Advertising: Some Challenges to Translation Theory

Jeremy Munday

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JEREMY MUNDAY
University of Surrey, UK

Abstract. *The translation of advertising was almost completely overlooked by translation studies for many years. This paper examines how far the evolution of translation theory has managed (or failed) to cope with the special circumstances of advertising translation. It considers some of the principal linguistic characteristics of advertising, and how these give new insights into long-debated issues of translation theory such as translatability, the unit of translation and standardization. Audience, function, purpose and cross-cultural transfer are particular areas studied, and the treatment of advertising in some major works in translation studies is discussed. Finally, it is suggested that concepts from recent writing on visual and multimodal communication (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001, Kress 2003) need to be incorporated into the study not only of advertising translation but of all types of translation.*

"Advertising is a prominent discourse type in virtually all contemporary societies" asserts Guy Cook in his influential book *The Discourse of Advertising* (Cook 1992/2001:8). Initially marginalized in societies that privileged the formal written book, it is a very complex type that straddles a vast range of theoretical, practical and representational domains. It is perhaps one of the best examples of what Scollon and Scollon (2003:xii) call "semiotic aggregates, … very complex examples of the interaction of multiple semiotic systems". Advertisements not only encompass the written copy to be found in newspapers, magazines and posters; they are a central feature of TV and are increasingly prominent in the new technologies in the guise of spam, pop-ups and indeed websites themselves. Nor should we restrict ourselves to seeing advertising merely in terms of consumerism, despite the importance of that link stressed by Fairclough (2001:165-75). Posters, book jackets, political advertising, food and clothing labels, information leaflets, product recall notices, home-made printed or hand-written pages stuck on lampposts, shop and street signs all advertise either a product, a service or some kind of information. They may not always be directly selling a product,

but they are reinforcing or constructing an image, seeking to affect people's behaviour in some way, or at least to make them stop and think.

In the face of such a complex, omnipresent discourse type, translation theory has until recently been relatively quiet. Examples from advertising do appear in some of the prominent 'classics' of translation theory (e.g. Vinay and Darbelnet 1958/1995. Reiss 1971/2000, House 1977, Gutt 1991), and more recently several monographs and edited volumes on the translation of advertising have been published in Spanish and French (Bueno García 2000, Corpas Pastor *et al.* 2002, Guidère 2000a). The number of articles that have appeared over recent years also attests to a surge of interest in a broad range of what were previously considered 'non-mainstream' translation-related activities: advertising, audio-visual translation, localization, globalization, etc. Adverts, after all, do comprise a massive, and readily available, corpus of parallel texts. In the light of this, one of the aims of the present paper is to summarize the position of advertising within translation studies to date and to evaluate how successfully theory has accounted for the special circumstances surrounding this area of translation; a second is to probe the links that exist between the translation of advertising and other disciplines and theoretical models, and to suggest areas that may be fruitful for the development of this field within translation studies. Concrete examples will be used from current or very recent advertising, mainly in Spain and the UK.

1. The marketing 'take' on translation

Although adverts are sometimes exhibited as a kind of art form, in an increasingly globalized world dominated by multinationals the wheels of the advertising business are driven by cash. Ads are expensive. In international campaigns designed to enhance brand image they account for 20-30 per cent of gross margin (Moore *et al.* 2000), so they need to be seen to make a difference. Yet, despite this global dimension, writing on marketing pays little attention to the translation of written copy. Arens' *Contemporary Advertising* (2002), a 600-page volume aiming to give the reader a solid introduction to the field, devotes just four pages to translation. In those pages, Arens (*ibid.*:100) identifies the three main obstacles facing a company embarking on a transnational advertising campaign: the different cultural value systems, environments and languages. There are three options for the company: (1) to translate; (2) to run new campaigns locally; and (3) to run an international campaign in English. Each has its pros and cons: (1) is cheap, but the ad may not be culturally suitable for the target audience or the trans-lated text may not 'work' as an ad; (2) can target the new culture but is much more expensive and will also require careful co-ordination to ensure global consistency; (3) may work for high-profile companies promoting a global culture (e.g. Mastercard, Nokia) but can lay the company open to the

criticism of linguistic and cultural imperialism.

