

On the Translation of Advertising from the Perspective of Memetic Theory

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Abstract

Globalization has witnessed booming economy and frequent cultural exchange. These in turn accelerate international overall communication. Meanwhile, advertising, the embodiment and accelerator of it, has been answering the call to propagating and circulating products and service for increasing demand and better life. Advertising translation plays an indispensable role in high profile of company and country. This paper aims at exploring the characteristics of memetic theory, memotype and phenotype, and combing it with the advertising translation to open a new broad realm for the ultimate goal of advertisement.

Keywords

advertising; memetic theory; memotype; phenotype

1. Introduction

Advertisement, which plays an increasing role in people's daily life, is not only the reflection of economic development and cultural exchange, but also an embodiment of one's material and mental demands. Without advertising, the vitality of social progress as well as the high quality of life can be reduced greatly. In good times, people want advertising; in bad times they have to. Therefore the study of it shows both commercial and academic significance.

Since translation can facilitate cross-cultural communication and commercial circulation, various translation theories applied to advertising translation come into being. Traditional translation theories, such as Functional Equivalence, Skopos Theory and Domestication and Foreignization, promoted the E-C or C-E translation a lot, which also achieve development under the study of linguistic features. Advertising translation, however, shouldn't be regarded as merely transfer of different language system and new theory is still to be explored.

This paper chooses the Memetic Theory, a newly proposed theory originated in *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins in 1976, to illustrate cultural evolution disciplinary based on the viewpoints of Darwinian evolution. It aims at exploring whether Memetic theory is applicable to the advertising translation and providing meaningful instructions for translators. On the whole, the paper is composed of five chapters. Chapter one is a brief introduction of the importance of conducting this topic. Chapter two is related to advertising and Memetic Theory. It begins with an introduction to advertising concerning definition, classification and characteristics. Then it deals with Memetic theory, including the definition of memes, development of memes and the lifespan of memes. Chapter three mainly explains the relationship between advertising and Memetic Theory. It contains definition of memes in advertising, characteristics and classification of advertising memes. Chapter four, the focus of this paper, probes into advertising translation from the perspective of memetic theory. It will be analyzed from two aspects, namely, memotype and phenotype, each of which followed by typical models respectively. Chapter five, the end of the paper, is a conclusion deduced from the former analysis. The goal of the paper is intended to give instructions to commercial advertising translation and academic study upon advertising as well.

2. Advertising and Memetic Theory

Before the analysis of advertising translation and study of memetic theory, basic concepts, characteristics and classification of advertising should be explained first. Since the advertising translation must be based on translation theory, then it is necessary to give a detailed introduction of some related definitions and the interaction of memes and advertising. When it comes to the Memetic theory, a western approach to study cultural evolution is gaining its power in various fields and attracting attention.

2.1 An introduction to advertising

Advertising plays an important role in people's daily life and the study of it has attracted many scholars. At the first place, the definition of advertising is worthwhile to introduce. Thus the basic conceptions are easily achieved, which gives instruction for further study.

1. The definition of advertising

Advertising, originated from a Latin word, means to attract the attention or to inform somebody of something or to bring into notice. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, advertising is "the activity and industry of advertising things to people on television, in newspaper, or on the Internet, etc." ("Advertising"). American Marketing Association has the most popular definition that advertising is the impersonal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about the products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media (qtd. in 饶广祥, 149). From the two definitions, it is easily generalized that advertising is mainly related to persuasion, sponsor and media. In some degree, advertising means providing messages by powerful words and affective attraction to persuade potential customers to buy products or service. Crystal and Davy, British linguists, have said that advertising has two functions: information and persuasion (qtd. in 叶欣, 傅福英, 56).

2. The classification of advertising

Based on various standards, advertisements may be categorized into several types. As for target language area, advertisement can be classified into local, national and international advertisement. In terms of media, there are print advertising and electronic advertising. According to target audience, advertising can be divided into consumer and business advertising. Actually two ways covering these classifications are commercial and non-commercial advertisings.

