



A Comparative Study of Lexical Aesthetic Selection in English and Chinese Perfume Advertising Copy and Relevant Translation & Communication Strategies

Aijia Zhang, Wenfeng Wang

School of Foreign Languages, Xi'an Shiyou University, Xi'an, China

Email: 1838687293@qq.com

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Abstract

From three dimensions, including phonological features, cultural imagery, and emotional appeals, this study draws a comparative analysis of divergent lexical aesthetic preferences embedded within English and Chinese perfume advertising copy. A quantitative lexical analysis of the two samples is carried out from part of speech and phonology: the study tallies the total word count of each advertising copy, alongside the quantity and proportional share of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other lexical categories. It further quantifies the proportion of English terms featuring alliteration, plosives, fricatives, and polysyllabic structures, as well as Chinese vocabulary marked by end rhymes, reduplication, Pingze rhyme scheme, and labial phonemes. Besides, this study compares lexical items carrying cultural imagery and emotional connotations in the two advertising texts, before putting forward targeted translation countermeasures. By combining translation theories with real-world challenges arising from the English translation of advertising texts, the study delivers deeper insights into translational regularities of perfume advertising copy across languages and offers feasible solutions for the English translation practice of perfume promotional materials.

Subject Areas

Language Education, Linguistics

Keywords

Aesthetic Linguistics, Perfume Advertising Copy, English-Chinese Comparative Analysis

1. Introduction

Driven by global economic integration, the perfume industry has evolved into a transnational sector worth over tens of billions of dollars. Statistics released by Beijing Yihe International Information Consulting Co., Ltd. indicated that the global perfume market reached approximately 55.64 billion dollars in 2024. China stands as an emerging consumer market, with its perfume import volume surging by 22% year-on-year in 2024 [1]. Far beyond mere commercial promotional texts, perfume advertisements function as a cultural carrier laden with profound values, conveying rich emotional and cultural undertones. Advertising translation also constitutes a pivotal component for perfume brands to integrate into the target market's culture, consumption habits, and social milieu [2].

Against the backdrop of global commercial exchanges and cross-cultural communication, the quality of translation in perfume advertising copy directly determines the transmission of brand information and the shaping of international brand image. Lexical aesthetic selection refers to the process of choosing contextually appropriate words with artistic merit that align with rhetorical principles and aesthetic standards in language use. It is never a simple one-to-one semantic matching exercise, but an artistic linguistic construction built from auditory effects, visual imagery, cultural connotations, and emotional nuances [3].

Existing literature on this topic bears notable limitations in literature retrieval. First, most studies adopt a single linguistic perspective, focusing on vertical intralingual analysis rather than horizontal cross-linguistic comparison between English and Chinese. Second, translation research tends to remain overly macro, with limited scholarship dedicated to comparing lexical aesthetic choices in bilingual advertising texts. Third, prior research prioritizes foreign perfume brands while neglecting domestic Chinese fragrance labels and their international communication pathways.

Against this research gap, this study addresses two core research questions: 1) From the lens of Aesthetic Linguistics, what disparities exist in lexical aesthetic features between English and Chinese perfume advertising copy? 2) Drawing on the above lexical aesthetic divergences, what translation strategies can be formulated for perfume advertising copy to reconcile aesthetic value and commercial objectives?

2. A Comparative Analysis of Two Pieces of Perfume Advertising Copy

This study selects promotional copy for Chanel No. 5, a classic French perfume, and for Fucui Noble Lady Solid Perfume from the Chinese brand Xiefuchun as research samples for comparative analysis.

CHANEL N°5:

PRODUCT: Since its creation in 1921, N°5 has exuded the very essence of femininity. The abstract, mysterious scent—alive with countless subtle facets—radi-

ates an extravagant floral richness. In 1986, Jacques Polge reinterpreted his predecessor Ernest Beaux's composition to create a fuller, more voluminous version of the now and forever fragrance: the Eau de Parfum.

