

Research on the Translation of Liquor Brands in Huaian City

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Abstract—In this paper, combining with the British translation theorist, Peter Newmark, on the classification of text types, namely, the expressive text type, the informative text type and calling attention text type, the author puts forward the latter two kinds of text types are fit for the translation of liquor brands. In the process of translation of liquor brands, on the premise of adhering to the principles of commodity brand translation and *Cuisine Translation Principles*, we should also consider the local liquor culture characteristics. At the same time, we should adopt the legal requirements of developed countries to add warnings of excessive drinking is harmful and no drunk driving to liquor product logos.

Index Terms—Huai liquor, the principles of liquor brands translation, Chinese pinyin domestication translation strategy, warnings

I. INTRODUCTION

Chinese liquor culture has a long history, its fame does not only come from its extensiveness, profoundness, vast territory and variety, but also from its unique fragrance, mysterious brewing process and production of liquor, which enjoys a good reputation both at home and abroad. In terms of the types, there are five main categories: liquor, rice wine, beer, fruit wine and mixed wine. If we classify liquor according to their different flavors, there are maotai-flavor, luzhou-flavor, light fragrant flavor, rice fragrant flavor, phoenix fragrant flavor, sesame fragrant flavor, fermented bean fragrant flavor and special fragrant flavor, altogether 8 categories (Gao, 2002). Huaian City, the capital of the Grand Canal, is famous for its production of liquor, whose liquor production can date back to western Han Dynasty, and became famous in Tang Dynasty. But the persons who made Huai liquor very famous all over old China were two emperors, namely, Emperor Yangdi Sui and Emperor Qianlong. One legend says when Emperor Yangdi Sui was en route to Yangzhou to appreciate garden flowers, he tasted Shuanggou liquor, one of famous brand liquors in Huaian, leaving such autograph, which says "If you want to appreciate the beautiful scenes, come to Yangzhou City. If you want to drink best liquor, drink Shuanggou liquor" (P.99). Emperor Qianlong in Qing Dynasty loved Yanghe liquor (another famous liquor in Huaian City) very much, not only did he name it as one of royal liquors, but also inscribed his autograph "Yanghe liquor is fragrant in flavor, it is really good liquor" (P.101). It is said that Emperor Qianlong used Yanghe liquor as the liquor to keep healthy, he drank 50-100ml Yanghe liquor every day, which contributed greatly to his longevity of eighty-nine years old. Among more than two hundred emperors in the past dynasties in China, he enjoyed the longest life. In the modern and contemporary international and domestic liquor and wine fairs, Huai liquors have won gold and silver medals many times.

II. PRINCIPLES TO TRANSLATE BRANDS OF LIQUOR AND WINE

As for brands of imported liquor and wine, they should still adopt their original English brands. As for domestic liquor and wine, they should adopt their registered English names. If the liquor or wine doesn't have registered English names, they should use Chinese pinyin (Foreign Affairs Office of Beijing Municipal Government, Office of Citizens in Beijing Speaking Foreign Languages Organization Committee, 2011).

III. THE TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES ABOVE ARE TOO GENERAL, SIMPLE, IT CAN'T SATISFY THE NEEDS TO PROMOTE CHINESE LIQUORS AND WINES TO THE WORLD MARKET

The British translation theorist Peter Newmark put forward in his book *The Exploration of Translation Issues that* different texts have cognitive meaning, communication meaning and associative meaning, which can be divided into expressive function, informative function and calling attention function according to their different functions. In terms of different texts, there are "expressive texts", "informative texts" and "calling attention texts" altogether three categories. "Expressive texts" include literature works, personal letters, autobiographies and prose, etc. Its core function is to express feelings. "Informative texts" include non-literary works, textbooks, academic papers and articles on newspaper and magazines etc. "Calling attention texts" include product manuals, notices, instructions, publicity, advertisements, etc (NewMark, 2002). As we know, "informative texts" and "calling attention texts" themselves possess functions to provide "information" and "calling attention", so providing information and exerting influence on the

