

Chinese Translation of Coca Cola: Analysis and Enlightenment

Shiyang Ran

School of Foreign Languages, Shandong University School of Foreign Languages, Yangtze Normal University No 35, Jiangdong Region, Fuling 408003, Chongqing, China E-mail: ranshiyang888@yahoo.com.cn

Abstract

The Chinese translation of Coca Cola is thought to be a well-known good translation, and many people discussed the translation or brand translation with it as an example. A large number of books or articles generally and abstractly conclude that the Chinese translation leaves people a kind of feeling of coolness and cleanness, pleases and attracts consumers' attention and their favor, however there is not still a book or an article studying systematically and scientifically how good the translation is, neither wholly from perspectives of linguistics, culture and aesthetic translation. Based on the literature review and comparative analysis with cultural translation study and translation aesthetics, the thesis is to discover how good the translation aesthetics, and to build a criticism model of translation of brand names, in addition, to analyze the enlightenment of this translation in other translation activities.

Keywords: Kekoukele, Coca cola, Linguistic analysis, Socio-cultural preference, Beauty

1. Introduction

Kekoukele, as a Chinese translation of Coca Cola, is well-known in China as a classic good translation. Zhan Pei considers it as a "perfect" translation, and many people also mention it as a typical good brand translation. Wang Bingqin discusses the brand's expressive function, in whose book he concludes that the Chinese translation of Coca Cola by Jiang Yi is a famous translation all over the country. Hu Di thinks that the translation of Coca Cola is classic with the technique of alliteration and assonance, containing both good sound effect and meaning connotation, which sounds fluent and rhythmed, and it also expresses the function and effect of the drink and Chinese psychological need. From articles and books, it is easy to found that the translation of brand is widely discussed, most of which are from a single aspect of culture, translation aesthetics or equivalence theory, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is analyzed, but is not systematically and theoretically discussed, not from the perspectives of linguistics, Chinese socio-cultural psychology, and translation aesthetics, neither from the three aspects. Therefore, the paper is to analyze the Chinese translation of Coca Cola from different perspectives, to evaluate systemically how good the translation is, and to further perfect the directive role of translation theories to translation activities, especially to the brands' translation.

2. Analysis of the Translation from the Perspective of Linguistics

Linguistics is the base of translating research, as translation at first is the transformation from one language to another language, which will be affected by two languages, and the linguistic features of each language will have a great influence on translation, so the analysis from the perspective of linguistics is necessary and useful for the topic.

2.1 Contrast Coca Cola with its Chinese Translation from the Aspect of Etymology

According to Online Etymology Dictionary, coca and cola are two kinds of plant:

Coca: 1616, from Sp. coca, from Quechua cuca. Coca-Cola invented in Atlanta, Ga., 1886, by druggist Dr. John S. Pemberton. So called because original ingredients were derived from coca leaves and cola nut. Cola: 1795, "genus of trees native to west Africa, introduced in New World tropics," Latinized form of W.Afr. name of the tree (cf. Temne kola, Mandingo kolo)." (Note 1)

In *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, Coca is "a tropical American shrub that is widely grown for its leaves, which are the source of cocaine", is the dried leaves of this shrub as a mass noun, which are mixed with lime and chewed as a stimulant by the native people of western South America. From books and dictionaries, it is easy to draw a conclusion that coca and cola are two kinds of trees which are the ingredient source of Coca Cola. And Coca Cola is a kind of a carbonated non-alcoholic drink with the material of Coca and Cola. Therefore, from the etymology the name of Coca Cola, has not any deep connotations or meanings, only represents a kind of popular drink.

In *Ci Yuan*, the definition of "kekou" is delicious which means dainty flavor for something. In *Chinese Great Dictionary*, it is defined as "kekou, which means delicious in English, refers that the food is flavorful and to one's taste". According to these definitions it can be found that kekou means delicious and tasteful, suitable to eat or drink, and kele means something making people happy and pleasant. So the four characters have a good feeling to the customers. In 1930s, Chinese American named Jiang Yi firstly chooses "kekoukele" as the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, which made Coca Cola known around the Chinese people and had a great economic and social effect. (Wang Bingqin)

From etymology, it is easy to find their origin is different / unequal, the naming of Coca Cola is accidental, the ingredient source of Coca Cola are mostly known from the English name, that is, coca and cola. While the origin of Chinese translation, based on the deep strong cultural background, can be traced back to 1930s, the meaning of which is delicious and tasteful cola that makes drinkers happy. Therefore, compared to the original, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola has a good drink image which makes the translation more suitable and receivable to Chinese people.

