

**ON THE ANALYSIS OF SLOGAN TRANSLATION  
IN THE CONTEXT OF WRITTEN ADVERTS**

**ANÁLISIS SOBRE LA TRADUCCIÓN DEL ESLOGAN EN  
EL CONTEXTO DE LOS ANUNCIOS ESCRITOS**



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## **Abstract**

This paper will look into the issues affecting the process of translation from English into Spanish in the context of written adverts, and more particularly, those appearing in the **slogan** advertising form. In order to have a clear perspective, the main objectives of this paper are the following ones: firstly, to discover how the nature and mechanics of **advertising** are, and the kind of linguistic or non-linguistic issues that they generate. Secondly, to move on **translation** studies in order to know how those problems of content transference are dealt with. Finally, a selected corpus of slogans from real advertising campaigns will be analysed in order to give an account of all exposed above. The research carried out in this paper, both in translation and advertisement areas, is sustained in the studies of experts in each field.

*Keywords:* slogan, advertising, translation.

## **Resumen**

En este proyecto se revisarán las cuestiones relacionadas con el proceso de traducción del inglés al español en el contexto de los anuncios escritos, y en concreto, aquellos que usan el **eslogan** como forma de publicidad. Para tener una perspectiva clara, los objetivos de este proyecto son los siguientes: en primer lugar, descubrir cuál es la naturaleza y funcionamiento de la **publicidad**, además de los problemas de índole lingüístico y no lingüístico que acarrear. En segundo lugar, nos centraremos en el estudio del campo de la **traducción** para conocer cómo se tratan los problemas surgidos de la transferencia de esos contenidos. Por último, se analizará un corpus específico de eslóganes extraídos de campañas publicitarias reales para dar cuenta de lo citado anteriormente. La investigación desarrollada en este trabajo, tanto en los ámbitos de publicidad como de traducción, está apoyada en los estudios de expertos en las respectivas materias.

*Palabras clave:* eslogan, publicidad, traducción.

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## **1- Introduction.**

Advertising plays a crucial role in the market context as it is the primary source for the products or services of a company to be publicly known. Therefore, when a company succeeds in its place of origin, the next step is to make itself known in other places around the world, and once again advertising turns to be particularly important for this purpose. The primary objective of international advertising is to attempt to transfer the information from an advert in its original language to other ones. Nevertheless, the transference very often carries out several problems that translator must face and solve.

Seeing the importance of successful advert transference in the international market context, this paper will cover the most relevant aspects involved in advertising and translation studies and will analyse a series of examples accordingly. The examples to be investigated in this paper have in common that they all are slogans among all the possible forms that shape advertising design. According to the Cambridge Dictionary of the English Language, a slogan is “a short easily remembered phrase, especially one used to advertise an idea or product”. In fact, the form of slogan is the shortest apart from the brand name itself and its purpose is no other than to provoke a direct impact in a very brief sentence or phrase. They usually go together as the slogan function is to reinforce the brand image.

Thus, the main goal of this paper is to revise the linguistic and non-linguistic factors according to the imposition of linguistic and cultural barriers that deviate the slogan transactions from the English language into the Spanish one. In addition, it is also aimed at discerning the nature of the aforementioned barriers and at stating the pros and cons of the issues that they generate in the case study section.

In order to achieve these goals, this paper will be built around well-known experts in the fields of advertising and translation studies to provide a consistent framework. Afterwards, such a framework will be worked out with a selection of slogans put in a real context taken out from the data source Google Images Inc.

## **2- Advertizing: what to know before the process of translation.**

In this section, the primary intention is to have a look at various aspects that participate in the advertising mechanics. Those include how advertising has evolved into what it is nowadays and which kind of language is involved in it.

### **2.1- The origins of advertising and how it affects the international market.**

Advertisement has not always been what it is nowadays as it has evolved quite a lot through all this time. In any case, if advertisement has changed, then the language that is used in it and its circumstances is expected to have also changed.

To start with, companies all over the world possess a common objective. Such objective is no other than to make their sell rates increasingly and aggressively bigger against that of their rivals. That means that the language of advertising that is at the service of these companies has to be aggressive as well. Advertising uses the language to persuade a costumer to consume goods or service. In fact, advertisement has always had a historical presence though it was not until the last century that it has evolved to represent the new strong market of today. Sánchez Corral (1991) observes that historically advertising has developed from a primitive stage, when the information tended to be more objective, to a more complex one that makes use of a language strongly biased by means of persuasion.

The turning point is set in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the “consumer society” arose due to the latest socioeconomic transformation: capitalism. Such a change made the market grow exponentially, what urged the need to create more means to spread the information about the products and services. Now that the market is swarmed with numerous companies, adverts have a crucial role. In other words, creative and hooking advertising very often makes the difference among rival companies. The following quote supports this idea:

“La preocupación actual de las empresas se ha desplazado, desde la producción a la venta, desde los costes de fabricación a aquellos destinados a la comercialización. No basta con producir, es sobre todo necesario vender. En este engranaje juegan un papel necesario el marketing y la publicidad” (Sánchez del Corral, 1991, p. 26)

Given the facts above, it can be established that nowadays adverts, that are much more subjective than before, are created to influence the audience in order to consume by means of a persuasive language. This kind of language is not simple to analyze as it is composed of several sources.

## **2.2- The language of persuasion. The message and the image represented as the two sides of a coin.**

In the context of advertising texts, persuasion is encoded in two different linguistic layers that are considered binary or complementary: the linguistic message and the message that comes from the image. Ferraz Martínez (1996) finds that the linguistic message is always present no matter how short it can be. That includes, of course, the shortest form of advertisement, which is the slogan. However, this message can be omitted to give the environment a veil of mystery or to make the message incomprehensible so that it makes the audience wonder about the very meaning of it. This strategy is quite typical of the early stages of some advertising campaigns because they are planned to give a response in further stages for purposes of intended expectation.