audience is the main purpose of these two kinds of texts .It goes without saying that liquor brand translation belongs to the latter two, namely "the informative texts" and "calling attention texts". This is because liquor translation should not only provide accurate information of liquor to the target language receivers (including brand names, the types of liquor and wine, liquor fragrant flavor types, its compositions, liquor degrees, producing areas, excessive drinking hazard warning and qualified product logos, etc.), What is more important is that liquor translation possesses functions for the publicity of the liquor products, advertising, sales promotion, so the translation principles above can't meet the needs of the liquor and wine translation, which still needs to be supplemented further. My suggestions are as follows:

Liquor Brand Translation

Liquor brand translation is the key to successful promotion .This is because the brand is the "eye" of product, if the "eye" of product is "charming", "hooking consumers' soul", it can expect consumers to accept and buy the liquor products, to some extent, choice of words during liquor brand translation is the first consideration for the translators. Liquor brands are roughly classified into four categories: brands named after the original production areas; brands named after celebrities or noble families; brands named after brewing materials or processes; brands named after the traditional Chinese medicine and brands named after implications, expectations and blessings (Wan, 2000). The former two types can use Chinese pinyin + type of liquor or wine, while the latter two types can use free translation + liquor or wine types so that the target language receivers can understand the compositions of liquor or wine and the enterprises' wishes and expectations for their potential consumers.

A. Brands Named after Original Production Areas, Celebrities and Noble Families

This kind of liquor brand translation can use special nouns (Chinese pinyin: names of production areas and names of noble families) + nouns with common meaning (product properties), which is the basic principles of commodity translation. The reason why liquor-making enterprises use the production areas, names of celebrities and noble families is that they are sure these names are well- known at home and abroad, there is no barrier to the understanding of Chinese pinyin to international friends .The use of common nouns to translate these brands is to convey the information of the types of products and the use of them. If we also use Chinese pinyin for these common nouns, the information of product properties and their uses has not been conveyed to target language receivers. That is to say, the result of translation behavior is failure.

Translation of brands named after production areas:

茅台(Moutai); 泸州老窖(Lou Zhou Lao Jiao); 蒙古王(Mongolian King); 牛栏山经典二锅头(Niulanshan Classic Erguotou). 哈尔滨啤酒(Harbin Beer).

Translation of brands named after celebrities and noble families:

康雍乾御酒(Kang Yong Qian); 孔府家宴酒(Confucius); 西夏王冰白(Xixia King Ice Wine); 太白酒(Taibai Liquor); 文君酒(Wenjun Liquor).

According to the principles of translation above, although the liquor products above are domestic and even international famous brands, there are some problems for their brand translation. For example, brands named after the production areas: Maotai, LouZhou Lao Jiao, Mongolia King and Niulanshan Classic Erguotou are highlighted for their information transmission of production areas, but they haven't passed on the information of product properties and their uses to target language receivers. Only the translation of the brand Harbin Beer is correct. The problem in the translation of brands named after celebrities and noble families is that the former two has only conveyed the information of celebrities, lack of product properties and their uses .The latter three are correct.

The referential translation can be Moutai Liquor, Louzhou Liquor, Mongolian King Liquor, Niulanshan Classic Liquor, Kang Yong Qian Liquor and Confucius Liquor.

B. Translation of Brands Named after Materials and the Technologies of Liquor Brewing

In China , there are a lot of brands named after brewing materials, such as 五粮液(Wuliangye), 枸杞酒(Gouqi Wine), 白糯米酒(Glutinous Rice Wine), 黑糯米酒(Black Glutinous Rice Wine), 雅妍樱桃果露酒(Yayan Cherry Liquor), 雅妍苹果酒(Yayan Apple Wine), 雅妍草莓酒(Yayan Strawberry Wine), 张裕干红葡萄酒(Chang Yu Dry Red Wine).

