

Transcreation in Advertisement Slogans from the Perspective of Communicative Translation Theory

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Through in-depth analysis of advertisement slogans, the present study probes into the unique contribution of transcreation in conveying brand messages and triggering emotional resonance of the audience. The study firstly outlines theoretical basis of transcreation from the perspective of Communicative Translation Theory, emphasizing its uniqueness in the traditional translation paradigm. Then the four key steps of transcreation, including in-depth understanding of the brand essence, sensitive response to cultural differences, flexible use of language skills, and incorporation of creative elements, are examined by means of case analysis in advertisement translation. Finally, the article sums up the positive impact of transcreation on cultural exchange, brand communication and translation field, particularly in the era of globalisation.

Keywords: transcreation, advertisement slogans, communicative translation theory

Introduction

Looking back at the history of Chinese and Western translation, transcreation has been incorporated into numerous translation practices. For example, Hatamarash was unique in his fluent and florid translations of the Buddhist scriptures, and Pound gave translation a unique imagery through his translations of poetry. Nestorian missionaries's compilation of *the Bible*, Yan Fu's abridged translations, and Lin Shu's translations and writings were all innovations in the history of Chinese and Western translation. In the modern language services industry, transcreation is also highly valued to meet the urgent need for cultural integration. In recent years, transcreation has attracted wide public attention, and it has rapidly emerged in many fields such as advertising, marketing and online game promotion. As a new branch in the field of translation, transcreation is rising in the translation market with unstoppable force. According to Professor Chen Lin, "transcreation" is the transcription of the source text by editing, reorganisation, creative rewriting, creative reconstruction and so on in the target language system to achieve the expressive and purposive text of the target discourse, which can be done in a unimodal or multimodal way (Chen, 2016). Transcreation, on the other hand, is still translation in the final analysis, and the translator needs to take into account the linguistic characteristics and cultural background of the source language and the target language, so he is not free to do whatever he wants.

What is a good transcreation? The prominent translator Huang Bangjie once asserted, "Translation is an art, a fact undisputed in the translation field." Since translation is considered an art, it should inherently possess

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creativity (Luo, 1984). It is generally believed that transcreation demands elevating the act of translation to the level of artistic creation. Guo Moruo argued, “The translated text should equally be a work of art” (Yu, Fu, & Wang, 2008). This perspective suggests that creatively translated works should evoke the emotional impact of the original, enabling readers in the target language to empathize and achieve effective communication, possibly even surpassing the impact of the original. Interestingly, this ideology aligns with Newmark’s communicative translation approach.

Translation from the Perspective of Communicative Translation Theory

Newmark’s Communicative Translation Theory

In 1981, Newmark put forward the concept of “communicative translation” in his book *Approaches to Translation*, which later evolved into the core of his translation ideas. Communicative translation aims to foster better communication between target language users and the translated texts. In communicative translation, the translator has several tasks. Firstly, the translator needs to ensure that the translation is concise and clear so as to highlight important information. Secondly, it is crucial to understand the general level of knowledge, intelligence, and sensibility of the entire audience of the translated text. In addition, the translator should avoid presenting the reader with a rewritten work that lacks novelty. The most important aspect of communicative translation is the translator’s intuitive grasp of how the audience will receive the translation. The success of the translation depends on the reader’s reaction to the translated text. In this process, translators need to keenly anticipate readers’ feedback in order to adjust their translation strategies to ensure that the translation can achieve the desired effect in communication.

Transcreation from the Perspective of Communicative Theory

Based on the aforementioned, communicative translation theory posits that effective communication entails not only the transmission of information but also the establishment of shared meaning and understanding between communicators and recipients. Transcreation, intimately linked with this theory, prioritizes the communicative intent of the source text over its literal rendition. Successful communication transcending linguistic barriers necessitates adaptation to the cultural and social context of the target audience. At the core of transcreation lies the creative reimagining of the source text to resonate with the target audience while preserving its essence. This process entails linguistic and content adjustments, cultural adaptation, and stylistic modifications to ensure the relevance, impact, and cultural appropriateness of the conveyed information. In contrast to traditional translation, which primarily focuses on fidelity to the original text, transcreation emphasizes fidelity to the communicative objective. Guided by communicative theory, transcreation serves as a dynamic approach to cross-cultural communication, playing a pivotal role not only in conveying the literal meaning but also in conveying the intended message, tone, and cultural nuances of the source text. Therefore, under the guidance of communicative theory, transcreation emerges as a dynamic method for cross-cultural communication.

