

Transcreation in the Translation of Food Advertisements Under the Functional Equivalence Theory

Jinxin Feng¹

¹ Xi'an Polytechnic University, Shaanxi, China

Correspondence: Jinxin Feng, Xi'an Polytechnic University, Shaanxi, China.

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Abstract

Food advertising translation plays a significant role in global market promotion. Accurate and creative translation is essential for breaking down cultural barriers and ensuring effective communication of advertising messages. The quality of translation directly affects the product's appeal to consumers in the target language market, which in turn impacts the product's sales profits.

This study, based on the functional equivalence theory, explores how to achieve equivalent communication of advertisements between the source language and target language markets through this theory, thereby promoting the globalization of food marketing. The study employs the literature survey method to systematically review previous research findings in the field of functional equivalence theory and advertising translation, providing a solid theoretical foundation for this study. Meanwhile, the case analysis method is used to collect a wide range of domestic and international food brand advertising translation cases. The study deeply analyzes creative translation strategies based on the functional equivalence theory, such as lexical substitution, syntactic adjustment, and cultural imagery transformation, exploring the specific application of creative translation in advertising translation. The study finds that to improve the effectiveness of food advertising translation, two principles should be followed: content is prioritized over form; the translated text should produce similar effects and functions as the source text.

The research indicates that creative translation strategies can effectively overcome cultural differences and enable target language consumers to have similar feelings to those of the source language consumers. This study is expected to provide valuable references for advertising translation practice, helping advertising practitioners improve translation quality and promoting the widespread dissemination and promotion of food in the international market.

Keywords: functional equivalence theory, food advertising translation, transcreation, cultural differences

1. Introduction

With the development of economic globalization,

the food industry is increasingly showing an international trend. As a bridge connecting food

enterprises and consumers, the quality of translation in food advertising directly affects the sales performance of products in the international market. However, due to significant differences in language, culture, and consumer psychology among different countries and regions, food advertising translation faces many challenges.

This study comprehensively uses case analysis and literature review methods to explore effective paths for food advertising translation. The theory of functional equivalence was proposed by Eugene A. Nida, emphasizing that translation should not only pursue literal correspondence, but also pay attention to the equivalence of functional effects between the translated text and the original text. In the field of food advertising translation, this theory provides solid theoretical support for advertising creation and translation. Through in-depth analysis of a large number of food advertising translation cases, this study aims to explore the application rules of functional equivalence theory in them.

The first chapter illustrates the significant value of food advertising translation against the backdrop of the internationalization of the food industry. The second chapter of this paper provides a comprehensive overview of the research, elaborating on functional equivalence theory and the characteristics of transcreation, laying a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent research. Chapter 3 focuses on the language characteristics and translation objectives of food advertising, deeply analyzes the unique language style of food advertising and the goals that translation should achieve, and clarifies the research direction. Chapter 4 focuses on exploring the specific application of functional equivalence theory in food advertising translation, from multiple dimensions such as lexical equivalence, syntactic equivalence, and stylistic equivalence, presenting the specific practical methods of this theory in practice. Chapter 5 based on the functional equivalence theory, extracts two principles for the creative translation of food advertising: prioritizing content over form, and pursuing similarity in effect and functional correspondence.

2. Overview of the Study

This chapter begins with a review of the current research status of food advertising translation in China. Secondly, the functional equivalence theory is introduced, which provides the

theoretical foundation for this study. Thirdly, transcreation, as a translation method, is introduced here, including its definition and characteristics.

2.1 Literature Review

The functional equivalence theory in translation studies began to emerge in the 18th century, when George Campbell (1789) proposed a theory of translation that relates word meanings to their intended purposes, laying the foundation for the development of functional equivalence theory. Subsequently, many scholars conducted research on this topic and later clarified the concept of functional equivalence theory. The first to propose the equivalence theory was the linguist Fedorov from the former Soviet Union, among others (Polina K, 2020). Nida, in *Language, Culture and Translating* (1993), emphasized that equivalence should be as close as possible, rather than absolute equivalence. He focused more on the effect of equivalence rather than merely the sameness of linguistic forms. This requires that the translation conveys the connotative information of the source text fluently and naturally, ensuring that the target language readers understand the translation in the same way as the source language readers understand the source text. Applying the theory of functional equivalence to the translation of food advertisements requires translators to deeply consider how to address cultural differences in the translation process and how to competently translate texts of different genres. Additionally, they must perform cultural conversion work between the initiators of the task and the target language recipients, possessing knowledge of at least two cultures, understanding the psychology of both cultures, and being familiar with the cultural patterns of both.

In the mid-1980s, research articles on advertising language began to appear in some foreign language journals in China. However, professional research on advertising translation did not start until the early 1990s. At that time, it mainly focused on exploring the methods and problems of Chinese-English advertisement translation, which was still in its initial stage. At the end of the 1990s, scholars gradually delved into the principles and standards of advertisement translation, as well as issues related to rhetorical techniques, emotion conveyance, brand image reproduction, and retention of labeling features. Chinese scholars primarily employed inductive and analytical

methods. In recent years, they have also started to apply pragmatics theory and theories from other disciplines to analyze translation problems (Sun, 2016).