The production of liquor in China is mainly divided into three stages : distilling stage , brewing stage and diluting stage , so some of the liquor companies name their liquor brands after their liquor-making technologies,for example ,古井大曲(Gujingdaqu), 泸州老窖头曲(LuzhouLaojiaotouqu), 郎牌特曲(Langpaitequ).

The problem of brand translation above is that brewing materials have adopted Chinese pinyin rather than translation from the names of materials. According to the principles of brand translation of commodity, production materials should adopt free translation (names of materials) + product properties. For example, the former two 五粮液(Wuliangye) fully adopts Chinese pinyin, the material of 枸杞酒(Gouqi Wine) uses Chinese pinyin, product properties uses free translation, which are against the principles of commodity brand translation. This will render the target language receivers to be at a loss by the information obtained, they will mistake wuliangye and gouqi for the names of persons or places, from which they will never know they are materials to make liquor. Among the latter several wine brand translation, only 雅妍樱桃果露酒(Yayan Cherry Liquor) has wrong choice of English words. In English, liquor refers to liquid produced by

boiling or fermenting a food substance, while wine refers to liquid made from grapes and other fruit(The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English with Chinese Translation, 1963). Obviously, 雅妍樱桃果露酒 is wine, not liquor.

The referential translation can be 五粮液(Liquor From Five Grains), 枸杞酒(Chinese Wolfberry Wine) and 雅妍樱桃果露酒(Yayan Cherry Wine).

C. Medicinal Liquor and Health Liquor Named after the Traditional Chinese Medicine

There are many kinds of medicinal liquor and health liquor in China. More famous medicinal liquor and health liquor mainly include: 虎骨酒(Tiger Bone Liquor), 三蛇酒(Liquor Of Three Kinds of Snakes), 熊掌药酒(Bear Pawn Medicinal Liquor), 灵芝酒(Ganoderma Lucidum Liquor), 海马酒(Hippocampus Liquor), 雪蛤大补酒(Frog Tonic Liquor), 鹿尾巴补酒(Deer Tailed Tonic Liquor), 人参酒(Ginseng Liquor), 多鞭酒(Liquor Of Animals' Whips), 玉容葆春酒(Liquor To Keep Young And Energetic), 少林药酒(Shaolin Monk Medicinal Liquor), 参杞补酒(Tonic Liquor Of Ginseng And Chinese Wolfberry), 十全大补酒(Tonic Liquor Of Ten Chinese Medicine), 风湿骨痛酒(Liquor To Cure Rheumatism Bone Pain) and 养血愈风酒 (Liquor To Nourish Blood).

It is our translators' duty to translate these Chinese medicinal liquors that can keep healthy, prevent and cure diseases into English. As for medicinal liquor translation, the author thinks that the first important task for the translators is to provide accurate information of medicinal liquor and health liquor products (including name of the brand, Chinese traditional medicine, compositions, prevention or treatment of certain diseases, taboos and qualified product logos, etc.) As for the strategy of translation, we should adopt domestication translation strategy, it is because the function of medicinal liquor and health liquor is for the prevention and treatment of diseases, which is a matter of life and death, so the translation must convey accurate information to target language receivers, and Chinese pinyin is not acceptable at all. English translation must be accurate and idiomatic, which can not be misunderstood by target language receivers.

D. Translation of the Brands Named after Implications, Wishes and Blessings

In China, there are many liquor brands named after implications ,wishes and blessings .such as: 长寿长乐牌(with no Chinese pinyin and English translation), 红福牌(Hongfu), 丰收牌(Fengshou), 牡丹牌(with no Chinese pinyin and English translation), 双喜牌(Shuangxi), 天一牌(Tianyi), 万事如意牌(Wangshiruyi), 凤凰牌(Phoenix) and 劲牌(Jing Wine) etc.From the brands above ,there are only two brands,凤凰牌(Phoenix) and 劲牌(Jing Wine) having English translation and only 劲牌(Jing Wine)'s translation is correct, because 凤凰牌(Phoenix) has not provided information of product properties. As for the translation of these implications, wishes and blessings in the brands, we should also adopt domestication translation strategy(or free translation) to convey liquor enterprises' goodwill to their potential consumers.