3. The characteristics of advertising

In order to perform persuasive function, an advertisement has to resort to the language without which it can't work, but what are the linguistic features of advertising? As a means of communication, advertising language is quite different from that of other ordinary discourse. Generally speaking, advertising language has its own lexical and grammatical features such as, factual, terse, creative and vivid. Since English and Chinese belong to different linguistic system: the former is a member of Indo-European Family while the latter falls in the Sino-Tibetan Family, they are governed by different linguistic rules.

As for lexical level, English is rather flexible. It prefers abbreviations and compound words, loan words. It chooses monosyllable verbs and comparative or superlative degree of adjectives. It uses new words or phrases by coinage or misspelling, while Chinese frequently makes use of tones, disyllable and syllable repetition. Compared with usage of couplets and four-character phrases in Chinese advertising, English tends to employ simple and elliptical sentences. As far as rhetorical level is concerned, chiasmus or anadiplosis are frequently employed in Chinese, instead, there are more choices in English.

2.2 B. An introduction to Memetic Theory

Before the study of memetic theory, the definition of meme should be explained firstly. Since meme is not quite familiar, it is necessary to give different opinions on it. The study of meme is not limited here and scholars at home and abroad have been dedicated themselves in this field.

The definition of meme

There are various definitions of meme. Based on the study of gene which is the unit for transferring creature information, Dawkins, expert in zoology in Oxford University, firstly proposed the concept of “meme” in *The Selfish Gene* in 1976. He defined meme as “a unit of cultural, hypothesized as analogous to the particular gene, and as naturally selected in virtue of its phenotype consequences on its own survival and replication in the cultural environment” (108). Besides, Susan Blackmore dedicates herself to studying meme. She considers that any information may be defined as meme if only it can experience the process of imitation and be duplicated (66). Meme is mainly used in language which is meme itself. Any words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs can be called memes if they are copied and transmitted by imitation (何自然, “语言中的模因”, 76). It can't be denied that similar or almost the same cultural phenomena have occurred such as religion, language, system, arts, custom, etc. in various regions and states. The concept of meme comes into being, so does memetics concerning the theory of meme. Memetics is a new theory to interpret the cultural evolution and selection based on Darwinism. As soon as Dawkins set forth the concept of meme, many scholars agreed with this new idea, such as, Kate Distin, Susan Blackmore etc.

2. The development of meme

What's more, after the birth of the concept of meme, scholars from many countries began to get involved in memetics study. Apart from Dawkins's great contribution, in January 1999, Darwin's student Susan Blackmore published *The Meme Machine*, which marked the peak of the research on memetics. In addition, Distin raised her own view on the development of the meme. Chilton and Johansson also wrote books to share their opinions on memetics and solve problems with it. To get a clear and full understanding of memetics, relative concepts about memes can't be neglected. The research on memetics abroad is very fruitful, so is at home. Although the study on this field at home is still not systematical, it has already been developing very fast. Professor He Ziran is the first scholar at home to study the memetics and he translated meme into “*moyin*” in Chinese. Searching online from CKIN, the present study finds that the papers about memetics have been growing its power. Under the influence of professor He Ziran, memetics is mainly applied to the linguistic and educational fields. He describes the meme as a virus which can infect from one brain to another. Chen Linxia is the representative for the research on memetics and language teaching. In her paper, Chen studies how memetics, a biology theory, can influence the writing ability of the university students. Wang Chunlei makes a comprehensive description for the development of memetics and makes a prediction for it as well. Nowadays the study of this theory is more attractive and can give some hints for other disciplinary exploration.

3. The lifespan of memes

To get a clear and full understanding of memetics, relative concepts about memes can't be neglected. Although different scholars have various opinions upon memetic study, the basic theory reflecting the essence is almost the same to some degree. Next it is going to introduce these conceptions and goals of panoramic view of memetics. Hints for advertising translation are to be achieved hopefully.

