

# The Influence of Religion on Products' Translation

## -- Take Southern Asian E-commerce Platforms as Examples

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### Abstract

The research on the products' translation under the influence of religion is quite important in the global communication via the Internet. In addition to the common errors in this field, the factor of religion cannot be ignored. This paper studies translation accuracy and connotation. And the religious impacts are considered as well, for example, Buddhism and Christianity. The paper can assist people to understand and analyse the products' translation from a brand-new perspective.

### Keywords

Accuracy; Connotation; Religion; Buddhism; Christianity.

## 1. Introduction

China witnessed the emergence of E-commerce in 1990, and then, Chinese government adopted relevant policies which have nurtured its growth. 1998 was a memorable date because the first trade on the Internet was done which proclaimed the coming of a fresh era of E-commerce in China. From 1990-2009, China adopted mostly the mode of B2B. At present, it has been developed into a global transaction involving more people from different countries and cultures. Therefore, plenty of experts begin to investigate translation concerning goods in order to avoid some distinct errors may occur in business to help the sellers deal smoothly. It must be given the attention about the productions' translation which not only helps people comprehend the meaning of production alone, but can be the bridge associated with one country's culture, religion, philosophy and so on. Moreover, there are few researches on religious effect.[4]

## 2. The Problems of Products' Translation on the E-commerce Platforms

### 2.1. The Lack of Accuracy

When browsing some websites about commodities, it is easy to discover some mistakes made in the goods descriptions which are translated into English directly without considering business style. Theoretically, business English differs in many parts compared with other forms. The former doesn't emphasize the gorgeous or rhetoric words. It also requires no polished statement either. From the view of enterprises, business English should be logical and accurate. Generally speaking, these words should be precise and careful. Nonetheless, plenty of shopkeepers in online shops don't give the attention to those fully, and they usually use MT instead of hiring professionals. What these persons do leave an unfavorable impression to foreign customers. Therefore, several palpable issues will be discussed in the following paragraphs.[3]

The first is grammatical errors. For instance, *if you want to learn more, please email to us*. The verb *email* is transitive, so the deletion of *to* is necessary. Regarding the time, there are Chinese translations as well, say, *the product ought to be sent in 15 days*. The preposition of *in* can cause the misunderstanding to clients who are not aware of time point. So, the sentence should be

corrected into *...within 15 days*. Although these are simple errors, some people may dissatisfy with tiny parts and are possible not to buy the goods leading to the loss of potential customers. Secondly, the meaning of paradox is common. For example, when describing the underwear, there is one type of translation: *woman underwear, thin, wireless but thick*. The thin and thick are the same level. The statement is irregular in English. *Sexy woman bra fitness, wireless and seamless* is better. Persons can get the useful information about size from the charts or pictures, so the superfluous depiction is, to some degree, redundant.

## 2.2. The Lack of Connotation

The shopkeepers barely focus on additional meanings. It's a noticeable and universal problem in translating, resulting from reasons. And there is an explanation accounting for the outcome. One is the discrepancy in customs. The brides always wear wedding dress in white, which cannot be accepted in China in the last century. The introductions online resemble with the thing. In China that one bride must carry out some procedures. For instance, the groom goes to the bride's home to escort her back to the wedding (Yinqin), out, and entering wedding car. But in the western countries, it's rather simple. The couples just take an oath in church. So, these foreigners may not comprehend that in China. In many websites overseas, the dress is translated into *outing dress* making people in confusion because they have one wedding dress and one evening dress. Therefore, the description can be replaced with *church* in the title.

## 3. Impacts of Two Major Religions on Translation

Religion matters in culture. It can be regarded as the special culture which influences people's life and the language they use. If the translator fails to grasp the internal knowledge about it, that's a bad outcome. As Nida once said, a successful translation must depend on the adequately binary cultural backgrounds. Owing to the great contribution made by the religion, the analysis concerning Christianity and Buddhism is necessary in the E-commerce field.[1]

### 3.1. Christianity

When browsing the trading platforms affiliated to those, plenty of clues regarding Christianity have been revealed.