The referential translations can be as follows: 长寿长乐牌(Longevity And Happiness Liquor); 红福牌(Happy Liquor); 丰收牌(Harvest Liquor); 牡丹牌(Peony Liquor); 双喜牌(Double Happiness Liquor); 天一牌(God Bestowed Liquor); 万事如意牌(All The Best Liquor); 凤凰牌(Phoenix Liquor) and 劲牌(Jing Wine) etc. Though "Double happiness" seems ridiculous to target language receivers, it has long been accepted in English because of sports equipment like table tennis bats. Whether the translation of 劲牌(Jing Wine) can be changed into Strength Liquor ,it is worth discussing , because everyone loves to be strong and vital .

IV. TRANSLATION OF BRANDS OF HUAI LIQUOR

A. The Origin of Huai Liquor and Its Development

More than twenty years ago,scientists of Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Ancient Human Beings' Research Institute found the fossils of ancient apes about 15-12 million years ago in Xiacao Bay (one place in Xuyi County, Huaian City) along the downstream of the Huaihe River ,which they named "Shuanggou drunk apes and the earliest ancient ape fossils so far in China" (P.93). Is it true those apes got drunk by Shuanggou Liquor? The answer is definitely not. According to the scientists findings, those ancient apes were drunk by the fruit wine of the fallen fruits fermented in the cracks of stones. Then, when the hell did human beings begin to make liquor or wine? It is still a mystery.

Based on large amounts of archaeological discoveries, ancient people in Huaiyi (ancient name of Huaian City) had made liquor cups of clay around 6-7 thousand years ago, which means human beings had invented technology to make liquor or wine (Li, 2006). According to *Imperial Mandate On Liquor* "Humans put their left food in the holes near white mulberries, when it got fermented after some time, there would be fragrant smell emitting out of the holes, which they were called technology to make liquor." (P.4). From this inference, most experts think Huai Liquor was made in this technology.

As is mentioned above, Huai Liquor became very famous in Tang Dynasty, so many famous poets left their masterpieces on Huai Liquor. For example, in Shi Gao's *For Fan's Liquor Mill In Lianshui* (one county in Huaian City) "When liquor has just been made, fresh fish is being cooked in pot in the kitchen" (P.93), from which we may infer there were not only big liquor mills to make liquor, but also small liquor mills to make liquor only for the enjoyment of

family members. When Yingwu Wei, another Tang poet, was passing here, he smelled the fragrance of liquor, drank to his heart's content and left his famous poem "When liquor jars open, fragrant smell will spread all over the town for three days, which is, though, turbid, yet it is the finest cream"(P.93). Another great master of Tang poems, Shi Su was on his way to the south, passing Huaiping Town of Sizhou (present Shuanggou Town, Sihong County) on the eve of Lunar New Year of the seventh year of Yuanfeng, describing the town as "From South Street to North Avenue, there are two liquor mills every three steps"(P.94), which reflects the prosperity of Huai Liquor industry. There are so many beautiful poems on Huai Liquor by great masters of each dynasty, I will not list them one by one here.

Huai Liquor has been developing very fast after the founding of People's Republic of China, especially after the Reform and Opening-up to the Outside World. During the 1980s, there were "san gou" and "yi he"(liquor production bases at that time), "namely, Shuanggou Liquor Production Base, TangGou Liquor Production Base, Gaogou Liquor Production Base and Yanghe Liquor Production Base), so far it has reached more than 20 brands, and each liquor group(the present name of the former liquor production base) has its own product series .

B. *Liquor Products and English Logos*

1. **Liquor Brands and English Logos of Shuanggou Liquor Group**

Shuanggou Liquor Group is located in Shuanggou Town ,Sihong County, Jiangsu Province .Its brands are as follows : 花好月圆(Hua Hao Yue Yuan), 苏冠酒, 天生赢家、贵宾酒及双沟酒系列酒. Among these liquor brands, only 花好月圆 has used both Chinese characters and Chinese pinyin (with no English logo), and other brands have only used Chinese characters with neither Chinese pinyin nor English logos.

