

Comments on Commercial Advertisements from the Perspective of Communicative Translation and Semantic Translation

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Abstract: With the relentless advancement of economic globalization, trade interactions among diverse nations have intensified significantly, fostering a complex web of interconnected markets. At the heart of this phenomenon lies the pivotal role of advertising, whose effectiveness is heavily influenced by the art of translation. Peter Newmark's communicative and semantic translation offer a nuanced framework for navigating the intricate landscape of cultural disparities encountered in the translation of commercial advertisements from English into other languages. This paper endeavours to expound upon the practical application of these theories, exploring how they can facilitate the accurate and persuasive transmission of brand messages across cultural boundaries, ensuring that the essence of the original advertisement resonates with target audiences while respecting and adapting to their unique cultural sensibilities.

1. Introduction

In foreign countries, some scholars have investigated the utilization of Newmark's semantic translation and communicative translation theory in advertisement translation. They believe that advertising translation needs to fully consider the needs and cultural background of the target readers to ensure that the advertising content is easy to understand and accept. At the same time, Peter Newmark's translation theory also provides some practical guiding principles for advertising translation, such as maintaining the semantic and rhetorical characteristics of the original text and focusing on the fluency and naturalness of the translation.

In China, some scholars have also studied the use of his translation theory in translating advertisements. They point out that Newmark's translation theory can help translators better deal with various problems in advertising translation, such as cultural differences and language styles between different nations. At the same time, in order to cope with the challenges in advertising translation, some specific translation strategies and methods also be put forward, such as amplification, omission, conversion.

However, it should be known that Newmark's translation theory is not a panacea, and its application needs to be adjusted and adapted according to the specific advertising type and target readers.

2. Peter Newmark's Translation Theory

Peter Newmark has pointed out that translation is essentially a transfer of meaning, rather than simply get the source language into the target language. The process includes two steps: language conversion and meaning transfer. Language conversion means that the translation of sentences in the source language into sentences in the target language, while meaning transfer refers that the translation of the meaning of sentences in the source language into the meaning of sentences in the target language. He also put forward the idea that diverse translation skills and strategies should be used when facing various text types, which covers semantic translation and communicative translation. And he divided text into different functional types: function of expression, information, aesthetic, calling, social and metalinguistic. What's more, he also stressed that the cultural background and language habits of target readers should be taken into account during the translation process, and the cross-culture of translation will be realized.

In general, Peter Newmark's translation theory emphasizes the complexity and cross-culture of translation, and translators need to not only carry out language conversion, but also to realize the transfer of meaning in the process of translation.

2.1. The Definition and Significance of Communicative Translation

The objective of the communicative translation theory is to try best to produce an impact on the readers of the target culture that is equivalent to the impact of the original text on the readers of the source culture. It emphasizes the transmission of information through an understanding of the target language's language, culture, and pragmatics, rather than strictly reproducing the original text as closely as possible. The translator has greater latitude in communicative translation to interpret and explain the original text. [1]

The communicative translation theory has strong significance and influence in the field of translation. It breaks through the limitations of literal translation and free translation, and it places readers at the first, and emphasizes the importance of translation as a cross-cultural communication behaviour. This theory not only provides a new perspective for translation studies, but also provides guidance for translators to better convey information and realize communication functions. At the same time, the theory also plays an important role in various fields, such as film subtitle translation, news report translation, advertisements translation and so on. It promotes the communication between different cultures and different languages. Therefore, his communicative translation theory is highly significant to the development of translation.

2.2. The Definition and Significance of Semantic Translation

The theoretical basis of semantic translation is mainly derived from Saussure's linguistic theory. It emphasizes that the meaning of language is the core of verbal communication. Semantic translation takes the source language text as a reference, and it focuses on reproducing the semantics and content of the original text, rather than just paying attention to the correspondence of language forms. Semantic translation theory centres on reproducing the meaning and equivalent elements of the source language within the target language, prioritizing comprehension and representation of the source language. In the specific translation process, semantic translation tends to maintain the expression and syntactic structure of the source language, in order to convey the semantics of the source language as accurately as possible. [2]

Semantic translation theory has a lot of advantages. Firstly, this translation technique aids in preserving the semantic meaning and phrasing of the original text, consequently, the target reader can better understand and feel the cultural background and author's intention of the original passage.

