

Original Research Article

New characteristics of English advertising in the digital age and its translation strategies

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Abstract: This paper focuses on advertising English in the digital age, delving into its new characteristics in vocabulary, syntax, and rhetoric. It systematically discusses the challenges faced by advertising English translation under the backdrop of language differences and digital technology development. Based on this, it proposes practical translation strategies from three dimensions: principles, methods, and techniques. The aim is to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the translation practice of advertising English in the digital age, thereby facilitating cross-cultural advertising communication.

Keywords: Digital age; Advertising English; New features; Translation strategies

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of digital technologies such as the Internet, big data, and artificial intelligence, the global advertising industry has undergone profound changes. In the digital age, advertising media have become more diverse, dissemination speeds have significantly increased, and the audience base has expanded. As an important medium for advertising information, English in advertising has seen significant changes in its linguistic characteristics under this new era context. Meanwhile, the increasing frequency of cross-cultural advertising communication has made English translation in advertising increasingly important. A deep study of the new features of English in advertising in the digital age and exploring corresponding translation strategies not only helps improve the quality of advertising translation and enhance the effectiveness of advertising dissemination but also promotes communication and understanding between different cultures.

2. The new characteristics of English advertising in the digital age

2.1. Vocabulary characteristics

The digital age has given rise to a vast array of new terms related to technology and the internet, which flow into English advertising like fresh blood. In terms of neologisms, besides “clickbait” (clickbait), “influencer” (influencer, internet celebrity) is also widely used. These terms are not only concise and vivid but also accurately define key roles and behaviors in digital advertising operations. Regarding the phenomenon of old words taking on new meanings, “troll” originally referred to a “giant monster,” but in the context of the internet, it has come to mean “someone who deliberately stirs up disputes and posts offensive comments online.” Advertisements use this term to describe negative online behavior, highlighting the product’s effectiveness in addressing internet chaos^[1]. Moreover, the use of abbreviations in digital advertising has become increasingly common, such as “VR” (virtual reality), “AR” (augmented reality), and “SEO” (search engine optimization). These terms, with their concise forms, succinctly encapsulate complex concepts, aligning with the fast-paced communication demands of the digital era. They enhance the modern feel of advertisements while significantly improving information delivery efficiency, allowing ads to convey rich messages within limited time and space^[1].

2.2. Sentence structure characteristics

In the digital age, advertising English syntax is increasingly moving towards simplicity and fragmentation. To capture the fleeting attention of the audience in an instant, advertisements heavily rely on simple sentences and ellipses. In ellipses, not only are linking verbs and auxiliary verbs often omitted, but some subjects are also left out according to context, making the language of advertisements concise and powerful. The use of questions in ads stimulates curiosity and a desire to explore, guiding the audience to actively think about the information conveyed. Imperatives, with their commanding and requesting tones, strongly guide the audience to take action, such as purchasing products or clicking links. The widespread use of present tense in advertising English creates a sense of immediacy, making the audience feel that the advantages of the advertised products and services are happening in real time. This enhances the appeal and persuasiveness of ads, accelerating consumer decision-making.

2.3. Rhetorical features

In the digital age, English advertising is more flexible and diverse in its rhetorical use, with an increasing emphasis on interaction with the audience. Metaphors transform abstract concepts into tangible ones; for example, cloud computing services are metaphorically described as “super warehouses of data,” making their functions easier for consumers to understand^[2]. Personification endows products with emotion and vitality, bridging the gap between them and consumers. Pun, with its dual meanings in sound or meaning, conveys more information within limited advertising space, adding interest and memorable elements to ads, allowing consumers to remember the content with a knowing smile^[2]. Repetition emphasizes key words or phrases repeatedly, reinforcing core messages and deepening consumer impressions. Interactive rhetoric uses the second person “you” to engage directly with consumers, creating a one-on-one communication atmosphere that narrows the distance between ads and the audience, enhancing their sense of participation and recognition.