Memplex (模因复合体) and memepool (模因池): Dawkins abbreviated the term “co-adapted meme-complex” into “memplex” which means a group of memes that thrive in each other's company. It is considered that a group of memes combined can be duplicated simultaneously (qtd. in 何自然, 陈琳霞, 156). Compared with single meme in the state of separation, combined meme, memplex, can be easily duplicated and exert more influence (Blackmore, *The Meme Machine*, 20). In general, memplex can be regarded as a collocation of memes that are well-organized and operate together effectively by the influence of each other. As Blackmore has stated that language, religion,

scientific theories, political geologies, belief system are examples of memeplex, and so are advertising memes. Besides, memepool, originated from "gene pool" is a lotus of memes. Genes are duplicated in the gene pool through sperm or eggs while memes achieve its meaning by imitation.

Host (人) and vector (媒介) : Henrik Bjrnescans, Bjarne Gronnevik and Anders Sangberg, have defined "host" as: "A host must be able to possess at least the potential capacity to elaborate on meme and to perform those cognitive tasks connected to the meme that we normally refers to as 'understanding' " ("The lifecycle of memes"). It means that only human can be hosts, animal can be perhaps become hosts for simpler memes, but we will not discuss this here.

Hosts, approaching the meme, can interpret itself and introduce it into another potential host. The ability of memory, thought, expression is also closely connected with the subject materials accessible to hosts, for instance, a skillful translated advertisement easily makes people propagate and achieve the consumption. According to some scholars, there are two basic types of hosts, active and inactive. It is the active host that actually make host different from vector greatly and pushes the development of memes.

Vectors are contrary to hosts. Glenn Grant regards vector as a medium, method or vehicle for the transmission of memes. Vector is something inanimate which transmits memes between hosts without reflecting on memes. Human can become vectors if they don't have the ability or interest to concentrate on memes, but the inactive carrier of memes can become active ones when they are incited. Vectors are essential for propagating and transmitting of memes and the ways that can arouse people, inactive potential vector, to be active are significant for delivering memes.

The lifespan of memes: In their academic essay "The Lifecycle of Memes", Henrik Bjarnescans, Bjarne Gronnevik and Anders Sanberg have claimed that the lifespan of memes can be divided into four stages: transmission, decoding, inflection and coding. When the memes are present and encoded in a vector, it can be interpreted by hosts. Then it acquires hosts to decode them by reading the text or hearing the message. Therefore the period of inflection may occur and the host can infect the new ones. Meanwhile the new hosts may recode the memes which are quite equal to the original one. Only on such recycle can the lifespan of memes be achieved. While a meme can be selected and reflected by a host is not that easy as expected, it may experience various stages before reaching a new host for its replication and redistribution. Heyligen has classified it into four stages, the first is assimilation, in which the meme must get memeplex in memepool so that it can be paid enough attention and goes in host's memory. The second stage is retention which means the time meme stays in the memory. The longer a meme stays in host's memory, the more it is possible to encode and transmit to others. It is a strict process that only limited memes can be retended. The third stage is expression. In order to be transmitted broadly, the meme must be changed from the memory mode into something that can be sensed by public such as the ways to walk, run, and dress. But some memes can never be expressed, thus they become weak ones. The last stage is transmission, in which hosts are encouraged to pour as much effort as possible to publicize and transmit the meme. The transmission stage is followed again by the assimilation stage and the four stages mentioned above are repeated again and again in circles. But the selected memes will be changed in process. It is the continuing transmission that gives lives to memes.

3. The Relationship Between Advertising and Memetic Theory

On the basis of above illustration, the questions of why advertising language can spread memes and how memes perform in advertising are still remained. What's more, large quantities of memes haven't equal status and ways to select memes are also worth thinking. Only by answering these questions may the translation of memes in advertising be accomplished.

