

English Translation Analysis of Live Commerce Discourse Based on Applied Translation Theory

Mei Dong, Jianuo Zhang

School of Foreign Languages, Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an 710065, China

Abstract: With the continuous development and progress of Internet technology and economy, the economic and cultural exchanges between countries in the world are becoming closer and closer. Cross-border electronic commerce as an emerging industry is gradually developing, and translation plays a crucial role in this field. In the Internet era, more new forms of economy appear in people's lives. As a new marketing model, live commerce can enable consumers to see commodities in front of the mobile phone screen, which greatly promotes the development of e-commerce economy. In this context, this paper collects relevant material, summarizes the basic characteristics of live commerce discourse, and analyzes the English translation skills combined with domestic applied translation theories. It can provide a reference for translators and scholars.

Keywords: Live Commerce Translation; Applied Translation; Live Commerce Characteristics

1. Introduction

In the Internet era, technology are developing rapidly and mobile devices are widely used, especially the wide application of short videos and live-stream technology. Live commerce has quickly become a new shopping method. Users can watch live-stream and shop anytime and anywhere on the applications. Live commerce is the combination of live-stream and e-commerce. Live-stream is a sales tool, and e-commerce is the foundation. It has not only changed the traditional shopping mode, but also brought new growth points for the e-commerce industry. It will certainly become one of the fastest ways for the public to shop, develop more forms and have more audience groups.^[1] However, the core audience of cross-border e-commerce in China is foreign consumers, language and cultural barriers need to be reduced as much as possible. In this process, the translation quality of live commerce has a key impact on cross-border e-commerce. Therefore, under the guidance of applied translation theories, this paper analyzed the characteristics of live commerce discourse, discusses the problems in translation from the aspects of word and sentence, and puts forward corresponding translation methods.

2. Overview of Chinese applied translation theories

Applied translation covers a wide range and large volume, including all kinds of languages in daily contact and practical applications. It involves social economy, scientific research, foreign exchanges, production fields and other aspects^[2].

The practice of applied translation in China is developing rapidly, and Chinese scholars have many perspectives on applied translation. Han Ziman believes that except for literary text translation, all types of text translation belong to applied translation. Different from literary translation, applied translation focuses on the information of text, and generally only needs to accurately convey the original content^[3]. Fang Mengzhi pointed out three principles on applied translation: purport expression, conformity and common understanding. Purport expression means to achieve the translation purpose and convey the main idea. Conformity requires translators to follow the specification of the target language. Common understanding is to enable readers to understand the translation clearly. In the translation process, purport expression is the purpose, conformity is the outline and common understanding is the measure.^[4]

3. Characteristics of live commerce discourse

As a new marketing pattern, live commerce has distinct discourse construction model and language characteristics. It is a combination of advertisement, e-commerce, entertainment and other elements, with both the language characteristics of traditional broadcast and new linguistic features of live commerce in the network era^[5].

3.1. Simple conversation mode

Live commerce is usually carried out on electronic live-stream platforms. Its target group is the public, so the words and discourses are simple and popular, mostly simple sentences. Elliptical sentences and imperative sentences are commonly used. Four-character phrases are often used, such as “秒拍秒发”, “拍一发三”, “麻麻辣辣”. In addition, live commerce discourses need to have strong affinity and infection to attract users to watch. The expressions are colloquial and similar to daily communication with friends. The language is lively, fluent, and friendly. In this way, audiences could have a sense of interaction, which can narrow the distance between live streamers and audiences, thus giving consumers a good experience. Their dialogue is relatively simple and fixed, usually with a simple greeting such as “家人们下午好, 欢迎宝宝们走进直播间! ”. After a brief greeting, streamers will begin with a brief introduction and preview of today’s products[6]. The way and process of introduction are generally fixed and similar.

3.2. Novel vocabularies

As a new sales mode, there are many differences between live commerce and traditional advertising. Firstly, live commerce has certain pertinence, it has a tendency to a certain type of consumer group. Streamers use special appellation for consumers, and even have exclusive titles for their fans, such as “美眉们”, “老铁们”, “宝妈们”, “集美们”.

Secondly, its words need to highlight the characteristics of goods, e-commerce uses the compound adjectives to describe colors in a more vivid and specific way, which can increase the lightspot and selling points of products. For example, “活力橙”, “奇幻泡梦”, “甜橙气泡冰”, “生椰拿铁粽”. Moreover, it is convenient to improve the taste of products and increase the appeal to consumers.

In addition, when introducing the ingredients of products, streamers will also speak a lot of professional terms to stand out the quality.

3.3. Exaggerated expression

At the sentence level, live commerce often uses exaggerated expression and strong emotions to accentuate the atmosphere. Interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, parallel sentences and exclamatory sentences are often used in live-stream. Interrogatives can enrich the expression of discourse and attract the consumers’ attention. Parallel sentences can deepen the users’ impression of products. Exclamatory sentences can express the strong subjective will of streamers, achieve the exaggerated expression effect and energize live atmosphere at the same time. In the live rooms, they even ring the bell and shout slogans to set the mood.