3. The challenges faced by English translation of advertising in the digital age

3.1. Challenges brought by language differences

Differences in vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatics between languages pose significant challenges for English-to-English advertising translation. At the lexical level, neologisms and culturally specific terms in English advertisements often lack precise equivalents in the target language. For instance, digital technology terms may not have established expressions in some languages, requiring translators to apply creative approaches. Grammatically, the sentence structures and word orders of English differ markedly from those of other languages. Translators must adhere strictly to the grammatical rules of the target language while flexibly adjusting sentence structures to avoid awkward and obscure translations. Additionally, pragmatic conventions vary widely across languages, and the same expression can carry entirely different meanings and functions in different cultural contexts. Translators need to deeply understand the cultural backgrounds of both source and target languages, accurately grasp pragmatic information, and avoid translation errors.

3.2. Challenges brought by the development of digital technology

The rapid development of digital technology has spurred the continuous innovation in advertising formats, leading to a proliferation of new types such as social media ads, short video ads, and interactive ads. These ads integrate various elements like text, images, audio, and video, placing higher demands on translation work. Translation must not only accurately convey textual information but also ensure that the translated text harmonizes with other elements to maintain the overall consistency of the ad. The fast dissemination and wide reach

of digital ads pose a significant challenge to the timeliness of translation. Translators must complete high-quality tasks within extremely short periods to meet the time requirements for ad placements^[3]. Moreover, the widespread application of digital technology has accelerated the pace of language updates in advertising, with new words and expressions constantly emerging. To keep up with the times, translators need to continuously learn and master new language knowledge and translation skills.

4. Translation strategies of English advertising in the digital age

4.1. Translation principles

In the digital age, English advertising translation should adhere to the principles of accurately conveying information, preserving the advertising style, and adapting to the target market^[3]. Accurately conveying information is the cornerstone of advertising translation; translators must ensure that the translated text accurately and without error conveys the core message of the original text, avoiding any distortion or misguidance of consumers. Preserving the advertising style requires translators to restore as much as possible the linguistic characteristics and rhetorical devices of the original text, maintaining the appeal and persuasiveness of the advertisement, so that the translated text can also resonate with consumers in the target market. Adapting to the target market involves translators fully considering the cultural background, consumption habits, and language features of the target market, making appropriate adjustments to the translation to make the advertisement more relevant to the target audience, enhancing its affinity and recognition, and improving the effectiveness of the advertisement's dissemination.

4.2. Translation methods

For the characteristics of advertising English in the digital age, various translation methods such as literal translation, free translation, and phonetic translation can be adopted. For advertisements with clear meanings and simple expressions, literal translation can preserve the original language form and content, achieving direct information transmission. When literal translation fails to accurately convey the original meaning or does not align with the target language's expression habits, free translation can flexibly handle the original information, making the translation conform to the target language's expression habits and accurately convey the core message of the advertisement. For brand names or words with specific pronunciation effects, phonetic translation can retain the original pronunciation, conveying unique brand culture. In actual translation processes, translators often need to combine multiple translation methods based on the specific content of the advertisement, its communication purpose, and target audience to achieve the best translation effect.

4.3. Translation skills

In translation practice, translators can use techniques such as adding translation, reducing translation and conversion. Adding translation is to add necessary information in the translation text, so that the translation is more complete and clear, in line with the expression habits of the target language, and help the target audience better understand the content of the advertisement^[4]. Reducing translation involves omitting redundant or non-conforming information to the target language, making the translation more concise and clear, highlighting the core message of the advertisement. Translation techniques include part-of-speech conversion and sentence structure transformation, which help make the translation more natural and fluent by flexibly changing the parts of speech and sentence structures. Additionally, translators should pay attention to the multimedia characteristics of digital ads, using subtitle translation and voice-over techniques appropriately to ensure that the translation harmonizes with the visual and auditory elements of the ad, enhancing its overall communication effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

The digital age has brought new development opportunities to English advertising, while also presenting numerous challenges for its translation. Through in-depth research on the new characteristics of English advertising in the digital era, we have identified the issues faced by English advertising translation under the backdrop of language differences and the advancement of digital technology. On this basis, the principles, methods, and techniques proposed provide guidance for the practice of English advertising translation. However, with the continuous development of digital technology and the increasing frequency of cross-cultural communication, English advertising and its translation will continue to evolve. In the future, translators must keep learning and exploring, keeping pace with the times to better address new challenges and promote the development of cross-cultural advertising communication.

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