3.1 Memetic study in the field of advertising

Language is an effective way to transmit memes. The language, being either a carrier of memes or a meme itself, is almost an ideal candidate to achieve advertising goals. Blackmore explains that "First, sounds are a good candidate for high-fecundity transmission of information; second, words are

effective way to propagate information and increase the quality of fecundity; third, grammar is a next step for increasing fidelity and fecundity and all of these will aid memorability and hence longevity” (“Imitation and the definition of a meme”). Advertising language, hence, can accelerate advertising memes by various forms such as comparative or superlative forms of adjectives, elliptical sentence and disjunctive clauses, usage of couplets or some special rhetorical devices, all of which can facilitate the wide spread of memes.

On the other hand, the duplication and repetition of memes forms language itself and strong memes can more easily prompt advertising propagation. Ayling Geoff, an Australian advertising veteran, gives the working definition of meme in his book *Rapid Response Advertising* “in the context of advertising, a meme is an idea or concept that has been refined, distilled, stripped down to its bare essentials and then super-simplified in such a way that anybody can grasp its meaning instantly and effectively” (43). Another memetic marketer, Jay Conrad Levinson, a follower of Geoff Ayling, defines memes in his book *Guerrilla Creativity* as “a self-explanatory symbol, using words, action, sounds or pictures that communicate an entire idea” and “Guerrilla Creativity means enlisting the wondrous power of meme in your advertising” (79).

3.2 B. Characteristics and classification of advertising

Based on these definitions of memes, the characteristics of it can be easily found. The First is simplicity. According to Dawkins, one way to achieve high copy-fidelity rate is simplicity since people's memory slot is limited. The simpler the meme is, the longer memory will be kept and transported. There is no deny that brevity is the heart of wit, besides, it is more likely to attract people by simple and forceful sentences than long, tedious or superfluous expressions sometimes. Therefore, there are many concisely lexical and systematic sentence structures in both advertising English and Chinese. The second is novelty. Among many factors to attract people's attention, novelty has become a demanding strategy for advertisers to pursue former and new customers, so, some relative knowledge and skills are needed since customers cannot be expected always in your goods and there are many competitors in this field, moreover, a few similar advertising propagating can be heard anywhere and anytime. The best way for successful advertising is trying to be different. Firstly, it means to be special in form and superior in quality. Secondly it means conformity. The more meme get close to conformity, the easier the products or service people can accept, or it will be excluded. Memes must conform to the culture, psychology, value and beliefs of its receiver sometimes, therefore, it is easier to select memes in same memeplex and memepool than to do this in different ones, that is to say, intralingual or transcultural transfer is not so difficult as that of interlingual and intercultural, so people should be much more aware of this during different languages translation.

According to evolutionary biologists, there are genotype and phenotype of genes. The former refers to genetic information coded in gene, while the later means the physical and behavior effects of this coding on an organism in its environment. By analogy, memes have memotype and memetic phenotype types. In terms of He Ziran, memotype refers to the information coded in memes. The memotype is the pure information it contains, like a musical score or a recipe. Meanwhile, the memetic phenotype refers to the cognitive and behavior effects that the meme produces in a person. Both memotype and memetic phenotype have different ways to transmit memes respectively, which gives hints for translating advertising. The next part will further discuss with examples based on the two types of classification, namely, to use memetic theory to explore the translation of advertisement.

4. The Application of Memetic Theory in Advertising Translation

Chesterman has proposed translation memetic theory, which describes a large quantity of translation memes in memepool. On the one hand, each meme is the duplication and succession of former ones, and on the other hand, it will make some changes during the process, which in turns makes development. Therefore, successful advertisement, sound proverbs or familiar poem can be used to translate correspondent information for a better acceptability of receptor in target language. As far as memetic theory is concerned, replication and transmission of language memes have two ways:

genotype “the same content with various forms” and phenotype “the same form with different content”.