2.2 Contrast Coca Cola with its Chinese Translation from their Phonetic Aspect

In translation, the phonetic features are very important, because a good translation is a translation that expresses not only the meaning but also the form including its phonetic features, for example in the translation of poems. In the translation of brand names, a phonetic feature is also important, a good transformation of which can compensate for the distance of meaning "lost in translation".

On the other hand, the stress has a little change in the position, which is obvious from its different pronunciation $[_______l_____l_____l__]$, but Coca Cola and its Chinese translation both have four vowel syllables, and the consonant syllables are almost the same, which are similar in the position and pronunciation effect. Generally, the Chinese translation retains the basic phonetics features of Coca Cola, its main sonorous syllable [...], its rhythm and trochee, and its sound effect.

2.3 Contrast Coca Cola with its Chinese Translation from their Morphologic Aspect

As morphology is concerned with word forms, it is akin to phonology which describes how words are pronounced, it is significant to delve into the morphologic features of Coca Cola wit its Chinese translation, which can make us better understand how similar the two versions are and how good the translation is. In English, Coca Cola in red italics looks like a stream, which can make drinkers keep the reddish beautiful drink in memory. In Chinese, as is well known, the morphologic feature is very important, because Chinese characters have their own morphology with their deep image. Chinese characters often contain two parts: meaning parts and sound parts, therefore, beautiful Chinese characters can lead readers to imagine.

Coca Cola has its morphologic feature. The "co" repeats, and so does "a". From its English brand ad, it is easy to see that coca and cola are parallel, and with two capitals "C"s with red color, which looks like the reddish drink with wide imagination. In addition, the brand name is very simple with only 8 letters, which is only made up of letters c, o, a, l. Therefore, the morphologic feature of Coca Cola is simplicity and streamline features. Chinese is an ideographic writing system and a tonal language, every Chinese character can be regarded as a trinity of pictograph, ideograph and phone. (from Guo Jianzhong) From morphologic perspective, "kekoukele" is very simple and easy to write down with

only four simple characters, which contains three "mouth" that means mouth, relating to the organ to drink. According to the *Shuo Wen Jie Zhi*, "mouth" is a pictograph, which is the organ to take in food or drink, and "ke" is an Associative Compound, which has two parts, "mouth" is a meaning part and "ding" is a sound part, while "le" means the total name of Chinese music. The phonological feature of Chinese translation of Coca Cola is simplicity, sonorousness of sound effect, visualization and understandability of its visual effect.

2.4 Contrast Coca Cola with its Chinese Translation from their Semantic Aspect

From the perspective of semantics, as Coca Cola is only a kind of drink, sometimes is shortened as Cola, the Chinese translation represents its basic meaning as a kind of drink "kele". Factually, the first translation of Coca Cola leads Chinese people to get to know this kind of carbonated drink, followed by other kinds of "kele". Therefore, the Chinese translation of this brand has realized its semantic meaning, and brought a new meaning of a "good and fine" drink.

Generally, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is not equivalent to original Coca Cola in semantic meaning, in fact, the former adds a more imaginative and aural effect that the latter does not contain. And the origins of the two are absolutely different. But the Chinese translation and its original are similar from the linguistic level with similar morphologic feature and similar phonetic feature. From phonetics, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola has the semantic meaning and stylistic meaning of the English brand as a kind of cola, and it has the similar sound effect with simplicity and sonorousness. In morphologic feature, Chinese translation also symbolizes the simplicity and visual effect of Coca Cola. And Chinese translation of Coca Cola contains its basic meaning as a kind of drink. To sum up, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is a good translation to its English from the aspects of linguistics. From the traditional translation theory, the translation is not faithful, as it does not translate its semantic meaning firstly.