The message that comes from the image, as its name suggests, is subordinated to the linguistic message of the advert. Its function is no other than to be at the service of the advert whose objective is to persuade the audience by shocking or attracting them. This kind of non-textual communication is probably the most common strategy of mass culture as it is direct and universal for the average spectator. According to Ferraz Martínez (1996), the so called non-textual meaning of the image attached to each advert is subdivided into other two layers of meaning: the iconic message and the iconographic message. The first one, the non-linguistic or graphic component of an advert, represents the real world so that the audience could relate it with the representation created by the advert. Therefore, these images carry the denotative meaning of a linguistic expression, that is, the universal meaning that is known by all the members of a linguistic community. More interestingly, the aim of the iconographic message of the image is to overlap in a subtle way associations like prestige, youth, modernity, passion or success to the original meaning that comes from the iconic message. As a result, the interpretations vary in each individual. Nevertheless, this is very often counteracted by

the conventions and conformism of the so-called mass culture. Obvious as it is, all what advertising tries to do is to grab the attention of the average audience. Therefore, it is expected that both the verbal and non-verbal output are full of connotative associations to either the goods or even their brand name.

Consequently, it is established that advertising is by nature connotative although the use of such connotations will depend on certain factors, for instance, the target culture, the characteristics of the target audience and the kind of advert that is dealt with. Ferraz Martinez (1996) distinguishes two types of adverts according to the goods or services advertised. On the one hand, advertising implied in the fields of high technology, automobile, or diet products are likely to be more influenced by denotational implications. Advertising agents do that by using the presumed attributes of what is advertised as a kind of guarantee quality. On the other hand, more connotational properties are to be found in the fields of beverages, tobacco and luxury products, for example. This is mainly because the predominant language used is very technical instead. A massive use of technical terminology leaves the audience with an impression that the goods or service seem to have more quality. All that matters with the connotations attached to the product or campaign is to give the brand image a personalization and individualization and to some extent hide the product behind these connotations. In fact, the manipulation that is implied in the advertising text goes beyond. In the end, advertising agents attempt to make the audience believe that what they are actually purchasing are the values that the connotations are charged with instead of the product or service itself. Ferraz Martinez goes more in-depth with this idea:

“En muchas ocasiones, lo que quiere realmente quiere adquirir el comprador son esos valores asociados o connotativos más que el objeto en sí. Esto explica el fenómeno actual de que las marcas ya no señalen o identifiquen únicamente los productos sino también a sus consumidores, que pasan a formar parte de un grupo connotado con unas determinadas cualidades (modernidad, juventud, lujo, etc.)” (Ferraz Martínez, 1996, p. 10)

These movements between connotation and denotation are to take importance in the process of transference from the LO (original language) and the TL (target language). This is so since connotations are strongly cultural in a natural way as they are addressed to a particular audience from a particular place. In fact, this is one of the

key factors for us to understand why translators have difficulties in transferring correctly the meaning from the source language to the target one.

### **2.3- The functions of language through the typology of written texts.**

Newmark (1992) advances strong evidence of all the facts discussed above, and, what is more, his findings in his classification of language functions of written texts reveals that the textual structure of advertising is a matter of complexity. From a linguistic point of view, Newmark organizes all texts according to their main function in three major categories called expressive, informative, and vocative. He also states that hardly any text presents characteristics of a single function: “Casi ningún texto es meramente expresivo, informativo o vocativo. La mayoría abarca las tres funciones, aunque sea sólo una la que resalte” (Newmark, 1992 p. 65). These words show a complexity that justifies a more in-depth analysis of his studies of this aspect of language.

The vocative function is predominant within the advertising scheme because its main focus is no other than the audience’s response. The purpose of this function is to make them think or feel according to the author expectations of the author. Moreover, Newmark (1992) distinguishes two key factors in order to highlight the vocative function in a text that will help us learn about what makes an advert be what it actually is. On the one hand, we have the writer-reader connection, which chooses specific forms of treatment like ‘*you/tú*’ and ‘*you/usted*’ and specific grammar forms like infinitives, subjunctives, the passive, impersonal forms or proper nouns to empower the language with equality, order, request or persuasion. On the other hand, Newmark insists that these texts must be expressed in a way that the audience can easily understand. Therefore, from the point of view of translation, culture and linguistics are to be revised in order to achieve a pragmatic impact.

The rest of Newmark’s functions are found in advertising texts playing a secondary role in regard to the vocative function. The core function of informative texts is to expose the contents and the extralinguistic reality. Thus, as another persuasive strategy, advertisement tries to use the aspects of this function to cover its intentions in order not to seem pretentious and manipulative. In other words, advertisement makes use of a language typical of the informative function only if it is able to highlight the

positive information. This way the manipulative effect is less shocking in any way. On the contrary, negative aspects of that object are hidden behind the positive ones.

Last but not least, the rhetoric elements that belong to the expressive function are in all cases linked to the vocative function as a way to reinforce the hooking nature of adverts. Many of them, like metaphors, paronomasia, rhyme, hyperbole or parallelism, are used to make the persuasive factor even more effective.

### **3- In-depth translation studies: key factors.**

Once the primal intentions of advertising texts are uncovered, there is yet a lot to be revised from the point of view of translation studies. The way advertising texts are translated is so important to take into account that it can really make whole international advertising campaigns fail. Consequently, such a mistake could make the same companies, which previously had invested huge amounts of money, have a great loss.

#### **3.1- The translation methods.**

A good starting point to open this section is to acknowledge that there are many different ways of translating a text. As Newmark puts it:

“Si tenemos en cuenta la aplicación de los dos métodos de traducción (semántico y comunicativo) a las tres categorías de texto, creo que en general los textos vocativos e informativos se traducen demasiado literalmente y, en cambio, la traducción de los textos expresivos carece de literalidad. El “traslacionismo” es el cáncer de la publicidad turística y de muchos letreros y carteles publicitarios.” (Newmark, 1992, p. 76).