Transcreation as Exemplified in the Translation of Advertisement Slogans

Advertisement Slogans

It is worth noting that the English term “advertising” originates from the Latin word “advertere”, meaning to “draw the public’s attention and induce them in a certain direction”. The ultimate goal of advertising can be succinctly encapsulated in the acronym “AIDMA” (Attention, Interest, Desire, Memory, and Action), signifying the objectives of attracting attention, generating interest, sparking desire, maintaining memory, and guiding action.

Advertising slogans serve various purposes, including brand building by emphasizing the uniqueness, values, or image of a brand; highlighting product features by showcasing unique functions, performance, or advantages; promoting activities by guiding consumers to participate in promotions such as discounts, freebies, or limited-time offers; and creating emotional resonance by establishing an emotional connection with the target audience. Advertising slogans need to be concise, easy to remember, and possess a certain level of creativity to attract people’s attention and convey key information in an instant. Consequently, advertising language often adopts the form of phrases or slogans to capture the attention of the target audience and convey specific information or emotions. These slogans are typically concise and powerful, aiming to swiftly pique the audience’s interest and leave a lasting impression.

According to Guo Yuchao (2013), advertising language is considered an inciting artistic language that integrates economic, cultural, promotional, and aesthetic elements, requiring a more flexible translation compared to other literary forms. When translating these slogans, the focus is on achieving simplicity and memorability to enhance brand or product awareness, stimulating consumer interest, aligning with the principles of Newmark’s communicative translation theory.

Transcreation as Exemplified in the Translation of Advertisement Slogans

Example (1) Inter inside

Translation: “给电脑一颗奔腾的芯”.

Intel is a global leader in the semiconductor industry and computing innovation, founded in 1968 and achieved revenue of \$63.1 billion in 2022. Now, Intel is transforming into a data centric company, working with partners to drive breakthrough innovation and application of revolutionary technologies such as AI and 5G. Example (1) offers the Chinese translation of its chip advertising slogan for analysis. Through transcreation, the phrase “奔腾的芯” (spirited core) cleverly incorporates the processor name “Pentium” of Intel, retaining the original English slogan’s phonetic qualities and enhancing its memorability. This phonetic similarity subtly reinforces the brand’s impression in consumers’ minds. Furthermore, the translation “Give your computer a spirited core” not only conveys the intrinsic importance of Intel chips but also vividly depicts the processor as a lively and dynamic heart, infusing life into the computer. This metaphorical description enhances the slogan’s emotional appeal and attractiveness. Additionally, the translation successfully integrates the essence of the original text with the Chinese context, making it more in line with the cultural and linguistic habits of the target audience. This helps increase the acceptance of the slogan in the Chinese market and ensures that the conveyed message aligns more closely with the psychological expectations of local audiences. Overall, this Chinese translation, through transcreation techniques, skillful language use, and emotional expression, successfully

retains the essence of the original slogan while providing a richer and more vivid perception to Chinese audiences. This translation creatively balances the technical aspects of the original text with the emotional needs of Chinese consumers, making the advertising message more effective in cross-cultural communication.

Example (2) Time is what you make of it.

Translation: 天长地久.

This advertising slogan is from Swatch, which is a renowned Swiss watch manufacturer known for its stylish and affordable timepieces, offering a variety of designs to suit various tastes and occasions. With the inheritance of innovation and high-quality craftsmanship, Swatch has become a symbol of excellence in the global Swiss watchmaking industry. The Chinese translation of its advertising slogan is also an excellent embodiment of transcreation. The Chinese translation, “天长地久” (lasting as long as heaven and earth) is often used to describe profound emotions and enduring time, symbolizing eternal constancy. With “天长地久”, the concept of time is ingeniously integrated with the Chinese idiom, creating a profound and evocative expression “天长地久”. As an advertising slogan, it aligns well with consumer psychology. Such a translation not only remains faithful to the essence of the original but also involves a creative transformation in the context of the Chinese culture. Clearly, by means of transcreation, the conveyance of information is fused with the artistic expression, enabling the translation to resonate emotionally and possess literary value among target language readers.

Example (3) In the Company of Masters.

