

An Aesthetic Perspective on the Study of Advertising Slogan Translation

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Abstract: In recent years, the acceleration of global economic integration has elevated the role of advertising slogans in our increasingly internationalized modern society. However, theoretical research on advertising slogan translation in China remains far from meeting societal demands. The introduction of aesthetic theory has shifted the focus of advertising slogan translation studies from an exclusive emphasis on the original creators and texts to the target audience. Examining the feasibility of advertising slogan translation from an aesthetic perspective aims to provide new insights and methodologies for this field of research. This paper employs aesthetic theory as its theoretical framework to examine the definition, classification, functions, linguistic characteristics, and cultural features of advertising slogans. By applying key aesthetic principles to guide translation practice, it analyzes representative case studies of slogan translations. The objective is to enhance the quality of slogan translations in practical applications and reduce the prevalence of one-dimensional interpretations.

Keywords: Aesthetics; Advertising Slogan Translation; Translation Aesthetics; Reception Aesthetics

1. Introduction

The advancement of economic globalization has further deepened the scope of globalization, while international economic and trade exchanges continue to expand. In this context, advertising slogans—as carriers of promotion and information—play an indispensable role in international trade. The ultimate goal of advertising slogans is to stimulate purchasing intent among consumers or target audiences. Advertising slogans have become an integral component of global trade, exerting significant influence. Advertising slogan translation possesses unique characteristics; when the target audience and product differ, distinct translation approaches must be employed. Although advertising slogan translation is a typical form of practical text translation, it occupies a non-traditional role in both temporal and spatial dimensions. One such role exists between the translator and the source text, while another lies between the translator and the target audience. Therefore, this paper adopts aesthetic theory as its theoretical framework to examine and analyze the definition, classification, functions, linguistic characteristics, and cultural features of advertising. It employs key theoretical perspectives to guide the translation of advertising slogans, aiming to enhance the quality of practical Chinese-English advertising language translation.

The aesthetic significance of an art form cannot be fully realized without the participation of the audience. The act of reception itself constitutes an aesthetic experience. All works are interpreted under certain expectations, which should not be regarded as fixed or closed positions. Aesthetics offers a fresh perspective for advertising slogan translation—one that prioritizes the reader's viewpoint. During translation, interpreters should fully consider the implicit reader's aesthetic tastes, judgments, psychological needs, and anticipated perspectives, while prioritizing their receptive capacity. In essence, as a popular art form, advertising copy carries commercial undertones. English-to-Chinese advertising texts must balance cultural sophistication with strong commercial appeal. They should not only remain faithful to the source text but also resonate with the aesthetic preferences and psychological expectations of the target audience.

Research on advertising slogan translation by foreign scholars began earlier than in China. Foreign scholars have employed numerous research theories and methodologies, covering a broad linguistic scope. Initially, the focus was primarily on translating the slogans themselves to explore their connotations and concepts. By the early 21st century, an increasing number of foreign scholars began

examining the effectiveness of advertising slogan translation from a cultural perspective. Subsequently, advertising slogan translation began incorporating interdisciplinary theories and broader perspectives, such as economics and psychology. Additionally, design studies were integrated into the research scope. Foreign scholars also emphasized the importance of considering social context factors and cross-cultural communication elements in advertising slogan translation.