This quote reveals in few words two main ideas worth analysing for the purpose of this section. The first one is to acknowledge that there are two broad different ways of translating any kind of text and that they entail opposite criteria. Both translation methods are based on a particular translating focus which is either source-centred or audience-centred. The source-centred focus' aim is to maintain the original form and word usage into the target language, as much as they can, so that the effect of the translating product can result in a faithful language transference. The audience-centred

focus consist of abstracting the meaning of the content to subsequently adapt it so that the audience in the target language can get the message the way that the original audience did. That means giving the translator license to drop faithful intentions with regards to the original text in order to get the message across. The second idea is basically that the translation of a text is going to be successful only if the right focus has been applied.

To be more precise there are not exactly two homogeneous ways for a text to be translated. In fact, Newmark (1992) presents a set of methods that are framed in a spectrum whose opposite sides are the so-called word-by-word translation and adaptation. These two translation opposite poles are representing, as has been exposed before, a full focus on the source language, or the content-centred way, on the one hand, and a full focus on the target language, or the audience-centred way, on the other.

From the most purist to a less restricted in form, these are the methods that are included into the source-centred focus group: word-by-word, literal, faithful and semantic translation. In the word-by-word translation method the word order remains the same and all the words are translated without being put into context. The literal translation method follows exactly the same points of word-by-word except for grammar, which is adapted to the closest structure available in the target language. Neither of them barely end up being used in real situations. In fact, as Newmark (1992) highlights, they are commonly used merely as a previous step in particularly difficult or complex text before it comes to the definitive version. Yet in the faithful translation model, although its objective is basically the same as the other two already exposed, the message to get across is not absolutely literal but rather contextual. The target audience, then, would still notice a bit of what Newmark (1992, p. 70) remarks as ‘strangeness’ or ‘oddness’ regarding the resulting text. Close to the faithful translation method, the semantic translation model tries to make the message understood but still focusing on the source text. That means that the only difference it has in comparison with the previous model is aesthetics. In other words, the effect of oddness just mentioned must not have the impact that it triggers in the faithful translation.

On the other side of the spectrum, the models that give importance to the audience over the original message are encompassed from a rather balanced to a strict audience-centred approach. These are the communicative, the idiomatic, the free translation methods and, finally, the adaptation. Starting with the communicative approach, it tries

to reproduce the exact message from the original version but prioritizing a good understanding of it from the audience's point of view. In other words, transfer changes are to be admitted just in the case of linguistic or cultural potential issues because the audience is the most important thing to take into account but deviating from the original version as least as possible. From this point on, the next translation models are prone to ignore the original form in different degrees to achieve a better way to get the message across. The following one, called the idiomatic translation method, is very close to the communicative method but it also constitutes the first model to add, remove or even adapt terms in the text, prioritizing colloquialisms and idiomatic expressions, which is the only characteristic that distinguishes it from the communicative method. We will see both the communicative and idiomatic translation styles in real examples within the case study section. Then, the free translation method basically consists of paraphrasing the whole original text, that is, the form has no longer presence in the translator's mind, especially when the resulting version is even longer than the original one. Finally, the adaptation just keeps the main information and ideas of the source text to later be rewritten to something fully new. This completely new version integrates fully the cultural and contextual claims of the new audience but, in turn, the resulting form has barely nothing to do with the original one. Although they are included in the translation methodology spectrum, Newmark (1992) emphasizes that both the free translation and the adaptation are not considered pure translations but merely versions of the original. The reason is that they simply do not respect the limitations of the form almost in any way.

Newman further points out how the nature of the canonical translation should be like:

“[...] deberíamos decir en primer lugar que solo la traducción semántica y comunicativa responden a los dos objetivos principales de la traducción: exactitud y economía. [...] En general la primera está escrita con la mira puesta en el nivel lingüístico del autor y se usa para los textos “expresivos”, y la segunda se hace pensando en el lector y se utiliza para los textos “informativos” y “vocativos”” (Newmark, 72, 1992).

In fact, Newman also emphasizes the canonical models for each kind of text, which are no other than the only two at the very middle of the proposed spectrum: the

communicative and the semantic translation styles. We will see later if the canonical translation model is valid for the written advert texts.

### **3.2- The role of culture in advertisement translation.**

As has been previously established, the main function of all advertising texts is to enhance the image of the product or service advertised so that it can influence the potential customers. If so, they will be eager to purchase the goods advertised. This persuasive effect is directly attached to culture, which in fact is always more or less distant regarding other foreign cultures. Therefore, the following statement can be established: advertising texts that are purposely connected to a connotative meaning that directly derives from the culture of a specific location have to achieve the same response in the target language. For this reason, in order to be successful in the target language, translators must adopt a translation style fully based on the audience so that the content could be at their service. That means that translators should take into account the culture of the source language and manipulate it in order not to disrupt the persuasive goal that is meant in the target language. In Levitt's opinion (1983), the success of cultural transference in the context of advertising is crucial:

“las empresas deberían considerar el mundo como un único mercado sin tener en cuenta las diferencias culturales. Sin embargo, la publicidad ha demostrado con multitud de ejemplos que esa actitud no es del todo acertada. Existen cientos de ejemplos recogidos en manuales de publicidad sobre los fracasos de una campaña de un país a causa de la falta de consideración de las diferencias culturales.”

Almost the same happens concerning shorter advertising text forms. Goddard (1998, p. 80) points out that brand names act as capsules of meaning letting the readers generate connotations around them, in other words, there is less room for elaborated connotative attachments. In fact, the slogan form is very similar to Goddard's idea of brand names; they are an amplified version of them. Brand names are designed to give an identity to a corporation and then slogans are, in the end, drills to make the audience easily recall them by means of a sticky sentence or phrase. Of course, this is so partly because of the lack of slangs and idiomatic or metaphorical meaning regulated into dictionaries. Polysemy can be a problem as well if it leads to an unfortunate

misunderstanding in the final version of the translation. In any case, all this strongly cultural pieces of language and their deviations based on rhetoric have to be revised so that it could deliver the message correctly to the new audience.