3. Analysis of the Translation from the Perspective of Cultural Translation

As the development of translation theories, more and more people gradually realize that the translation is not only concerned with linguistics, factually "culture impacts and constrains translation" (Li Heqing etc.), and language is not seen "as an isolated phenomenon suspended in a vacuum but as an integral part of culture" (Snell-Hornby), "the translator needs not only proficiency in two languages, he must also be at home in two cultures" (ibid). Cultural concepts, which underlie the variety of language usage and language habits, come to be the key area of translation studies. (from Guo Jianzhong) As a result, translation is "seen as a form of acculturation" (Li Heqing etc.), is "the exploration of an unbridgeable gap and of a tension between cultures, variable according to the historical time and the socio-economic motivations of the assessment, its function is to develop cross-cultural constructions while at the same time bridging and underlining the differences." (Hewson & Martin) Therefore, people have to pay much attention to the translation from the perspective of culture.

All the Chinese people who meet the Chinese translation of Coca Cola at the first sight speak highly of its appropriateness and beautifulness, it is only because it perfectly represents our Chinese cultural psychology, that is, when they hear the translation, they can form a good imagination to the drink. In fact, the realization of Chinese cultural psychology in the translation is obvious.

According to the four simple Chinese characters, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola shows Chinese preference to the simplicity and seeking to the condensed usage of characters. Chinese people all the time like expressing their feeling or idea with least characters, therefore there are a large pool of Chinese ancient poetry and classics, in which the feature to seek to least characters to express what those wanted to say is easy to find. Chinese translation of Coca Cola is also made up of four common Chinese characters with strokes respectively five, three, five and five, which are widely used in people's daily life, even those Chinese learners can easily understand them.

Chinese have their psychological tendency to be luck and happy, they want to lead a happy life, healthily and luckily, as a result, in their daily they want to use such kinds of words to show this kind of feeling. Chinese characters are made up of two parts, one of which is the meaning of the characters. Different characters have different feelings. In the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, the first two characters mean delicacy, while the latter two mean happiness, which together mean delicious cola or delicious and happy. So it is easy to find that the Chinese translation of Coca Cola represents the Chinese cultural psychology of seeking happiness, preference to the good food.

From the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, it is easy to get to know that the Chinese people's preference to the beautiful thing, as the Chinese translation shows a good feeling to the fine and nice food. The Chinese cultural psychology and feeling are represented in the translation, such as the feeling to the naming of food, tendency to harmonious and happy life, simplicity. Therefore, Chinese people feel the translation beautiful and excellent, attractive and acceptable, because it reveals the psychological identity and acceptance.

In fact, the naming and translation of brand are closely related to the Chinese cultural psychology. As Lv Ye mentions that brands often contain rich human-regional factors, national customs, and aesthetic features. The naming of brands is involved in many factors such as linguistic rules, cultural psychology and aesthetic interest. For example, a brand of Chinese cosmetic is named "mei-jia-jing", which is made up of three Chinese characters meaning "beauty and

cleanness". The naming takes Chinese cultural psychology of love to the beauty and cleanness. Another example is a tonic made in Shanghai named "lai-fu" which means the coming of the good fortune. The name shows the Chinese cultural psychology of pray blessing for a good fortune. A kind of tea is named beautiful "West Lake" which makes people have a good feeling of that kind of tea with the imagination of West Lake. Others include the drink "Tong-Yi" which means unification, alcoholic drink "Jin-Liu-Fu" which means happiness and good fortune, a make of computer named "Fang-Zheng" which means "square". All these represent the in-depth Chinese cultural psychology, only those can give costumers a good association to good fortune, happiness, and union and so on, only these kinds of brands can form a good ad effect, which cause people to remember.