4.1 Memotype of advertising memes translation

Expressing the same messages in the process of copying and spreading, memes may have the same forms or various ones but the content stays the same. Therefore, the same information can be spread in different contexts by various forms. These memes that have the purpose of transporting content are compared to memotype. It contains two situations: On the one hand, to transmit the same content, unchanged information is transmitted directly, such as, kinds of cited works, proverbs, etc. Memes are usually duplicated and transmitted by themselves when they are in similar or closer source context. On the other hand, although during publication, information may have some changes, even go far away from the original form and literal meaning or memes are transplanted. All of these don't influence the original information and duplicated one is still the same (何自然, “语言模因说略”, 138). This phenomena is popular nowadays, for example, 竹叶 is replicated from 主页; 斑竹 is equal to 版主; 水饺 equals to 睡觉. What's more, different districts and countries choose different words. For some words people prefer or hate are greatly different. It is reported that Chinese have preference for some words like 福, 寿, 喜, 乐 etc. English writer Irving Wallace has chosen the most beautiful English words: chime, golden, lullaby, melody, murmuring, etc. These words, both are attractive in form and meaningful in content, can leave a pleasant visual effect.

1. Citation

Generally speaking, cited language memes in advertisement are well-known information, which hold the property of a long-time transmission and such advertising language can be transmitted effectively, for example, 决胜于千里之外, 运筹于帷幄之中(日本东芝通讯公司). It is originated from ancient Chinese classic *The Records of Ground History*. The citation of Chinese loaded sentences not only leaves good impression on Chinese consumers, but gains good profile. Besides, take the following as an example, Just do IT(某IT公司). For the first sight, people may connect it with Nike which used it to gain international consumers' welcome. While reading a second time people can find that the advertising skillfully uses the abbreviation of Information Technology to emphasize the importance of IT and its attractive prospect through brand effect. Citation may have a direct impression and achieve good profile. It is possible and necessary to utilize citation in translation of advertisement to influence potential consumers. The supportive examples are as follows.

1. 爱您一辈子。(“绿丹兰”化妆品)

Love me tender, love me true.

2. 随身携带, 有备无患; 随身携带, 有惊无险。(速效救心丸)

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

百闻不如一见。(西湖牌电视机)

Seeing is believing.

4. Things go better with Coca-Cola. (Coca-Cola)

喝可口可乐, 万事如意。

Example 1 is the citation of Elvis Aron Presley's lyrics, “love me, love my tender”. The memes are equivalence with the Chinese version. Since the native speakers of English are quite familiar with the lyric, it is easy to accelerate this English advertising for more hosts. The more you think of it, the more it is possible for you to buy it. Besides, example 2 and 3 are proverbs. They don't possess the changes in forms and meaning. Also these two memeplex in English memepool are selected directly to conform to value and beliefs of its receiver, the English speakers. This citation is more likely to achieve copying-fidelity for later duplication and propagation. As for example 4, if the advertising is directly translated into “拥有可口可乐, 事情会变得更好”, consumer may imagine that things

become worse without Coca-Cola. Thus it may be confused. Instead, “万事如意”, favorable to Chinese, not only has interpreting the original meaning, but makes people feel pleasant and buy it.

2. Parody

A parody, in current use, is an imitative work created to mock, comment on or trivialize an original work. It imitates subject, style or some other targets by means of satiric or ironic imitation. Parody here is not in its strict sense, which means to imitate memes in target memepool. No matter language form changes or not, the connotation remains the same. Most translation systems are one-to-one, so a reader who knows the system can reconstruct the original spelling. And the misunderstanding at the first sight also attracts people. “M for U”, here M is the abbreviation of Maine, and U is the liberation of You. This full expression is “Maine for you”. Besides, in the advertising “我的网络, 随‘触’可见” (Nokia N97), “处” is transliterated in “触” which generalizes powerful function of the little mobile phone and expresses two meanings: showing people the touch screen appearance; illustrating its sound cyber function: where you are, you can be well informed of first-hand news of the world by Nokia N97 on line. Therefore, advertisement creators have preference for liberation and the translation can get enlightenment from it for common intention by using minimum resource to achieve maximum effect.

