

How culture influences advertisement translation essay

[Art & Culture](#), [Music](#)



In our everyday life, every time we watch television or while we are surfing the internet, advertising is behind the corner and sometimes we do not even realize we are listening to it.

We are bombarded by slogans and catchy phrases that catch our attention and make us customers of the product advertised in a way that is not direct but instead hidden and implicit. Without being aware of it, we buy products because when shopping, something triggered in our mind: a hidden input given by a catchy phrase or a picture in the advert we remember. This is in fact the power of advertising: keeping the customers' memory alive on the product.

For big companies it is therefore important to translate the advertisements and slogans in the most appropriate way to the target language, using words and phrases that function in the same way as the source text and have the same impact on customers. This is a quite difficult job because not only the text has to be translated, but the target language text should also convey the feelings and emotions played around the source text of the commercial. Literal translations are for this reason not enough effective because the translator should also reproduce the atmosphere and feeling of the slogan, attract the attention and create memorable phrases which in a different target language could be quite different from the source language.

Translation can be intended as a product or as a process.

The process of translation involves the translator who has the task of changing the original text (source text) in a source language into a text (target text) in a target language. Transferring the meaning and the main

idea of a text into a target language could at first sight seem easy, but the translator has on the contrary a great and significant task, and sometimes needs to interpret from the source text and put some personal features to the target text. When analyzing advertising as discourse we find out that although the main focus of discourse analysis is on language, it is not concerned to language alone: in fact it analyzes and examines the context of communication, in other words who is communicating with whom and why, the society, the music combined to pictures.

Then the discourse analysis must take into consideration these modes of communication too. There is in fact a distinction in advertising between text and context: the text is normally used to convey linguistic forms, whereas the context includes much more, like the music played during the advert, the pictures, the paralanguage (meaningful behaviour accompanying language such as gestures, voice quality and facial expressions), the addressers with their interpretations, and the function. Discourse in advertising is for this reason a mix of text and context. In the process of advertising the translator has to be very careful of the words to choose. The language used has to be very expressive and effective in order to make the slogan memorable and dispose the customer favourably towards the product on offer. Another important feature of the text of the advert is catching the customer's attention, conveyed by using a rich and striking vocabulary, stock phrases and short words to achieve memorization.

There are advantages in making controversial statements as well as communicating with people using straightforward language. Moreover

slogans sometimes introduce odd and new words, not grammatically correct, but that become common in use because people become used to them by hearing the slogan everyday on television or on the radio, and they become assimilated with this language. Words moreover not only describe things but are used to convey feelings about what we are describing and they bring ideas in customers' minds.

1. Theories used
The aim of my essay is to give a comparison of the way translators use language differently in connection to the source language and culture, and in particular I would like to focus the attention on how the source culture influences the words used when advertising a product. In such a competitive word like advertising, the translator plays a very significant role because he or she has to convey ideas, images and feelings in the most appropriate way in relation to the culture he or she is referring to.

Newmark's (1981) theories on translation studies can be applied to advertising and slogans. In his translation studies he first of all makes a distinction between semantic translation and literal translation: the semantic translation is used to render closely the contextual meaning of the original text, raising the importance of target text readers. Literal translation cannot be always applied since they do not convey the same power of words of the source text. He therefore emphasizes the power of communicative translations, which are the ones that project onto the readers the same effect produced by the source text on its readers. Moreover, Newmark focuses the attention on the fact that advertisements and commercials need

to be translated at the level of text and not word-for-word if their message is to function in the target culture.

Newmark therefore claims that the translator should emphasize the function of the whole text by using strategic words that catch people's attention.

Among the theories on translation procedures and strategies, Nida (1964) has contributed in shaping the process of translation; he makes a distinction between: Technical procedures: analysis of the source and target languages;

- a thorough study of the source language text before making attempts to translate it;
- Making judgments of the semantic and syntactic approximations.

Organizational procedures:

- constant re-evaluation of the attempt made;
- contrasting it with the existing available translations of the same text done by other translators;
- checking the text's communicative effectiveness by asking the target language readers to evaluate its accuracy and effectiveness and studying their reactions.

As we can see, the translator has a prominent rule and has to follow procedures in the work of translation.

What I would like to focus on in this essay is the way target cultures influence translations. To do that, I decided to take into account two famous advertisements, one from the Nutella website and the other one is a TV commercial of Ferrero Rocher. Both of them are owned by brands of an Italian company who have decided to advertise its products abroad and who have chosen to do so through a different approach related to the target language and culture. .

