sprinkles, sprays, splatters, and spills. (Advertisement for iPhone)

潇潇洒洒笑对水花飞洒

In example (14), “A moment's rest, and full of vitality” adopts a rhetorical device of personification, which illustrates the fast-charging speed of cell phone batteries. When translated into English, speed and super has the letter “S” rhymed, which is a rhetorical device called alliteration. The target text uses a different rhetorical device to achieve similar aesthetic feeling to the original. The semantic meaning is precise and the form is very beautiful. This translation technique breaks free of the bonds form and adopts a new, which is creative but faithful to the original version.

In example (15), the original sentence “眼里有世界, 也有细节” adopts a rhetorical device of personification to personifies the wide range of a scene can be covered by the camera and high definition of the camera. The target text uses a new sentence pattern but precisely delivers the meaning of the original and achieves the same aesthetic feeling since it contains the end rhyme “er”. The same interpretation of the appreciation of the original and translation technique can be applied to example (17) and (18).

In example (16), “Mate accompanies you from morning to night”, the original text adopts a rhetorical device of personifi-

cation, but the translation uses a new phrase pattern in which three words starting with "T", which is a rhetorical device called alliteration, transcending the constraints of the original form and creating a new rhetorical effect with original meaning preserved.

In example (19), the original text "天边, 海边, 一镜到边" forms an end rhyme to express that the camera of cell phone can cover a wide range of scenery. The target language retains the rhyming effect of the original text, and at the same time creatively translates it into a homophonic pun, which involuntarily reminds the native readers of lyrics in the song "My heart will go on": "Near, far, wherever you are". The target version of "Near, Far, Aim for the Stars" is highly appealing to the native speaker.

In example (20), the original sentence "Super Portrait, Super Pro, Survives splashes, sloshes, sprinkles, sprays, splatters, and spills" adopts the rhetorical device of alliteration which has a letter "S" rhymed. The rhyme is catchy and enjoyable. When translated into English, it retains the rhyme of the original text and also adopts a four-character pattern in Chinese, which is a creative translation that is effective in conveying both meaning and aesthetic feeling and easy to impress customers.

3. Conclusion

This thesis deepens the understanding of the rhetorical devices of advertising language and enhances the appreciation of rhetorical effects by analyzing the rhetoric of advertising text in English and Chinese. Analyzing and studying the art of rhetorical language and linguistic features of advertising language can provide theoretical guidance for the creation of advertising texts. Since Chinese and English belong to different language families, a variety of translation methods can be used to bring out the semantic and aesthetic effects of the original text when converting the two languages. This paper proposes several translation methods for translating advertising text in English and Chinese based on the appreciation of the rhetorical effect and the semantic content of advertising text in English and Chinese, which has reference value for the bilingual conversion of advertising texts. With the development of the economy, the commercial value of advertisements will be improved with the times. Therefore, further optimizing the expression of advertising text has far-reaching significance for the progress of social development and the spread of culture.

References

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