For instance, David C. Palmer notes in *“A Behavioral Interpretation of Aesthetics,”* that achieving the full “Tory style” of irony undoubtedly requires a series of successive approximations to explain aesthetic behavior [1]. He proposes that literary aesthetics necessitates multiple controls to achieve descriptive and selective responses to the subject's aesthetic experience. By providing examples to support this suggestion, a more rigorous vocabulary emerges from behavioral laboratories. In *“Analysis on Features of Advertising English from the Perspective of Aesthetic Rhetoric,”* authors Jing-Wei Shu and Lin Wang introduce the concept of aesthetic rhetoric, elucidating its characteristics in English and its artistic features within advertising copy [2]. This aesthetic rhetoric is applied to assist in translating and producing high-quality advertisements, offering guidance and recommendations for translating advertising English. Additionally, in *“Cultural Implications of Food Label Translation from the Perspective of Advertising Aesthetics,”* author Yang, Jing [3], analyzes successful and unsuccessful cases of food label translation both domestically and internationally, summarizing the characteristics and cultural implications of food label translation. In *“The Language of Advertising: Analysis of Original and Translated Texts,”* author Jurgita Vaicenoniene argues that advertising slogans should be defined by their key functions, which are designed to capture attention [4]. Given consumers' decision-making processes and the factors influencing those decisions, the linguistic messages in advertisements require translation. In *“Rhetorical Artistry of English Advertising Words and Its Translation Analysis,”* Zheng Li examines how advertising language influences consumer attitudes and preferences to encourage purchases of products or services [5]. Starting from the rhetorical artistry of English advertisements, Zheng Li analyzes several common advertising rhetorical devices and their effects, providing examples to help us understand the linguistic characteristics of advertising rhetoric. The author also proposes fundamental principles for English-Chinese translation: naturalness, accuracy, and comprehensibility. Flexibility is key to achieving these principles. All these perspectives sufficiently demonstrate that to ensure the reproduction of advertising language artistry and textual style, translators must thoroughly understand both the advertised product and the content and rhetorical techniques of the advertising text, selecting the most appropriate translation approach.

Western translation theory has not delved into translation from an aesthetic perspective but instead employs an interdisciplinary approach. Overall, however, the translation of modern Western advertising slogans has entered a new era. With the further advancement of economic globalization, the translation of advertising slogans—a crucial component of marketing—has drawn increasing scholarly attention. Early Western research primarily focused on the linguistic characteristics and technical application of advertising slogans, whereas China's approach differs significantly.

In the article *“Characteristics and Applications of English Product Advertisements”* Ding Zhenqi not only analyzed the four characteristics of advertising slogans—surprise, uniqueness, comprehensibility, and moral appeal—emphasizing product advantages while prioritizing economic benefits, but also summarized five techniques of advertising language: repetition, contrast, idiomatic phrases, puns, and attention to rhyme and rhythm [6]. In her article *“Comparative Analysis and Translation of Rhetorical Devices in English and Chinese Advertisements”* Su Shuhui examines commonly used rhetorical techniques in commercial advertisements from a perspective that considers linguistic and cultural characteristics, comparing their translation outcomes in English and Chinese [7]. This indicates that early advertising slogan translation research lacked a solid theoretical framework, primarily focusing on general studies and the translation of slogans along with their associated challenges. Advertising slogans leverage distinctive content and communication formats to enhance product information delivery, foster consumer recognition of products, stimulate purchasing desire, and boost economic benefits [8]. At a higher level, they satisfy consumer needs, driving market expansion and diversification, ultimately elevating overall market quality.

In the article *“Commercial Advertising Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics,”* Zhang Yan summarizes three advertising translation strategies: “Translators should always focus on the target audience in commercial advertising translation; given the literary nature of commercial advertising language, attention should be paid to the ‘blank spaces’ in translation—that is, the use of white space and uncertainty; the translator occupies a unique position, being both a reader of the original commercial advertisement and a reader with clear translation intentions and tasks.” Through comparative analysis, she examines advertising slogan translations across meaning, rhythm, and

structure [9]. From an aesthetic perspective, translation enhances the quality of advertising translation. Meanwhile, in “*An Exploration of Advertising Slogan Translation from a Translation Aesthetics Perspective: Taking Clothing Advertisements as an Example*,” Yin Tianqi “analyzes the rhythmic patterns, syntactic structures, rhetorical devices, and aesthetic appeal of original and translated slogans from a large collection of domestic and international clothing advertisements [10]. By employing diverse methods and forms to rework the original artistic elements, compelling slogans are generated.” Regarding the application of reception aesthetics to advertising text translation, the analysis explores three perspectives: subjectivity, creative betrayal, and fusion. It proposes that applying reception aesthetics theory to advertising translation aligns with translation thinking patterns and can explain the psychological identification phenomena among authors, translators, and audiences during the translation process. Xu Minyu's research in “*Aesthetic Studies of Advertising in a Commercial Context*” reveals that advertising aesthetics is the synergistic outcome of beauty and advertising, carrying and conveying aesthetic values within commercial development [11]. This affirms beauty's status and role in the economic sphere. From an aesthetic perspective, it represents an extension of aesthetics into the practical domain. In advertising, it guides the practice of aesthetics within design. Unlike foreign advertising slogan translations, Chinese advertising slogan translations have always been closely tied to aesthetics [12]. Rooted in China's rich traditional culture, Chinese translation aesthetics enriches and refines itself by introducing and assimilating Western reception aesthetics.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Liu Miqing's Translation Aesthetics Theory