In the translation of brand names, the receivers' socio-cultural psychology is essential to be born in mind. The translation of brand names must transmit their rich cultural connotation, reflect their deep culture and meaning, and only so it can be widely accepted by the receivers. NIKE is an international brand, whose English version means the victory goodness of Greek Myths, when it is translated into Chinese as "Nai-Ke", which in Chinese culture has a meaning of resistance and a spirit of all-conquering. Pantene is a kind of shampoos made by P&G Co., its Chinese translation as "pan-ting" will cause among people an association with a slim and graceful lady that is suitable to Chinese cultural aesthetic psychology. Goldlion consists of two parts, that is, gold and lion, in the western culture, lion is the king of the nature, which symbolizes brave and powerful men, while in China, the position of lion is not as high as it has in the western culture, further, the Chinese pronunciation of lion is "shi" which sounds like death "si", therefore, it is unadvisable to translate it as "jin-shi" which means gold lion, but translate it as "jin-li-lai" which contains the wish of coming of profit and good fortune. And "bai-xiang" which originally white elephant, has not negative meaning in Chinese culture, while when it is literally translated as "white elephant", westerners thought it expensive and useless, as a result it is not accepted by westerners. Only those naming and translation of brands concerning the receivers' cultural and psychological identity have a good market. Therefore, in translation, especially translation of brand names, the first to be considered is the consumers' or target-readers' socio-cultural psychology, not its semantic meaning.

4. Analysis of the Translation from the Perspective of Translation Aesthetics

Chinese translation of Coca Cola intelligently expresses the Chinese people's aesthetic preference, as the Chinese translation with simple four Chinese characters shows its beauty of music, rhythm, meaning, and it feels delicious and happy, which is main reason for the success of its brand in China.

4.1 Beauty in Sound

Beauty in sound in translation means that in the translating, the translators seek for the most suitable musical expressions to its original text. Beauty in sound, in a broad sense, is the melody in language and stress, which sometimes can make a sentence, even a paragraph balanced, flowing, smooth and beautiful. According to Xu Yuanchong's view, beauty in sound refers to the melody of poems, which is expressed mainly by the rhythm, poetic meter, sound group, cadence and some rhetoric ways in the poems. (Xu Yuanchong) Though Xu's definition is closely related to the poems, it is also applicable to the discussion of all translation criticism. In the sentence "His words are always more candied and candid", the beautiful words "candied, candid" will make us feel the greatness and expressivity of language. Internal melody in language provokes people to choose rhythmic and cadenced beautiful words or expressions when speaking or writing, which is the human cognitive common sense. Another feature to the beauty in sound is that most brands are sonorous with clear rhythm, which can bring a beautiful enjoyment to the target readers. In the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, Chinese pronunciation [_______ ℓ_{-}]with its unstressed and stressed syllables shows its sonorousness with plosive[]and its cadence with the change of stress, which successfully represented the beauty of language.

4.2 Beauty in Form

Beauty in form, according to Xu Yuanchong, mainly means by the beauty of poem's form, which includes the arrangement mode of poems, poetic format and other kinds of expressive methods such as the change of capitalized words and colors. Beauty in form also concerns that the brands are characteristic of simple, bright, vivid and easy to understand and remember in form. While the form of brands also plays an important role to its expressive effect, therefore, Xu's definition is also helpful to the translation of brands. In the translation of brands, it is essential to concentrate on its visual acceptance to the target readers, or it will cause a meaningless advertisement effect. For example, in the naming or translation of brands, it is not common to use those characters with too many strokes that are infrequently occurring or difficult to understand or to remember.

In Chinese, simplicity is beauty. In the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, the four Chinese characters are widely used as simple characters. Especially there are only five, three, five, and five strokes respectively, while in which there are three mouths that are related to Chinese diet preference. In addition, Chinese people think that four-character phrases or idioms are very beautiful and popular, which is the reason why there are so many four-character idioms in Chinese. In the translation, one of the principles of translation into Chinese is translators' preference to Chinese four-character

idioms and expressions.

In the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, the four-character translation is the representation of Chinese aesthetic tendency to the usage of simple Chinese characters and four-character idioms.