### **3.3- Dynamic and Formal equivalence principles.**

In this paper it has been stated that there are several modalities in which the translation of a text can be developed, all of them at the service of the translator's purpose. Following Newmark (1992), it has been also established that they are placed in a spectrum measuring how close they are regarding two different and opposing focuses, and that all text types are usually tied to a default translation modality. The goal of this section is to revise the criteria supporting both focusses, the source-oriented and the audience-oriented ones. In the end, we will learn that all translation varieties are attached more or less the principles proposed by Nida (1964): the source-oriented focus aims at the principle of formal equivalence whereas the audience-oriented focus does so at the principle of dynamic equivalence.

The formal equivalence attempts to keep the form and content of the source text in the target text as much as it can. Nida (1964) here reveals that this very effect is managed in three major points:

- i) To preserve grammatical units by translating words by words in their closest equivalent possible. This includes keeping parts of speech, word order and punctuation intact. In fact, all the elements of the translation must look like the ones appearing in the source text.
- ii) To attempt to reproduce consistency in word usage, which means making use of what Nida (1964, p. 165) calls "concordance of terminology". This concordance consists of translating every single term by its corresponding one in the target language. However, this should not be pushed to an absurd extend so that the resulting message may end up being meaningless. One way to resolve this problem is by making use of parenthesis, brackets and italics for possible added words for the purpose of clarification.
- iii) To reproduce meanings in terms of the source context, and Nida here is very specific towards insurmountable obstacles such as idioms, puns or other cultural material. He proposes two ways to solve this: the translator can simply add footnotes to maintain the

effect of rigidity proper of these modalities of translation or translate it literally rather than trying to find an idiomatic equivalent.

As a result, consistent translations that have achieved a formal equivalence effect will contain much material that the average reader would consider unintelligible. In fact, marginal notes will be needed, as explained above, to understand the most difficult parts of the resulting translation. In my opinion, this attitude towards translating an advertising text is inherently opposite to the purpose of advertising which is, again, to persuade the audience to consume. What is more, in the case of slogans, following this principle would lessen drastically the effect of sticking in someone's mind if the translation cannot be adapted to the audience's needs as commented before.

On the other hand, the purpose of the dynamic equivalence principle consists of imitating the response obtained from the audience of the original text in first place. Then, that response is adapted so that the audience of the target text can understand better, that is, the content of the translated message is freely modified in order to maintain the same meaning and intention in other languages. Compared to formal equivalence, where only a rigorous linguistic analysis is needed, to achieve a dynamic equivalence effect it is necessary to take special attention to culture. Nida defines this principle as "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" (Nida, 1964, p. 166), and he remarks the very concept of naturalness as the key idea to understand the mechanics of this principle. Such effect of natural translation must accomplish three requisites to be successful:

i) To start with, Nida advances that the concepts of the receptor's language and culture must be combined together in order to achieve a satisfactory stylistic level. In fact, the adjustments applied to the resulting translated version must not indicate any trace of foreign origin. Thus, in order to follow this criteria both grammar and lexicon areas are to be revised. On the one hand, grammar is scarcely an obstacle due to its own inflexibility, which leaves few choices to the translator. On the other hand, the lexicon does offer plenty of possibilities that are presented in three groups according to the connection to culture that they may have. There is no problem with the first group which is composed by words that are already paired with available parallels. Those words are usually common and universal; for instance: *sea*, *sun*, *floor* or *sky*. Then, the second group contain words that have correspondence in function are found, despite being culturally different, which may drastically vary once put into context. Good

examples would be the comparison of the context where the terms *clothes* or *house* as they constitute different referential meaning from one place to another, and even from the past to nowadays. Finally, the third group is clearly the most difficult to translate. The terms that take part in this group cannot be explained without their cultural background, in other words, there is no adjustment available in the new version that can avoid all foreign traces. Nida (1964, p. 168) claims “It is inevitable also that when source and receptor languages represent very different cultures there should be many basic themes and accounts which cannot be “naturalized” by the process of translating”. The usual answer to this issue is to make use of extra resources like footnotes or notes in order to clarify them. However, and partly thanks to the recent mass culture, international advertising tends to foresee this problem and, what is more, if such terms are in any circumstance used it is because of particular reasons. One reason may be to prompt positive connotations deliberately in regard to the exotic or international quality of things. Then it takes part in the contexts of advertising as another available resource.

ii) Nida’s second point refers to the idea of ‘naturalness’ as a balance among several linguistic levels in the receptor’s language: word classes, grammatical categories, semantic classes, discourse types and cultural contexts. Thus, the target language text is considered appropriate when the cultural and linguistic contexts are achieved and also when it contemplates the context of the message in particular. To sum up this point, Nida expresses that a natural translation can be described more in terms of what it avoids than in terms of what it actually states. In this sense, and in order to achieve a dynamic effect, a natural translation has to avoid as much as possible any inconvenience for the good understanding of the message but it also has to add some new positive material.

iii) Nida’s third point takes into account the extent to which the message has to be adjusted in regards to the targeted audience. Such adjustments are made according to the audience’s experience and capacity of decoding of the text, and, of course, taking into account the response of the source text’s audience.

In brief, this principle follows point by point the very nature of advertisement. The purpose of international advertisement is to transfer a message capable of being meaningful no matter the kind of linguistic or cultural gap it may encounter. Thus, the content itself is very often modified or even rewritten in order to find ways to avoid the already commented difficulties. Due to the nature of this principle, slogans are

completely benefited because of its flexibility. It definitely helps to achieve the slogan's original purpose again in the target audience by retaining its capacity of making the audience remember it easily.

#### **4- An analysis of slogan translation.**

In this section, some examples are going to be analysed in order to put into practice the ideas exposed earlier in this project. These examples have been taken out from advertising campaigns performing both English language, as the original version, and Spanish language, as the derived version.

All the examples analysed have been classified in three major subdivided groups according to the nature of their translation procedures. This categorical taxonomy results in the following one: the linguistic-centred group, the cultural-centred group, and the regular group. Both elements of the advert, the graphic and linguistic ones, are going to be revised. Besides, each example is going to be explained individually except for the regular group, which is going to be analysed rather in a generic way.