Apart from the common information, the number is attached importance frequently. Many merchants introducing their products avoid certain numbers, say, 13, which represents the betrayer Judas. So, the disciples are not willing to speak of it that can bring the misfortune. On the contrary, the figure 7 is different. *It's the best present for the seventh son in your family*. It has no connection with the seventh kid in a family. And this introduction can be explained the product which is nice for the outstanding children.[5]

Translators have obligations to study these biblical principles seriously because lots of information of merchandises encompass underlying dogmas. Errors will be created if the professionals don't translate based on Christian knowledge. There is one advertisement in online shopping, *Buy it for the apple of your eyes*. [2] When a person doesn't learn the relevant sources in advance, he is bound to misunderstand it. However, in Singapore, most of people can get the idea immediately. In *Bible*, the phrase means the beloved person, so this sentence may appear in the introduction of some valuable jewelry. The French brand--Bramy Viguiier gives much attention on product's information. The idea is translated in *the soul like the body, hardens with pain*. The connection between soul and body is similar with the explanation in *Luke 9* which preaches human beings suffering physical pains can make their own souls become strong and rebirth. To an extent, this brand achieves the goal of marketing successfully in southeastern Asia. But the wrong use of religion can cause undesirable results. The garment brand--JNBY, gives obscene descriptions under the disguise of Christianity. *Welcome to Hell, Let Me Touch You*. But lots of information about products still comply with the principles. One cosmetic called

Reflections Organics translates its own aim into *Living in Her Time*. In *Galatians*, women are equal and have more power than men. The blessed virgin Mary is the excellent example, who embodies the idea of the brand.

### 3.2. Buddhism

As one of the three major religions in the world, Buddhism owns an enormous scale of votaries especially in southeastern countries where it is supported as state religion. Combining with its special creed, an invisible culture request has been set as a matter of course in people's daily life. Thus, sellers who hold big markets of great potential in these countries must be those who are familiar with the beliefs and taboos of the religion. Accordingly, a good translator has been attached with great importance either under cross border circumstance. Or the mistakes made in the description of goods may lead to a sharp reduction on the shop profits.

People believing in Buddhism obey many widely known principles out of the religion's doctrines. For example, in order to protect animals from being killed and hunted, most of the believers prefer vegetarian diet rather than meat. Some even object to dairy products. Hence, food containing pork or other meat should not be placed in shop websites which take Buddhism believers as the major customers. Also, products which have ingredients of milk should be noted and translated clearly. Other products like alcohol beverage and cigarette are resisted by partly believers too, so translators should avoid making conflict by notifying these materials when showing them to customers.

Apart from household products, other goods in commercial platforms are directly connected with Buddhism culture. The first example is literary works. In some countries which have few knowledge of "Buddha", they may simply equal it with the notion of "God" and translate it in the same way. However, this kind of mistake may drag down customer's satisfaction. Although both "Buddha" and western "God" are representatives of beliefs, they express different spirits attracting supporters. So wrong translation would on the one hand be offensive to some extent, it would make the shop less favorable on the other hand. [6]

## 4. Conclusion

Serving as the bridge connecting customers from all over the world to the products selling on the cross-border E-commerce platforms, the job of the translators is far more than merely transforming one language into another. The best way to achieve the effective communication between people from different backgrounds is to translate the information on the cultural basis. Besides, religion as a special symbol which has developed in parallel with economic, philosophy and literature in human history has influenced the world expansively. Moreover, the population of Christians and Buddhists have already reached 39% of the world's total. Thus, religion believers as a group of potential customers for many sellers who aim to expand their business globally should be paid much attention.

To sum up, on the international business stage, the product translators should translate the goods description in a more acceptable way by considering the cultural difference. A good version of product translation in cross border selling process can not only make the shop best known but can better satisfy the customer's expectation.

## Acknowledgments

Fund Projects:

1. Undergraduate Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program of Chengdu University of Information Technology - A Normative Study on English Translation of Cross-border E-commerce in China (S202110621030);

2. 2021 Undergraduate Education and Teaching Research and Reform Project and Undergraduate Teaching Engineering Project - Online and Offline Mixed Course Construction of Business Writing in the Era of Internet Economy. (JYJG2021057);
3. Sichuan Network Culture Research Center Project- Research on Marketing Language of Sichuan Cultural Products in Cross-border E-commerce Platform (WLWH21-16).

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