Secondly, semantic translation assigns greater attention. It maintains the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the source language. It preserves the expression and syntactic structure of the source language, and cultural distortion and linguistic form distortion can be avoided. So that the target readers can better understand the cultural background and values of the source language. Thirdly, this manner can enhance the readability and acceptability of the translated version. The target readers will better understand and accept the information and content of original text. Fourthly, it can promote cultural communication and understanding between different countries, because the semantic and equivalent elements of the source language can be conveyed accurately. Readers are able to get better understanding of ideas and values in other cultural contexts and nations, and ultimately communication and understanding between different cultures will be promoted.

2.3. Similarities and Differences between Semantic Translation and Communicative Translation

Communicative translation pays more attention to the second readers, and the readers don't hope to face many difficulties and obscurities when they are reading the translated version, and a mass of transfer of cultural elements of original text is necessary. Communicative translation theory emphasizes the reader of the target language, whereas semantic translation emphasizes the transmission of the content of the original text. It is more complex, detailed and more concentrated. And semantic translation focuses on the writer. [3]

However, the two different theories also have the similarities. In the first place, both translation theories are grounded in cognitive translation. Both translation methods must reflect the ideological content of the source text while adhering to the grammatical structure and specific stylistic features of the target language. Chinese scholar Liao Qiyi [4] has pointed out in his book named Temporary Translation Studies in UK that there is no clear line between communicative translation and semantic translation. No text can be separated into two segments, where one segment is translated using communicative translation and the other using semantic translation. Program listing or program commands in text should be set in typewriter form such as Courier New.

2.4. The Characteristics of Advertisements

From the perspective of source language, we know that text is divided into expressive text, informational text and evocative text by Newmark. And advertisements belong to the evocative text. Firstly, good advertisements are usually short and easy to remember. That means a good advertisement need to be short and concise, and easy to be remembered, and it also need to quickly catch the attention of the consumers. Secondly, advertisements need to have outstanding features. The slogan should highlight the unique features of the product or service and convey the unique selling point, so as to attract consumers. What's more, advertisements need to mobilize emotion, and a good advertising slogan should be able to mobilize consumers' emotions and stimulate their desire to buy. And advertisements need to be unique, creative, authoritative and colloquial. [5] In the field of advertising translation, it is critical for translators to ensure that the translated text not only achieves the desired function, but also effectively conveys the information in the target language. [6] We hope you find the information in this template useful in the preparation of your submission.

3. Application of Communicative Translation and Semantic Translation in Advertisements

Nowadays, the translation of Chinese advertisements into English is becoming increasingly pivotal for us. Due to the expansion of trade and frequent cultural exchanges, we need to strengthen our cultural confidence and improve our country's cultural soft power. Therefore, successful advertising

translation is extremely important. The follow examples are the usage and analysis of communicative translation and semantic translation in advertising translation.

1) Rejoice Slogan “Start ahead”.

Analysis: This translation is so concise, which is in line with the characteristics of the advertisement. It is more inclined to semantic translation. In this translation, “Start ahead” accurately conveys the semantic meaning, that is, to be ahead from the beginning, focusing on the efficacy of the product and the success of the user. At the same time, the translation of “Start ahead” is also easy to understand and remember, and meets the requirements of the advertisement slogan. Although the translation “Start ahead” also reckon the needs and cultural aspect of the target people, it pays more attention to accurately convey the semantics of the original text, so it is more in line with the principles of semantic translation.

2) The slogan “Baidu, search once, you know”.

Analysis: It is mainly semantic translation. In this translation, “search once” accurately conveys the semantic meaning, and only once search is needed to obtain the desired information. At the same time, “you know” also conveys the semantic meaning, and the answer can be obtained by searching. This translation precisely captures the semantic content and significance of the source text, and it is more in line with the principles of semantic translation.

