

# A Brief Analysis of Linguistic Features of English Advertising Language

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## **Abstract:**

With the development of social economy, advertising has penetrated into all aspects of social life and has become an indispensable part of people's daily life. The appeal of advertising is largely due to the advertising language. The advertising language is divided into three parts, including the slogan, brand and functional impression of trademark. Among them, the slogan can best reflect the main language features. Advertising is the product of the development of commercial economy. With the rapid development of economic globalization, advertising as a carrier of information dissemination is an indispensable medium for marketing. As a special applied stylistic language, English slogan has its own unique stylistic features. Compared with general advertising, English advertising shows similarity and difference in language expression. At present, English advertising accounts for more than half of the world's advertising market. Therefore, in order to improve China's international competitiveness and improve the quality of the civil, it is necessary to conduct corresponding research and popularization of English advertising. The increasing popularity of English advertising provides another way for us to grasp and analyze the characteristics and trends of modern English applications.

The first chapter of this paper will briefly introduce the background of the advent of advertising and the significance of the studying English advertising; the second chapter will note the relevant studies and findings about advertising abroad and at home; the third chapter will express some linguistic characteristics of English advertising language from some aspects; then the fourth part will conclude some translation skills when we translate the English advertising into Chinese; and the last part of this paper will give the findings of this study and point out some drawbacks.

**Keywords:** English advertising language; linguistic features; lexical; translation

### 浅析英语广告的语言特征

**中文摘要：**随着社会经济的发展，广告已渗透到社会生活的各个方面，已成为人们日常生活中不可或缺的一部分。广告吸引力很大程度上源于广告语言。广告语言分为三个部分，包括广告语，品牌和商标的功能论述。其中，广告语最能体现出广告语言的主要特色。广告是商业经济发展的产物，随着经济全球化的迅速发展，广告作为信息传播的载体，是营销不可或缺的媒介。英语广告作为一种特殊的应用风格语言，具有其独特的风格特征。与一般广告相比，英语广告在语言表达方面表现出相似性和差异性。目前，英语广告占全球广告市场的一半以上。因此，为了提高中国的国际竞争力，提高国民素质，有必要对英语广告进行相应的研究和推广。而英语广告的日益流行，为我们把握、分析现代英语应用的特点与趋势提供了又一条途径。

本文第一章将简要介绍广告出现的相关背景以及研究英语广告的意义；第二章将介绍有关国外和国内广告的相关研究结果；第三章将从一些方面阐述英语广告语言的一些语言特点；第四部分将给出把英文广告翻译成中文时的一些翻译技巧；本文的最后部分将呈现本研究的结果，并指出本研究的一些不足之处。

**关键词：**英语广告语言；语言特点；词汇；翻译

## 1. Introduction

An advertisement is an information dissemination activity carried out by an advertiser to a specific object on the basis of payment in order to promote its goods, services or concepts. English Advertising from a Latin word 'adverture', it means "attention" or "induction", which is "a means of evoking the public's attention to something and inducing them in a certain direction."

In Western advertising, there is a formula for the creation of advertising copywriting called "AIDA". These four English letters represent one component of the formula: attention, interest, desire, and action. In other words, the advertisement has certain promotion ability. For the media, the first choice is to draw the reader's attention. Once the readers are attracted, they will be interested in the goods, so that they can further understand the situation of the goods, generate the desire to purchase, and finally confirm the goods and generate purchase actions.

The study of English advertising has important practical significance. English Advertising is a specialized English language that belongs to the field of applied linguistics. It serves specific promotional purposes in the commercial, industrial, scientific and social fields. The study of English advertising aims to solve the practical problems of contemporary China facing the world. In today's world, advertising has become one of the symbols of a country's economic development and civilization. In today's reform and opening up, and the rapid development of the socialist market economy, which is increasingly in line with the world, the role of English advertising in economic development and social progress is no small matter. It directly affects the economic exchanges and cultural exchanges between China and the world. At present, although English advertisements in China are not uncommon, the mistakes and irregularities of English advertising in China cannot be ignored. Therefore, as an emerging

and interdisciplinary subject, English advertising urgently needs research and development, otherwise it will affect the international competitiveness of China's economy, and even undermine the image of enterprises, groups, governments, and even the country. English advertising research can help domestic writers and translators understand the particularity of English advertising and guide their practice of writing and translating English advertisements. It helps students who major in foreign economics and trade or foreign language of domestic college to understand the characteristics of English advertisements and learn to appreciate, write and translate English advertisements. With the popularity of English in China, English advertising, as an important part of modern language, has its unique lexical features and rhetorical features. These characteristics reflect the unique language charm of English advertising language, making English advertising an organic combination of language art charm and commercial marketing.

