

A Study of Technology Product Advertising Subtitle Translation Under Communicative Translation Theory: A Case Study of *Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review*

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Abstract: *Evaluation videos of technological products have emerged as a primary medium for audiences to comprehend diverse devices, consequently endowing such content with an inherent promotional nature. To facilitate Chinese viewers' understanding of international tech products, the optimization of subtitle translation has become a critical undertaking. Guided by the communicative translation theory, this paper examines translation strategies for promotional subtitles of technological products through a case study of the E-C subtitle translation for Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review from the Android Central channel on YouTube. Key strategies including transcreation, supplementation, and non-translation are systematically explored, with subsequent analysis of their practical efficacy in cross-cultural communication. The study aims to provide methodological references for enhancing the accessibility and marketing effectiveness of global tech products in localized contexts.*

Keywords: Communicative translation; Technological products; Advertisement translation; E-C translation.

Cited as: Lu, B. (2025). A Study of Technology Product Advertising Subtitle Translation Under Communicative Translation Theory: A Case Study of Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review. *Journal of Theory and Practice in Linguistics*, 2(2), 7–12. Retrieved from <https://woodyinternational.com/index.php/jtpl/article/view/217>

With the rapid advancement of technological products, evaluation videos have evolved into a primary channel for consumers to understand new devices, often carrying inherent promotional characteristics. The effective translation of subtitles for such content has thus become crucial in enabling Chinese audiences to comprehend foreign technological innovations. Guided by the principles of communicative translation theory, this study investigates strategies for translating promotional subtitles in tech product reviews through a case analysis of the E-C subtitle translation for *Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review*. The research aims to elucidate methodologies that balance informational accuracy and persuasive intent in cross-cultural technological discourse.

1. Introduction

Communicative translation and semantic translation constitute the core components of Newmark's translation theory, with the former being formally introduced in *Approaches to Translation* (2001). Communicative translation theory emphasizes the purposefulness of the target text, advocating that translation should prioritize the reception effect on target-language readers rather than rigid adherence to the source text's form. This theory proves particularly applicable to the translation of subtitles for technological product advertisements, as it ensures not only the accurate transmission of product information but also effectively engages and stimulates the interest and purchasing intent of consumers in the target market (He & Liu, 2021). In contrast, semantic translation prioritizes the cultural authenticity of the source language, focusing on faithfully reproducing cultural elements from the original text rather than optimizing the readability of the translated version (Wu, 2023).

Another pivotal concept in Newmark's framework is the text typology theory. He categorizes advertising language as a hybrid of vocative and informative texts, designed to capture audience attention, convey product details, and drive consumer action. Guided by this theory, the translation of subtitles for tech product advertisements must center on the target audience, necessitating a profound understanding of their cultural context and consumption

patterns. Within this process, communicative translation theory emerges as a critical framework, empowering translators to adapt texts flexibly. This approach ensures both the precision of technical information and the persuasive appeal of promotional content, thereby maximizing the advertisement's cross-cultural marketing efficacy.

2. Translation of Advertisements for Technological Products

As a form of commercial advertising, technology product advertisements primarily serve to introduce products, demonstrate functionalities, and highlight features to stimulate consumer purchasing intent. These advertisements exhibit three defining characteristics:

2.1 Terminology Integration to Enhance Persuasion

The objective of commercial advertising lies in fostering product recognition and leaving lasting impressions to drive consumer interest (Gao & Chen, 2023). Technology advertisements frequently incorporate specialized terminology to showcase technical superiority, explicitly communicate core selling points, and provide consumers with measurable performance benchmarks. For instance, the Honor 300 smartphone's slogan — “DSLR-grade portrait imaging, Sony 50MP dual-stabilization main camera” — emphasizes photographic capabilities; “Snapdragon 7 Gen 3 chipset with GPU Turbo X gaming engine” highlights processing power; while “5,300mAh Qinghai Lake battery, marathon endurance” underscores battery longevity.

2.2 Textual Conciseness

To maximize information delivery within limited advertising durations, technology advertisements employ concise language to capture attention and sustain engagement. Huawei's Mate60 campaign exemplifies this: “Satellite connectivity, spanning mountains and seas” succinctly conveys uninterrupted communication in remote areas, while “Harmonized innovation, aesthetic reimagined” encapsulates design philosophy through symbolic imagery, effectively communicating core features, brand identity, and emotional resonance.

2.3 Rhetorical Flourish

Technology advertisements extensively employ rhetorical devices — including similes, metaphors, puns, symbolism, personification, contrast, rhyme, repetition, irony, and hyperbole — to amplify expressiveness and emotional impact (Huang & Wu, 2013). Apple's iconic “Think Different” campaign utilizes personification to associate its computers with superior computational prowess and uniqueness. Similarly, Huawei's viral tagline for its tri-fold smartphone — “Three folds, endless facets — functionality and prestige in every crease” — leverages a bilingual pun: “facets” (面, miàn) dualistically signifies both the device's functional surfaces and the social prestige of ownership, elevating the product's aspirational value.