From the perspective of domestic research, the hotspots of domestic food translation research mainly focus on translation strategy, food advertising slogans, and English translation. Most of the related literature comes from general journals, indicating that the research level in this field needs to be improved, and the academic demand needs to be strengthened. In recent years, the scope of research has gradually expanded, and the content has become more specific, but the topics remain relatively concentrated. Most studies explore the translation value of food advertisements from different dimensions, while research on the transcreation of food advertisement language is relatively weak. For example, Zhang Xiaoyan (2011) analyzed the positive effect of fuzzy restrictive language in English food advertising slogans. Wang Xiaoyan et al. (2016) proposed to use the theory of translation ecology to translate food advertising slogans to give full play to the economic and cultural value of food advertising. Ye et al. (2018) discussed the importance of using puns to achieve functional equivalence in food advertising translation. Tang et al. (2019) discussed the application and guiding significance of functional equivalence theory and translation teleology in the Chinese translation of food advertising slogans.

In summary, scholars from various countries generally believe that translation is a process of cultural conversion. They advocate that translators should minimize changes to maintain the original meaning, and they believe that the ability to convert cultures across languages is one of the most important qualities of translators. Since the advertisement text contains cultural symbols and values of the source language, the translator needs to communicate with the original author to ensure that the deeper meaning of the source text is accurately understood and appropriate translation strategies and techniques are used to achieve consistency between the two languages.

2.2 Overview of the Functional Equivalence Theory

Eugene Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory is one of the core theories in translation studies, emphasizing that translation should produce responses similar to those of the target language

reader, rather than pursuing a formal word-for-word correspondence. The core idea of this theory is that the focus of translation is to convey the function and meaning of the source text, rather than simply the equivalence of linguistic forms.

Nida originally proposed "Dynamic Equivalence", emphasizing that the translated text should naturally convey the message and emotion of the source language, so that the target language reader can understand and feel the text in a similar way to the source language reader. Later, he developed this concept into "functional equivalence", further clarifying that the goal of translation is to achieve functional equivalence, not formal homogeneity.

The theory of functional equivalence has several levels: at the lexical level, the translator needs to find the closest equivalent; At the syntactic level, the sentence structure needs to be adjusted to conform to the expression habits of the target language. At the discourse level, it is necessary to ensure the coherence and logic of the discourse; At the stylistic level, it is necessary to maintain the style and tone of the source text as much as possible. Through these level adjustments, the translation can achieve functional equivalence.

Nida also proposed the basic principles of translation: the translated text should be expressed naturally and conform to the linguistic habits of the target language; should be faithful to the meaning of the source language and avoid misunderstandings or misinterpretations; At the same time, the response of the target language reader should be similar to that of the source language reader. These principles provide important guidance for translation practice.

Overall, the theory of functional equivalence is centered on the target language reader, focusing on the transmission of meaning and the reader's response, and although controversial, it still has important guiding significance for translation practice.

2.3 Definition and Characteristics of Transcreation

There are roughly two definitions of creative translation: firstly, transcreation, which refers to the recreation based on the content of the original text. Its core lies in "creation" rather than "translation", aiming to overcome the "untranslatability" caused by language and cultural differences. Therefore, the original content is rewritten in the target language and new text content is created when necessary.

Secondly, transcreation refers to creative translation, and translation is its attribute, with the core being “translation”. But it is more creative, as they are given more permissions to “add, rearrange, or create”. Its characteristic is the integration of creativity in the translation process to adapt to the target audience, while conveying the same information, style, and emotions from the source language to the target language, making the target language closer to the expression and meaning of the source language. From this perspective, creative translation is fundamentally related to “translation”, emphasizing the use of creative techniques to reproduce the meaning and beauty of the original text (Li Xiaoyi & Zhang Shunsheng, 2022). The purpose of this paper is to discuss the second type of transcreation.

As a portmanteau combining “translation” and “creation”. “Transcreation” can also be referred to as creative translation. Zhao Gang and Guo Yajun (2019) point out that in cross-cultural translation, the foreign elements that need to be recreated include names, publicity, presentation methods, as well as the design of prefaces and appendices. Transcreation is redefined as an intralingual reinterpretation aimed at the target readers. Yuan Yuqi and Li Yi, (2024) point out that creative translation enables translators to accurately convey the meaning of the original text while striving to preserve its forms. Due to differences between languages, some linguistic forms in the original text may not have direct equivalents in the target language. Translators need to exercise their subjectivity and creativity, employing appropriate strategies, methods, and techniques to reshape the content and form of the original work in order to achieve fluency, flexibility, originality, and comprehensiveness in the translation.

Thus, translation emphasizes creative adaptation based on fidelity to the original work, allowing the translator’s initiative to align with the reading habits and aesthetic standards of the target language readers.