COMPOSITION: With its unprecedented use of aldehydes and layers of complexity, N°5 was the world's first abstract fragrance. The Eau de Parfum draws inspiration from the original Parfum. This floral bouquet, composed around May rose and jasmine, features bright citrus top notes. Aldehydes create a unique presence, while the smooth touch of bourbon vanilla yields an incredibly sensual silhouette.

ART OF PERFUMING: The Eau de Parfum comes in a spray for easy application [4].

Xiefuchun Fucal Noble Lady Solid Perfume (谢馥春馥彩名媛香膏):

【香味】 娇艳玫瑰、绰约芍药、玉树琼花、国色牡丹。

【产品说明】 烟花三月下扬州，桃红柳绿姹紫嫣红，微风中带一丝清甜。优雅不妩媚，散发清新迷人的幽香，举手投足尽显名媛风范。

【使用方法】 取适量轻轻涂抹于脖颈两侧、耳后、手腕等部位[5]。

2.1. Selection Criteria

The two advertising texts used in this comparative study are retrieved from official brand webpages. The Chanel sample is the official product description for Chanel N°5 Eau de Parfum, with the source text originally in English. The Xiefuchun Fucal Noble Lady Solid Perfume is the official product copy, with its original text in Chinese.

The selection criteria are as follows. First, both are classic representative works of their respective perfume-making traditions: Chanel N°5 stands as an iconic Western liquid perfume, and Xiefuchun Fucal Noble Lady represents time-honored Chinese solid-perfume craftsmanship. Second, both excerpts serve identical core practical functions: they introduce fragrance notes, product traits, and application guidance for consumers, acting as public-facing promotional texts for commercial product presentation. Third, only official, publicly released product copy is adopted; third-party reviews, blogger commentary, and advertising poster slogans are excluded.

Even though one text describes a liquid spray perfume and the other describes a solid-form balm perfume, they maintain functional comparability for lexical-aesthetic comparison. Both samples are official consumer-oriented product promotional discourses that cover scent profiles, product characteristics, and usage instructions. The present study focuses on lexical aesthetic preferences in advertising discourse rather than on comparing the physical properties of liquid and solid perfume. Differences in the physical form of perfume do not interfere with the analysis of phonological features, cultural imagery selection, and emotional appeal and word choice embedded within the two sets of promotional language. Therefore, these two texts are qualified for cross-linguistic comparative analysis of advertising lexical aesthetics.

2.2. Words Class Distribution Rules and Classification Criteria

Words Class Distribution Rules

For the English text, complete words serve as tokens for counting; punctuation marks are excluded. Manual part-of-speech counting is implemented for every token. Recurring words are independently counted for each instance. Multi-category words receive POS labels determined by their contextual grammatical role within advertising sentences.

For Chinese text, each Chinese character is adopted as the basic counting unit for overall quantity statistics, while semantic word boundaries are respected for part-of-speech annotation. Repeated lexical items are counted and annotated on each occurrence without merging duplicates. For multi-functional Chinese words, parts of speech are assigned according to syntactic function in context rather than dictionary default categories.

Words Classification Criteria

Clear manual classification criteria are established for lexical-aesthetic categories, namely phonological aesthetic features, cultural imagery (including sensory vocabulary and rhetorical items), and emotional appeals (including four emotional lexical groups). All categories are non-mutually-exclusive, which means one lexical expression may be coded into more than one category if it satisfies multiple definitional criteria simultaneously.

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Word Class Distribution in the Two Advertising Texts

Statistical results show that the Chanel advertising copy contains 121 words, including 67 content words and 21 functional words (33 nouns, 11 verbs, 18 adjectives, 3 pronouns, 2 numerals, 2 adverbs, 17 prepositions/conjunctions, and 2 articles). The summed figure of 88 refers to the number of distinct lexeme types, not running tokens. Among them, repeated occurrences of certain words in the continuous text account for the remaining tokens. The Xiefuchun solid perfume copy totals 48 Chinese characters, covering 20 nouns, 6 verbs, 13 adjectives, 1 numeral, 1 measure word, 1 adverb, 2 prepositions/conjunctions, and 2 auxiliary words, with 41 content words and merely 5 function words.