## **2. Literature Review**

In a sense, advertising is an advertiser who presents various information of commodity to the public, allows them to accept information, and becomes the owner and consumer of certain commercial information. So knowing the studying results about advertising is necessary for us.

### **2.1 the findings about advertising abroad**

English advertising research is a comprehensive applied research. English advertising exists as a foreign subject in foreign countries. It has been in the West for more than a few years since its inception. In general, in foreign countries, the application research of English advertising has been relatively complete. Western business schools have regarded advertising English as a compulsory course, and ordinary universities have also offered advertising English electives. The textbooks, dictionaries and research on advertising English are endless. In the economic industry, according to the statistics of the World Advertising Association in recent years, the global expenditure on advertising costs is more than 180 billion US dollars, of which the United States is 102.1 billion US dollars, which means that English advertising accounts for half of the entire international advertising market.

### **2.2 the findings about advertising at home**

In China, the research on English advertising is still relatively weak, and it is relatively late. In recent years, as the role of English advertising in social and economic development has become more and more important, the research on English advertising in higher education institutions in China has become more and more concerned. At present, China's English advertising has improved significantly before joining the WTO, but there are still problems in terms of quantity and quality. According to the survey, in various public places in China, such as roads, parks, stations, squares, cinemas, hospitals, museums, science and technology museums, commercial advertising English, public service advertising English, signboard English, and marked English are all obvious. In various tourist attractions, English advertisements are generally not authentic, even incorrect signboard English, English, and introductory English. The importance of English advertising in the workplaces and production sites of well-known

domestic enterprises is not enough. There are not enough signs for introducing products and services in English, and the quality of production is not good enough. Domestic government agencies, educational institutions, and other institutions have not shown sufficient emphasis on English advertising. In addition to the "quantity" of English advertisements in our country, there are still problems of "quality". There are many problems in terms of lexical, syntactic, stylistic, cultural, and aesthetic values. Chinese-English is often seen. In general, the use of words is not accurate enough, the syntax is not standardized, the style tends to be single, and the cultural carrying capacity is weak. Among them, the most problematic is that the words are not accurate enough, the syntax is not standardized, and the English is not popular. In today's economic globalization, if you want to enhance China's own international competitiveness, you cannot ignore the importance of English advertising.

### **3. The Linguistic Characteristics of English Advertising Language**

Advertising is an economic activity, a promotion of goods and services, and a cultural carrier. It is like an invisible hand that affects people's lifestyles and spending habits. Advertising culture has obvious mass, commercial, national and contemporary characteristics. Cultural traditions, beliefs and values influence the psychology and behavior of operators and consumers to a large extent, thus affecting the advertising campaign itself. Therefore, it is also important to understand the characteristics of advertising.

Therefore, this paper analyzes the characteristics of English advertising language from several aspects such as lexical features, syntactic analysis and rhetorical analysis, and then summarizes the language features of advertising language.

#### **3.1. Lexical characteristics**

##### **3.1.1. The usage of adjectives**

The famous British linguist Leech suggested that the advertising context consists of four elements: product, media, audience/listener and purpose. The applicable products of advertisements are different, and the chosen language is different, especially the choice of vocabulary is more different. Therefore, advertisements for different products will choose their distinctive and unique vocabulary to establish a good image among consumers. From the lexical level of language, it is not difficult to find that English advertisements, like Chinese advertisements, often bring together the vocabulary of the same language domain, and make perfect promotion of a certain product, making it easy for people to immediately purchase the products recommended by the advertisement. In order to promote products, advertisers inevitably describe the nature and quality of products, and whitewash and beautify the products, which naturally require the use of a large number of adjectives and their comparative and superlative.

For example:(1) Excellent daily specials and mouthwatering desserts.

This is advertisement of one restaurant. We can see the usage of adjectives that describe the desserts truly charm many people.

(2) And along the way, you'll enjoy the warmest, most personal service in the sky.

This is the advertising of airline's campaign, using two of the most advanced, showing their own quality service.

(3) Tastes richer...mellower...more satisfying.