The characteristics of creative translation are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

1) Flexibility: Transcreation does not stick to the literal meaning of the original text, but flexibly adjusts the translation according to the cultural background and expression habits of the target language, so that it is more in line with the reader’s understanding and acceptance.

2) Cultural adaptability: During the translation process, the translator should fully consider the characteristics of the target culture and avoid cultural conflicts or misunderstandings. Through creative processing, translations are better integrated into the target culture, enhancing readability and empathy.

3) Language artistry: Transcreation focuses on the aesthetic effect of language and pursues the fluency and artistry of the translation. Through the clever use of language, the translator makes the translation convey the original meaning while having a literary beauty.

4) Innovation: Transcreation is not only a transformation of language, but also a re-creation of the original text. On the basis of being faithful to the spirit of the original text, the translator can add his own understanding and innovation to give new life to the translation.

5) Functionality: Transcreation also focuses on the functionality of the translated text, ensuring that it can effectively convey information in a specific context and achieve the desired communication effect.

Therefore, the translation of business English advertisements is not just about simply conveying the literal meaning of the advertisement, but also about appropriately guiding consumers to develop a favorable impression of the product, truly considering the needs of consumers, and being able to stimulate their interest.

3. Linguistic Characteristics and Translation Objectives of Food Advertisements

This chapter is divided into two main sections. Initially, it examines the linguistic features of food advertising, emphasizing the necessity of conveying crucial product information and highlighting key selling points within a concise word count. Subsequently, the chapter outlines the translation objectives for food advertising, establishing an initial standard to evaluate the effectiveness of food advertising translation.

3.1 Linguistic Characteristics of Food Advertising

Food advertising slogans are an important tool for brands to communicate with consumers, aiming to present the important information of the product as much as possible in concise and vivid language within a certain number of words, so as to leave a deep impression on consumers, so as to generate a strong desire to buy, so as to achieve the effect of publicity (Fan Ludan, 2022).

A good food advertising slogan usually has the following characteristics: concise and clear, highlighting the selling point, emotional resonance, and easy to remember. The following is a detailed analysis of the characteristics of food advertising slogans with specific examples.

Firstly, concise and clear. Food advertising slogans are usually short and powerful, capable of capturing consumers' attention in a short amount of time. Given that consumers have limited attention spans, slogans need to convey the core message in a few seconds.

Ex 3-1: "Rich and fragrant, leaving you wanting more." (Maxwell Coffee)

This slogan conveys the rich flavor of coffee in eight characters, being concise yet vivid, evoking the richness and aftertaste of coffee.

Secondly, highlighting unique selling points. Food advertising slogans need to highlight the unique selling points of the product, which may include taste, health, natural ingredients, functionality, etc. By emphasizing the advantages of the product, they attract target consumers.

Ex 3-2: "Nature's Source, Healthy Choice." (Yili Milk)

This slogan emphasizes the natural and healthy attributes of the product, catering to modern consumers' demand for healthy food.

Thirdly, emotional Resonance. Excellent food advertising slogans often evoke emotional resonance in consumers by integrating with their life scenarios and emotional needs, thereby enhancing the brand's affinity.

Ex 3-3: "The taste of home, the love of a mother." (Master Kong's Braised Beef Noodles)

This slogan evokes consumers' emotional memories of family warmth through "the taste of home" and "a mother's love". enhancing the product's affinity.

Fourthly, easy to remember. Food advertising slogans need to be catchy and memorable to leave a lasting impression in consumers' minds and even become a catchphrase.

Ex 3-4: "Eat more if it's delicious." (Delicious Biscuits)

The slogan reinforces the memory points by repeating "delicious" and "eat more", while conveying the product's tastiness.

In summary, the sentence structure of these food

advertising slogans is characterized by simple and abbreviated sentences, making it easy for consumers to understand at a glance and quickly grasp key information.

3.2 Translation Objectives for Food Advertising

Food Professional English (Wang, 2019) proposes that food advertising translation under the purpose theory is a cross-cultural communication of foreign economic behavior. It should convey the unique culture in food advertising on the basis of being close to the original text, so that the translation conforms to the expression habits, language cognition, and social culture of the target language, forming a harmonious and infectious beauty.

Based on the art of Food Professional English, the author believes that, given the differences in language form between the source language and the target language, in the translation of food advertisements, if there is a conflict between the language form and the target language, it is necessary to follow the principle of purposive translation, fully utilize the advantages of the target language, beautify the translation effect as much as possible, and leave a good impression on consumers. The coconut juice advertisement "The pioneer of the world. The most delicious in China." (Natural Coconut Juice) Although this translation result achieves formal equivalence with the original text and fully conveys the main meaning, it is vastly different from the language characteristics and habits of English advertising, making it difficult for the target language consumers to accept and achieve the expected advertising effect. Therefore, it can be translated as "Natural Coconut Juice: a world special with an enjoyment beyond all your words".