4.3 Beauty in Meaning

The beauty in meaning concerns the meaning or artistic conception expressed in the poems by poetic language, which also contains other expressive methods such as rhetoric, tone and language style and so on. While Wang Qing defined that beauty in meaning referred to that the brands had a beautiful artistic conception, which could arouse relative association with the feature of the brands in consumers' mind. The beauty in meaning generally focuses on the content or connotative meaning, which is of great importance in Chinese with its meaning-bound feature. That is, in Chinese, the meaning sometimes is obvious from its characters or phrases, for example, Oing(clean)is related to the water with its left part with the meaning of water, while Oing(feeling or affection) is related to the heart feeling with its left part with the meaning of heart, Qing(asking)is related to the request with the left part meaning language, and Qing (sunniness) is related to a good weather with the left part of the meaning of sun. Although the four characters have the same right part with the sound of ging (therefore, all of them are read as ging), they have absolutely different meaning with the change of left part, which is distinctive to the English's such kind of change such as suffixes or prefixes. But all the four characters are easily to be understood by Chinese people with its meaning of left part, so the beauty of meaning in Chinese characters is greatly related to its characters themselves. As the first two characters contains the meaning of delicious, while the next two have the meaning of happiness, and the whole translation has the meaning of delicious cola, or in another explanation with the meaning of delicious and happy. So the translation embodies the Chinese people's aesthetic pursuit to the beauty of an abstract image, to the happiness of life and good wishes to others.

In the Chinese translation of Coca Cola, in general there are three mouths, with rich information to show that is closely connected with people's mouth, which best reveals Chinese people's aesthetic tendency to good diet with rich dietetic culture. Therefore, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola embodies the Chinese aesthetic pursuit to a good diet and a happy life. Generally speaking, translators concern more about the aesthetic effect of translation in target readers' situation.

From the etymology, Coca Cola is just a kind of drink, while its Chinese translation is different from its origin, which has a meaning of delicious cola. From the aspects of phonetics, morphology and semantics, the Chinese translation equally has its phonetic and morphologic features, while the semantic meaning of Chinese version is richer than that of original. From the perspective of culture, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola satisfies the Chinese people's cultural identity and psychology to the good diet and happy life. While from the translation aesthetics, the Chinese translation embodies the aesthetic tendency preference of Chinese people, which realizes the "three beauties". With the need of brand's advertisement and sell, the translation of brands should not be strictly or firmly accordant to its meaning, but accordant to target readers' acceptance psychology, cultural identity and aesthetic preference. Therefore, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola into "kekoukele" is a great translation. However, its Japanese translation " $\neg \neg \neg$ " and Russian translation "koka-koлa" have not the same effect as Japanese and Russians have different cultural psychology and aesthetic preference that the translation could not embody with the translation as Chinese version. From the discussion, it is easy to draw the conclusion that the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is good in its linguistic, cultural and aesthetic level.

5. The Enlightenment of the Chinese Translation of Coca Cola

According to these articles or books, it can easily realize that the focus of brand translation turns to the consumers' psychology. Some still concern more about the original, however, according to the analysis of Chinese translation of Coca Cola, the Chinese version of Coca Cola is mainly translation-oriented, that means it concerns more about the receivers or consumers, focuses on the target readers' socio-cultural psychology. Therefore, the significance of the discussion of Chinese translation of Coca Cola is that in brand translation, the first and most concern is the receivers' socio-cultural psychology, not constrained to the original but translation-oriented and target-oriented. As a matter of fact, the principle is not only suitable to the brand translation, but also to other kind of translation activity such as ad translation, book title translation, movie title translation and even some literary translation.

According to the above-mentioned principle, the translation of brands or trademarks firstly has to take receivers' sociocultural psychology into consideration. Only those that are accordant with the target readers' cultural identity and aesthetic psychology can be widely accepted by the consumers. As Coca Cola was firstly translated into Chinese as "kekekenla", the brand name was not accepted very well.

