

# Research on C-E Translation of Cross-border E-commerce Webpages Based on Functional Equivalence Theory

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## Abstract

With the rapid development of economy, cross-border e-commerce has gradually become the main form of international trade, which has greatly promoted global trade activities and made shopping more convenient for consumers. Therefore, Chinese consumers have an increased demand for browsing global shopping websites. However, the Chinese-English translation of cross-border e-commerce website pages is not very mature and there are many problems, and the traditional business English translation in the past can no longer meet the needs of the current development, so it is of great significance for its reform and innovation. Guided by Nida's functional equivalence theory, this paper mainly analyzes the translation of China's cross-border e-commerce platforms from the perspectives of morphology, syntax and discourse equivalence, summarizes the translation method, and aims to solve specific problems in business English translation in the context of cross-border e-commerce, improve translation quality, seize business opportunities and promote cooperation.

## Keywords

Business English; Cross-border E-commerce; Web Pages; Functional Equivalence; Translation Strategies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to the rapid development of Internet technology, China's cross-border e-commerce is developing rapidly, which is a huge driving force for China's economic development and progress. According to relevant economic statistics, the transaction volume of China's cross-border e-commerce continues to increase. Compared with traditional import and export trade, cross-border e-commerce has its unique advantages, for example, it gets rid of the limitation of time and space, allowing buyers and sellers around the world to complete their trade through online transactions. Buyers and sellers carry out preliminary communication through the text or picture type product description presented on the web page, so it is particularly important to have accurate and situational description of the web page. Therefore, it has theoretical basis and practical significance to study cross-border e-commerce web page translation under the guidance of functional equivalence theory, which can effectively meet the needs of the cross-border e-commerce industry. [1]

## 2. FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE THEORY

### 2.1. Introduction of Functional Equivalence Theory

In 1964, Nida published the *Toward A Science of Translation*, in which Nida proposed the concept of "dynamic equivalence", which emphasizes that the expression of the target text

should be natural and the effect of the target text and the source text on each reader should be as equal as possible. [3] Therefore, dynamic equivalence is a translation oriented approach, which requires the translator to make appropriate adjustments to the original text according to the culture and language habits of the target language. However, the term "dynamic" was easy to cause people to misunderstand, so to dispel the misunderstanding and emphasize the concept of "functional", he changed it to "functional equivalence". The core of functional equivalence theory is that the reader's reaction to the target text should be basically the same as the author's feeling and reaction to the source text.

Then, according to the linguistic and cultural gap between the source language and the target language, Nida further divides functional equivalence into minimum and maximum functional equivalence, which further improves functional equivalence theory. Therefore, Nida's functional equivalence theory not only requires the translator to accurately understand the information conveyed in the original text and express it in the most appropriate and natural equivalent in the target language, but also requires the translator to pay attention to the reader's response.

## **2.2. Business Translation under Functional Equivalence Theory**

Cross-border e-commerce is to put domestic products on the third-party platform website, the product is sold to foreign users, the process involves the translation of China's product information into another language, and the quality of the translation will directly affect the shopping needs of consumers, and in the English interface of China's cross-border e-commerce website, the operator's use of basic English vocabulary and grammar is overall better, but there are many defects, which leads to merchants can not promote the latest products to consumers from all over the world in time and miss the opportunity. Therefore, web page translation should meet the needs of consumers, so that consumers read the product information is real, and this information can attract consumers and stimulate their desire to buy. [7]

For business translation, the biggest requirement is to be able to communicate well with customers, to accurately convey product information to consumers, so that they can feel the product information in all directions, which is in line with the theory of functional reciprocity. Weng Fengxiang believes in On the 4Es Standard of Business that the business efficacy of the original text and the commercial efficacy of the translation should be equal. Therefore, functional equivalence theory has important guiding significance for business translation in the study of language characteristics, focusing on information expression and analyzing logical relationships. [5] Therefore, using functional equivalence theory to guide translation can enable translated consumers to truly and accurately understand the information of the product, meet the expectations of consumers for the product, and thus improve their desire to buy.

## **3. APPLICATION OF FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE THEORY IN CROSS-BORDER E-COMMERCE WEB PAGE TRANSLATION**

Language translation in cross-border e-commerce platforms belongs to the category of business English translation, which covers a large number of cross-border e-commerce professional terms and professional expressions, and the language forms are diverse. It requires translators not only to have basic translation skills and basic knowledge, but also to have a certain understanding of cross-border e-commerce knowledge. Therefore, the content of this chapter is guided by the theory of functional equivalence, mainly from the three aspects of lexical equivalence, syntactic equivalence and textual equivalence, in addition, it summarizes the characteristics of cross-border e-commerce web page language and corresponding translation methods.