The goal of translating food advertisements is to maximize cultural adaptability and communication effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of translating food advertisements can be summarized into three aspects.

The first goal of translation is to accurately convey the core message of the original advertisement, such as the product's taste, health benefits, or unique selling points, while avoiding misunderstandings or ambiguities caused by cultural differences.

The second goal of translation is to pay attention to the cultural background and dietary habits of the target market, using language that resonates with local consumers' psychology to enhance the advertisement's appeal and attractiveness.

The third goal of translation is to retain the emotional resonance and purposeful language of the original text, stimulating consumers' appetite and desire to purchase through vivid expressions. The ultimate goal is to achieve the same promotional effect in the target market as the original text, and even further enhance the advertisement's impact and reach through creative translation.

In conclusion, the goals of food advertising translation are diverse and crucial. Accuracy is the foundation, and it is necessary to present core information such as product taste, health benefits, and unique selling points in an authentic manner, to eliminate cultural differences that may cause misunderstandings. At the same time, it is crucial to deeply consider the cultural heritage and dietary habits of the target market, and use language that can touch the hearts of local consumers to enhance the appeal of advertising. It is also necessary to retain the emotional appeal and targeted wording of the original text, and use vivid expressions to stimulate consumers' appetite and purchasing impulse.

4. The Specific Application of Functional Equivalence Theory in Food Advertising Transcreation

In Chapter 3, linguistic characteristics and translation objectives of food advertisements are introduced, as well as the functional equivalence's strong feasibility to advertisement translation. This chapter will elaborate on the application of Nida's functional equivalence theory in the translation of Chinese and English food advertisements from three aspects: lexical, syntax, and style.

4.1 Application of Food Advertising Transcreation in Lexical Equivalence

In the translation of commercial advertising slogans, it is necessary to consider not only its basic meaning but also its metaphorical meaning, not only its literal meaning, but also the implied meaning it wants to express (Liu Peipei, 2015). Therefore, in this part, semantic equivalence and cultural vocabulary equivalence will be discussed combining the analysis of some typical food translation cases.

4.1.1 Semantic Equivalence

Due to the difference between English and Chinese, some ads cannot be translated directly. If you don't take into account the differences and

translate them directly, the target readers may be confused. Therefore, semantic equivalence is necessary when translating ads.

Ex. 4-1:

Original Text: You are the happiness of my life. (DOVE)

Translated Text: 得到你是我一生的幸福。(德芙巧克力)

This advertising slogan adopts the method of free translation. The literal translation of the original text as "你是我的幸福" is awkward, while the free translation is "得到你是我一生的幸福". Personifying chocolate can better reflect its emotional value and trigger emotional resonance among consumers.

This slogan translation uses part of speech conversion and addition techniques. The original noun "happiness" is translated into the adjective "幸福的", making the translation smooth and natural, and concretizing abstract emotions. It adds the word "得到", improve sentence structure, give dynamic emotional changes, highlight the experience of consumers obtaining happiness by obtaining chocolate, and enhance product value.

The advertising slogan adopts a domestication strategy, incorporating the brand name "德芙". "DO" sounds similar to "德" in "德芙" and "VE" sounds similar to "福" allowing consumers to associate with the brand quickly. This strategy helps strengthen the brand image, improve brand awareness and reputation, and make consumers remember the Dove chocolate brand while remembering the advertising slogan.

Ex. 4-2:

Original Text: For the next generation. (Pepsi Cola)

Translated Text: 新一代的选择。(百事可乐)

In terms of translation methods, translators abandon the straightforward and uninspiring literal translation of "为了下一代" and adopt free translation to translate "For the next generation" as "新一代的选择", accurately conveying the market positioning for the young consumer group and stimulating purchasing desire.

At the level of translation skills, there are parts of speech conversion and additional translation. Transforming the noun phrase "next generation" into the adjective phrase "新一代的" to modify "选择" aligns with Chinese customs and highlights the connection between the product

and the younger generation. The addition of the word “选择” enriches the meaning of the original text, implying that Pepsi is the preferred beverage of the younger generation and provides a psychological hint for keeping up with lifestyle trends.

This slogan employed domestication strategy. Given that Chinese culture places great value on the “new generation” and the pursuit of trends, the translated advertising slogans cater to the psychology of Chinese consumers. They imply product fashion and innovation, meet the younger generation’s need for individuality, and help brands gain recognition in the Chinese market.

4.1.2 Cultural Vocabulary Equivalence

When certain cultural concepts in the source language have completely different meanings from their counterparts in the target language, we can adopt an adaptation strategy by supplementing the missing cultural images in the source language culture while making them popular and familiar to consumers in the target language. In this way, the advertisements’ persuasive power can be strengthened and syntactic functions consolidated.