3) The slogan “Charge for 5 minutes, talk for 2 hours”.

Analysis: In this translation, “charge for 5 minutes” accurately conveys the semantic information of the original. “Talk for 2 hours”, which also accurately conveys the semantic message of the original. This translation preserves the semantic meaning of the source text and adheres to the conventional grammatical structures and idiomatic expressions of the English language. And it is easy to understand and accept. Although this translation also takes into account acceptability and influence in the target culture, it mainly uses semantic translation.

4) The slogan “Save up to 99% energy with Midea”.

Analysis: The slogan mainly emphasizes the energy efficiency of the product, and the consumption is only one degree of electricity per night, and the translation is focused on accurately conveying this semantic information. Communicative translation focuses more on conveying cultural and linguistic characteristics and emphasizing acceptability and influence in the target culture. They are not the main considerations in this example. So, the translation of the slogan is more inclined to semantic translation. And in this way, customers will be willing to buy it because it is so effective. Although this translation also takes into account acceptability and influence in the target culture, it mainly uses semantic translation. At the same time, in this process reverse translation method is welcomed. We translators should select appropriate translation manners based on the linguistic discrepancies between English and Chinese advertising languages. [7]

5) The slogan “Nong Fu Shan Quan, slightly sweet”.

Analysis: This translation successfully transmits the intended intention of the source text. The water quality of Nong fu Spring is somewhat sweet. This translation successfully conveys the artistic conception and taste of the original text, and enable the target readers to comprehend and appreciate the depth and essence of the original text. Furthermore, the aim is to convey the taste and quality characteristics of Nong fu Spring to the target readers, so that they can understand and feel the slightly sweet taste and high-quality water. And the translation of this advertisement is more in line with communicative translation.

6) The advertisement “Wang Shou Yi 13-spice seasoning, the taste of home, fragrance floats miles.”

Analysis: In the advertising translation, the translator accurately conveys the artistic conception and meaning of the original sentence. This translation not only accurately transmits the surface meaning of the original sentence, but also delves into its deeper meanings and emotional undertones. It can also make the target readers feel the artistic conception and emotion of the original text. In addition, the translation also takes into account the reading habits and cultural background of the target readers, and there are no grammatical errors or inaccurate expressions. This translation is more readily embraced and comprehended by the target readers, thereby facilitating effective

communication of information and cultural exchange. The goal of advertisements will be achieved finally. What's more, aesthetics is used in this translation. Information conveyed through the content beauty and formal beauty embodied in advertising, so the target readers would like to read and to take action, and finally realize the utilitarian purpose of advertising. [8] Therefore, this translation belongs to the category of communicative translation.

4. Conclusion and Prospect

From above six examples, we can see that there are four advertisements were translated by semantic translation. What's more, I have searched more information about advertising translation and found that the semantic translation theory is often used as the guiding theory in the translation of advertising language without violating the taboo of foreign religions and customs. And we need to express Chinese cultural confidence and spirit during the process of translation. However, it cannot be said that a translation only conforms to one translation theory, and usually tends to a certain translation theory.

However, communicative translation also has some disadvantages. It excessively focuses on the effect of communication sometimes leads to the loss of the original cultural colour and expression mode of the translation, so that the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the original text can't be fully conveyed. When dealing with some texts with complex cultural backgrounds and connotations, Communicative translation might overly focus on catering to the target readers, at the expense of disregarding the nuances and intricacies of the original text, and this will affect the accuracy and integrity of the translation. While Semantic translation also has some disadvantages. It pursues the faithful expression of the original text too much, which may lead to the translation being too complicated, cumbersome or difficult for target readers to understand. Sometimes, the overly rigid language structure and expression in the original text hinder the translation from capturing the essence of the target language and readers' expectations, resulting in a less than satisfactory smoothness and naturalness in the final translation.

Therefore, the way of translation can be adjusted according to the cultural acceptance of the audience. [9] Translators should flexibly use these two translation theories according to the specific passage, translation purpose and readers, so as to achieve the best translation effect. [10]

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