The referential translations can be as follows: 花好月圆(Happy Marriage Liquor), 苏冠酒(Jiangsu Champion Liquor), 天生赢家(Winners Liquor), 贵宾酒(VIP Liquor) and 双沟酒系列酒(Shuanggou Liquor Series).

2. **Brands and English Logos of TangGou Liquor Group**

Tanggou Liquor Group is located in Guannan County, Jiangsu Province. Its brands are as follows: 两厢地和、两厢人和、两厢天和, which have only Chinese characters without Chinese pinyin and English logos.

The referential translation can be: 两厢地和(Liangxiang Environment Harmony Liquor); 两厢人和(Liangxiang Relation Harmony Liquor); 两厢天和(Liangxiang Timing Harmony Liquor).

3. **Brands and English Logos of Gaogou Liquor Group**

Gaogou Liquor Group is located in Lianshui County, Jiangsu Province. Its brands are as follows: 今世缘(King's Luck), 国缘(Guoyuan Liquor), 玉锦缘(Yujin Yuan Liquor) and 高沟系列白酒. The former three liquors have adopted both Chinese and English logos, but the latter one has only Chinese characters without English logo. The proper reason for it is that Gaogou Liquor Group may think 高沟系列白酒 are for the domestic consumers ,not for the international consumers. We may as well add its English logo as: Gaogou Liquor Series . As for the former three English logos, they are correct.

4. **Brands and English Logos of Yanghe Liquor Group**

Yanghe Liquor Group is located in Yanghe Town ,Siyang County ,Jiangsu Province .Its brands and English logos of Yanghe Liquor Group are: 洋河蓝色经典海之蓝(Yanghe Lan Se Jing Dian ;Spirit Yanghe Classic), 洋河蓝色经典天之蓝(Yanghe Lan Se Jing Dian; Spirit Yanghe Classic, and 洋河蓝色经典梦之蓝(Yanghe Lan Se Jing Dian; Spirit Yanghe Classic. Yanghe Liquor Group has adopted the same English logos for their three different brands of liquors, which are not acceptable, because they will confuse the consumers. The other problem is that they put spirit (product properties) before the special name of liquor group.

The referential translation can be 洋河蓝色经典海之蓝(Yanghe Classic Hailan Liquor); 洋河蓝色经典天之蓝(Yanghe Classic Tianlan Liquor); 洋河蓝色经典梦之蓝(Yanghe Classic Menglan Liquor). In this way, we not only separate different kinds of liquors from one another, but also we have put the product properties (liquor) at the end of the English logos, which are required by commodity translation principles. The reason why I have not translated 海之蓝, 天之蓝, 梦之蓝 into sea blue ,sky blue and dream blue respectively is that people in the western world have different concept in thinking . Something may mean good in Chinese mind, but it may mean quite opposite in the west, because "blue" has another meaning "gloomy".

V. **ADD WARNINGS THAT EXCESSIVE DRINKING IS HARMFUL AND NO DRUNK DRIVING TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION**

There are still no legal requirements that excessive drinking is harmful and no drunk driving on liquor product English logos in China. In the developed countries, it is required by the law to put this warning on liquor product logos, so we must have the following English logo on liquor product: Excessive Drinking Is Harmful. No Drunk Driving.

VI. **CONCLUSION**

Huaian is the hometown of liquor and the capital of the Grand Canal, so it is quite necessary to give publicity of its famous liquors to the world market. During the process of translation of Huai liquor logos, we should strictly comply with the principles of commodity brand translation and those of *Cuisine Translation Principles*, combining with the

local liquor cultural features. At the same time, the translation should be in line with the British and American cultures so that they can accept Huai Liquor. Moreover, following the requirements of international liquor brand law, add English warnings that excessive drinking is harmful and no drunk driving signs to Huia Liquor logos.

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