Translation: 尊贵人生，大师随行。

Audi is a globally recognized automotive brand renowned for its luxury vehicles, innovative technologies, and sleek design. With a rich history spanning over a century, Audi continues to set industry standards for performance, comfort, and cutting-edge engineering. Therefore, its advertising slogan also fits the brand's characteristics very well. In the original slogan “In the Company of Masters”, the term “masters” refers to experts or authorities, while the translation “大师随行” elegantly and poetically expresses this concept, vividly presenting the brand philosophy. By adding the translation “尊贵人生”, Audi's luxurious and sophisticated image is underscored, attracting consumers and showcasing Audi as a high-end automotive manufacturer. This transcreation cultivates an impression of luxury and nobility associated with the Audi brand, captivating readers' attention and fostering brand loyalty. Additionally, the association of owning an Audi with a noble lifestyle further amplifies the appeal. This imaginative translation retains the essence of the original while integrating refined language and cultural nuances, thereby establishing a more profound and personalized brand image for Audi. Such a transcreation, while preserving the essence of the original, incorporates skillful wording and cultural nuances, establishing a deeper and more personalized brand image for Audi. Overall, this translation successfully communicates the brand values of Audi, showcasing the flexibility and expressive power of transcreation.

The Process of Transcreating Advertising Slogans

As shown in the above case analysis of the transcreation of advertisement slogans, the steps of translating advertisement slogans creatively can be summarized as follows.

In-Depth Understanding of Brand Essence

In the intricate task of creatively translating advertising slogans, the foremost step is gaining an in-depth understanding of the brand's core values and essence. This encompasses a comprehensive insight into the brand's history, cultural roots, and the demographics of its target audience. Only by delving deeply into the brand can the translator accurately capture its unique attributes, laying a solid foundation for subsequent creative expressions.

Sensitivity to Cultural Differences

The essence of transcreation lies in the translator's ability to sensitively discern the subtle differences between the source and target language cultures. Advertising slogans often require skillful integration of cultural elements from the target language, ensuring alignment with local aesthetics and cultural nuances. Therefore, translators need to possess extensive cultural knowledge and profound cross-cultural understanding to guarantee that the creatively translated slogan resonates effectively within the target culture.

Flexible Application of Language Skills

Transcreation of advertising slogans requires a translator of exceptional language skills. This includes a keen sensitivity to vocabulary, adept manipulation of sentence structures, and the precise application of rhetorical devices. Through the flexible use of language skills, translators can vividly convey the emotional nuances and brand spirit of the advertising slogan, enhancing its attractiveness and expressiveness.

Integration of Creative Elements

During the transcreation of advertising slogans, translators must infuse creative elements into their work. This may involve innovative expression methods, the introduction of novel metaphorical techniques, or the utilization of expressions unique to a particular culture. By incorporating creative elements, translators make the advertising slogan more personalized, capturing the attention and memory of the target audience. This creative approach not only enriches the layers of translation but also makes the slogan stand out as distinctive and profound.

Through the organic combination of these key steps, creatively translating advertising slogans allows for a more comprehensive and accurate conveyance of brand information. Simultaneously, it fosters a stronger resonance within the target culture. This provides a systematic and robust methodology for the transcreation of advertising slogans, ensuring fidelity to the original text while infusing new vitality within the target culture.

Conclusion

As an emerging branch in the field of translation, transcreation exhibits characteristics of creativity, flexibility, and practicality. Within the realm of advertising, transcreation not only stands out in conveying messages but also serves as a powerful tool for brand building, emotional resonance, and cultural integration.

However, it is essential to discern the distinction between transcreation and creative writing. Transcreation operates within the framework of translation, considering the cultural and linguistic differences between the source and target languages, rather than being a purely free creative process. In this journey, translators must carefully balance various factors to ensure the translated text achieves the intended communicative effect. As globalization deepens, the application of transcreation is expected to expand further within the field of

translation. For professional translators, proficiency in language skills and translation techniques is no longer sufficient; the ability to navigate cross-cultural communication and express creativity is of paramount significance. The rise of transcreation presents both a challenge to traditional translation practices and an injection of new vitality and possibilities into the field. Looking ahead, we anticipate the continued evolution of transcreation which will become a driving force in promoting cultural exchange, advancing brand communication, and leading the trends of the times.

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