Many advertising translators' experience is limited to (1), that is, translating the written text of an advert. However, in those cases Arens stresses (*ibid.*: 430) that the translator, in addition to working competently between the two languages, should be a good copy-writer, understand the product, preferably live in the target country and receive 'easily translatable' copy. The role of the advertising translator is therefore expanding, in common with what is expected of other kinds of translator. This means that the translator needs to be increasingly multi-skilled but remains just one player in a complex advertising translational action, to adapt Holz-Mänttäri's (1984) term. The translator is often last on the list of an advertising agency's priorities after manufacturer, agency, producer, writer, etc., but a very important one nonetheless in a transnational campaign. When it comes to branding, Rozin and Magnusson (2003) describe a process that involves deciding marketing strategy at the top level, brainstorming and testing names, trademark and legal screening (to make sure the name is not already in use) and native-speaker check. It is that last element which most closely interfaces with translation and which ideally should be carried out by a translator as a cross-cultural expert.

Branding is a crucial element of successful advertising that involves, or should involve, careful cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research. While the goal of brand names, and logos, is to facilitate recognition of a company and its products in any location and context (Cook 1992/2001), sometimes the name needs to be altered to cater for its local pronunciation or association when a different script is needed in the target culture. Name and image are very extensively documented concepts of brand management, but the crossover to translation studies is rarely made. Exceptions are Dong and Helms (2001), who discuss the translation of US brands in China, and Bueno García (2000), who has an interesting section on the use of foreign brand names, notably French and Italian names of perfume and clothing brands as an index of elegance, sophistication and sensuality. In most cases, mention of translation tends only to surface when a glaring error is made, when a name is used that has unintentional and very humorous or obscene connotations in the target culture. Recent examples that have hit the news are the Buick *Lacrosse* (in French Canada it means 'masturbation') and Sharwood's new *Bundh* sauces (close to the word 'arse' in some dialects of Punjabi). These firms seemed to have overlooked the native-speaker check before launching their products.

2. Advertising and translation studies

The exact role of translation in the creation of adverts in different languages is a topic of some debate: Cook (1992:196) quotes Snell and Crampton (1983),

writing in *The Translator's Handbook,* as asserting that "translation has little to do with this fascinating area of communication"; on the other hand, Guidère (2001) sees advertising translation as "the means of communication *par excellence* of a company exporting its products" and "one of the areas that most makes use of specialized translators", and Bueno García (2000:17) describes advertising as "translation *per se*" since, through adaptation, it provides a gateway to another culture. The issue of whether we should be speaking of 'translation' or 'adaptation' has been discussed by many authors (see discussions in Bueno García 2000:26, Cook 1992/2001:73, Gutknecht and Rolle 1996:299-300, Tatilon 1990). Somewhere in the middle is Snell-Hornby, who, in her well-known diagram of an integrated theory of translation, locates advertising on the boundary of general language transla-tion and special language translation and of communicative function and information function, subject to a wide range of linguistic parameters includ-ing text linguistics, phonological effects, sociolinguistics, pragmalinguistics and psycholinguistics (Snell-Hornby 1995:32).

   In truth, the debate on the distinction between translation and adaptation, which has been a preoccupation of other areas such as theatre translation, is a distraction. What is more fruitful is to examine the existing potential commonalities between translation studies and advertising, a practical and complex semiotic system covering many linguistic and cultural concepts. In what follows, I look first at the level of language, then audience, purpose and cross-cultural transfer.

2.1 Linguistic strategies and advertising techniques

Cook's analysis of mainly British advertising (Cook 1992/2001)[1] deals extensively with the semantic concepts of denotation and connotation, which are of course well-known to linguists, and with advertising techniques such as 'reason' and 'tickle', which are perhaps less so. As far as the use of language in advertising is concerned, Cook highlights the fact that "adver-tisers have a predilection for strategies which distract from or add to the literal meaning" (1992/2001:105). These include prosody or rhythm that conjure up associations and breaks down rigid semantic connections. A famous example quoted by Cook (*ibid.*:133) is W.H. Auden's poem 'The Night Mail', used as an ad by the Royal Mail, with its rhythm reminiscent of a racing train carrying the mail to its destination. The clear link this demonstrates between advertising and poetry might explain why translation of both is so difficult. In fact, some poetry is advertising, and vice versa:

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[1] In fact, it is noticeable that even less prominence to the translation of advertisements is given in the 2001 (second) edition of Cook's book.

many metro systems, such as London's, now display poems alongside other ads, promoting the arts and creating a more pleasant ambience for travel. In 2003, London Underground even had a 'translated poetry on the underground' feature, bringing together and celebrating translation, poetry and advertising in an unusually visible way, citing the names of both poet *and translator*.

