MEMORABILITY IN THE TRANSLATION OF ADVERTISING TEXTS

-----Analysis from the perspective of presupposition

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從預設角度探析廣告文本翻譯中
增強讀者記憶的策略

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to investigate the strategies of increasing texts’ memorability in advertisement translation and provide explanations with reference to presupposition, which is a concept normally theorized in philosophy, logic and linguistics. In this study, we will briefly review three lines of research on presupposition within linguistics, namely semantic, pragmatic and experiential approaches, and arrive at a contextual notion of presupposition (or the first-level presupposition as defined in this research) in the light of consumer needs, Co-operative Principle (CP), Politeness Principle (PP) and textual organization principles. Two levels of presuppositions are distinguished covering the ordinary notion of the term and the technical usage in linguistics. In our analysis we mostly refer to first-level presuppositions, but we will also explain second-level ones, because they are essential for clarifying first-level presuppositions and play a special role in the advertising discourse for packaging information. Second-level presuppositions, usually regarded as “conventional presuppositions” (Grundy 1995: 85), refer to what has been studied in semantics, which can be recognized via some linguistic expressions called presupposition triggers. As to first-level presuppositions, three contextual sources for them are identified including the generic, situational and discourse ones. Generic first-level presuppositions are of a universal nature, and we will confine them to consumer needs in our data analysis. In contrast, situational first-level presuppositions are closely related to specific cultural or communicative situations, which will be restricted to the discussion of CP and PP. First-level presuppositions connected with the discourse context mainly refer to intertext and co-text. These three categories of first-level
presuppositions have covered what consumer needs to appeal to, principles for, communication and rules of textualization, which will be applied in our research concerning the strategies of enhancing audiences’ memorization in advertisement translation. After elaborating the definition and composition of presupposition, we will analyze how and why the different strategies of increasing texts’ memorability are applied in advertisement translation from this presuppositional perspective. There are mainly two categories of strategies to enhance audiences’ memorization of what is advertised. Firstly, appealing to audiences’ needs can engage their emotional involvement, which in turn deepens their impression and enhances their memorization. We will introduce the psychological theory of human needs and investigate how Chinese and English texts may lay different emphasis on the needs with reference to the situational first-level presuppositions or CP and PP. For this stream of analysis, we expect that our research findings from the perspective can shed some light on cultural variations in terms of the universal human needs. Secondly, as to the surface of the advertising discourse, there are many textual devices to help strengthen audiences’ memory, and we will choose four of them for analysis, which play relatively more prominent roles in strengthening audiences’ memory, namely focus, specificity, intimacy and originality of a text which are means to realize the textualization and communicative principles and gratify audiences’ various needs. We will analyze the use of repetition as an example to study the focus of a text, analyze the provision of details for studying the specificity of a text, explore the use of second-person reference for studying the intimacy of a text, and treat of the use of rhetorical figures to study the originality and creativity of a text. Similar to the discussion on consumer needs, in this
stream of analysis concerning surface textual devices, different ways of handling these devices will be explained from the perspective of first-level presuppositions, and we also expect that our conclusions can reveal nuances between Chinese and English languages as well as cultural implications inherent in such linguistic differences.

**Key words:** advertisement, translation, presupposition, memorability, need, textualization
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