1. Robust mineral water, as clear as crystal. (Robust)

乐百氏矿泉水, “净”在不言中。

Intel Inside. (Intel Pentium)

给电脑一颗奔腾的“心”。

Example 1 is attractive for its novelty, for “净”在不言中 imitates the memes “尽在不言中”. Although the form and reference of “净” and “尽” are different, the connotation they represent is the same. Since “尽在不言中” is quite familiar memeplex in Chinese memepool, it can lengthen the lifespan of memes, that is to say, the four stages of transmission, decoding, inflection, and coding can smooth propagation. Similarly, “心” in the version for example 2 is the meme full of novelty. It imitates “芯” peculiar to computer, informs people the host, the importance of Intel Inside, and encourages them to choose and buy it.

4.2 B. Phenotype of advertising memes translation

Phenotype means to transmit various contents by using the same form. As for some verses, ballads, idioms, etc, only their forms are stayed but new meanings are introduced. The method is also called “new wine in old bottle”. It can be classified into three types: Firstly, to keep original structure and use similar pronunciation. Secondly, to create association when consumers touch the same structure, that is, unchanged form may have different associations in circumstances, for example, 人类失去联想, 世界将会怎样 (联想); 沟通从心开心 (中国联通); 百度一下, 你就知道 (百度). Thirdly, to make language meme’s structure and form stay the same but to replace some words of content by others containing new information, for instance, after TV series 《爱你没商量》, “x你没商量” is rapidly duplicated and transmitted, there come “宰你没商量”, and “骗你没商量”, etc. These will be further explained with respective examples.

1. Transliteration

From an information-theoretical point of view, systematic translation is a mapping from one system of writing into another, word by word, or ideally letter by letter. Most transliteration systems are one-to-one, so a reader who knows the system can reconstruct the original spelling.

1. You will go nuts for the nuts you get in Nux. (Nux nuts)

纳克斯坚果, 让你爱不释口。

2. I’m More satisfied, ask for More. (More)

摩尔香烟, 我更满意。再来一支, 还吸摩尔。

In the first example, the meme 纳克斯 is transliterated from the “Nux”. It is quite familiar in translation of some brands. This method is worth to be employed for its easy understanding and wide acceptance. In terms of advertising, this translation is mainly used for propagating and translating the brand. When hosts, potential Chinese consumers, deal with it, they can easily connect Chinese version with English one, then people are likely to introduce it into next hosts. For the second one, 摩尔 is transliterated from More. Although they have varied meanings, the form, word sound, is not changed. It facilitates potential consumers to transmit the advertising memes.

2. Association

Association (psychology) means a connection between two or more concepts in the mind or imagination. If consumers rethink or encode the propagated advertising, the advertising memes will keep a longtime in memory, i.e. 赢海威: 中国人离信息高速公路还有多远? 向北1500米, which makes people have a quite clear awareness about Chinese information highway situation. On the other hand, it informs people Ying Haiwei has a developed level in this field.

1. My Goodness! My Guinness! (桂尼斯酒)

此酒只应天上有。

2. IBM: 没有不做的小生意, 没有解决不了的大问题。

No business too small, no business too big.

In example one, the version imitates “此曲只应天上有” which is created by Dufu, one of famous poet in Tang Dynasty. It not only expresses high quality of Guinness but also lets consumer have a thirst to taste. While the advertising is directly translated into “我的天, 我的桂尼斯酒”, it may be ridiculous and lose admiring association. Example two comes into being when the company Blue Giant was depressed, which shows the desire to become an intercounty enterprise and provide One-Dragon service planning for high-technology electronic field. This advertising is used to encourage both employees and employers. Now IBM is playing a decisive role in electronic commerce.

3. Homonym

In linguistics, a homonym is, in the strict sense, one of a group of words that share the same spelling and the same pronunciation, but have different meanings. In non-technical contexts, the term “homonym” may be used to refer to words that either homograph or homophones, the paper is based on the latter. On 2, 2013, “Chen Ou Style” originated from JuMei advertising in 2012 is eye-catching and frequently imitated, with the structure “你有xx, 我有xx。你可以xx, 但我会xx....但那又怎样, 哪怕xx, 也要xx。我是xx, 我为自己代言! ”。Imitators, especially students, create all kinds of “xx style” to describe their schools and appearances, even small things in their daily life.