Content words account for 55.3% (67/121) of the English advertising text, compared to 85.4% (41/48) of the Chinese text, demonstrating that Chinese advertising copy delivers far denser information. Further comparison across word classes reveals inherent textual differences between the two samples: English is an alphabetic language featuring longer text structures, while Chinese, an ideographic tongue, delivers concise expressions steeped in cultural connotations [6]. English copy leans toward objective factual description, whereas Chinese copy abounds in natural imagery. English relies heavily on verbs to narrate processes, while Chinese predominantly employs adjectives to depict states. English sentences feature complete syntactic frameworks with explicit logical connectors, while Chinese guides audiences to perceive implied meanings through juxtaposed imagery.

2.4. Comparison of Phonological Aesthetic Features in Lexical Selection

Perfume advertising texts deploy a range of phonological phenomena to express distinct emotions intended by advertisers for target consumers [7]. Consistent phonological counting units are adopted across two advertising texts: each complete word serves as the phonological counting unit for English, while each individual Chinese character functions as the phonological counting unit for Chinese; punctuation marks are excluded from all phonological counts.

Phonological Quantitative Analysis of Chanel's Advertising Copy

Alliteration is defined as a phonological relation between adjacent words or adjacent phrases, rather than a property of isolated lexical items. An alliterative instance is registered when two neighboring tokens share identical or comparable initial consonants or consonant clusters in their stressed syllables. Internal sound repetition within a single word does not qualify as alliteration, and alliterative cases are tallied based on qualifying adjacent token-pairs instead of counting individual alliterating words. Plosives and fricatives are allowed to overlap within the same token. Where one token contains both plosive and fricative phonemes, it is coded under both feature categories. Phonological feature categories are descriptive and non-mutually-exclusive; each token can be marked for multiple co-occurring sound features, and reported proportions reflect token-level presence of each phonological property.

1) Alliteration: 19 lexical items, accounting for 15.7% of the total word count. Alliteration refers to a linguistic phenomenon where two or more consecutive words share identical initial consonants or consonant clusters in stressed syllables, regardless of varying opening vowels [8]. Alliterative words identified in the copy are listed below:

/s/: since, scent, subtle, sensual, sillage.

/f/: femininity, floral, fuller, fragrance.

/k/: countless, complexity, create, composition.

/p/: predecessor, Parfum, perfume, presence.

2) Plosive words: 17 items, 14% of the total vocabulary. Plosives are produced by temporarily blocking airflow in the oral cavity and then releasing it abruptly, creating crisp, forceful sounds that instantly capture the audience's attention [9].

/p/: predecessor, Parfum, perfume, presence, spray, application.

/t/: countless, subtle facets, reinterpreted.

/k/: countless, complexity, create, composition.

/b/: bourbon.

/d/: draws.

3) Fricative words: 25 items, occupying 20.7% of total words. Fricatives are generated as air flows through narrow gaps between articulators, yielding soft, lingering auditory effects that mimic the gradual diffusion of perfume aroma and evoke an air of grace and mystery [10].

/s/: Since, scent, subtle, countless, essence, sensual, sillage, its, has.

/f/: femininity, floral, fuller, fragrance, Parfum, perfume.

/z/: is, draws.

/v/: voluminous.

/ð/: the.

4) Polysyllabic words: 33 words, 27.3% of total vocabulary.

The sample includes 22 disyllabic words (recurrences included): creation, essence, scent, alive, floral, richness, fuller, version, fragrance, Parfum, perfume, bouquet, composed, citrus, notes, unique, presence, smooth, bourbon, vanilla, sensual, sillage, making up 66.7% of all polysyllabic words and forming the core information framework of the advertising text. Rather than commonplace lexicon such as “smell” or “scent”, sophisticated terms like essence, fragrance, and sillage exude refinement and depth, distancing the brand from mass-market labels and aligning with Chanel’s luxury positioning.

