

Translation Strategies of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names under the Skopos Theory

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Abstract

In recent years, the cosmetics industry has achieved booming development in China. Among them, foreign cosmetics brands have a place. When foreign cosmetics brands enter China, they must try their best to draw attention from the Chinese people and attract consumers to pay for their products and services. Therefore, how to translate advertising into Chinese advertising that can interest the target group is a particularly important step. This paper will list many classic cases of translation of foreign cosmetics advertisements to analyze the translation strategies and methods used by foreign cosmetics advertisements, so as to provide some references for foreign cosmetics brands to enter china.

Keywords

Foreign cosmetics; Brand names; Translation strategies.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Paper

In today's world, all countries and people are in the era of globalization, which brings more opportunities to each country and individual. At the same time, with the increasing women's self-awareness in recent years, a large number of women in China pay more attention to appearance. They are more eager for beautiful appearance and willing to spend money on cosmetics. With a population of over one billion, China is considered to be the largest market in the world, attracting a great number of foreign cosmetics companies. When these cosmetics companies are about to enter China, the translation of foreign brand names are of great significant, which can directly influence the result. A well-received translation of the brand name surely helps to attract the consumers and promote the sales of products.

1.2. Significance of the Paper

This paper is of theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, this study integrates lots of translation strategies concerning foreign cosmetics brand names and analyzes that strategies differs as a result of various purposes and circumstances. Practically, findings of this paper can be applied in translating cosmetics brand names, which is beneficial for foreign cosmetics companies when they are about to enter China. This paper focuses on analyzing and summarizing translation strategies and characteristics based on many cases of translation of foreign cosmetics brand names in China at present, thus can be instructive and directive for other foreign cosmetics companies to enter China's market.

2. Characteristics of Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

2.1. Functions of the Brand Name

A brand name is used by a company to identify its products or services distinctively. It is one of marketing methods that can help to distinguish a company from its competitors and create a lasting impression in the minds of customers. A good brand name can capture the imagination

and connect with the people you want to reach. A improper name may lead to failure. The brand name not only symbolizes the product, but also represents the image of the enterprise that produces the product in the mind of consumers. A good brand name is the essence of its enterprise spirit and culture.

2.2. Importance of Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

When a foreign cosmetics company tries to enter China, coming up with a good brand name in Chinese is a very time-consuming and important task. A good brand name is a crucial beginning for a company to get their products or services into China. The recognition degree of consumers to the brand name directly determines the recognition degree of the product in the mind of consumers. Therefore, to some extent, the translation level of brand names directly determines the survival of products and enterprises.

2.3. Characteristics of Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

Each industry has its own differences and characteristics. Compared with other industries, the cosmetics industry has a more close relationship with women. Therefore, except being brief and novel, brand names in Chinese usually are women-centered and convey the idea that consumers can become more beautiful after using its cosmetics. For example, Guerlain is a French brand which was famous for its perfume at first. Then by virtue of its unique noble temperament and elegant quality guarantee, Guerlain has established its brand status in France. When Guerlain entered China, its brand name in Chinese is “娇兰” which was very consistent with its brand culture and idea. The Chinese character “娇” means beauty and glamour, and the character “兰” represents elegance and nobleness. As expected, it succeeded in entering China thanks to its perfect brand name that immediately drew women’s attention and enticed them to buy.

3. The Skopos Theory's Application to Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

This chapter, from the perspective of Skopos Theory [1], analyzes translation strategies adopted in translation of foreign cosmetics brand names. Also, this chapter sums the existing problems and causes in the translation in the market, and put forward with solutions to improve the translating ability of foreign cosmetics companies and make their brand names more acceptable to consumers in the target language countries so as to expand their international influence and establish their status.

3.1. Guiding Principles of Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

The Skopos Theory was established by the German linguist Hans Vermeer and comprises the idea that translating and interpreting should primarily take into account the function of both the source and target text. The core of Skopos Theory is that the primary principle of any translation process is the purpose of the whole translation act [2]. Under the guidance of Skopos principle, the translator breaks the limitations of the traditional translation principles such as literal translation, free translation, pair translation, etc., and can give full play to his subjective initiative, so as to provide the target audience with a high-quality translation that conforms to his purpose.