1. Where there is a way, there is a Toyota (Toyota)

车到山前必有路, 有路必有丰田车。

2. Only your time is more precious than this watch. (某手表)

手表诚可贵, 时间价更高。

3. 黑妹牙膏, 强健牙龈, 保护牙齿。(广东黑妹牙膏)

Don't show me any other, but show me Black Sister.

4. 中原之行哪里去, 郑州亚细亚。(亚细亚商场)

While in Zhengzhou, do as the Zhengzhou do—Go shopping in the Asian Supermarket.

5. 如今的风采, 昨日的绿世界。(“绿世界”系列晚霜广告)

Give me Green World, or give me yesterday.

Example one is the propagating advertising of Fengtian company. The translation memes are taken from an ancient Chinese saying “车到山前必有路, 船到桥头自然直”. This advertising translation

is fit for Chinese culture, so it can bring consumer closeness and faithfulness. Besides, it wins broad consumer marketing and gains high popularity of brand. In the second example, the initial meaning is that your time is more precious than this watch, however, if expressed in that way, it is may be too common to arouse consumers' attention. While the translated version imitates two sentences in *free verse* by Sandor Petofi “生命诚可贵，爱情价更高”， its rhythm is easy to remember and a surprise follows as the words are read completely.

Example 3 imitates an advertisement of American glass container “Don't show me the crystal show me Galway”. Example 4 imitates the advertisement of Stokely record “Stokely brings you the world on a platter”. And example 5 is the transformation of words of poem by Patriot Henry “give me liberty or give me death”. Although the utilization of this in advertising translation can shorten consumer's mental distance, its weakness cannot be neglected: 1) There are so many proverbs in target language that target language receptor may not be interested or stimulated; 2) Much more such imitation may irritate receptor and make them tired, which may go away from translator's initial intentions. However, this paper supports the idea that if parody is used properly, it can achieve intentional purpose and is not a bad translation method.

5. Conclusion

With the development of economy and technology, global communication has been expanded as ever before. Advertising has played an indispensable role in the process; the translation of it also attracts numerous advertisers, translators and academic scholars as well. A good advertising translation can not only achieve the goal of advertising, but win good profile of a company or country. Moreover, the theories have been explored from different angles, such as Functional Equivalence, Skopos Theory and Foreignization and Domestication, etc. But theories concerning interdisciplinary study are still to be explored.

This paper chooses memetic theory, which is usually studied in linguistic field, to explore advertising translation. Memetic theory is a newly developed one used to explain cultural evolution, and its content is numerous and can be used to different fields. The essence of it is imitation, which is basic ability of human beings and can facilitate information transmission. And language has its own features of pronunciation, glossary, grammar; all of these may help to propagate memes. What's more, language factors are too influential to be neglected and always bear the duty of transmitting culture. Therefore, it is possible to combine advertising translation with memetic theory.

Before entering the theme, the thesis gives a brief introduction to advertising and memes which lay the foundation to memetics. Further, to give a more detailed information of memetics, the lifespan of memes is introduced to explain the four stages of memes, namely, transmission, decoding, inflection, coding. Moreover, the characteristics and classifications of memes are introduced. It is the latter that gives theoretical background for commercial advertising.

Generally speaking, memetics falls into menotype and phenotype. By menotype, it means that the version of target language keeps the original content and the form stays the same. Thus there are two subtypes: citation and parody. Since Chinese and English share the identical expression in many aspects, memes such as old sayings, idioms and speeches are usually used in commercial advertisements directly without changing, all of which will shorten the distance between advertising memes and potential consumers. By phenotype, it means that the version of target language alters the content but the form remains. Therefore, there are three subtypes: transliteration, association, and homonymy. Because the words or phrases of the original texts are replaced by the required advertising memes, the meaning has changed and gives ways to advertising requirements. This method may produce more versions and arouse consumer's interest.

All in all, no matter what concrete method will be chosen, people should keep in mind that some adjustments and supplements sometimes may be made. Only in this way can memetic theory be actually employed in advertising translation.

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