Slogans analysis The first slogan I decided to take into consideration is Nutella's one. By looking at the Nutella website I found the commercial on

the homepage of both the Italian and English website and by looking at the way it has been translated we can point out the different choice of words and adjectives made by the translator. Italian version: “ La colazione del mattino comincia qui, fra i nocciolati e la natura con le nocciole migliori, poi del buon latte e il nostro cacao. E’ così che nasce Nutella, per una prima colazione completa ed equilibrata: una fetta di pane, un po’ di nutella, latte e un frutto, il 20% del fabbisogno calorico giornaliero, quello che ci serve ogni mattina.

E’ il pieno di bontà. E’ nutella. Che mondo sarebbe senza nutella. ” (www. nutella.

com, 2010) English version: “ More and more families are discovering Nutella. Each 15 gram portion contains two whole hazelnuts, some skimmed milk and cocoa. And Nutella releases its energies slowly. Wake up to Nutella. (www. wakeuptonutella.

co. k, 2010) At the first sight there are some clear differences in the work of translation, first of all the length: the Italian advert is composed by 72 words and has many adjectives related to the ingredients, such as ‘ migliori’ and ‘ buono’, perhaps because of the fact that Italian customers need to be talked a little tale around the product, in order to feel more comfortable with it. As a matter of fact one of the primary aims of advertising is persuading the addressees to buy, and Italian customers can be much more influenced by adjectives, long phrases and images than English customers. The Italian advert is like a short tale, rich of words created in order to be memorable for customers.

On the contrary, the English translation of the ad just needs 30 words to be impressive for the public, giving less information but much more precise: as a matter of fact the advert tries to give the exact proportion of ingredients contained in every 15 gram portion, by simply saying there are hazelnuts, some skimmed milk and cocoa. Adjectives that appear in the Italian version (such as 'buono' and 'migliori') are cut out of the text in order to be more precise and technical. To impress the public the English text concentrates on the fact that the product releases energy slowly, throughout the day. The description of the product is more technical, as a matter of fact English language is known all around the world for being precise and short, much more than the Italian one. So even in advertising the product, the translator decided to give his own interpretation of the text, trying to focus on specific aspects instead of translating the whole Italian text word-for-word. Moreover, in the Italian slogan there is a reference to the provenience of the product, given by the adjective 'nostro' related to cocoa: this adjective gives a perception of the ingredient coming from Italy and not from foreign countries and this could probably be because Italian customers want to be always aware of where the product comes from, and they will be more satisfied if it comes from their own country.

Whereas in the English advert there is no reference to the origin, the slogan in fact focuses on the detailed description of ingredients without even mentioning they come from Italy. Furthermore, the translation into English of the famous Italian slogan 'che mondo sarebbe senza Nutella' would have sounded too long for English customers. For this reason translators decided

to shift the sentence into a more easy to remember motto like 'wake up to Nutella'.

This shift has a completely different literal meaning but at the same time is very effective because it conveys the idea of eating a small quantity of the product every day. The second advert I analyzed in the purpose of showing how culture influence the translation is a TV commercial of the famous Italian brand Ferrero Rocher. Italian version: "I ricevimenti dell'ambasciatore sono noti in societa per il buon gusto del padrone di casa: gusto italiano che conquista i suoi ospiti. (...) Ferrero Rocher: una creazione dell'Italia che piace" (www. outube.

com/watch?v=3-LavXsgRIw, 2010) English version: The ambassador's receptions are noted in society for the hosts' exquisite taste that captivates its guests. (...) Ferrero Rocher: a sign of good taste. (www. wikio.

co. uk/video/ferrero-rocher-advert—ambassador-reception-4109576, 2010)

The first part of the TV commercial is quite similar and conveys the same ideas, both in the Italian and English transcripts, even if once again the reference to Italy and Italian taste is not transferred. As a matter of fact in the Italian version is said: "gusto italiano che conquista I suoi ospiti" and this is translated into English as "exquisite taste that captivates its guests". Moreover, by looking at the final sentence of the commercial, the Italian version once again makes a reference to Italian spirit, by saying "Ferrero Rocher: una creazione per l'Italia che piace". This sentence emphasizes, as in Nutella slogan, the fact that the product as been created for "the Italy

that people love". Such a literal translation would have sounded too unnatural and would not have had the same effect in the target language that instead plays in the Italian text. The translator therefore decided to switch the meaning to a more powerful " Ferrero Rocher: a sign of good taste", highlighting the aspect of good taste instead of saying that the product is Italian.

Conclusion In conclusion, words in advertising have the very important rule of catching customers' attention on the product and for this reason the target culture and language influence words in a way that makes the advert seem slightly different from the original one. Therefore a word-for-word translation cannot be applied by companies to sell their products in other countries, because they need to concentrate on the target culture they are referring to.

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