This sentence is taken from the advertisement of REAL cigarette. There are comparisons to identify advertisers when they are selling goods, always try to compare their products with similar or previous products.

### **3.1.2. Creating new words**

Strange or new words can make products novelty and special and can meet the consumer's personality psychology of pursuit of fashion and brand.

For example: (1) GoingEast.StayingWestin.

In this advertisement about hotel, the advertiser deliberately wrote Western as Westin (a hotel name), using a beam-for-column approach to enhance the advertising effect.

(2)DRINKA PINTA MILK ADAY.

This is an advertisement that advises people to drink a bottle of milk every day. The full text should be: Drink apint of milk a day. This advertisement uses the pronunciation to subtly combine the ad texts, and the creativity is novel and unobtrusive.

(3) TWOGETHER: the ultimate all inclusive one price sunkissed holiday.

This is an advertisement for a couple traveling. 'TWOGETHER' is obvious not a correct word. It is actually a change from 'together'. The twogether is the meaning of the together and "two people". In contrast, the twogether is more vivid, using two instead of to, the purpose is to show that the husband and wife travel together, share the happy atmosphere of a beautiful holiday and enjoy the two worlds.

### **3.1.3. The usage of simple and verbal words**

(1) Just do it.

This is one successful slogan of Nike sneakers. It uses 3 very simple, very common English words, which saves a lot of space, makes people understand the meaning of advertising words. Its purpose is to stand out among the many sports brands. As soon as we see this slogan, we think of Nike's logo.

(2) Enjoy Coca Cola.

It is the slogan of Coca-Cola. Enjoy not only expresses the feeling of hearty, but also reflects the confidence and atmosphere of Coca-Cola. Both traditional and classical, there is no lack of passion and vitality. The succinct slogan is not only easy to remember, but also makes it easy for people to generate brand associations.

## **3.2. Syntactic characteristics**

### **3.2.1. The usage of affirmative sentence and elliptical sentence**

(1)A diamond is forever.(for diamond)

(2) Something within you is Dior. (for Dior Cosmetics)

(3) We lead, others copy. (for copiers)

(4) Life for fun, style for teens. (for shoes)

(5) The sign of excellence. ( for watches)

The purpose of advertising is to make readers accept certain goods or services, expect readers to have a desire to buy and take action immediately. And advertising is aimed at the general public. If the sentence is long and complicated, it will increase the difficulty of understanding and reduce the interest of readers. Using affirmative sentences and elliptical sentences can increase readability, and the rhythm is simple and powerful, jumping and easy to remember.

### 3.2.2. The usage of imperative sentences and interrogative sentences

- (1) Who does your hair? I do it myself (for shampoo)
- (2) Take the Pepsi Challenge! ( for Pepsi Cola)
- (3) Choose your price, choose your comfort! ( for sofa)
- (4) What are luxury car should be? ( for Lincoln car)

The language of imperative sentences is an inspiring language. It is necessary to use the language to persuade readers to act immediately to purchase promotional products. Interrogative sentences can create suspense, inspire readers, resonate and stimulate their curiosity, thus enticing consumption. The imperative sentence prompts the reader to do something, and the interrogative sentence prompts the reader to think and answer the question. Both of these sentences can make the readers psychologically excited and deepen the impression of the reader.

### 3.3. Rhetoric characteristics

To make advertising own attention value, memory value, readability, and persuasive power, English advertising often uses a variety of rhetorical devices to enhance the artistry and appeal of language. It can be said that the success of English advertising is not only related to the words and sentences, but also closely related to the clever use of various rhetorical devices.

#### 3.3.1. Metaphor and simile

- (1) The most sensational place to wear satin on your lips. ( for lipstick)
- (2) Fly smooth as silk. (for airplane company)
- (3) Wash your big city out of your hair. ( for shampoo)

By using metaphors, the abstract, boring objects are compared with vivid and concrete objects, which can make the abstract concept concrete, enrich the connotation, deepen the theme, and play a novel, intuitive and image effect.

#### 3.3.2. Pun

- (1) I am More satisfied ! (for Moore cigarette)
- (2) More sun and air for your son and heir. (for outdoor bathing place)
- (3) Oh, I see! ( for "OIC" glasses)

The pun is witty, using the characteristics of homonyms or semantics, making the advertising statement have a double meaning, which is memorable. In English advertisements, the charm of puns is often used by creative advertisers. They skillfully use homonyms or homonyms to create puns in the context of advertising, making the language of language cumbersome and humorous. It's time to have an artistic effect that is endless.

