

Trademark Translation and Its Standards under Functional Equivalence Theory

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Abstract

In the circulation of commodities, trademarks stand for the names of goods. With the help of trademarks, the goods can be better promoted and a better image of enterprise can be made. Trademarks have already become an important way to excavate the market potential and enhance the development of international trades. This thesis tries to analyse the strategies and standards adopted in the translation of trademarks.

Keywords

Trademarks; Trade; Translating strategies.

1. Introduction

In today's increasingly frequent international exchanges, commercial exchanges have increased, and while foreign goods are imported and China's goods are exported. Trademarks, as the names of goods, play an important role in buying and selling. Meanwhile, problems are emerging in the translation of the trademarks. Unlike other texts, trademarks have many factors to consider when translating it because of their commerciality, cultural particularity, and functionality. First of all, considering the legal provisions in commercial activities, translators need to consider whether the translated products comply with the relevant provisions of the law. Second, taking cultural issues into account, translators need to fully consider issues such as cultural conflicts when translating. Finally, the special calling and stimulating functions of the trademark are also very important, therefore it is necessary to ensure it functions normally in target language as it is in original text when translating.

Taking British and American companies as examples and from the perspective of trademark function and trademark composition, this article intends to explore the strategies of trademark translation and the standards for the quality of the translation in the analysis of trademark cases of British and American enterprises.

2. Functions of Trademarks

presented in the form of words, symbols, etc., trademarks are generally distinctive marks used by business participants such as founders and distributors of goods to distinguish their products from other products, and are the representatives of the images of goods and the commitments of the quality of the products. The function of the commodity is mainly to distinguish and identify the commodity, provide the main information of the commodity, publicize the significant characteristics of the commodity, stimulate the consumer's desire to buy, and stimulate consumer consumption. Looking at the "Top 500 World Brands" list compiled by the World Brand Lab, it is not difficult to find that in addition to the excellent quality of goods, the composition of the trademark also has great meaning and has its unique connotation.

3. Compositions of Trademarks

The compositions of the world's trademarks are diverse, the types are huge and varied. This paper mainly focuses on the trademarks of large enterprises in Britain and the United States, and discusses and analyzes the rules of trademark compositions. We find that there are mainly three types of trademarks in Britain and the United States, they are proper nouns, existing words, and imagery words.

Proper nouns can also be divided into three types. Firstly, the composition of personal name and surname of the founder of the company, such as the German car brand, Mercedes Benz, is named after the surname of the founder of the company, Karl Benz, and the same is the case with Colgate toothpaste, Procter & Gamble, Nestle Food and so on. The second is the place name of the headquarter of the company, such as the American Columbia Record Company named after the city of Columbia, and Avon named after the city of Shakespeare's house. The third is to name after people in ancient Greek myths and legends, such as the American Apollo soda named after the sun god in ancient Greek mythology, Nike named after the Greek goddess of victory, etc.

Existing nouns refer to the use of the already-existed words in English to name products, but due to the provisions of the Trademark Law, trademarks can not directly express the quality efficiency or practicality of goods, and can only take indirectly implied methods, etc., So some trademarks named after the existing words, which have more or less changed the vocabulary, or selected words that have nothing to do with the quality of goods. For example, Ivory soap, which means ivory in English, can reflect the whitening effect after using the soap, and the other is to imply the noble and high-end quality of the soap, like ivory. Another example, Camel cigarettes, whose founder named their products after camels, which is closely related to his experience in Turkey when he searched for his ideal tobacco, "Prince Elber". During his tour in Turkey, the founder, R. J. Reynolds, saw a caravan of camels passing by not far away from him, and the huge camels held their heads high, looking so untamed, so powerful and so noble. The unique image of the "Desert Boat" left such a deep impression on him that when naming his goods, he immediately chose the word, camel.

Most of the imaginary vocabulary is designed by the trademark designer according to the characteristics, performance or efficacy of the products, and then slightly changed it from the perspective of modern lexicology and word construction theory and after considering the market design, consumers' psychology, social preferences and other external factors, to finally design a trademark that relatively meets the conditions. The word-building methods adopted are generally three types. Firstly, acronyms, such as IBM's use of the acronym of International Business Machines. Secondly, the combinations of words, such as The American Le Cordon Bleu, are named after blue ribbons because their barrels are often tied with blue ribbons, so they use the combination of these two words as their name. Thirdly, there are also words combination, such as Microsoft's use of the combination of 'Micro' and 'software' for its name. Contec cold medicine is named after the word 'Continuity' and 'Action' to indirectly reflect the efficacy of the medicines.

4. Standards of Translation

A successful trademark translation can express an image, which is consistent or similar to the different images of the goods in the psychology of consumers in different countries. And Nida (1964) believes that "in dynamically equivalent translation, the translator should not concern about the one-to-one correspondence between the source language and the translated language, but he should take the dynamic relationship into consideration, that is, the relationship between the target language receiver and the translated text should be basically the same as

the relationship between the source language receiver and the original text.” It can be seen that Nida's theory of functional equivalence is very suitable for guiding trademark translation.