Aesthetics is a discipline that studies aesthetic categories such as beauty, ugliness, and nobility, as well as human aesthetic consciousness, aesthetic experience, and the creation, development, and laws of beauty. It focuses on the aesthetic relationship between humans and reality, with art as its primary object. Aesthetics is the study of the essence and significance of beauty in nature [13].

Regarding translation aesthetics, it is essential to examine the aesthetic subject and aesthetic object, which also constitute significant content within the field of translation studies. Professor Liu Miqing categorizes the aesthetic object into “primordial aesthetic representation” and “non-representational beauty,” exploring the dynamic beauty and formal beauty of both the source text and the target text [14]. Successful advertising slogan translation must integrate aesthetics, emphasizing the aesthetic value of linguistic artistry and the harmonious beauty among sound, form, and meaning. From a translation aesthetics perspective, aesthetics is undoubtedly crucial in advertising translation. However, limiting oneself to this alone—without considering rhythmic beauty and formal beauty—is self-imposed restriction [15]. That is, through information analysis, we can propose theories on how translation aesthetics operates and how it can be improved. The initial form of linguistic structural beauty, also known as the matrix, originates from the optimization of word combinations. However, translation is a form of cultural transmission, and the approach will be more selective. We need to master a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics of linguistic beauty. Liu Miqing believes that linguistic beauty can be elaborated from six aspects: audiovisual perception, structural form, meaning, emotion, imagery, and cultural characteristics.

2.2 Xu Yuanchong's Translation Aesthetics

In his essay “*The Standards of Translation*,” Xu Yuanchong proposed criteria for translating poetry based on its aesthetic characteristics: “As for poetry, especially metrical verse, I have suggested that we should strive to convey the original poem's beauty of meaning, beauty of sound, and beauty of form.” [16] Poetry is an art form that highly condenses literary language, and the “Three Beauties Principle” plays a crucial role in poetry translation. It is equally applicable to the translation of advertising slogans. Xu Yuanchong's “Three Beauties Principle” falls within the ontological realm. He asserts that the beauty of meaning holds paramount importance, followed by the beauty of sound and the beauty of form [17]. The process of aesthetic reproduction typically follows these steps: understanding the aesthetic structure of the translation object; transforming this understanding; optimizing the transformed result; and presenting the refined outcome. This sequence aligns seamlessly with the advertising slogan translation process, making its guiding role in this field self-evident.

The Ultimate Pursuit of Meaningful Beauty: According to translation aesthetics, sensory perception belongs to the informal system or ambiguous category of translation aesthetics. While difficult to

describe precisely, it holds profound significance. When translating advertising slogans, recreating meaning and content is crucial, yet recreating sensory elements is equally vital. The foundation of semantic beauty lies in sensory similarity. Generally, sensory similarity aligns with semantic beauty. However, they can sometimes conflict—meaning similarity cannot fully represent semantic beauty. This occurs when semantic beauty stems from historical elements, or when certain words lack direct equivalents in the target language.

Highlights of Phonetic Beauty: To recreate phonetic beauty, multiple factors must be considered. First is the intonation pattern. Xu Yuanchong advocates that when translating Chinese versions into English, one can adopt anaphylactic, long-short, or anaphylactic-anaphylactic patterns. Regarding rhythm, Xu Yuanchong believes phonetic similarity is ideal. This is often difficult to achieve, but at minimum, rhymes should be preserved.

Emphasizing formal beauty to enhance translation accuracy: From Xu Yuanchong's perspective, if the content and form of an advertising slogan harmonize, the translation process becomes relatively straightforward. If they clash, form takes precedence [18]. Clearly, Xu Yuanchong places significant emphasis on formal beauty. The ideal, optimal scenario is preserving all three beauties simultaneously. Only by ultimately achieving formal beauty can the translation of an advertising slogan be considered perfect.