4. English Translation Analysis

Firstly, in translation practice, translators must follow the basic translation principles of “faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance”, adopt diversified translation methods according to the actual situation, and consider translation strategies from multiple perspectives of language and culture. The structure of live commerce discourse is not complicated. However, translators need to pay attention to grammar to ensure that the translation conforms to the target thinking logic and idiomatic expression. Furthermore, translators should also think from the perspective of streamers and audiences. Streamers requires exaggerated language to attract users, but consumers need the real product introduction. Translators should balance these two needs, keep the authenticity of information. But don’t be rigid and lose the interest and pleasure of the language style.

4.1. In terms of vocabularies

About the translation of appellation for consumers, “我们姐妹们”, “这位姐妹”, “老铁们”, “小哥哥小姐姐” can not be directly translated as “our sister”, “this sister”, “old ironmen” and “little brothers and little sisters”. These translations are unidiomatic, strange for foreigners. They can be translated as: ladies, honey, my friend, my love, everybody and guys. In this way, the timeliness of original text is properly reduced, the consumers’ appellation is completely changed. It can shorten the distance between audiences and streamers and increase the publicity and agitation effect of live.

Besides, live commerce frequently uses compound adjectives, such as “自留爆款”, “超级畅销款”, which can be translated as “self reserved best-seller” and “host-seller and fast-seller”. Through the use of hyphens, the information of multiple words is fused together to

form a rich and concise description. Thus avoiding the long and wordy, make the expression more concise and powerful. At the same time, it can express the multiple attributes of product and make the description more vivid.

4.2. In terms of sentences

Due to the structural differences between Chinese and English, Chinese emphasizes parataxis while English emphasizes hypotaxis. English translation should focus on the core meaning of the original text, rather than the structure and form of sentences. For instance, streamers often repeat the phrase “它真的非常非常的亮眼。” to introduce a product. It can be translated as: It's super shiny. Omission can cut down repetitive adjectives, simplify complexity, and preserve key points. In Chinese, repetition is convenient to emphasize, but it is not necessary in English. When streamers sell clothes, they usually say: “它可以完美的遮住你的小肚腩, 挡住你的拜拜肉, 让你看上去至少可以显瘦五斤。” If the literal translation method is adopted, it is translated as: It can perfectly cover up your belly, block out your “bye meat”, and make you look at least five pounds thinner. This translation is in written form and can be more simply and accurately translated as: Hide your fat on belly. Hide your fat on your arms. Make you so slim at least 5 pounds visually. The original text is converted into three imperative sentences, which are similar in structure and catchy. Meanwhile, they are highly motivating, giving audiences a sense of need and urgency.

Moreover, translators need to adopt flexible translation methods. For example, “你穿上它绝对百分之百的回头率。” can not be literally translated as: You'll turn heads 100 percent in it. It doesn't accurately express the original meaning. In order to avoid ambiguity and maintain the simplicity, it can be adapted translated as: This one is a head turner for sure. Convey clear and accurate information, and close to the expression habits of foreign consumers.

5. Conclusion

Applied translation involves a wide range and various types, which are enriched and changed with the continuous development of society. In the cross-border e-commerce industry, new live commerce is developing rapidly because of its convenient and affordable advantages. According to different product types, translators need to make specific analysis and adopt appropriate translation methods for practice. Good translation can not only promote the development and growth of China's economy, but also increase international exchanges.

References

- [1] Yang Q. Characteristics and Development Trend of Mainstream Media Live Commerce[J]. West China Broadcasting TV, 2020(16):31-33.
- [2] Fnag M Z. and Fu J M. Construction of the History of Pragmatic Translation in China[J]. Foreign Languages in China, 2023, 20(02):91-97.
- [3] Han Z M. Applied Translation: Practice and Theoretical Research[J]. Chinese Science & Technology Translators Journal. 2005(04).
- [4] Fang M Z. 30 Years of Applied Translation Research(1980-2010)[J]. Shanghai Journal of Translators, 2012, (02):22-27.
- [5] Xu M Q. and Zhu X J. Normative Research on Live Commerce Language[J]. West China Broadcasting TV, 2022, 43(19):61-63.
- [6] Zhu L. Study on E-Commerce Live-Stream Language from the Perspective of Discourse Analysis[D]. Shanghai Normal University, 2023.

About the author:

Mei Dong(1969-), female, Han, Doctor Degree, Xi'an Shiyu University, Baoding City, Hebei Province, Associate Professor, Translation.

Jianuo Zhang(2000-), female, Han, Master Degree, Xi'an Shiyu University, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, Translation.