Four trisyllabic words account for 12.1% of polysyllables: femininity, aldehydes, original, and mysterious. Seven words with four or more syllables constitute 21.2%: reinterpreted, predecessor, composition, voluminous, inspiration, incredibly, and application. Trisyllabic and multisyllabic vocabulary serve as ornamental highlights, introducing rhythmic shifts that avoid the monotony of monosyllabic lexis. Polysyllabic words are not mere linguistic embellishments; they serve as linguistic carriers that integrate brand positioning, product characteristics, and target consumer demands, echoing Chanel’s timeless premium identity while illustrating the intricate, layered composition of its fragrance.

Quantitative analysis confirms that the lexical phonology of Chanel’s advertising copy leverages vowel-consonant harmony, rhythmic coordination, and lexical repetition to reinforce cadence, turning phonetic resonance into a marketing tool for olfactory appeal. The brand’s aesthetic tenets—feminine charm, abstract artistry, and understated luxury—are embedded within auditory rhythms, ultimately achieving the artistic effect of conveying meaning through sound and shaping brand temperament via rhythm.

Phonological Quantitative Analysis of Xiefuchun’s Chinese Advertising Copy

1) End rhymes: Rhyming pairs include Meigui (rose) & Shaoyao (peony), Qionghua (jade blossom) & Mudan (tree peony), Yangzhou (a place in southern China) & Qingtian (sweet fragrance), Wumei (charming) & Youxiang (delicate aroma). Terminal vowels (-ui/-ao/-ua/-an; -ou/-ian; -ei/-iang) echo across key nouns and sentence endings, enhancing textual fluidity and memorability. Flower names employ open-end rhymes (-ui/-ao) to strengthen auditory perception, while the semi-rhyme between “Yangzhou” and “sweet” links the poetic elegance of Jiangnan scenery to the sweet scent via synesthesia for lasting memory. There are four sets of end-rhyming phrases (8 characters in total), representing 16.7% of the full character count.

2) Reduplication, dual alliteration and repeated rhyme: Lexical items featuring these structures deliver neat, melodic musicality, their harmonious phonetic texture embodying poetic linguistic aesthetics [11] and mirroring Xiefuchun’s oriental brand positioning, standing apart from the straightforward expression of

Western perfume advertising. Five such terms are identified, accounting for 10.4% of total characters: Qingqing (gently), Liulv (green willow), Shaoyao (peony), Yanhong (crimson peach blossom), and Youya (elegant).

Reduplication: The term “Qingqing” in Chinese amplifies sensations of softness, delicacy, and mildness through repeated syllables, perfectly matching the solid perfume’s smooth texture and gentle application, functioning as the core lexical vehicle for tactile description in the copy.

Dual alliteration: “Liulv” features identical initial consonants in both characters in Chinese, enabling a seamless syllabic transition and strengthening the coherence of the visual imagery.

Repeated rhyme: “Shaoyao, Yanhong, and Youya.” These pairs share identical or highly similar terminal vowels in Chinese, creating resonant cadence and consistent rhythm.

3) Pingze rhyme scheme: The Chinese Pingze rhyme scheme revolves around alternating level tones (first and second tones), namely, the Ping rhyme scheme, and oblique tones (third, fourth, and entering tones), also the Ze rhyme scheme. Skillful alternation between Ping and Ze rhyme schemes generates melodic flow and rhythmic balance [12]. The shifting tonal pattern of Xiefuchun’s advertising copy lends lyrical fluidity to the text, allowing readers to perceive emotional fluctuations through synesthesia. Seventeen Pingze rhyme scheme characters are counted, making up 35.4% of the total vocabulary.

Ping rhyme scheme characters: Meigui (rose), Qionghua (jade blossom), Mudan (tree peony), Yangzhou (a place in Southern China), Taohong (peach blossom), Weifeng (soft breeze), Qingtian (sweet fragrance), Miren (enchanted), Youxiang (delicate aroma). Level tones sound drawn-out and soothing, forming the core auditory atmosphere of the copy, predominantly used with floral imagery, spring landscapes, and descriptions of noble bearing to convey soft, expansive, long-lasting sensations and to avoid abrupt, jarring phrasing.