Ex. 4-3:

Original Text: 怕上火，喝王老吉。(Wanglaoji)

Translated Text: Fight against excessive internal heat, drink Wanglaoji Herbal Tea. (王老吉)

The advertisement “怕上火，喝王老吉” was translated using a combination of free translation and transliteration. In the Chinese context, “怕上火” is a unique cultural concept rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, and it is difficult to find a direct corresponding term in English. Therefore, it was translated as “Fight against excessive internal heat”, which conveys the physical discomfort symptoms and prevention needs associated with “上火” in a way that English-speaking audiences can understand. Meanwhile, “王老吉” was transliterated as “Wanglaoji” to preserve the brand’s cultural elements and maintain its unity and uniqueness in cross-cultural communication, thus retaining the brand name’s distinctiveness and cultural identity.

Additionally, this advertising slogan employs techniques of vocabulary replacement and addition. “怕” was replaced with the more action-oriented “Fight against” to enhance the proactivity of the statement. “Herbal Tea” was

added after “Wanglaoji” to clarify the product’s attributes, enabling English audiences to quickly understand the product category and aligning the brand name more closely with the product’s functionality.

Ex. 4-4:

Original Text: Celebrate the harvest with Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte, a taste of autumn tradition. (Starbucks)

Translated Text: 用星巴克南瓜拿铁欢庆丰收，品味秋日传统滋味。(星巴克)

Firstly, the advertising slogan adopts a translation method that focuses on literal translation and appropriate free translation. “Starbucks Pumpkin Spice Latte” combines direct transliteration and literal translation, while retaining the brand and product names; The literal translation of “Celebrate the Harvest” is “欢庆丰收”, and the free translation of “a taste of autumn tradition” is “品味秋日传统滋味”, conveying cultural imagery and emotional experiences related to autumn harvest in English to Chinese audiences.

Secondly, the sentence employs domestication strategy. Translating and transplanting the cultural tradition of Western autumn harvest and pumpkin into Chinese advertisements, while emphasizing the traditional taste brought by the products, to evoke emotional resonance among Chinese audiences towards the beautiful atmosphere of autumn, and to achieve equal dissemination of cultural vocabulary in different cultural contexts.

Finally, the sentence employs techniques of conversion and cultural imagery preservation. Convert the noun “tradition” in English to the adjective “传统的” in Chinese to make the sentence more in line with Chinese expression habits; At the same time, cultural imagery such as “丰收” and “秋日” should be retained to allow Chinese audiences to experience cultural scenes and emotional atmospheres similar to the original English text.

4.2 Application of Food Advertising Transcreation in Syntactic Equivalence

In this part, we will focus on the application of syntactic equivalence in food advertising translation, exploring it in depth from two key perspectives: simple sentences and the present tense.

4.2.1 The Widespread Use of Simple Sentences

In the translation of food advertisements between Chinese and English, simple sentences have the characteristics of being concise, clear, and hitting the key points, and are commonly used sentence structures to convey product information.

Ex. 4-5:

Original Text: 饿货，快来条士力架！（士力架）

Translated Text: Hungry? Have a Snickers!

This advertising slogan adopts a literal translation method, translating “饿货” as “Hungry” and “快来条士力架” as “Have a Snickers”, retaining the concise and direct sentence structure of the original text, so that both Chinese and English advertisements convey the core information of the product in short and powerful sentences. It is worth noting that in Chinese, it is customary to use the word “条” to modify packaged foods such as Snickers, such as “一条士力架”. Chinese tends to achieve concise meaning by flexibly omitting elements such as subjects, quantifiers, and conjunctions. These essential language elements in Chinese may become redundant parts that hinder information transmission in English simple sentences due to differences in syntactic rules. To avoid confusion among target market consumers due to cultural and language differences, the translator chooses to omit the quantifier “条” and directly use the expression “Have a Snickers” when translating. This processing method not only conforms to the language expression habits of English, but also ensures the accuracy and fluency of advertising information transmission.

This sentence uses the technique of combining interrogative and imperative sentence structures. Although the Chinese word “饿货” is not a formal question, it implies an inquiry about the consumer’s status, while the English word “Hungry?” reinforces the sense of questioning with a question mark; Subsequently, following the imperative sentence “Have a Snickers”, a logical chain of inquiry suggestion is formed to maintain consistency in sentence rhythm and expression logic between Chinese and English.

Ex. 4-6:

Original Text: 渴不及待，可口可乐。（可口可乐）

Translated Text: Can’t wait, Coca Cola. (Coca Cola)

Firstly, the advertising slogan adopts a literal translation method. The Chinese advertising slogan “渴不及待” is directly translated as “Can’t wait” in English, and “可口可乐” is transliterated

as “Coca-Cola”, retaining the structure and core semantics of simple sentences in the source language, making the English translation consistent with Chinese syntax, and expressing consumers’ urgent needs for products directly with concise phrases.

Secondly, the sentence employs vocabulary correspondence and structural preservation techniques. The word “不及待” in “渴不及待” corresponds precisely to “can’t wait”, which is highly compatible in terms of semantics and emotional expression; At the same time, the structural order of Chinese advertising slogans expressing needs first and product names appearing later has been retained, making the English translation completely consistent with Chinese in terms of syntactic structure and information presentation logic.