### **3.3.3. Parallelism**

- (1) Life with ensure. Life with Sustacal. And life to our eyes. (for Sustacal nutritional energy drink)
- (2) You've got a lot to live. Pepsi's got a lot to give. (for Pepsi cola)

The parallelism structure can express strong feelings, highlight the advertising content, enhance the momentum of the advertising language, and also highlight the sense of rhythm and the rhythm of the language.

### **3.3.4. Personification**

- (1) Apple thinks different. (for Apple computer)
- (2) Flowers by Interflora speak from the heart. (for flowers)

Personification is a kind of rhetorical method commonly used in English advertisements. It personalizes the things advertised, gives the goods the human emotions and life, and gives consumers a sense of intimacy and human touch.

It can be seen from the above that advertising English has its own characteristics, whether it is vocabulary, syntax or discourse. With the intensification of commercial competition, the competition of merchants to use advertising to grab consumers will inevitably become more and more fierce. Advertising creators must fully understand the characteristics of advertising language in order to make their product advertisements stand out. Therefore, paying attention to the study of advertising language can not only enrich English theory but also have certain practical significance.

## **4. Some Translation Skills of English Advertising**

From the perspective of lexical features, there is no essential difference between the composition of advertising English and the composition of general practical English. Therefore, in the process of translation, it is also influenced by deeper language levels such as sentences, paragraphs and chapters. It also needs to be guided by translation theories and principles. One of the authors of Western translation theory, Eugene Nida's equivalent translation theory is the best principle to guide English translation of advertisements. Nida believes that "the focus of translation should not be the expression of language, but the response of the reader to the translation." That is to say, the translation should be equivalent to the original in the function of the language, rather than in the form of the language, that is, dynamic peering. Therefore, in the translation, in addition to finding the point of convergence with the original text from the linguistic law, it is also necessary to deal with the differences in understanding brought about by cultural differences. Also consider the vocabulary and rhetorical features of the original text. Therefore, the translator must understand the characteristics of advertising English, understand the response of the recipient of the translation to the translation and the response of the original recipient to the original text, change or adjust the information form according to different reactions, and smoothly complete the transmission of information. That is to say, the translation should be in perfect harmony with the original text, sound, shape and meaning. In the specific translation process, the methods of literal translation, free translation, and borrowing translation are mainly used.

Generally speaking, the advertising's appeal comes from his writing skills. Only when the advertising text has a special artistic charm can it attract the attention of the reader in an instant, stimulate his desire to purchase, and promote his purchasing behavior. Therefore, the key to advertising translation is to make the translation of the advertisement equally appealing to the reader to achieve its intended function. Specifically, we must grasp the following points:

#### 4.1. Literal Translation

Literal translation, according to Newmark's definition, literal translation means "converting the grammatical structure of the original language into the most similar corresponding structure in the target language, but the vocabulary is still a pair of translations, regardless of context".

In the process of translation, the sentence is regarded as the basic unit of translation, while considering the constraints of discourse and context, retaining the original content and the original form, especially retaining the original metaphor, image and national color. Under the premise of conforming to the language norms of the translated language and without causing false associations, the translation retains both the content of the original text and the original form. The literal translation method is mainly used to deal with some official slogans or titles whose original meaning is clear, the sentence structure is simple and complete, and the literal meaning and deep meaning of the sentence can be expressed at the same time.

For example:

(1) The taste is great. (味道好极了!) ( for Nestle Coffee)

(2) Feel the new space. (感受新境界!)( for Samsung Electronics)

(3) Let's make things better. (让我们做得更好.) ( for Philips Electronics)

(4) Hand in Hand, Future in Your Hand with you. (伴你同行, 齐握未来)(The Tai Ping Life Insurance Co. Ltd.)

In the case of literal translation, although it may not be as smooth as the original text of the original language, the information it conveys (including the surface and deep meaning) is very clear.

#### 4.2. Free Translation

The free translation method refers to keeping the original content and discarding its form, allowing the reader to have some creativity, but the basic information of the original text should be preserved, conveying the meaning of the original words and phrases in the context. The free translation of the advertisement requires that the translation correctly express the content of the original text, but it can be out of the form of the original text of the advertisement. If it is impossible or unnecessary to translate literally, the free translation method is adopted, and the meaning is included in the context, and the semantics of the advertisement is clearly expressed. When the word order, grammatical structure and rhetorical means of Chinese and English are very different, free translation should be used. Translators must get rid of the original form and make full use of their imagination to make the advertisement more compliant with the culture of the translated language.