##### **4.1- The linguistic-centred group.**

The examples analysed in this group are those in which translators are either incapable of reproducing the slogan in the target language because of linguistic reasons or they just want it deliberately changed because they seek to improve the results obtained in the original version.

###### **4.1.1- Case study #1: Rexona.**

The English version of this example is represented by the slogan 'It won't let you down' (1a), whereas the Spanish version is 'No te abandona' (1b). Both of them count with the same simple, straightforward graphic context. It merely consists of a black and white background that contrasts a great deal with the linguistic component of the advert. The font and logo also share the same contrast, which gives the advert

an air of sobriety. All this suggests that the product does not need any ornament to represent quality or trust to the audience. In the end, both version do not vary as they trigger the same feeling across the two cultures.



*Figures 1a & 1b (Rexona)*

In turn, the linguistic part does not resemble exactly the same. This version is at the service of the rhyme that arises when the translator choice for ‘let down’ is precisely ‘abandona’. Due to this fact, the Spanish version does not respect neither the semantics in ‘let down’ nor the tense proposed in the English version, using a present simple instead of a future.

In regard to meaning, the phrasal verb ‘let down’ does not have a direct correspondence with ‘abandonar’ in Spanish. In fact, it is a deviation of its figurative meaning ‘decepcionar’ to manage the rhyme construction, Rex-ona/aband-ona, as an extra hooking device.

As a result, this case lies in the idiomatic translation method and not in the communicative one because the Spanish version distorts the nuances of meaning of the term ‘let down’ in order to give priority to the rhyme. In other words, in this example not only has the slogan been adapted to ease the reader’s comprehension but the translator has also felt free to make modifications to enhance the translated resulting text.

In addition, Nida's principle of dynamic equivalence is very clear in this case study because the changes from one language to the other just affect the form and barely the meaning. In fact, although 'let down' does not mean exactly 'abandonar' in Spanish both version accomplish the same impact in the audience.

#### 4.1.2- Case Study #2: Kit Kat.

In this case study, the linguistic part of the English version features the idiomatic expression 'Have a break' (2a) whereas the Spanish version results in a direct translation as 'Tómate un respiro' (2b). Both texts count with a simple reddish background, whose colour is the one representing the brand, and a different set of elements inside as the graphic component.



Figures 2a & 2b: (Kit Kat)

The original version of this advert takes into account not only the idiomatic meaning of the aforementioned expression but also its literal meaning, too. By playing with this duality the advertising campaign manages to surprise the audience, what, of course, helps the persuasion engine work better.

The issue arises when one notices that the Spanish version fails to provide a good option to supply the intentions of the original version so that it could encompass both the literal and idiomatic meaning of the original expression. In the end, the power of the Spanish version has decreased a great deal in comparison to the English one. The translator here has decided to simply translate the English idiom ‘have a break’ into its closest correspondence in Spanish: ‘tómate un respiro’.

From my point of view, the form and semantic core meaning remains the same so, taking into account the nature of idioms in translation context, the focus adopted in this example is probably a semantic or communicative translation style. However, conclusions here cannot be definite due the main issue that the translator has encountered: the Spanish language does not have any expression able to fulfil the linguistic strategy that the original language is carrying out. Therefore, an important loss in meaning is perceived in the Spanish translation. In any case, it follows Nida’s (1992) principle of dynamic equivalence.

#### **4.1.3- Case Study #3: Burger King.**

From the point of view of the graphic component of this advert, both are almost the same: they present idyllic examples of hamburgers to enhance the brand image. In any case, this time the relation between the linguistic and graphic components of the advert does not affect the Spanish translation proposal.



*Figures 3a & 3b: (Burger King)*

On the contrary, the linguistic message does vary from the original language to the target one. The English version, ‘Have it your way’ (3a), differs in two linguistic layers from the Spanish proposal, ‘A tu manera’ (3b). Firstly, the English slogan is an idiom, inflexible in form, whereas the Spanish one is merely an ordinary phrase so the form does not correspond to that of the original in the transfer. Secondly, and most important, the semantic transfer is directly affected by the register of both versions because, in fact, the Spanish language is unable to reproduce fully the English proposal. According to *English Oxford Dictionaries*, ‘Have it your (own) way’ is an informal expression that indicates imperative mode: “Used to indicate angrily that

although one disagrees with something someone has said or proposed, one is not going to argue further”. In turn, ‘A tu manera’ is not documented in the Spanish *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*. In fact, the expression ‘Have it your way’ is linked to very negative connotations of disapproval, and it is used in much ruder contexts, whereas ‘A tu manera’ displays no connotations at all so there are no specific situations for it to be used.

Summing up, this example is located in an idiomatic translation style. A pragmatic deviation has been produced to also change the commercial strategy from a direct negative way to a more neuter one.

#### **4.1.4- Case Study #4: KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken).**

The following examples of slogans belong to the same company. The first one, which became one of the most successful slogans in the history of advertisement, ‘it’s finger licking good’, was originated by accident during the 50s, as we can learn from an article in the Daily Mail published in February 2011:

“The catchphrase originated by accident in the 1950s when franchisee David Harman was shown eating chicken and licking his fingers in the background of an American TV commercial. A viewer phoned up to complain about the incident and spoke to manager Ken Harbough, who replied: 'Well it's finger lickin' good.'”

Right after that, the phrase became extremely popular and it has been used as slogan of the company until 2011, when the fast-food firm decided to replace it with ‘so good’. The reasons seems to be that the former slogan of the company was too ‘food-centric’ whereas the new ‘so good’ slogan would refer to other important things within the company, such as the people working for it. The first example, and former slogan as we have already said, is the pairing ‘it’s finger lickin’ good’ (4a) in English and ‘para chuparse los dedos’ (4b) in Spanish.

The proposals follow another advertising resource, the principle of ‘rupture’, that is to say, deliberately breaking the rules that govern the language of the message,

especially those referring to orthography in this context. Although the slogan was created by accident, the following quote gives an explanation to why it was still so successful and thus why there is such a great contrast between both languages in this area: “En español, los publicistas no tratan, por lo general de quebrantar las convenciones ortográficas para reflejar las pronunciaciones coloquiales, mientras que en inglés esas convenciones se violan para atraer la atención del consumidor” (Breva Claramonte, 1997, p. 306). An example of the so-called ‘rupture’ effect would be avoiding the final ‘g’ in the gerund ‘licking’ and putting an apostrophe instead.