Finally, the sentence employs a concise equivalence strategy. Given the characteristic of simple sentences in advertising that aim to convey information quickly, efforts should be made to maintain simplicity and equivalence in both Chinese and English sentence structures during translation, without adding too many modifying elements, so that the target language audience can receive product information at a similar reading pace and understanding to the source language audience.

4.2.2 Present Tense

In English advertisements, the present tense is commonly used to indicate the a sense of immediacy and vividness of this product.

Ex. 4-7:

Original Text: Taste the pizza perfection now. (Pizza Hut)

Translated Text: 现在，品尝完美披萨。（必胜客）

This advertising slogan adopts a literal translation method, accurately corresponding to English and Chinese vocabulary. “Taste” is translated as “品尝”，“pizza perfection” is translated as “完美披萨”，and “now” is translated as “现在”. The original sentence’s present tense (“Taste” is a general present tense directive) and imperative sentence structure are fully preserved to ensure complete consistency in grammar structure, time expression, and behavioral instructions between Chinese and English, enabling Chinese audiences to have the same information reception experience as English audiences.

This sentence adopts translation techniques of

word order adjustment. In English, the time adverb “now” is placed at the end of the sentence, which conforms to the expression habit of emphasizing the core action first in English; In Chinese, the word “现在” is advanced, which conforms to the Chinese word order rule of “time first, action later”. By adjusting the word order, the translation becomes more natural and fluent.

This sentence uses a call to action strategy to create a sense of immediacy in the present tense, paired with imperative sentence structures to directly issue instructions. Both Chinese and English use the straightforward expression of “现在品尝” to shorten the psychological distance between consumers receiving information and taking action. Through the use of immediate and directive sentences, it stimulates consumers’ impulse to try products at the moment and promotes purchasing behavior.

Ex. 4-8:

Original Text: Open happiness now. (Coca Cola)

Translated Text: 此刻开启快乐。(可口可乐)

In the process of translating the English slogan “Open happiness now” into Chinese, a literal translation method was used to directly translate the original text into “此刻开启快乐”. When translating, the present tense marker “now” and the core verb “Open” in the original English sentence were fully retained to ensure that the tense features and action instructions of the Chinese and English advertisements are completely consistent, conveying the core selling point of the product that can bring consumers a pleasant experience in the present moment through real-time expression.

From the perspective of translation techniques, this translation comprehensively utilizes vocabulary replacement and word order optimization strategies. At the lexical level, “Open” is accurately translated as “开启”, achieving seamless integration of action meanings; “Happiness” breaks through the literal meaning and is translated as a stronger emotional color of “快乐”, enhancing the infectiousness of the advertisement. In terms of word order, Chinese expresses the concept of time through time adverbs, particles or contextual contexts, and its syntactic structure is relatively flexible; English uses verb inflection and time adverbs to clearly indicate tenses, presenting a rigorous syntactic constraint. In response to the English habit of placing the adverb “now” after the time adverb to highlight

the action, the Chinese translation has flexibly adjusted to place “此刻” before it. This not only follows the conventional Chinese word order of “time before action”, but also makes the expression of the entire sentence more natural and fluent, in line with the reading habits of Chinese audiences.

Ex. 4-9:

Original Text: 品味纯甄，就在此刻。(蒙牛)

Translated Text: Savor the purity now. (Mengniu)

The advertising slogan uses literal translation to translate the Chinese slogan “品味纯真，就在此刻” directly into “Savor the purity now”. The translation fully preserves the concept of time “此刻 (now)” and the core action “品味 (Savor)” in the original Chinese sentence. Both Chinese and English advertising slogans use the present tense to emphasize the immediacy of enjoying products in the present moment.

Translation techniques for this advertising slogans using conversion. In the translation process, the Chinese word “纯甄” is converted into the English noun “purity”, which can succinctly and clearly demonstrate the pure characteristics of the product; “品味” corresponds to the English word “savor”. Compared to the ordinary word “taste”, “savor” can better highlight the process of savoring and lingering. In addition, the English translation omits the word “就在”, making the sentence more concise and refined, in line with English expression habits.

4.3 Application of Food Advertising Transcreation in Stylistic Equivalence

In this part, we will delve into the application of food advertising translation in terms of stylistic equivalence from the perspectives of language style and rhetoric.

4.3.1 Language Style Equivalence

There are many types of food advertisements with various styles and forms, and in the translation process, translators should pay attention to stylistic equivalence. Common forms of advertising style include narrative, poetic, Q&A, and association. When translating such texts, the translator should make the original text and the translated language text equal in style, so as to reproduce the style of the original text and express the connotation of the original text in the translated text.