In addition, during the process of brand translation, it is useful to take the functions of brand into account. Any brands

are used to attract the consumers' attention, enlarge its influence of the products, make more consumers known and remember them, so the final purpose of brands is to attract the consumers' to buy the products. This is the function or purpose. So the brand translation is not only a single process of transcoding, but also as a specific form of human action. From the perspective of functionalism of translation studies, "each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose." (from Nord) The purpose of a brand text is its function. According to the Skopostheorie, the Chinese translation of Coca Cola has realized the purpose of the brand translation. First of all, the translation embodied its commercial purpose to make Chinese people feel it beautiful, acceptable, attractive, and easy to understand and remember. On the other hand, the translation realized the psychological identity of Chinese people, which is the aim of brand translation. As the Chinese translation of Coca Cola shows, the function of Coca Cola is to attract the consumer to like it, it must express its attractive function.

In the brand translation, the brand's feature is also deserved to be concerned. The first is its simplicity and memorability. Brands or trademarks will attract public's attention, arouse their interests, leave an unforgettable impression on them and inspire their purchase desire, if any brand leaves public a feeling of "new and fresh", attractive and impressive, such as Kodak, Coca Cola are easy to be remembered for any consumer. The second feature is full of connotation and association. Brands must be associative for target readers and leave good impression on them. In this aspect, the brands must be accordant to the consumers' cultural background and aesthetic need. Good brands have good effect with their good connotative and associative meaning, as in Chinese, many characters with rich connotative and associative meaning are used for the brands, so does the translation of foreign brands into Chinese.

So the translation of the brands has to take the customers' acceptance into consideration, that is, it must be accordant to the customers' cultural identity and aesthetic psychology or in another phrase "sociocultural psychology". The excellent Chinese translation of Coca Cola gave us a good example of brands translation. In the brands translation, it is essential to concern the linguistic feature of the brands, and take the customers' culture feature and aesthetic feature into account, to realize the brands attraction function. As in the translation of other brands, such as the translation of Chinese products into foreign languages, it is better to concern the three aspects, linguistics, culture and aesthetics.

In translating of brands, the most important consideration is the target readers' sociocultural psychology. From this point of view, this principle is also applicable to many texts, such as translation of book titles, movie titles, ads, and even literary texts. Therefore in translation, the target receivers' sociocultural psychology is the most important considerable factor to be concerned, especially to those texts that rest more with the target readers' or consumers' acceptance. As a result, in the translation and translation criticism, the target readers' sociocultural psychology works as a direction.

6. Conclusion

After the discussion of the Chinese translation of Coca Cola at the angles of linguistics, culture translation and translation aesthetics, it is concluded that the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is successful not only in form, but also in meaning, cultural identity and social psychological acceptance, as the Chinese translation of Coca Cola is widely accepted by Chinese people with its perfect realization of Chinese cultural feature and aesthetic psychology. The analysis is not only limited within the superficial impressive discussion and evaluation, but also concerned with the concrete and theoretical discussion. The model of analysis can be applied to the evaluation of brands translation and guide the brands translation activity, that is, it is necessary to consider the three or more aspects in the brand translation criticism and in the process of brand translation, even in all translation practice. Therefore, in the translation practice, especially brand translation, it is necessary to consider all the factors including morphologic, phonetic, phonologic equivalence, similar cultural image and aesthetic effect, while the first and foremost is the target readers' or consumers' sociocultural psychology.

More importantly, the translation strategy can be applied to the translation of book titles, movie titles, ads, even literary texts, and the translation criticism, as the translation activity is completely connected with the translator's and target readers' sociocultural psychological preference and feature. According to the discussion, a conclusion can be drawn that in translation the most important influencing factor is the target readers' sociocultural psychology, which influence not only on the translation strategy, but also on the meeting, reading, choice of translation texts, the translation acceptance and translation criticism.

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Notes

Note 1. http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=coca&searchmode=none

Table 1. The Linguistic Features of English Coca Cola

Different phonetics features	Coca Cola
c	[]
0	[_U]
a	[_]
1	[…]
e	[_]
со	[U]
са	[]
la	[]
Coca	[]
Cola	[]
Coca Cola	[
	<i>l</i>]

Table 2. The Linguistic Features of Chinese Translation of Coca Cola

Kekoukele	pronunciation of effect of its Chinese version	
ke	[]	
kou	[]	
le	[]	
keko	[]	
u		
kele	[]	
Keko	[.]	
ukele		