Figures 4a & 4b: (KFC)

The second and current pair of slogans are the following ones: the English version ‘so good’ (4c) versus the Spanish version ‘buenísimo’ (4d). First of all, both constructions are basically the same: they are absolute superlatives, which express a describing adjective in its maximum degree regardless of the comparison with some larger group. In fact, Huddleston and Pullum (2002, p. 1166) remark that for a superlative to be interpreted in an absolute sense “[...] the comparison does not involve anything outside the NP containing the superlative form”. Nevertheless, there is a slight difference in form from one language to the other. The original version makes use of the option with ‘so’ premodifying the adjective ‘good’ whereas the Spanish version does so applying the superlative morpheme ‘-ísimo’. However, the English language has no way to express absolute superlative degree morphologically as the Spanish language does, for instance, in the case of ‘buenísimo’ instead of ‘muy bueno’.



*Figures 4c & 4d: (KFC)*

Moving into the graphic component, the advert reinforces the visual impact of the superlative structures in both languages by using red and black colours for the font in contraposition to the white colour used for the background. The red colour is used to highlight 'so', the modifying part of the structure, whereas the black colour does so with the adjective 'good'. On the contrary, the Spanish version still uses the two colours to split the root 'buen-' and the superlative morpheme '-ísimo' in order to resemble the original version as much as possible.

In conclusion, a rather idiomatic translation method has been applied in the first example whereas in the second one the translator has opted for a rather communicative translation approach.

#### **4.1.5- Case Study #5: Gillette.**

World-wide famous industries usually have a basic and direct graphic messages because of the kind of audience it aims at. In the case of Gillette, it consists of presenting the product as it is, in simple typography and dark and bright colours, what fulfils the stereotype that men prefer things without ornaments.

Now moving into the linguistic message of the advert, Gillette's two versions of its slogan are the following: for the English version, 'The best a man can get' (5a), and for the Spanish one, 'Lo mejor para el hombre' (5b). Although both versions omit a hypothetical subject and a copulative verb *ser/to be*, they also omit other elements in their structure, but this time not symmetrically as they are not similar constructions. One the one hand, the Spanish version consists of a subject complement, 'lo mejor', where the head adjective 'mejor' is postmodified by the prepositional phrase 'para el

hombre’. On the other hand, the original version consists of a subject complement, ‘the best’ followed by a relative clause, ‘(that) a man can get’. The presumed relative pronoun ‘that’ is omitted as well.

Taking into account that, although both proposals are not fully similar in form, the core meaning of the linguistic and contextual message is overall the same so that means that for the Spanish version it has been adopted a communicative translation focus.



*Figures 5a & 5b: (Gillette)*

## 4.2- The culture-centred group.

In this group, all the examples are affected to some extent by the traits of culture, which, in turn, modify the linguistic components of the translated versions. Culture is understood here as the non-linguistic components that constrains the translator to take them into account in the process of translation. These non-linguistic components in this paper are the cultural barrier and the messages of the image.

### 4.2.1- Case Study #6: Danone Activia.

The original version's proposal of this case study consists of two noun phrases without a link: 'Activia tummies. Happy people' (6a). Just like the English version, the Spanish one uses the following one: 'Barrigas felices. Gente Activia' (6b). Both versions count with a simple green background where certain well-known people in the culture of each version are standing. As can be seen in (6a) and (6b), the celebrities in the adverts are each holding a card which depicts what seems a healthy belly with a smile on it. In fact, the symbolism within the advert tries to suggest well-being, a product that takes care of you. It seems clear that the reason why the Spanish version does not include the people appearing in the English version is that it would disrupt the cultural aspect of the advert. In other words, the Spanish version must use other recognisable people to obtain the same effect of guaranteed quality that is achieved by portraying famous people advertising the product.





*Figures 6a & 6b: (Danone)*

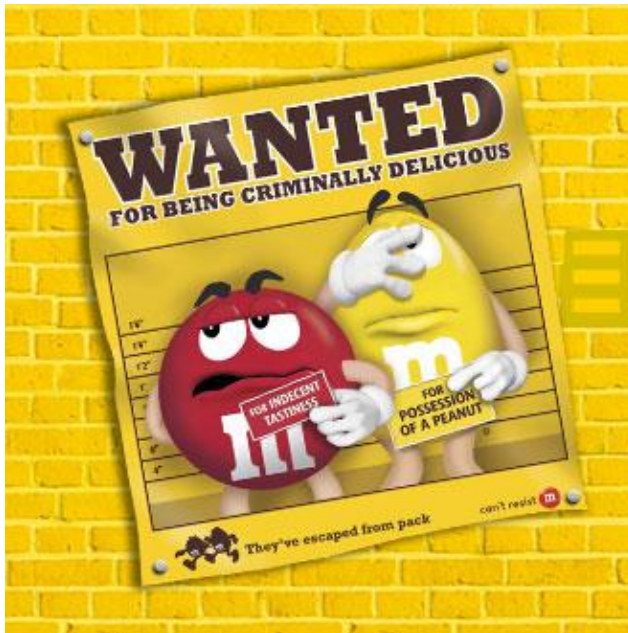
The translation choices are very accurate except for the chiasmus between both phrases in the linguistic message. In fact, such a change is intimately connected to the message of the image because of the aforementioned cards that the figures hold. In my opinion, by playing with elements' order, the resulting Spanish version is prone to meet the reader's attention as the statement 'Barrigas felices' reflects far better the reality depicted in the referent, or the cards that the famous people are holding. A more faithful alternative, for example 'Barrigas Activia. Gente Feliz', would have result in a more accurate translation but it would have also lost the additional persuasive effect that ties the message and the image together.