Ze rhyme scheme characters: Yushu (jade tree), Shaoyao (peony), Liulv (green willow), Youya (elegant), Shiliang (appropriate amount), Tumo (daub), Erhou (behind ears), Buwei (body parts). Oblique tones carry short, crisp phonetic qualities, mainly used for raw material descriptions, usage guidance, and temperament definition to deliver precise, decisive information. They counteract the sluggishness brought by excessive level tones and create rhythmic contrast between soothing imagery and concise functional instructions.

4) Labial phonemes: Chinese labial vocabulary refers to characters featuring bilabial or labiodental initial consonants, produced by closing the lips or pressing upper teeth against the lower lip during articulation, inherently evoking sensations of softness, intimacy, and subtlety [13]. Five labial terms are identified, taking up 10.4% of the total vocabulary.

Bilabial phonemes (/m/): Mudan (tree peony), Miren (enchanted), Tumo (daub). Bilabial articulation involves brief lip closure with nasal airflow, free of harsh plosive effects, conveying softness, roundness, and warmth. They dominate labial vo-

cabulary, associated with fragrance texture, application motions, and core raw materials to accurately reflect the solid perfume's mild, non-irritating quality.

Labiodental phonemes (/f/): Fengfan (bearing), Weifeng (soft breeze). Labiodental articulation generates airflow friction between teeth and lips, creating light, lively auditory sensations linked to noble demeanor and spring scenery, highlighting the perfume's fresh, non-greasy, refined character.

Quantitative results demonstrate that Xiefuchun's advertising copy capitalizes on the intrinsic phonological beauty of the Chinese language, utilizing traditional rhythmic devices including end rhymes, tonal alternation, initial alliteration, and vowel rhyme to achieve the aesthetic effect of conveying sentiment through rhyme and crafting refined elegance via sound.

2.5. Comparative Analysis of Cultural Imagery Aesthetics

Cultural imagery refers to lexical units that evoke culturally specific allusions, symbolic associations, shared historical-literary references, or brand-domain-specific perfume-industry technical concepts. This includes classical poetic allusions, culturally loaded plant-scene metaphors, and professional perfume terminology carrying established industry-specific connotations. Plain descriptive nouns for generic natural objects without special cultural or technical symbolic weight are excluded.

Sensory vocabulary includes words and multi-word phrases that directly evoke at least one of the five human sensory modalities: olfaction, vision, touch, hearing, or taste. Qualifying items describe scent characteristics, visual appearances, tactile textures, flavor hints, or audible qualities. Abstract evaluative terms with no direct sensory referent are excluded from this category.

Rhetorical items cover words and multi-word phrases that employ figurative linguistic devices, including metaphor, personification, synaesthesia, hyperbole, and symbolic imagery. Plain factual descriptions that state product-related information without figurative rhetorical manipulation are excluded.

Chanel's advertising copy contains 21 abstract words (essence, femininity, abstract, etc.), 42 concrete terms (scent, facet, composition, etc.), 8 cultural imagery lexicon (top note, sillage, aldehyde, etc.), 12 sensory vocabulary (scent, floral, citrus, etc.), and 15 rhetorical items (bouquet, facet, alive, etc.). The Xiefuchun copy includes 8 abstract words (elegant, coquettish, bearing, etc.), 28 concrete nouns (rose, peony, misty blossoms, etc.), 10 cultural imagery phrases (Sailing down to Yangzhou amid misty spring blossoms, peach blossoms and green willows, a riot of purple and crimson blooms, etc.), 10 sensory terms (vibrant, graceful, delicate aroma, etc.) and 19 rhetorical expressions (peach blossoms and green willows, a riot of purple and crimson blooms, jade blossom, etc.).