2.3 Slogan

Advertising slogans, as the name implies, refers to promotion—that is, increasing visibility through media and other promotional methods. Advertising slogans embody a practical style that reflects commercial value, with their ultimate purpose and social function being to enable consumers to understand, accept, and purchase goods or services. In terms of advertising slogans, they are characterized by brevity, memorability, distinctiveness, strong appeal, and adaptability to needs. They bring aesthetic enjoyment to people and possess a certain aesthetic value. If an advertising slogan fails to persuade the target audience to develop a purchasing intent, its functionality and value become meaningless. The same principle applies to advertising slogan translation. When considering text translation, advertising slogan translation should place greater emphasis on linguistic artistry and aesthetic experience. Based on geographic scope, advertisements can be categorized as international, domestic, regional, or local. By target audience, they include consumer-facing and business-to-business advertisements [19]. Common advertising media encompass newspaper ads, magazine ads, outdoor advertisements, and online advertisements. Ultimately, any successful advertisement must first capture consumer attention, then spark interest, followed by product understanding, and finally drive purchase. Its aesthetic function manifests in influencing the target audience's psychology, stimulating and inducing purchasing intent, and facilitating transactional behavior.

Advertising is a cultural and aesthetic symbol born from social evolution and progress, using artistic imagery as its medium. It possesses profound cultural connotations and unique aesthetic attributes. Within translation aesthetics, Professor Mao Ronggui further categorizes aesthetic objects into rhythmic beauty, rhythmic beauty, simplicity, artistic conception, structural beauty, tonal beauty, neatness, stylistic beauty, and ambiguous beauty for discussion and analysis. In advertising slogan translation, we should strive to achieve the organic integration of these three beauties. In fact, even if a translation fully conveys the source text's information, without the beauty of sound and form, it cannot accurately capture the original's style, artistic conception, and charm.

3. Principles and Strategies for Translating Advertising Slogans

3.1 Principles of Advertising Slogan Translation

Advertising slogans are an art form—the art of persuading consumers and influencing their psychology. Translating advertising slogans constitutes a relatively specialized form of text translation that requires distinct translation methodologies.

First, be concise and clear. Taglines should highlight key messages while omitting unnecessary words.

Second, evoke emotion. Evoking emotion means stirring specific feelings or thoughts in people's minds. Emotion represents individuals' attitudes and experiences regarding whether objective things meet their needs.

Third, be novel and distinctive. Boring taglines linger only briefly in consumers' memories, whereas novel and distinctive ones pique their curiosity, foster psychological identification, and boost product sales.

3.2 Basic Strategies for Translating Advertising Slogans

First, defining the target audience is crucial before creating any advertising message. The visual and textual elements of the ad should be appropriately tailored to the needs and realities of potential customers, ensuring the success of the advertising campaign.

Second, advertising copy conveys a hidden message, attempting to persuade the audience in various ways. All persuasion techniques use language as a tool to express themselves and achieve the desired objectives.

3.3 Rhetorical Strategies and Effects in Advertising Slogan Translation

To infuse advertising slogans with artistic flair, it is essential to employ rhetorical devices for refinement. Rhetoric involves the use of various metaphorical techniques and expressive methods—that is, utilizing diverse linguistic tools during language use to achieve optimal communicative effects. Rhetorical devices render advertising slogans more vivid, evocative, and compelling, thereby better capturing audience attention and enhancing the persuasiveness and impact of advertisements. Common rhetorical devices include metaphor, personification, hyperbole, parallelism, and rhetorical questions. These techniques imbue advertising copy with artistic flair and emotional resonance, facilitating the effective transmission of marketing messages and achieving commercial objectives. Examples include:

- 1) It gives my hair super shine, super body, and leaves it smelling fresh as a meadow. (Metaphor)
- 2) Flowers by Interflora speak from the heart. (Personification)
- 3) Money doesn't grow on trees. But it blossoms at our branches. (Pun)
- 4) Make your every hello a real good buy. (Pun)
- 5) Today, it is like a thriving sakura. (Metaphor)
- 6) Henan, China—The Cradle of Kung Fu (Metaphor)
- 7) Love life, love Lafang. (Repetition)

First is metaphor. Metaphor is a rhetorical device that uses imagery, analogies, anecdotes, stories, and myths to unlock new possibilities for thought, emotion, and action. Example 1 contains a metaphor—an image conveying comparison, almost always expressed as “like” or “as if.” To showcase the shampoo's high quality and delightful experience, the ad designer sought to evoke consumers' imagination of spring grass fragrances in this advertisement.