In conclusion, this example is located at some point in between the communicative and idiomatic translation styles. The key words linguistically maintain the semantics and register but the word order turns to be flexible so that the translation could be better received by the audience. From my point of view, the Spanish translation turns to be an enhanced version of original one. In fact, such an improvement has been achieved thanks to the relation between the graphic and linguistic components within the advert.

#### **4.2.2- Case Study #7: M&M's.**

The next case study is presented in a very particular graphic context. There are two animated sweets, representing the brand, portrayed as criminals in well-known 'wanted' posters. The performance of the criminal scene tries to intensify positively the idea that the product is so good that it deserves to be penalized, which eventually tries to grab the audience's attention.

The linguistic message varies from other case studies in that they use culture as well as linguistics. The English slogan features the sentence ‘Wanted for being criminally delicious’ (7a) whereas there are several Spanish variations departing from the original version. In fact, there are different proposals in my findings: ‘Se buscan por ser criminalmente deliciosos’ (7b) and ‘Se buscan por irresistibles’ (7c).



Figures 7a &7b: (M&M's)



Figure 7c (M&M's)

On the one hand, the first proposal in (7b) results in a mirrored translation, or a word-by-word translation. Such a translating scheme is used because it is possible to transmit the message across audiences without losing any trace of meaning. This, put in Nida's (1964, p.165) words, means that this translation follows each point of the formal equivalence effect as it is achieved a good "word consistency" and "meaning in terms of the source language" instead of the so needed dynamic equivalence effect found in the rest of the examples in this category. On the other hand, the second proposal in (7c) looks for another way to express the message: the translator has decided to omit the adverb 'criminalmente' and replace the adjective 'deliciosos' with 'irresistibles', another adjective. Neither the semantics nor the relation between the messages of the image and the text are modified by the adjective replacement. However, the linguistic message and that of the image get less tied together without a term like 'criminalmente'. In fact, 'criminalmente' is used with the only purpose to evoke the specific effect of intensification previously commented.

More interestingly, there is a third proposal that mixes both languages and the content of both previous examples: 'Wanted por criminalmente irresistibles' (7d). This slogan mixes the adverb 'criminalmente', which appears in (7a) and (7b), but, this time, it is followed by the adjective 'irresistibles', which takes part in the version (7c). In addition, it also leaves untranslated the first element in the sentence: 'Wanted'. The style of 'wanted' posters originally comes from the Wild West times and later on it became a symbol in the spaghetti western film scenery. Eventually, it became a public universal referent and, in this context, another way to captivate the audience.



*Figure 7d: (M&M's)*

As there are several Spanish realisations of the same original slogan, there are also more than one translation method that have been applied, and, of course, dissimilar from each other. A translation style that gives preference to the form, as it remains unchanged, has been used in the example (7b) whereas in (7c) the form varies in order to have more ways to advertise the product. Moreover, the proposal (7d) is even more interesting as the word ‘wanted’ remains untranslated because of its cultural contribution. In other words, a single advertising campaign is free to make use of different styles to open the door to more ways of hooking the audience into the advert.

#### **4.2.3- Case Study #8: Pringles.**

This company has a famous slogan that has strengthened during the last years in both the English and the Spanish communities. On the one hand, the English version of the slogan is ‘Once you pop, you never stop’ (8a) and, on the other, the Spanish version is ‘Cuando haces pop, ya no hay stop’ (8b).



*Figures 8a & 8b: (Pringles)*

The two proposals are similar in form and structure: they both present a complex adverbial sentence expressing time. However, both versions slightly differ as regards the lexical class of the words that appear in each slogan.

The terms appearing in both versions, 'pop' and 'stop' are kept untranslated with the purpose of maintaining in the Spanish version the rhyme produced in the original advert. In fact, the impact of this rhetorical figure is so heavy in the original version that the translator may have decided to leave it unchanged to seek the same impact in the target language using exactly the same terms. Thanks to the presence of mass culture, the Spanish language is enabled to embrace both English terms.

In order to put those terms in an acceptable Spanish grammatical frame, the translator is forced to change the verbs 'pop' and 'stop' into nouns in Spanish. In

addition, 'pop' also makes reference to the onomatopoeic sound characteristic that happens when one opens a can like that of Pringles, which is the value that the Spanish language have taken from the original 'pop' term. Eventually, the term 'stop' works in this case study due to the fact that is widely used in other contexts where it functions as a noun, for instance, as a traffic sign.

Finally, although the original content has been adapted, meaning has not been changed enough to consider this an idiomatic example in Newmark's (1992) translation model category. Because of that this, case study would belong to the communicative translation group as the transference of meaning is still clear.