English perfume advertising centers on the intrinsic olfactory attributes of fragrances, adopting objective, precise, rational language to help audiences directly grasp scent characteristics. By contrast, Chinese perfume advertising draws heavily on classical cultural imagery and rhetorical devices laden with symbolic connotations, constructing vivid visual scenes and emotional tension through linguis-

tic craft to pursue the aesthetic realm of “meaning lingering beyond words” [14].

This analysis identifies divergent lexical-aesthetic orientations concerning cultural imagery within the two selected perfume advertisements only, rather than advancing broad generalisations about Western and Chinese linguistic or cultural traditions as a whole. Within these sample texts, the Chanel copy favours objective description of olfactory properties rooted in product composition, whereas the Xiefuchun copy draws heavily on classical cultural imagery and figurative rhetorical devices to build aesthetic scenes and implicit emotional undertones. These observed stylistic differences are interpretive findings specific to this pair of promotional texts. It should be acknowledged that other perfume advertising campaigns, both from Western and Chinese brands, may adopt substantially different stylistic choices and rhetorical approaches, so the patterns noted here cannot be extrapolated to all perfume advertisements across the two cultural contexts.

2.6. Comparative Analysis of Emotional Appeals

Four categories of emotional lexical items are defined in this paper: 1) Strong emotional words: lexicon carrying explicit, intense emotional overtones; 2) Neutral emotional words: neutral terms solely conveying objective information such as product attributes, raw materials, actions and timelines; 3) Identity-related emotional words: terms tied to specific social identities, lifestyles and personas, enabling consumers to express personal stance, values and self-identity through lexical selection, thus delivering emotional belonging and value recognition via identity association [15]; 4) Emotional amplifying expressions: rhetorical collocations that intensify emotional conveyance (fragrant, romantic, enchanting, captivating, authentic self, luminous, etc.), which embellish the sophistication of perfume products, stimulate audience imagination and fulfill the persuasive function of advertising [16].

Chanel’s copy features 12 strong emotional words (mysterious, extravagant, unique, etc.), accounting for 9.9% of total vocabulary; 38 neutral emotional terms (aldehydes, May rose, jasmine, etc.), 31.4% of total words; 5 identity-related emotional lexicon (femininity, Perfuming Craftsmanship, predecessor, etc.), 4.1% of total words; and 7 emotional amplifying expressions (countless, now and forever, alive with, etc.), 5.8% of total vocabulary.

Xiefuchun’s copy contains 9 strong emotional words (vibrant, graceful, resplendent, etc.), making up 18.75% of total characters; 26 neutral emotional terms (rose, peony, jade blossom, etc.), 54.2% of total characters; 4 identity-related emotional lexicon (noble lady, every gesture, Yangzhou, etc.), 8.3% of total characters; and 8 emotional amplifying expressions (Sailing down to Yangzhou amid misty spring blossoms, peach blossoms and green willows, a riot of purple and crimson blooms, etc.), 16.7% of total characters.

These emotional-appeal disparities are observed specifically in the two analysed advertising excerpts and do not represent universal aesthetic paradigms across Western and Chinese cultures. For these two samples, English advertising leverages strong emotional lexicon and professional definitions to trigger immediate

consumer emotional experience, aligning with the instant gratification logic of modern consumerism. Chinese advertising constructs aesthetic imagery through classical symbolism and synesthetic rhetoric, adhering to the traditional Chinese aesthetic logic of “sentiment embedded within scenery, scenery infused with emotion” that balances virtuality and reality [17]. Such textual features are limited to the chosen case materials; other perfume advertisements originating from either cultural background may adopt alternative emotional-expression styles.

3. Translation and Communication Strategies for Perfume Advertising Copy under the Framework of Aesthetic Linguistics

3.1. Translation Strategies

The phonological, cultural imagery, and emotional appeal disparities between Chinese and English perfume advertising copy originate from three root causes.

First, divergent linguistic systems: Chinese’s conciseness and implicit nature enable rich emotional and conceptual connotations to be encapsulated within brief phrasing, a feature difficult to replicate accurately in English, resulting in divergent lexical selection and aesthetic expression across languages [18].