Second is personification. Personification describes an object as a human being. In advertising copy, it primarily portrays the advertised product as a person with thoughts, emotions, and life. In Example 2, the “flower” is personified as a lover who expresses her heartfelt sentiments, brimming with boundless love and charm. This effectively captures consumers' attention, strikes an emotional chord, and prompts purchasing decisions.

Third is double entendre. This rhetorical device employs a pair of phrases sharing identical syllables or similar grammatical structures to convey related meanings. Formally, such paired sentences exhibit neat aesthetics, conciseness, and readability with a strong rhythmic cadence. In Example 3, “branch” carries dual meanings: a stem resembling an arm growing from a tree trunk, and a subsidiary office of a bank. The ad implies that money certainly doesn't grow on trees, but depositing it in any branch of the bank will make your money grow.

Fourth is repetition. Repetition simply involves repeating a word within a sentence or line of poetry without specific placement to ensure emphasis. In Example 7, the repetition of the verb “love” conveys to the audience that using Lafang skincare products is, in essence, a way of loving life.

4. The Application of Aesthetic Theory in Advertising Translation

In modern society, the powerful forces of market economies, mass media, and commercial

replication have imbued commodities with cultural significance and aesthetic appeal. Advertising works have also participated in expanding the scope of aesthetics. Beyond their economic attributes, consumers pursue the aesthetic essence of advertisements, hoping they fulfill the function of transmitting social and cultural discourse while conveying product information—thus becoming a fusion of economics and art.

“Kěkǒukělè”, the Chinese translation of ‘Coca Cola’, is renowned in China as a classic example of excellent translation. Many consider it a “perfect” translation, and it is frequently cited as a model of effective brand translation. This analysis of Coca-Cola's Chinese translation is not a systematic or theoretical discussion, but rather an examination from the perspectives of aesthetics, translation aesthetics, and reception aesthetics. The Chinese translation of Coca-Cola skillfully expresses Chinese aesthetic preferences. The translation “Kěkǒu Kělè” uses only 8 Chinese characters, yet repeats the ‘CO’ sound four times with consistent rhyme, making it easy to read. While the repetition of “kě” is intentional, it faithfully captures the beauty of phonetic harmony, delivering the desired poetic resonance and aesthetic experience. This simple four-character translation showcases the beauty of rhythm, cadence, and meaning, evoking a sense of happiness—a key factor in Coca-Cola's success in China. Another example is the fast-food slogan “Deliciously Simple, Simply Delicious.” The source language employs repetition for emphasis, while the translation “mei wei di dao, di dao mei wei” uses a literal approach to reinforce the reader's impression, achieving equivalence in both formal structure and linguistic meaning.

Slogans serve as vehicles for cultural exchange, with their artistic beauty being a primary research focus. Translation is a linguistic art form where aesthetic theory closely intertwines with practice. The original text, its translation, and all aesthetic elements within the translation process constitute key research subjects. Thus, the integration of aesthetics and translation represents a breakthrough in translation theory. For years, emphasis in slogan translation has centered on fundamental linguistic skills. It should be explicitly stated that core linguistic skills inherently encompass foundational aesthetic competencies. In recent years, interdisciplinary research on translation aesthetics in advertising slogans has been relatively scarce. Theoretical and research approaches present significant challenges, requiring an attitude of development, analysis, and critique. No monograph can be flawless. Consequently, this paper has certain limitations and relies on a finite number of references.

4.1 Translation of Advertising Slogans from an Aesthetic Perspective

During the translation process, translation aesthetics must be applied to preserve the original text's aesthetic appeal in the target language. Both advertising language and translation should reflect aesthetic qualities. Guided by translation aesthetics theory, the aesthetic features within advertising language will be further enhanced, delivering a pleasurable experience to consumers.