3.2. Translation Strategies of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names under the Skopos Theory

According to the Skopos Theory, the purpose of translating determines the final translation strategies that the translator should adopt. Therefore, from this point of view, the translator can use a variety of translation strategies and use combined translation strategies to achieve

the desired purpose [3]. In the process of translating foreign cosmetics brand names, translators can choose literal translation or free translation, as well as transliteration or omission translation and so on.

3.2.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation means that translation is equivalent to the original text and has no conflict with the original text and its culture. Also, the translation is also required to be fluent and easy to understand. The word "equivalence" is the key. Many cosmetics companies chose to translate their foreign brand names literally so as to convey the literal meaning of original brand name. For example, Clé de Peau Beauté (CPB for short), is a French brand that originally means 'the key to beautiful skin' in French. And the company chose to translate it into “肌肤之钥” in Chinese which is equivalent to the structure and meaning of the original text.

3.2.2. Free Translation

Free translation is usually regarded as a translation method opposite to literal translation which means the target translation words by adopting free translation are usually much more than the original text. This translation strategy aims to highlight and publicize the deep meaning of the company culture so as to make people know and remember it. For instance, Origins is a American brand which literally means “起源” in Chinese. In fact, this brand products are powered by nature and proven by science. This brand products blend ingredients from nature with advanced science to create high performance and natural skincare, makeup and bath & body products. So the company translated Origins into “悦木之源” in Chinese that conveys the idea that this brand products are healthy and secure.

3.2.3. Transliteration

Transliteration means to ignore the literal meaning and textual structure of the original text, using the same or similar sound translation take the place of the original text. The translation of transliteration method does not necessarily have special meaning, but it should pay fully attention to the aesthetic tendency of the target customers, taking their receptive ability into account, and adopt the transliteration method which the target audience is willing to accept. For example, the brand name in Chinese of “Amarni” is “阿玛尼”.

3.3. Problems of Translation of Foreign Cosmetics Brand Names

First, some companies do not consider the preference and needs of the target group which are mainly young women, as a result, the target group are not interested in its products. Besides, people of different ages have different thoughts and understandings. But some companies don't have clear position. Thirdly, some companies do not have a good knowledge of our Chinese culture which emphasizes customs and values. Different countries have their own cultural characteristics, so it's of great significance to know the Chinese culture well. A good knowledge of the Chinese culture influences the translation directly. With a low level of knowledge, it is impossible to come up with a good brand name in Chinese.

3.4. Suggestions

The process of translating foreign cosmetics brand names needs transformation between two languages in form, and transformation and inclusion of the differences between China and other countries in essence [4].

First, the vast majority of people that buy cosmetics are women who are usually prone to be attracted by the name of cosmetics that show the idea of nobility, elegance, youth, health or glamour. Therefore, the name of cosmetics must not be too boring and serious. At the same time, women of different ages have various thoughts and needs for cosmetics, and companies should be supposed to translate their brand names based on thoughts and preference of the target group. Last but not least, translators are required to have rich knowledge of Chinese culture [5],

master the similarities and differences between Chinese and other countries' cultures in detail. It is necessary to respect the cultural differences and national traditions in brand name translation from the perspective of Skopos Theory, and fully consider the cultural differences between China and other countries [6].

4. Conclusion

To sum up, an excellent brand name contains is supposed to contain profound national and company culture, which is an important carrier and external form of national language and company culture. Although a brand name is relatively short, it is difficult to translate. Therefore, when foreign cosmetics enter China's market, the translation of brand names must give what will target group think when seeing or hearing this brand name into consideration. In many circumstances, when women see or hear the elegant cosmetics brand name, they will feel that they will become elegant when using this cosmetics. Also, having a good knowledge of the Chinese culture is necessary.

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