Second, cross-cultural differences: varying core values, aesthetic perceptions, and historical traditions shape the creation direction and lexical preference of advertising copy, yielding distinct cultural connotations and stylistic aesthetics.

Third, disparate consumer demands: shoppers from different cultural backgrounds hold contrasting consumption psychology and aesthetic preferences. Market data shows domestic consumers generally favor fresh, mild, subtle fragrances, standing apart from Western mainstream perfumes featuring intense, dramatic aromas [19]. Advertisers, therefore, tailor lexical choices to resonate with target audience preferences.

Accordingly, three targeted translation strategies are proposed for the English translation of Chinese perfume advertising copy to accommodate lexical aesthetic disparities in phonology, cultural imagery, and emotional expression:

Align Phonological Features with English Aesthetic Preferences

Prosody can transmit linguistic information [20]. English advertising prioritizes alliteration, utilizing plosives and fricatives to build rhythmic cadence, while Chinese relies on end rhymes, Pingze rhyme scheme alternation, and reduplication. When translating Chinese perfume copy into English, translators ought to retain the core rhythmic logic of the source text before reconstructing its auditory rhythm via target-language phonological devices. Chinese four-character collocations and reduplicative phrases can be converted into English alliterative or vowel-rhyming phrases to preserve rhythmic consistency [21]. For instance, the line “娇艳玫瑰, 绰约芍药” is rendered as “Blush-hued Roses, Breathtaking Peonies”, where the /b/ alliteration paired with plosive articulation generates striking rhythm. Similarly, “轻轻涂抹” is translated as “glide, graze, go gently”, sharing the consonant /g/ to echo the soft motion of application.

Translate Metaphorical Chinese Cultural Imagery through Sensory Description

English perfume copy prioritizes objective ingredient descriptions, while Chinese copy relies on symbolic natural imagery to construct aesthetic realms through implicit sensory hints. Translating cultural imagery embedded in Xiefuchun's advertising copy demands profound cultural awareness and aesthetic literacy from translators to decode and convey cultural symbols across linguistic boundaries, as such imagery embodies unique folk wisdom, historical context, and cultural signifiers specific to each nation [22]. During translation, culturally loaded Chinese allusions can be rephrased as universal natural scenes. For example, the line “烟花三月下扬州” is translated as “Spring unfolds over Yangzhou”. In this line, “Yanhua (烟花)” depicts the mist-veiled, luxuriant spring scenery of southern China rather than literally fireworks. The verb “unfolds” vividly evokes the gradual blooming of spring scenery in the Jiangnan region and preserves the original poetic mood. This translation triggers visual sensory imagination of blooming spring vistas, which further evokes the perfume's soft, sweet scent via synesthesia for target consumers.

Explicitly Render Implicitly Conveyed Chinese Emotions

English perfume copy adopts a rational, lucid style with transparent syntactic structures, whereas Chinese copy leans toward poetic language centered on imagery, expressing emotions indirectly through scene depiction. In English translation, translators must extract core emotional undertones and substitute implicit imagery with explicit emotional adjectives to clarify latent meanings and emotional orientations, transforming Chinese indirect implication into direct English emotional descriptors [23]. For example, “优雅不妩媚” is translated as “Elegant yet unassuming”: the coordinating conjunction “yet” reinforces contrast, and the adjective “unassuming” pinpoints emotional nuance, avoiding the frivolous negative connotation of “coquettish” and conforming to the direct expressive conventions of English advertising.

Combining the above translation strategies, the adapted English translation of Xiefuchun's advertising copy is presented below (illustrating how the proposed strategies might operate for cross-cultural perfume advertising, rather than representing a definitive or benchmark translated version of the source Chinese copy):

Xie Fuchun Fucai Noble Lady Balsam

Scent Profile: Blush-Hued Roses, Breathtaking Peonies, Jade-Kissed Blossoms, Majestic Tree Peonies.