Linguistic deviation from the norm often becomes part of the message: thus, the logo *Lángûãgë Show* was used for a national language fair in the UK in 2003, the foreignness of the accented letters fitting with the theme of the fair. If anything, this is a variant within advertising of translation's age-old form-content dichotomy that so exercised earlier theorists. It is also another take on pseudo-translation, here, the false appearance that translation, or at least foreign language production, is taking place. This is quite a common technique in advertising: the AA has promoted its five-star Europe service with the halting and halted British motorist demanding from a French mechanic "Le motor broke, vous fix, s'il vous plait".

Loan words and neologisms also play a fundamental role. Bueno García (2000:154-59) gives many examples of loan words in translation, notably of English technical terms from domains such as computing and cosmetics, and notes:

> More than anyone else, the translator of advertising will feel a special predilection for creating neologisms, knowing not only that they will be well received by the public – who are always entertained by these formulations – but will also serve to support the objectives of a message that is full of novelty and able to attract the reader's attention. (*ibid.*:159; my translation)

It would be useful to test this assertion on a wider corpus of ads and to extend it to other features of the text, such as puns and syntax. If it is true that the translator of advertising feels permitted to employ such forms, it would run counter to the tendency towards standardization in translation that is often noted by translation theorists (notably Toury 1995). Punning does seem to be a popular technique in advertising in many languages and cultures (see Nomura 2000 for examples from Brazilian Portuguese and German). The effect is to catch the reader's attention and to amuse, which presumably smoothes the way for the more serious function of selling, improving brand awareness, and so on. At the same time, this affinity for punning that eludes translation also explains why some advertising needs to be completely rewritten for the foreign market, with new puns created. In Spain, Thomson managed a pun on their name with the slogan "no compre su televisión sin Thom ni son", which is very close to "no compre su televisión sin ton ni son" ('don't buy your television without rhyme or reason'). Other ads are purely for a domestic audience anyway, so are not likely to be

translated: in the early 1990s Spain ran an imaginative HIV/AIDS awareness campaign with the slogan "sí da – no da" ('it does give – it doesn't give') with a list of examples of how HIV is passed on, or not. This works linguistically because of the play on the form SIDA, the Spanish term for AIDS.[2] On the other hand, in 2003 in South Africa, ranked fourth worldwide for its innovative ad campaigns (Portfolio Committee 2002),[3] one of the slogans featured on posters encouraging the use of condoms to combat the AIDS epidemic in that country was a very different pun: "take prickautions". This tendency to use the same techniques in non-translated ads on the same topic in different cultures is something that needs to be followed up carefully in contrastive studies of what are very illuminating parallel texts.

The translation of advertising adds new insights into what have become rather staid terms in translation theory, such as translatability and the unit of translation (see Hatim and Munday 2004). For instance, perfumes and wine are major products that, because they are based on smell or taste, are sometimes referred to as "indescribable" (Cook 1992/2001:107). The translation, or rewriting, of wine text is a specialism in itself, with some translators specializing in that copy (see, for example, the website for www. devinitywine.com). Another frequent solution to this problem is, quite simply, to produce an advertisement that has no words at all, apart from the name or a photo of the product, or not to translate a transnational English-language ad. Unlike other scenarios, here zero-translation of a whole text is an option.

These are some of the linguistic features that have come out of studies specifically directed at the translation of advertising and which shed light on long-debated translation issues. Examining the issue from a slightly different angle, namely the discussion of advertising within general theories of translation, there are three main theoretical points that have been emphasized, which perhaps understandably parallel the developments of translation theory over the past forty years. These are the focus on the target audience (2.2), the purpose or skopos of the translation (2.3), and the fact that adverts are a clear example of cross-cultural transfer (2.4).