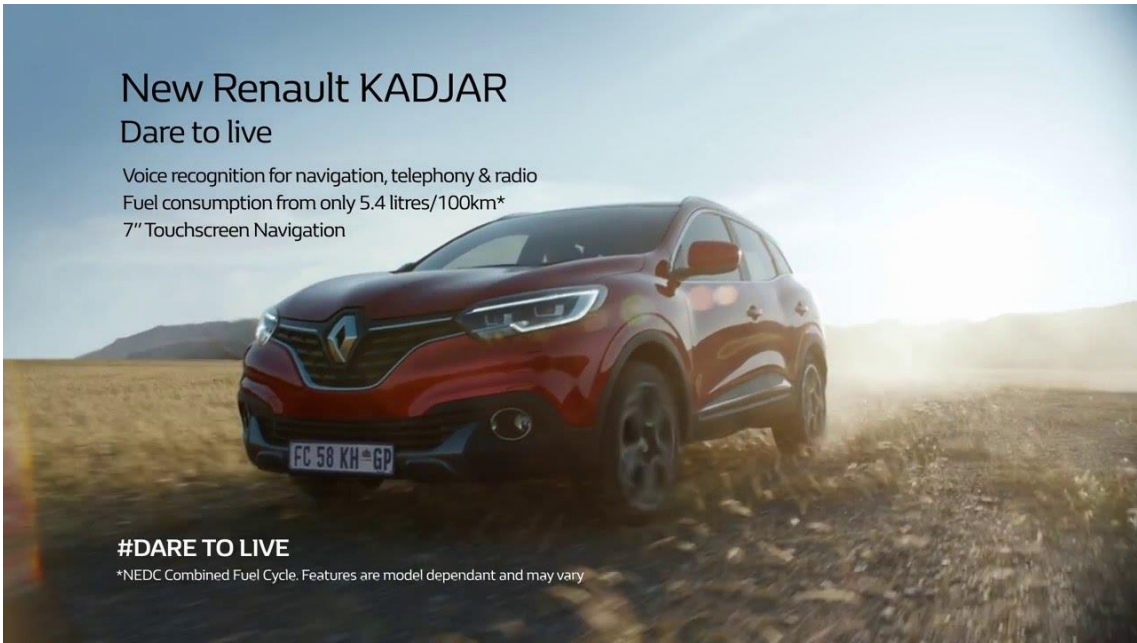
### **4.3- The regular group.**

This group is composed by several examples that are neither linguistic nor cultural-centred, in other words, they do not present significant changes from the original version to the translated one. In fact, this group encompasses the major part of those commercial campaigns that have their linguistic messages translated. The reasons why they are in this category are either because they consist of plain direct translations or they lack any form of translation process.

#### **4.3.1- Case Study #9: Direct translations.**

When the average translator does not encounter any linguistic or cultural issue to deal with during their work they simply make use of approaches that give an emphasis to the form. As the slogan form is a very short one, such translation methods are enough to get a similar impact from the original to the translated version of the slogan.

Some examples out of many are: 'Because you're worth it' and 'Porque tú lo vales (L'Oréal), 'Welcome to the Independent Republic of your Home' and 'Bienvenido a la República Independiente de tu Casa' (Ikea,) and those that appear below: 'Dare to live' (9a) and '¡Atrévete a vivir!' (9b) (Renault), 'When there's no Coke' (10a) and 'Cuando no hay Coca-Cola' (10b) (Pepsi).

A red Renault Kadjar SUV is shown driving on a dirt road in a vast, open landscape under a bright sky. The car is the central focus, moving towards the viewer. The background features rolling hills and a clear horizon.

**New Renault KADJAR**  
Dare to live

Voice recognition for navigation, telephony & radio  
Fuel consumption from only 5.4 litres/100km\*  
7" Touchscreen Navigation

**#DARE TO LIVE**  
\*NEDC Combined Fuel Cycle. Features are model dependant and may vary

A red Renault Kadjar SUV is parked on a rocky cliff edge. In the background, a person is seen climbing a steep, rocky slope. The landscape is rugged with a river flowing through a valley below. The sky is clear and blue.

**Renault KADJAR**  
¡Atrévete a vivir!

Inspírate con los videos de campeones  
de deportes extremos.

*Figures 9a & 9b: (Renault)*



*Figures 10a & 10b: (Pepsi)*

The vast majority of translated adverts belong to this category as, in fact, the translator always tries to give the closest linguistic equivalent version regarding the original version.

#### **4.3.1- Case Study #10: The ‘untranslated’ way.**

International well-established companies, particularly those that belong to the fields of sport and technology, take advantage of mass culture traits. For that to work, brand companies make use of adverts in which culture is more neuter, in other words, they include material that the vast majority of the audience accepts and understands. Consequently, their advertising campaigns simply take the choice of keeping the entire linguistic component of the slogan unchanged, whichever the original language it is. This happens only if the transferred message is a slogan form and it has a special potential if the untranslated code is English, as it remains as the language of mass media and mass culture globally.

In my opinion, they manage to trigger two kinds of effect over the places where the English language is not spoken as the mother tongue. On the one hand, foreign products are taken as a guarantee of quality just because they come from abroad. On the other hand, using English in a non-English context makes the audience curious about an unintelligible message, perfect to amplify the persuasive power of advertising. Ferraz Martínez (1996, p. 22), in a deeper analysis, finds out that unintelligible or suppressed messages takes part within the mechanics of advertising that aims at the inherent human sense of curiosity so the same must work for untranslated messages in other languages and cultures.

Eventually, the untranslated way works as intended in slogans because of its brevity in form, that is to say, it is very unusual to find any other kind of textual piece like this.

Some of the companies whose advertising campaigns generally opt to have their slogans untranslated are: Adidas, ‘Impossible is nothing’ (11), Sony, ‘Make. Believe’ (12), or Apple, ‘Think different’ (13)



*Figure 11: (Adidas)*



*Figure 12: (Sony)*



Figure 13: (Apple)

## **5- Conclusion.**

In this paper, we have acknowledged that every advert is mainly composed of two binary elements whatever the kind of advertising form we are dealing with, including our object of study, which is the slogan. Those elements are the linguistic and the non-linguistic parts of the advert, the last one referring to either the graphic part of the advert or its cultural traits. Although this paper is mainly based on the linguistic analysis of slogan, the graphic component cannot simply be ignored in order to carry out a proper translation in each particular case.

Thus, when it comes to the translation process, the analysis shows two kinds of situations: translations that encounter some kind of linguistic or cultural interferences and those ones that do not meet any kind of interference. Once surpassed such interferences, the resulting translation in the first group, according to my findings, tend to enhance the persuasive goal of advertisement in one way or another if the target language has the resources to do it. However, when the target language does not have the possibility to establish a direct transfer with the source language then the persuasive power lessens. Those slogans that do not encounter any kind of problem can be

rendered into Spanish by means of a direct translation style or can simply remain untranslated due to the influence of mass culture and recognised referents. In any case, they stand as perfect concordance examples between the target and the source languages.

In addition, the analysis carried out has proved that translation studies in the context of advertising are always directed to a specific direction: the good understanding and assessment of the particular audience that the adverts are addressed to is the key to succeed in the international marked context. For that to be accomplished the translation will always pursue Nida's (1964) dynamic effect to the maximum possible extent and, later, the translation focus will be adjusted according to the needs of each case in particular, being Newmark's (1992) communicative and idiomatic translation styles the most frequently according to our investigation.

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