### 3.1. Lexical Equivalence

The biggest feature of business English in vocabulary is that it contains a large number of professional vocabulary related to commodities, covering ordinary words and compound words with business meaning, as well as abbreviations, etc., which requires translators to identify according to the content of the original text, so as to accurately grasp the meaning of words.[4] In addition, the vocabulary in the English language of the cross-border e-commerce webpage will change with the changes of the times, so many new words will appear, which requires the translator to keep pace with the times, not only need to accurately understand the new words in the original text, but also need to combine the culture of the target language readers to translate the new words into the language that the target language readers can understand.[2] What's more, the description of the product in the web page contains a large number of modifiers, due to the difference in Chinese and English culture, the consumer's reaction will be different when seeing the same description. In short, the translator's translation should not only be accurate, clear and easy to understand, but also can cause consumers to buy. The Examples are showed as follows:

#### Example 1

ST: 2018新安卓Wifi 3D视频眼镜 移动影院 支持AR软件 3D智能

TT: 2018 New Android Wifi 3D video glasses mobile theater support AR software 3D smart.

#### Example 2

ST: 新设计 虚拟现实 3D VR 眼镜与耳机 虚拟实境 3d Ar Vr 智能耳机 眼镜 用于视频和游戏。

TT: New Design Virtual Reality 3D VR Glasses With Earphones Metaverse 3d Ar Vr Smart Headset Glasses For Video And Games.

These two examples are taken from the titles of the same type of virtual VR glasses sold on Alibaba's international website. Before the advent of VR technology, there was no translation of this kind of glasses that could experience virtual reality in the dictionary. Therefore, cross-border e-commerce web page translation has the characteristics of flexibility. In Example 1, the translator used the expression "vedio glasses", which is not very accurate and does not meet the requirements of the theory of functional reciprocity. Because the function of glasses is not only to watch movies, but also to experience games and so on. In contrast, the expression of "smart headset glasses" in Example 2 will be clearer and more accurate, "smart" summarizes the function of this glasses, and "headset" clearly indicates how the glasses are worn. In addition, when translating, the translation of "VR" and "AR" retains the original abbreviated format. Whether abroad or at home, people can understand "VR" and the technology represented by "AR", so there is no need to translate the words represented by the abbreviated form.

#### Example 3

ST: 抗汗防水, 效果持续一整段时间, 不晕妆。

TT: Anti-sweat and water, the effect lasts for a whole time, and the makeup is not dizzy.

This example comes from a mascara seller's description of the effects of mascara. In this example, the translation of "不晕妆" is inappropriate, and "dizzy" is used to describe a person who feels as if everything is spinning around him and that he is not able to balance. "不晕妆" in Chinese actually means that makeup is not mottled, so "dizzy" should be replaced by "mottling". There will be a large number of descriptions of products in cross-border e-commerce, so when translating, the translator needs to correctly understand the meaning of the original text and translate it with accurate modifiers.

### 3.2. Syntactic Equivalence

When translating cross-border e-commerce sentences, it is necessary to be familiar with the relevant product knowledge, understand common terms, contact context, and adopt appropriate translation skills. Compared with other industry English, cross-border e-commerce English rarely involves long and difficult sentences, and the sentence structure is relatively simple and clear, which is easy to read. In addition, when carrying out product descriptions and marketing activities, cross-entry e-commerce texts tend to use more active structures to emphasize the subjectivity of cross-border e-commerce parties including both parties to the transaction, platform operators, and third-party services. Therefore, when translating sentences, translators need to understand the differences between Chinese and English cross-border e-commerce languages and use reasonable translation methods to achieve functional equivalence.

#### 3.2.1. Inversion

Cross-border e-commerce translation must fully consider the language habits and thinking patterns of the intended readers. English sentences generally put the key information at the beginning, while in the Chinese generally put the key information at the end of the sentence, so appropriate adjustments need to be made when translating.

##### Example 4

ST: 广州碧盈化妆品是一家集研发、生产、销售为一体的专业化妆品公司，坚持"品牌"的发展战略，秉承"诚实守信，质量第一"的经营理念。

TT: Guangzhou BIYING Cosmetics is a professional cosmetics company integrating R&D, production and sales, adheres to the 'brand' development strategy, and the business philosophy of 'Honesty and trustworthiness, quality first'.