2.2 Focus on the target audience

Although Nida's interest is Bible translation (Nida 1964, Nida and Taber 1969), his focus on the receptor of the message and championing of dynamic equivalence are of course crucial in advertising translation as well. This would normally immediately rule out formal equivalence if it runs counter to the

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[2] My thanks to advertising translator Martin Smyth in Madrid for these examples.
[3] My thanks to Kim Wallmach for alerting me to this document and for information on the Vodacom advertisment.

needs of the message, though exceptions do give rise to many popular examples of unintended humour. One such example is the oft-quoted warning to motorists in Japan that selects TL items of completely the wrong register: "When a passenger of the foot heave in sight, tootle the horn. Trumpet at him melodiously at first, but if he still obstacles your passage, then tootle him with vigour". An extreme example of such a translation approach applied to a whole text occurred in the German town of Homberger-an-der-Efze, where the tourist office used non-post-edited machine translation to produce its brochure and had to pulp the entire run (O'Neill 2003).

Valdés (2000:272) stresses that "the main factor influencing the production and the translation of an ad is the receiver. All translation decisions depend on the presupposition the translator has about the target consumer's interpretation of the message". At the same time, however, she cautions against presuming that the audience is 'homogenous' and cites an ad for the Spanish Iberia airline which is substantially rewritten for the British market (*ibid.*:274). This is an accepted and encouraged strategy in advertising. Indeed, advertising translation agencies such as Merrill Translations place the stress on "knowing your audience":

> In any language, across all media, we know your audience. Merrill Translations specializes in the translation/adaptation of advertising copy, taglines, marketing materials and the conversion of audio-video materials into and from foreign languages. (http://www.merrillcorp. com/solutions/translations/translationservices_advertising.htm, 11. 08.04)

Two examples of translated tourist brochures in Juliane House's well-known register-based model of translation quality assessment (House 1977) both show how difficult this concept of audience can be: the brochures are for a Finnish-German ferry line and for the German city of Nuremberg. Both are instances of House's 'covert' translation (that is, they are meant to function as if they were original texts in the TL). House's analysis, concentrating exclusively on the written copy, shows that the German Nuremberg ST is exaggerating and rather pompous regarding the attractions of the city, and, according to House, flattering towards the ST reader because it assumes specific cultural and historical knowledge. This knowledge is explicated in the TT. However, House's analysis is later questioned by Gutt (1991) from the perspective of relevance theory. In the ferry text, where the Finnish and German texts only correspond in fifty per cent of the brochure, Gutt argues that changes of information content have been introduced to meet the expectations and needs of the different audience travelling in different directions on the ferry. Gutt also pursues the issue of whether it would be appropriate for the Nuremberg TT to preserve all the different functions,

suggesting that this would risk flouting the rules of cultural communication in the target culture, where flattery, for instance, might be more, or less, the norm. Linguistic analysis requires consideration of such cross-cultural issues.

The opposite approach to the Nuremberg example (that is, non-explication/non-adaptation of source culture terms) may serve to define and restrict the target audience. A recent example is a poster campaign in the UK by the Hungarian Tourist Board, which begins:

> Hungary welcomes Britain
> Visit Hungary – homeland of Liszt, Bartók, Lehår, Sir Alexander Korda,
> Sir George Solti and Puskás

Perhaps only classical music lovers and football cognoscenti of over 40 years of age would be sure to identify these names. Others, presumably not the specific target audience, might feel excluded. Alternatively, the writer and producers of the ad have spectacularly misjudged the average British reader's acquaintance with Hungarian culture. Such cultural exclusion parallels the deliberate linguistic exclusion discussed by Pym in his analysis of an advert for tender posted by the State of Kuwait in English, with a very brief descriptive paratext in French, in the French daily *Le Monde* (Pym 1992). Pym describes three kinds of audience for this ad: the excluded (French readers who do not know English), the observational (French readers who read the French paratext but cannot respond to the tender), and the participative (English-language readers who are in the position to respond). This is a good example of the complexities of texts in different communicative situations, where the target readership is deliberately defined by the presentation.

Despite these caveats, however, persuasive effect must remain a central concern for translators of adverts, and for translation theorists too. Adab (2000, 2001), writing from a descriptive translation studies perspective, seeks to draw up a framework for evaluation and guidelines for translators to achieve 'functional adequacy' and preserve 'persuasive effect' in adverts.