8) Wearing is believing. Seeing is believing. This is an underwear advertisement. Unlike other clothing ads, underwear should prioritize quality and comfort, and the tagline must highlight these unique attributes to genuinely captivate consumers. This fosters psychological and aesthetic resonance, reflecting the slogan's aesthetic value and cultural depth. The rhyming of “wearing” and “believing” creates harmonious cadence—a rhythmic phonetic beauty that enhances memorability.

9) Face all. Confront everything. The original ad is an imperative sentence led by “face,” carrying a persuasive function. Translating ‘face’ as “confront” reflects a fearless spirit of bravely facing all challenges. Simultaneously, the translation adopts a four-character phrase—a unique linguistic form in Chinese. It is not only concise and clear but also condenses the original slogan's essence into a four-character structure, embodying a formal aesthetic.

10) Love shown in the details. This slogan allows consumers to appreciate the product's refined characteristics. ABC KIDS focuses on caring for children through meticulous attention to detail from infancy to adolescence, ensuring products align closely with children's developmental needs. Parents can observe these thoughtful details, fostering greater confidence in their purchases and shaping ABC's image as a brand of healthy children's apparel.

11) I love you only when I met you. My heart belongs only to you. A literal translation—“I fell in love with you the moment I met you”—would render the slogan mundane and the sentence overly lengthy, failing to leave an impression. Rewriting the complex original into “My heart belongs only to you” proves more effective. These five concise, powerful words ensure ease of reading and memorability while preserving the artistic resonance of the original.

4.2 Advertising Slogan Translation from an Aesthetic Perspective

On the surface, translating advertising slogans involves converting linguistic vocabulary, but in reality, it constitutes secondary creation by the translator. Numerous factors must be considered. One such factor is the psychological resonance with the target audience—their psychological receptivity.

1) Good to the last drop. Every drop is rich and aromatic, leaving you wanting more. In this advertisement, the author fully considers that it is for a beverage product, where color, aroma, and taste are the most crucial elements to highlight. As a tagline, it must be highly condensed, concise, and clear while also being appealing to the audience and eliciting a psychological response. Therefore, the word “Good” is used to encapsulate color, aroma, and taste, while “last drop” creates a sense of anticipation and desire to try it.

2) Where there is a will, there is a way; where there is a way, there is Toyota. Where there's a will, there's a way; where there's a way, there's Toyota. Example 13 employs the English proverb “Where there is a will, there is a way.” Similarly, its Chinese translation borrows the Chinese proverb “Where there is a will, there is a way.” The cultural characteristics of linguistic beauty often exhibit distinct cultural typicality. In advertising, citing linguistic phenomena from two different cultures imbues language with varied hues, suddenly sparking audience interest.

3) Make yourself heard. Communication knows no bounds. This advertising slogan exemplifies a creative betrayal of the original text—an act of “disloyalty” that precisely conveys the target culture's intended meaning, infusing the translated work with vitality and charm. Rather than directly rendering the phrase as “Understanding is communication,” the translator employed the word “boundless,” fully capturing the powerful functionality of this communication tool—a nuance absent in the source text.

5. Conclusion

This paper explores the translation of advertising slogans guided by aesthetics. On one hand, we should adapt and enhance cultural translation to better align with Chinese linguistic and cultural conventions. On the other hand, only by mastering the principles of aesthetic translation, grasping the content and spirit of the original text, selecting appropriate translation methods, flexibly applying translation strategies, and choosing profound expressions from the target language can the original rhetorical meaning and significance be conveyed. This greatly enhances the artistry and practicality of English advertising slogans, endowing them with beautifying or popularizing utility while avoiding vulgarity and one-sidedness. The use of advertising slogans always aims to encourage consumers to purchase products, thereby generating economic benefits for enterprises. Therefore, advertising slogans must not only align with consumer perceptions but also allow consumers to appreciate the aesthetic appeal of the product. By applying translation aesthetics, the deeper meanings of the original text can be revealed, making the advertising slogans captivating. This contributes to enhancing brand recognition and reputation, broadening the development prospects for the enterprise. However, aesthetics encompasses many dimensions that remain unexplored. This paper aims to make some contributions to the translation of advertising slogans, provide references for those interested in this field, and facilitate further research in a broader context.

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