Product Description

Spring unfolds over Yangzhou. Blushing peach blossoms and emerald willows mingle amid a riot of colorful blooms; a faint, sweet breath lingers on the soft breeze. Elegant yet unassuming, it releases a fresh, bewitching, subtle fragrance that casts the poise of a refined lady over every gesture you make.

Art of Applying

Scoop a small amount, then glide, graze, and go gently across the sides of the neck, behind the ears, and wrists.

3.2. Suggestions about Communication Strategies

Contemporary consumers embrace an integrated online-offline consumption model. Beyond optimizing advertising translation, Xiefuchun's solid perfume must refine product design, promotional formats, and marketing channels to boost international outreach.

Advertising Copy Optimization

Chanel's promotional text details fragrance profiles, creative inspiration, application guidance, brand founding timeline, and corporate heritage. In contrast, Xiefuchun's existing copy only covers fragrance profiles, product introduction, and usage instructions, with abstract descriptive text lacking brand origin and creative backstories. This omission hinders audiences' understanding of brand heritage and weakens promotional efficacy. Supplementary brand history and heritage narratives should be incorporated into advertising copy to deliver factual brand storytelling that aligns with Western audiences' rational thinking habits.

Promotional Format Innovation

Chanel employs multi-modal marketing on its official website, including image galleries, animated visuals, audio clips, and short videos to deliver immersive multi-sensory product displays that narrow the distance between brand and consumer [24]. Xiefuchun's current promotion relies solely on static images and text, providing limited sensory stimulation and weakening persuasive power. Given that perceived fun exerts a full mediating effect on how the language of feed-stream advertising headlines shapes consumers' attitudes toward advertisements [25], Xiefuchun's advertisement can therefore be produced in audio-visual formats for multi-modal product promotion, so as to enhance advertising interestingness.

Global Marketing Expansion

Chanel leverages pop-up advertisements, video commercials, and celebrity endorsements to expand brand influence, operating retail outlets worldwide supported by a robust brand image and comprehensive marketing frameworks. Xiefuchun must innovate in traditional craftsmanship, expand its audience reach via social media platforms, and diversify its promotional channels to raise global brand awareness and facilitate overseas market penetration [26].

4. Conclusions

This study investigates lexical aesthetic disparities between English and Chinese perfume advertising copy and draws two core conclusions through translational analysis.

First, significant lexical aesthetic gaps separate English and Chinese perfume advertising across phonology, cultural imagery, and emotional expression: Chinese copy prioritizes end rhymes, reduplicative phrasing, cultural symbolism, and implicit artistic conception, while English copy emphasizes alliteration, plosive/fricative phonology, objective natural imagery, and rational directness. Such divergences essentially represent the tension between Western modern aesthetics and traditional Chinese oriental aesthetics.

Second, dimension-matched translation strategies are proposed to bridge these gaps: for phonology, adopt formal conversion to transform Chinese reduplicative four-character phrases into English consonant-rhyming collocations; for cultural imagery, employ imagery substitution, replacing culturally specific allusions with universal natural scenes and conveying metaphorical connotations through sensory descriptors; for emotional expression, utilize emotional explication to render Chinese implicit sentiment via concrete, objective English lexicon matching the rational clarity of English prose.

To strike a lexical aesthetic balance in English-Chinese perfume advertising translation, translators must preserve the core aesthetic connotations embedded within Chinese cultural imagery while complying with English's straightforward linguistic conventions. The three strategies outlined above—aligning with target-language phonological preferences, translating metaphorical cultural imagery via sensory description, and explicating implicit emotional undertones—jointly fulfill dual objectives in cross-cultural advertising communication: accurate transmission of product information and resonant cross-cultural aesthetic empathy.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: Zhang, A.J. and Wang, W.F.; Methodology: Zhang, A.J.; Formal analysis: Zhang, A.J.; Investigation: Zhang, A.J.; Resources: Zhang, A.J.; Data curation: Zhang, A.J.; Writing—original draft preparation: Zhang, A.J.; Writing—review and editing: Zhang, A.J.; Supervision: Wang, W.F. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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