2.3 The purpose of the translation

The crucial weight afforded by Katharina Reiss (1971/2000) and Reiss and Vermeer (1984) to language function, text-type and skopos, or purpose, does include a brief discussion of advertising. Reiss (Reiss *ibid.*:25) considers it to be an example of where the different functions co-exist but where the 'persuasive' or 'operative' function predominates:

> [A]dvertising copy should not be classified as content-focused, where
> it would be essential only that the informational content correspond
> to the original. Commercial advertising is a rather pointed example of

the persuasive function of language, and in translating this must be recognized as taking priority over depictive functions.

To our eyes, Reiss's analysis now seems rather one-dimensional. She classifies advertisements as 'audio-medial texts', which for her are principally TV commercials, and the goal of the translation is to have an equivalent effect on the target audience: "a translation appropriate for audio-medial texts must preserve the same effect on the hearer that the original has in the source language" (*ibid.*:46). It is true that the marketing and advertising industries do devote ever more effort and money to refining their classification of market segmentation and on more precise identification of the target audience. However, the target segment may vary from country to country: McDonalds, for instance, targets the youth market in France but children in Spain (Bueno García 2000). This variation rather excludes the possibility of equivalent effect except on a very general level of 'persuasion'.

Reiss does acknowledge hybridization of text-type, but advertising takes this to another level altogether. Described as "parasitic" by Cook (1992/ 2001:33), advertising occupies space within a range of discourses and mediums, and also adopts from, manipulates and subverts other text-types. For instance, in autumn 2003 the web-based travel company lastminute. com ran the following mock-Biblical ad in London:

> And on the sixth day Mary didst flee the office for a humbly priced trip to New York. And she shopp'd til she didst hobble in her kitten heels. (From the book of lastminute.com 14:59-62)

The linguistic mimicking of Biblical style is easy to see. The humour generated by the unexpected lexis *office*, *New York*, *shopp'd* and *kitten heels* causes subversion of a canonized text-type, which might be more controversial in a more religious environment. This is what happened during the 1998 football World Cup, when the Vatican fiercely objected to an ad in which the Brazilian star Ronaldo is portrayed in the pose of the statue of Christ overlooking Rio de Janeiro.

Hybridization also occurs in the sometimes deliberate obscuring of the fact of advertisement, either by presenting it as an 'advertorial' (an advert disguised as a piece of journalism) or by publications which blur the boundary between journalism and advertising such as the lifestyle magazines discussed in Kress and van Leeuwen (2001). Witness too the ways in which the subject lines of junk emails attempt to elude the watch of anti-spam programs by adopting the guise of informative or interpersonal topics rather than the obviously persuasive ad. A translator asked to work with any of these materials would need to identify their real function or purpose and to adopt appropriate techniques in the target culture if they exist.

Purpose remains a central issue to the discussion of the translation of advertising, including the practical guidelines published in *Translation, Getting It Right: A Guide to Buying Translations* (2003), produced by CILT (National Centre for Languages), the Institute of Translation and Interpreting and the Société Française des Traducteurs. This booklet highlights the need for companies to avoid common pitfalls in the commissioning of translation. One example given is that of Electricité de France, which spent over £100,000 on advertising space but just £60 on the translation of the copy. Failure to stress the purpose of the translation, and failure to employ a native speaker, meant that unidiomatic phrases such as "EdF offers competitive energetic solutions" appeared in the TT, undermining the professional image of the company.

It is important to stress here that, while the main focus of most analyses of translated adverts has been on the linguistic features of published ST-TT pairs, in fact in many instances the vast majority of ads are translated for information only.[4] That is, an agency or company wishes to know what the competition or overseas offices of its own company are saying in their ads and requires just a gist translation. In the past, in Spain at least, this type of ad was often passed to freelance translators, but now the work is increasingly carried out in-house by non-translator employees. Such translation remains invisible to outsiders and is rarely noted in the literature. One exception is Hönig and Kussmaul's (1982:35) discussion of different potential translations of an ad for a brand of high-quality shirt, depending on whether the translation is for information or for publication. In the latter case, they importantly assert that "the original advertisement in English has little bearing on the German version … and may be a distraction. … [D]ifferences in sociocultural background might be such that it would be better to design a new advertisement altogether".