Beyond conventional commercial advertising, product review videos exhibit distinct linguistic and communicative traits. First, these videos often reflect creators' individualized styles, necessitating translators to preserve such personal nuances. Second, their inherently interactive nature — often prompting audience engagement through bullet comments or discussions — demands translations that not only convey technical accuracy but also foster emotional resonance.

From the practical requirements of translating tech review videos, communicative translation transcends traditional notions of “fidelity” and “equivalence,” offering adaptive solutions to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps. This approach empowers translators to flexibly negotiate cultural-specific references, ensuring both informational precision and persuasive efficacy in cross-cultural marketing contexts.

3. A Case Study of Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review

The video Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review, sourced from the Android Central channel on YouTube, provides a concise overview of the then-newly released Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold 2, a flagship foldable smartphone. The English subtitles, comprising 774 words, detail the device's features, innovations, and usage guidelines. As a pioneering product in the foldable phone category, the video extensively highlights the Galaxy Z-Fold 2's core selling points, rendering it a valuable case study for analyzing translation strategy selection and efficacy. The

subtitles' technical richness and specialized content serve as a rigorous test of translators' professional competence (Li, 2023), while the translation process necessitates careful alignment with brand identity and cultural values to ensure resonance with the target market's expectations. This case study thus offers a robust framework for investigating translation strategies specific to technological product advertisement subtitles.

3.1 Restructuring

Restructuring, a widely adopted translation method in technical communication and a common strategy for vocative texts in communicative translation, involves syntactic adjustments to optimize sentence structures. This approach enhances logical coherence and aligns the translation with target-language conventions, thereby improving communicative efficacy.

Source Text: Something that's pretty unique to foldables is the ability to have 2 completely different home screen layouts, depending on how you're using the phone.

Target Text: 折叠屏手机的一大特点就是能根据你的手机使用习惯，设置两个完全不同的桌面布局。

Here, the translation employs a straightforward literal approach, preserving the original meaning without semantic additions or omissions. However, syntactic restructuring is evident. Contrast this with an unadjusted version: “折叠屏手机的一大特点就是能拥有2个完全不同的桌面布局，这完全取决于你的手机使用习惯。” While semantically accurate, the latter adheres rigidly to the source text's sequence, violating Chinese conventions of cause-effect prioritization. The restructured translation positions “根据你的手机使用习惯” as the premise before introducing “设置两个完全不同的桌面布局”, aligning with Chinese syntactic norms.

This case illustrates that literal translation does not necessitate word-for-word replication but prioritizes fidelity to the original meaning while permitting structural adaptation. Such flexibility ensures both semantic integrity and target-language naturalness, critical for effective cross-cultural communication.

3.2 Transcreation

Transcreation, the integration of creative innovation into translation, aims to enhance textual expressiveness and audience engagement. Central to advertising's purpose of maximizing information dissemination and public appeal, transcreation proves particularly critical in translating technology products, whose allure often lies in their novelty and ingenuity. This demands translators to transcend conventional frameworks and employ “information transmission tools” (Nida, 1964) for contextually grounded yet imaginative adaptations. Crucially, transcreation must operate within boundaries that respect source-text intent, ensuring novel renderings remain semantically faithful.

Example 1:

Source Text: "which opens the door for some clever functionality"

Translation: 这就大大增强了可玩性

A literal rendering “这为一些巧妙的功能打开了大门” would retain accuracy but lack rhetorical impact. The term “可玩性” surpasses “功能” by connoting both utility and experiential appeal, aligning with tech enthusiasts' preferences. This adaptation stems not from arbitrary invention but from a nuanced understanding of target-audience vernacular and market dynamics.

Example 2:

Source Text: flex mode, edge screen

Target Text: 立式交互模式；侧屏幕面板

Such neologisms are prevalent in technology advertising to foreground product innovation. Translators, guided by corporate branding requirements and market demands, craft these terms to ensure technical precision while generating public curiosity (Qiao & Yu, 2016). For instance, “立式交互模式” linguistically mirrors the physical posture of the device in flex mode, while “侧屏幕面板” spatially contextualizes the edge screen's functionality. These creative choices balance technical clarity with marketing resonance, exemplifying transcreation's role in

cross-cultural technological discourse.

3.3 Supplementary Translation

Supplementary translation refers to the deliberate addition of contextual or explanatory content during the translation process to enhance textual richness and precision (Jiang & Zhang, 2015). These additions are grounded in thorough analysis of source-text ambiguities or culturally specific terms (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 1997), prioritizing target-audience comprehension over arbitrary embellishment.