5. Translation Methods

Under the premise of fully considering the reciprocity of functions and meeting the demands of social pragmatical needs, the translation methods often adopted by business translators in the translation of trademarks mainly include: literal translation, transliteration, half-transliterate and half-translation, free translation, etc.

The so-called literal translation is only a method of retaining the semantic connotation and syntactic structure of the original text in the translation without violating trademark laws or other regulations, not violating the rules of the target language, and not producing any negative effect such as pragmatic errors or cultural conflicts. This method can convey and reproduce the semantic connotation of the original text and present the cultural background behind the language. This method is suitable for the translation of trademarks with existing vocabulary and some imagery vocabulary. It is more faithful to the original text and the original meaning of the trademark than others, and it has the same function of promoting goods and promoting consumption as the original text. In literal translation, translator usually uses catchy and well-known words with positive meaning. Like Dongfeng Nissan's Blue Bird, as a family car, this car takes its name from the famous Belgian fairy tale drama 'Blue Bird'. The Blue Bird in the play symbolizes happiness in the future which is very much in line with the functional positioning of the family car - carrying the happiness of the family. For Chinese consumer, they can also find 'blue bird' in Li Bai's poem, "Penglai has no more roads to go here, and the blue bird is diligent for exploration." The car, blue bird and the 'blue bird' in the poem are literally similar and both have the similar connotation as 'a happy guide'. Therefore, when this car was introduced into Chinese mainland, the trademark was literally translated as Blue Bird, the carrier of happiness, which is in line with the cultural background of both China and the West. Besides, it as well as has the role of promoting products and stimulating consumption.

Transliteration refers to the kind of translation method, in which translators choose the appropriate Chinese characters, which have similar meaning or similar pronunciation to the trademarks in English, without causing any misunderstanding and also in accordance with the pronunciation rules of the target language. This method of translation is faithful to the pronunciation or prosody of the original trademark. Transliteration can be subdivided into pure transliteration and homophonic puns.

Pure transliteration method refers to the direct selection of words in the Chinese that are similar to the pronunciation of the original trademark. During translation, people translate, regardless of whether the phrase has any meaning in the Chinese, and only retain the musical characteristics in the original text to the greatest extent, such as Kodak's translation. Kodak was coined as a contrived word, created because the founders liked the letter 'K', but because the pronunciation mimicked the click of the shutter when the camera took a picture. When translated into the Chinese market, its translation adopts a pure transliteration method, and the characteristic sound effects of the original trademark are retained as much as possible.

Homophonic pun method refers to the selection of words with special meanings in the target language, which not only retain the sound senses of the original text, but also have the meaning and informational function behind the trademarks as much as possible at the same time. In other words, it not only retains the trademark's sound characteristics but also plays the role of promoting goods. For example, the tire manufacturer, Goodyear, has its goods trademarked by the surname of Charles Goodyear, the inventor of vulcanized rubber. When marching into the Chinese market, the translator chose the Chinese word '固特异', which not only retained the pronunciation characteristics of its trademark, but also highlighted the hardness and firmness

of its tires indirectly and subtly, and played an important role in promoting goods and stimulating purchases.

Half-transliterate and half-translation method refers to the method of partial literal translation and partial free translation. The free translation part is mainly based on Chinese allegories and has little to do with the original meaning. For example, Hong Kong menswear brand Gold Lion, translated as ‘金利来’. If the trademark is completely translated into Golden Lion by literal translation, it will be in harmony with the two-word in some dialects, which is not beneficial to the promotion of goods. Therefore, the half-transliterate and half-translation method is adopted, which is translated as ‘金利来’, which means the benefits keep rolling in, and it is in line with the commercial culture of the brand.

Free translation, also known as innovative translation, refers to a translation method which is completely different from the literal meaning of the original trademark. The translators take a different path and chooses other words. For example, when the British milk powder Dutch Lady entered the Chinese market, it was translated as ‘子母’, which is in line with the cooperation culture. And the company did not choose a spokesperson, but instead they use female employees who works in the company to promote because the company takes the relationship between the employees who are mothers and their children as their commercial. In this way, the company highlighted the reliability of its milk powder’s quality, which is the choice of thousands of mothers. In this way, the translation can retain its unique corporate cultural meaning, while also give consumers a refreshing feeling, thus the demands of promoting goods and stimulating consumption can be met.

6. Summary

As a part of commercial activities, trademark translation must firstly ensure that the translated text complies with the provisions of the Commercial Law. It can not infringe any regulations and can not plagiarize from others. This is the premise and a fundamental step about whether the commercial activities can be carried out smoothly.

Secondly, trademark translation involves cross-cultural communication, and when translating, it is necessary to pay attention to whether the selected vocabulary will not cause controversy or misunderstanding in any culture, or produce negative results. It is necessary to fully consider the personal factors of the receivers and the other external factors. Do not use words derogatory senses or slander words, especially to translators should fully consider the feelings of the microcommunity. Market researches should be done as much as possible, and choose the most appropriate translation.

Finally, trademark translations should be unique and innovative, acting as refreshing and impressive to the audience and avoiding falling into clichés. But at the same time, translators must also pay attention to the use of words, try to use ordinary words, and avoid the emergence of strange words, so as to maximize the receive of the audience and play a better role in promoting goods.

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