This is an example of a company's self-introduction on its product sales page. In Chinese sentences, the summary of the company is put at the end of the sentence, and the description of the characteristics of the company is put at the front of the sentence, while in English, it is just the opposite. The translation of this sentence conforms to the expression habits of English and achieves functional equivalence.

##### Example 5

ST: 在给我们大订单之前，我们可以为您提供样品进行测试。

TT: We can provide a sample to you do best before give us a big order.

In Chinese, it is customary to write sentences in chronological order, and what happens first is put before the sentence. However, in English, it is related to the use of the preposition "before", so the translation needs to adjust the word order to conform to the expression habits of English.

#### 3.2.2. Combination

Chinese emphasizes parataxis and its structure is loose, so there are many simple sentences. English emphasizes hypotaxis and strict structure, so there are more long sentences. Therefore, when translating from Chinese to English, we should make use of conjunctions, participles, prepositions, infinitives, attributive clauses and independent structures to connect short Sentences in Chinese into long sentences in English. Although the structure of compound sentences in cross-border e-commerce texts is not complicated, translators must carefully analyze the original text, determine the relationship between the components, and then accurately express the meaning.

##### Example 6

ST: 3CE不止售卖彩妆和时尚, 更代表一种生活方式。她承袭首尔的神韵, 希望通过其前卫和创造力, 赋予女性以独特的个性

TT: 3CE IS THE LIFE STYLE BRAND THAT CAPTURES SEOUL' SVIBES, EDGE AND CREATNITY TO EMPOWER AND ENCOURAGE WOMEN' S INDNIDUALITY.

This is a description of the 3CE brand on alibaba's international shopping website. Comparing these two descriptions, there are more small clauses in Chinese than in English. In English, it takes only one sentence to express what it takes two sentences in Chinese. The subject of the whole sentence is actually 3CE, so only one 3CE is used when translating into English, which avoids repetition. And the translator translated the second sentence in Chinese into an appositive clause, and then used "to" to express the purpose. Nida once said that in order to translate meaning, form must be changed. Therefore, this example conform to Nida's functional equivalence theory.

### 3.2.3. Negation

In translation practice, in order for the translation to faithfully and linguistically customarily convey the meaning of the original text, it is sometimes necessary to turn the positive statement in the original text into a negative statement in the translation or a negative statement in the original text into an affirmative statement in the translation. On the basis of faithfulness to the original text, flexible and appropriate use of this translation method can make the translation more authentic and fluent.

#### Example 7

ST: 我们承诺以最优惠的价格提供最优质的产品, 因此收入微薄。

TT: We promise we offer good quality for best price, so there is not so much interest.

This example is taken from a company's statement about not being able to provide free samples. Due to different language habits, it would be more accurate and appropriate to translate "low income" into negative expression "there is not so much interest" here. If directly translated into "our interest is low", English readers may think that the company's products are not good, so few people will buy them.

### 3.3.4. Textual Equivalence

Functional equivalence theory emphasizes the fluency and readability of text at the textual level. The target text must conform to the target language culture, be easy for the target language readers to understand, and make the response of the target language readers and the original readers as consistent as possible. For example, Chinese product titles often have contradictory antonyms. If these descriptions are only translated word by word, buyers will be confused.

In addition, functional equivalence theory also emphasizes the coherence and cohesion of the text. Chinese and English have different ways to make the text appear smooth and easy to read. Therefore, in order to achieve the same effect in translation, translators are required to understand the differences between Chinese and English expressions and flexibly use coherent words. And text equivalence means proper selection and modification in translation to make the translated text smooth, natural and acceptable to buyers.

#### Example 8

ST: 我们的化妆品质量达到专业化妆品标准。许多专业化妆师给模特化妆时都使用我们的产品, 在照片里显示的妆容颜色让他们非常满意。我们向您保证, 我们的产品以市场最实惠的价格提供给您最好的品质。

对于低起订量, 我们也愿意提供OEM和ODM服务, 帮助我们的客户推广自己的品牌。

TT: The quality of our makeup products meet to professional cosmetics standard. Thousands of professional makeup artists use them on their models, they satisfy with the nice colors shown on taking photos. We have confidence to assure you of high quality cosmetics and competitive prices.