Ex. 4-10:

Original Text: Indulge in the creamy luxury of Häagen-Dazs. (Häagen-Dazs)

Translated Text: 沉醉于哈根达斯的丝滑奢华。(哈根达斯)

This advertisement adopts a literal translation method. “Indulge in” is translated as “沉醉于”, “the cream luxury” is translated as “丝滑奢侈”, and “Häagen-Daz” retains its transliteration, directly conveying the elegant and high-end language style and core information of the original English text to the Chinese translation, ensuring consistency in language style between Chinese and English advertisements.

The translation of this advertisement utilizes techniques of poeticizing vocabulary and creating artistic conception. “Creamy” is translated as “丝滑”, which is more poetic and aesthetically pleasing than simply “奶油般的”. “Luxury” is translated as “奢华”, using high-quality vocabulary to create a high-end and enjoyable atmosphere. The Chinese translation “沉醉于……” adopts a dynamic object structure, which is concise yet full of charm, echoing the elegant sentence style of the English original “Indulge in... luxury”, conveying the high-end and exquisite brand image of the product.

This advertisement adopts a style continuation strategy. As a high-end ice cream brand, Häagen-Dazs has always been known for its elegant and luxurious advertising language style. During the translation process, the translator carefully selected vocabulary and sentence structures to continue the brand’s consistent language style, allowing Chinese consumers to also feel the unique luxury charm of Häagen-Dazs through advertising.

Ex. 4-11:

Original Text: 亲嘴烧, 辣得过瘾, 根本停不下来! (卫龙辣条)

Translated Text: Kiss-shaped snacks, insanely spicy, you won’t be able to stop! (Weilong spicy strip)

The advertisement adopts a translation method mainly based on free translation and supplemented by literal translation. “亲嘴烧” is translated as “Kiss-shaped snacks”, using vivid descriptions to help English audiences understand the shape of the product; The phrase “辣得过瘾” and “根本停不下来” are translated as “insanely spicy” and “you won’t be able to stop!” respectively, which is a free translation of the product’s extremely spicy and captivating

characteristics. It abandons literal translation and focuses more on conveying the vivid and exaggerated language style of the original text.

This sentence employs techniques of lexical exaggeration and tone reinforcement. “过瘾” is translated as “insanely”, using exaggerated vocabulary to highlight the degree of spiciness; “根本停不下来” is translated as “you won’t be able to stop!”, creating a highly provocative language style by emphasizing the tone of the expression, just like the original Chinese text. At the same time, the use of the playful expression “Kiss-shaped” corresponds to “亲嘴”, maintaining the lively and playful language style of the original text.

The Chinese advertising slogan of Weilong spicy strips attracts consumers with a down-to-earth, lively and exaggerated language style. When translating, in order to achieve linguistic style equivalence, translators start with vocabulary and sentence structures, using exaggerated, colloquial, and infectious vocabulary and sentence structures to present a humorous and enthusiastic language style similar to the Chinese original text in the English translation.

4.3.2 Rhetorical Equivalence

Merchants usually use rhetorical devices to make their advertising slogans more distinctive, meaningful, and engaging. Advertising slogans often use repetition, personification, puns, and metaphors. Among them, repetition and metaphors are commonly used.

Ex. 4-12:

Original Text: 生活如此多娇。(肯德基)

Translated Text: So good, so KFC. (KFC)

This advertising slogan adopts a combination of free translation and simplification translation methods. The Chinese original text “生活如此多娇” uses poetic expression to metaphorically describe how consumers’ lives become better and more charming after enjoying KFC products. The English translation “So good, so KFC” does not directly translate word for word, but abandons the literal translation of words such as “生活” and “多娇”, and directly associates the brand name “KFC” with the word “good” in a very concise way.

From the perspective of translation techniques, the English translation of this advertisement cleverly employs the techniques of repetition and contrast. The word “so” repeated twice in a sentence not only enhances the rhythm of the

sentence, but also strengthens the emotional power conveyed by the advertisement through this repetitive emphasis, triggering resonance among consumers. At the same time, “good” and “KFC” form a sharp contrast, with the former focusing on the beautiful experience brought by the product, while the latter highlights the brand’s main body, and the two complement each other. This contrasting and echoing approach forms an equivalent relationship with the emphasis effect of the word “如此” in the original Chinese text, both achieving the highlighting and strengthening of key information.

Ex 4-13:

Original Text: Milk Fragrant, Silky Feel. (DOVE)

Translated Text: 牛奶香浓，丝般感受。（德芙巧克力）

This advertising slogan adopts a combination of literal translation and free translation methods. “Milk fragment” literally translates to “牛奶香浓”，conveying the message that chocolate has a strong milk aroma. “Silky feel” is translated as “丝般感受”，not directly translated as “丝绸般的感觉”. Instead, it vividly conveys the smoothness of chocolate taste in a more concise and in line with Chinese expression habits, allowing consumers to quickly associate the smooth texture of silk and have a visual experience of chocolate taste. At the same time, the word make the translation more complete, natural, and accurately convey the experience of chocolate taste that the original text intends to convey.