Source Text: lets you watch your video on one screen and read the description and comments on the other."

Target Text: 你也可以进行分屏浏览一边观看视频一边阅读视频简介和评论。

While the original text merely states "one screen... the other....," the translation introduces “分屏浏览” — a term absent in the source. For an advertisement targeting general consumers, the literal phrasing lacks technical specificity and fails to highlight the product’s innovation. The supplementary term “分屏浏览” not only clarifies the functionality but also amplifies its appeal, enabling non-expert audiences to grasp the feature’s novelty instantly.

Source Text: Jump into the display settings and change the navigation type to swipe gestures.

Target Text: 进入显示设置，把导航类型切换成“全面屏手势”。

Here, “swipe gestures”— Samsung’s proprietary terminology — is localized as “全面屏手势”, a more widely recognized term in Chinese tech discourse. The addition of quotation marks serves dual purposes: it adheres to the target language’s conventional phrasing while subtly signaling the brand-specific adaptation of a common feature. This supplementary approach preserves source-text intent while aligning with linguistic norms, ensuring both clarity and cultural resonance.

These examples demonstrate that supplementary translation operates not as arbitrary expansion but as a strategic enhancement. It addresses gaps in cross-cultural comprehension, bridges technical jargon with layperson accessibility, and reinforces brand messaging through linguistically nuanced interventions.

3.4 Non-Translation

Non-translation has become increasingly prevalent in today’s globalized context, particularly in the digital age, where certain terms retain fixed English designations within Chinese linguistic environments. Translating such terms may risk alienating or confusing audiences, whereas non-translation preserves semantic integrity and avoids ambiguity.

The principle of non-translation must adhere to specific guidelines. First, translators must consider the prevalence and acceptance of a term, analyzing whether it has already been widely recognized and frequently used. Second, they must evaluate the necessity of translation — that is, whether translating the term would provide additional comprehension value to the audience. Non-translation is commonly applied to brand names, trademarks, or proprietary terms, such as Apple and Nike, which retain their original English forms in the Chinese context due to established recognition. It is also frequently used for technical jargon or industry-specific terminology, such as AI and VR, which carry clear and unambiguous meanings within their specialized fields. Additionally, internet slang or popular expressions, such as LOL and OMG, which have become ingrained in youth culture and online communities as part of daily language, may also remain untranslated.

Source Text: Instagram, Adobe Lightroom

Target Text: Instagram, Adobe Lightroom

These software names remain untranslated in Chinese app stores and digital discourse. Social platforms like Instagram (colloquially Ins) enjoy such widespread recognition that sinicized equivalents would undermine familiarity.

Source Text: Google Sheets

Target Text: Google表格

The treatment of “Google Sheets” exemplifies the flexible integration of non-translation and translation. Given Google’s high recognition in China, the brand name “Google” retains its untranslated form. However, the term “Sheets” is not widely recognized, and multiple software products under the Google brand follow the “GoogleXX” naming convention, which may be challenging to distinguish during rapid subtitle scanning. Thus, “Google 表格” preserves the original’s distinctive features while enhancing audience comprehension. This approach demonstrates the wisdom of non-translation strategies and highlights the adaptability of translation strategies.

4. Conclusion

This study investigates translation strategies for technological product advertisement subtitles through the lens of communicative translation theory, employing the *Samsung Galaxy Z-Fold2 Review* as a case study. The analysis reveals that subtitle translation for tech product advertisements prioritizes three dimensions: linguistic features, communicative dynamics, and value proposition. Although the source video lacks distinctive stylistic elements necessitating linguistic adaptation, the case exemplifies how translations fulfill communicative and functional imperatives.

Regarding communicative dynamics, translators must optimize audience engagement by balancing technical terminology accessibility with creative neologism acceptance. Effective translations require not only informational accuracy but also linguistic clarity and rhetorical appeal to foster viewer interaction. In terms of value proposition, translators must articulate product innovations with precision, ensuring that nomenclature for new features aligns with marketing objectives while concisely conveying core selling points to captivate potential consumers.

Furthermore, this study identifies an emerging trend: the growing integration of short-form videos and advertising will likely proliferate hybrid content that merges promotional, informational, and entertainment functions. Though such texts currently occupy a niche, their translation demands innovative strategies to address dual communicative goals. Future research could explore:

- 1) Market-Specific Adaptation: How translation approaches might be tailored to diverse cultural contexts and consumer behaviors across global markets.
- 2) Technological Integration: The potential applications of artificial intelligence, corpus linguistics, and machine learning in automating or enhancing the precision of technical subtitle translation.

By addressing these directions, scholars and practitioners can advance the efficacy of cross-cultural technological communication in an increasingly digital and interconnected marketplace.

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