Also we would like to offer OEM and ODM service with low MOQ to help our customer to promote their own brand.

In the original text, the use of “我们的化妆品” and “我们的产品” can makes two sentences closely connected. When translating, the translator didn't repeat the word “our product”, but used “them” to replace it, which fits the English expression habits. Moreover, in the second paragraph, the translator added the word “also” to make the connection of the two paragraphs smooth.

## 4. PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Since translation is an exchange between two cultures, the Chinese and customs are characterized by diversity and complexity. And there are differences between China and other countries in terms of environmental culture, way of thinking, religious culture, etc. Therefore, the translation of cultural load words and rhetorical sentences is a difficult point for translators. This chapter introduces the translation difficulties encountered in the translation of cross-border e-commerce web pages and proposes corresponding solutions.

### 4.1. The Translation of Culture-loaded Words

Cultural load words refer to those words that contain rich socio-cultural meanings above their original or conceptual meanings. Whether in Chinese or English, there are many words with strong cultural characteristics, especially in many idioms, languages, slang, and dialects, and the cultural connotation is particularly rich. As far as the translation of these two languages is concerned, cultural load words include the following two categories: one is the words that the Chinese culture has but the English culture does not have, or the words that the English culture has but the Chinese culture lacks, which contain the most characteristic cultural factors; the other is the words that both English and Chinese words have, but in the two cultures, they have different or even diametrically opposed associative meanings.

Improper translation of culture-loaded words in product description will affect the sales of the product in the target language country. For example, when T-shirts with the “lucky dog” logo were designed as “幸运狗” in Chinese, few people took them up. Because in the West, people think the dog is a lovely animal and a faithful friend of human beings, many people take the dog as a pet. In English, “top dog” means an important person, and “lucky dog” means a lucky person, not a lucky dog. However, in China, many words about dogs are derogatory words, such as “狗腿子”, “狼心狗肺”, “狗东西” and so on. Later, the translation of “Lucky Dog” was changed to “幸运儿,” and the T-shirts was sold much better.[6]

These cultural words are the product of the influence and restriction of a nation's material culture, institutional custom culture and spiritual culture on its language vocabulary system. Therefore, in order to achieve functional equivalence in translating cultural load words, translators are required to understand cultural differences, and at the same time, to enhance the awareness of cross-cultural communication, in order to overcome the translation obstacles caused by Chinese differences in the translation process, so as to respect the etiquette, culture and customs of other countries, deepen mutual understanding, and then promote cooperation.

### 4.2. The Translation of Rhetorical Sentences

In order to promote the sales of products, persuasive texts in commercial advertisements usually contain rhetoric, which gives full play to the aesthetic and persuasive functions of



language. However, due to the cultural differences in different countries, consumers in different countries will have different characteristics of consumer psychology. Therefore, mastering the translation of rhetorical sentences is an important means to stimulate consumers' desire to buy. In the Chinese shopping website, there are a large number of four-word words for the description of the product, and these four-word words contain rhetoric, which will cause consumers to imagine the beauty of the product after purchasing the product, but in overseas shopping website the products exaggerated sexual modification is less, consumers generally pay attention to the practical function of products abroad. Therefore, when translating, it is possible to appropriately reduce the exaggerated modification of the product in the Chinese description, and try to translate it into short and easy-to-understand language.

There are differences between Chinese and Western rhetorical sentences, which can reflect different national psychology. The similarities and differences of national psychology will naturally affect consumers' shopping mentality. Therefore, the translator integrates the unique national culture into the translation of the modified sentence, so that consumers can identify with the product more psychological resonance, less psychological barriers, and only in this way can the sales of the product be promoted.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Business English is a common communication language in the field of cross-border e-commerce, and business English translation plays an important role in cross-border e-commerce activities. The quality of business English translation will directly affect the economic interests of businesses. Therefore, in the era of continuous growth of import and export of cross-border e-commerce, the English translation of cross-border e-commerce must also develop forward, so as to better promote the steady progress of import and export trade. Based on functional equivalence theory and practical examples, this paper analyzes the characteristics of cross-border e-commerce translation from three aspects. Cross-border e-commerce website page translation requires translators to be proficient in Both English and Chinese languages and their cultures, as well as be familiar with cross-border e-commerce professional knowledge and understand the language characteristics and expressions of different texts. In this way, the sales volume of goods can be increased and the role and advantages of cross-border e-commerce in international trade can be reflected.

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