For example :

- (1) Ask for more! (渴望无限) ( for Pepsi-cola)
- (2) The color of success! (让你的业务充满色彩) ( for Minolta-copier machine);
- (3) Every time a good time. (每一秒钟欢聚欢笑) ( for McDonalds McDonald's).

Although there is no translation above can make the keywords be in one-to-one correspondence with the original text, and the structural form of the sentence is completely gone. However, as long as you carefully ponder, the essence or deep meaning of the original advertisement is still preserved in the translation. The above translations are highly refined, although some rhetorical techniques of the original text, such as Every time a good time, cannot be reproduced in the same form in the translation, but the translations are made in other forms (such as confrontation) to compensate so that the readability of the translation is equivalent or even beyond the original text.

### 4.3. Borrowing Translation

The translation method is translated by means of Chinese idioms. Due to different cultural backgrounds, the image of the original text sometimes does not conform to Chinese customs, so if it is translated directly, it will be quite confusing, or the image of the original text will cause another association, which will affect the accurate communication of the original meaning. At this time, borrowing translation method can be used. .

For example:

- (1) Can the leopard change his spots!(江山易改, 本性难移!)
- (2) One man's disaster is another man's delight! The Sale is now on! (几家欢乐几家愁!甩卖进行中!)

The unique feature of (2) is that it uses a pseudo-rhetoric approach, borrowing the English proverb "One man's meat is another man's poison." (The poison of A, the poison of B.), the message to be conveyed is: The sale is undoubtedly a disaster for the merchant, but for the consumer, it is a delightful opportunity. Understand the meaning of the original text, when translating you can apply one idiom with similar meanings in Chinese:几家欢乐几家愁!甩卖进行中!This kind of translation is more resonating than literal translation.

English advertising translation is a process of re-creation. When translating, we should try to find out the common characteristics of products in the language of translation, so that the translation is more in line with the habit of translation and easy to accept. When you are translating, you should pay attention to some basic techniques and methods while grasping the principle of functional equivalence.

In short, measuring the pros and cons of advertising translation mainly depends on the extent to which the translation reflects the original propaganda effect, expression, persuasion and so on, and to what extent the original language features and charm are preserved. So in the translation, the choice of words on the stress avoidance, the sentence should be as concise and clear as possible, the rhetoric should retain the original rhetoric. The translation should focus on the overall grasp, not limited by one word, and should give full play to the translator's subjective initiative. In addition, advertising translation should also fully consider the cultural differences between the Chinese and English

languages. Only by understanding the various characteristics of the original text, in accordance with the KISS principle ( that is “Keep it short and sweet”), combined with the characteristics of the advertised goods and the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the nation, can we translate a wonderful advertisement that attracts people's attention and lay a good foundation for product selling.

## **5. Conclusion**

As an ideal medium for selling goods and services, English advertising is extremely language-specific. The realization of language features depends on the advertising designer's flexible control and creative use of advertising words and sentences. The use of rhetorical techniques is an important source of English advertising language charm. This paper introduces some studying results about English advertising, and shows us the linguistic characteristics of advertising, then it present some translation skills for translators.

Of course, this paper has some drawbacks. Firstly, it doesn't express much relevant theory about English advertising. Secondly, this paper doesn't give enough examples under the contents of chapter three and chapter four. Thirdly, it doesn't give other linguistic characteristics and translation skills to us and doesn't propose some measures to optimize English advertising.

The advertising English is colorful, with novel words and splashes, which contain a strong sense of life and the appeal of strong people. With the development of the times, English will add new content and have its own characteristics. Studying and mastering the language features and translation skills of advertising English Seriously will help to grasp the pulse of English development, keep up with the pace of language development, and improve the understanding and appreciation of English. Although the English advertising environment in China has changed significantly in recent years, the status quo is still unsatisfactory. The local English and introductory English are generally unspoken and incorrect. The reason is English advertisements are not popular and the lack of quality in English advertisements. Therefore, we should strengthen the optimization measures of English advertising, focus on instilling the language characteristics of English advertising, and cultivate more professional talents to enhance China's international competitiveness.

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