This advertising slogan compares the taste of chocolate to silky smoothness, using the beautiful image of silk in people’s hearts to create a high-end and delicate quality image of chocolate, attracting consumers’ attention and stimulating their desire to purchase, thus achieving the purpose of advertising promotion.

5. Principles of Food Advertising Transcreation Under the Functional Equivalence Theory

By analyzing and summarizing the cases in Chapter 4, the author has derived two principles for advertising translation under the guidance of the functional equivalence theory: the principle of content primacy and the principle of similar and corresponding functions in effect.

5.1 Prioritizing Content

The principle of “content first” is summarized based on theoretical guidance and case studies, emphasizing that in the translation of food

advertisements, conveying the core message and brand value should be given top priority. The necessity and importance of this principle in advertisement translation is mainly reflected in the following:

In the translation of food advertisements, the priority of content often overrides the reciprocity of form. This feature can be observed in the translation cases of advertising slogans for Maxwell Coffee, Yili Milk, Master Kong’s Braised Beef Noodles, and Delicious Biscuits in Chapter 3-1. The simplicity and clarity of Maxwell Coffee’s tagline directly convey the convenience and quality of the product, aligning with consumers’ psychological expectations for quick coffee enjoyment. Yili Milk’s tagline “Nature’s Source, Healthy Choice” accurately captures the core selling point of naturalness and health, satisfying consumers’ pursuit of food quality. Master Kong’s braised beef noodles slogan “The taste of home, the love of a mother” employs an emotional marketing strategy to evoke consumers’ empathy for the warmth of family, enhancing the product’s appeal. The advertising slogan for Delicious Biscuits “Eat more if it’s delicious”, reinforces the taste advantage through repetition of “delicious” and “eat more”, creating a memorable advertising hook.

These cases demonstrate that food advertisement translation should focus on accurate content communication and flexibly apply different translation strategies to adapt to the target market’s cultural background and consumer psychology. Strategies such as simplicity and clarity, highlighting selling points, emotional resonance, and strengthening memory points are all ways to optimize advertising effectiveness through appropriate creative translation, while prioritizing content.

5.2 Similar Effects and Corresponding Functions

Food advertisements are often concise, vivid, and innovative, using rhetoric to enhance their infectious power. Translators need to create translations that retain these characteristics so that the translations produce similar effects in the target language. For example, “新一代的选择（百事可乐）” is a free translation of “For the next generation. (Pepsi-Cola)”, which is adjusted to conform to Chinese expression habits. It effectively conveys the product positioning and meets the requirement of “similar effects” in the theory of functional equivalence.

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The translation of food advertisements should take into account the cultural background of the target market and avoid cultural conflicts. For example, “怕上火，喝王老吉（王老吉）” is translated as “Fight against excessive internal heat, drink Wanglaoji Herbal Tea. (Wanglaoji)”, adding “Herbal Tea” so that the English-speaking audience can understand the related symptoms and the need for prevention, thus avoiding cultural misunderstanding. The Chinese cultural concept of “fear of excessive internal heat” is translated as “Fight against excessive internal heat”, which enables English-speaking audiences to understand the related symptoms and preventive needs, and avoids cultural misunderstanding. This is in line with the requirement of functional equivalence.

Another example is the translation of “世界首创，美味超乎言表。（天然椰子汁）” into English as “The world’s first and China’s most delicious coconut juice. (Natural Coconut Juice)” This translation does not align with the style of English advertisements and is difficult to accept for target language consumers. Adjusting the translation to “Natural Coconut Juice: World’s First, Flavor Beyond Words” is more in line with the English advertisement style. It attracts consumers, stimulates the desire to buy, and achieves similar effect and functional equivalence.

To sum up, the translation of food advertisements should be combined with the theory of functional equivalence. Retaining the characteristics of the original text, considering the cultural background, and triggering emotional resonance through creative translation help realize the equivalence between the translated text and the original text in terms of effect and function.

6. Conclusion

This study deeply analyzes the practice of transcreation in food advertising translation from

the perspective of functional equivalence theory. It reveals the importance of cultural adaptation, creative translation strategies, and the integration of language and culture. The study finds that, to achieve the most natural equivalence in advertising translation, the application of functional equivalence theory should follow two principles: “prioritizing content” and “similarity effects and correspondence functions”.

Although this study has achieved some theoretical and practical results, there are still some limitations. Firstly, this study mainly focuses on creative translation strategies in food advertising translation and does not involve other types of advertising translation. Future research can further expand the scope of research to explore the effectiveness of creative translation strategies in different types of advertising. Secondly, the case analysis in this study is mainly based on existing cases, lacking field research on the advertising translation process. Future research can provide interviews, questionnaire surveys, etc. to gain a deeper understanding of the practical issues and challenges in the process of advertising translation. Finally, this study mainly focuses on the translation of Chinese and English advertisements, with less research on the translation of advertisements in other languages. Future research can further expand the scope of language and explore advertising translation strategies between different language pairs, thereby enriching the theoretical system of translation research.

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