2.4 Advertising as cross-cultural transfer

The third critical area is indeed culture, and cultural context. This is noted by some of the theorists mentioned above. Thus, Reiss (1971/2000:42) observes that "not every language group … will have the same response to the same kind of advertisement": she describes how, in Germany, a brand of orange juice was sold with the association of sunshine and energy, whereas the same product in Italy focused on the vitamin content. House's (1977) concept of cultural filter recommends adjustment for cultural difference, but her analysis is totally text based and, as Gutt shows (see 2.2 above), fails to encompass wider contextual factors.

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[4] Martyn Smyth pointed this out from his own experience in Spain.

These factors include major cultural differences in the way the audience is addressed linguistically in ads. In English, the personal pronoun *I* can allow the readers or hearers to project themselves onto the character in the ad, whereas the second person *you* is usefully either a single referent (for example, the famous First World War recruitment poster of General Kitchener pointing directly at the reader with the words "Your country needs you!") or 'multi-exophoric' (i.e. referring to the audience as a whole) (Cook 1992/2001:157). This is clearly much more problematic in the many languages such as Spanish that omit personal pronouns and make a distinction between the formal and informal second person (as well as singular and plural forms). Although this common problem is discussed widely in translation studies, it is absolutely crucial in advertising where an inappropriate choice would be both very visible (all the more so because adverts are meant to be seen and read repeatedly) and possibly counterproductive (if the reader felt insulted to be addressed too informally, or excluded if addressed formally). A good example of how the ad producer's/translator's decision varies according to target culture is given by Bueno García (2000:40). He analyzes the slogan "Drink Coca Cola", which is rendered with an informal plural Italian, a formal singular in Spanish and a first person plural in Japanese.

Another fascinating example is the slogan for L'Oréal cosmetics, changed from "Because I'm worth it" to "Because you're worth it" in 2002 in order to create a softer, less egotistical image. The latter slogan necessitated a decision on which pronoun to select (in Spanish it is the informal singular "Porque tú vales"). The former slogan was translated into French, German, Italian and Spanish, but there had been cultural problems in China, where it was seen as too individualistic, and in France, where it was considered to focus overly on monetary value (Motished 2003). Motished also clears up the question of the original language of the slogan, invented as a declaration of "empowerment" by a female American executive of the company. In many cases, as Bueno García points out (2000:85), and in common with many global or institutional texts, there is real uncertainty as to the language of the original text. In some bilingual countries such as Belgium, the English version is actually preferred for some adverts so as to avoid the need to produce separate French and Flemish versions. Phillipson (2003:92) notes the same phenomenon in Denmark, a country with one official language.

The translation of advertising is a clear example of the application of cross-cultural analysis to everyday life. It really could be said that the unit of translation is not just the text but the culture. Sometimes significant cultural gaps need to be overcome: Cook (1992:176) gives the example of home insurance, a concept which had to be explained to visitors from the old Soviet Union; and Beeby (1996) suggests that the job advertisement was actually a new discourse type in democratic Spain, since previously employment would have been found through personal contacts; the deliberate

marketing of gender differences in other cultures and newly opened markets is also well documented in journals of marketing (see True 1999 for an analysis of the post-socialist Czech Republic). The appearance of these new types is actually an indication of ideological change in the target culture. On a smaller, but still significant level, lifestyle changes promoted by multinationals can be disguised linguistically: for example, some 'fish finger-type' convenience foods for children in Spain are marketed as "palitos de merluza" ('hake sticks'), playing on the positive association with a popular fresh fish.

In South Africa, Vodacom has for five years run a very successful and specifically localized campaign that has played on and challenged cultural and racial attitudes. Its very funny *Yebo gogo* ('Hi gran!' in Zulu) adverts feature a bearded black man (Professor Omotoso) and a white man (Michael de Pinna) in which the white man always comes off worst. These ads succeed in drawing together a very diverse society by means of humour while taking a good hard look at racist attitudes.[5] The need to bridge the cultural gap is also the theme of a remarkable recent global marketing campaign run by Lowe and Partners for HSBC bank, whose brand line is "the world's local bank". The adverts depict everyday objects or concepts that exist but are realized differently across cultures. For instance bread, that has a different shape in France (baguette) and India (chapatti); an unlucky number that is different in China and the UK; a thumb to forefinger gesture that means different things in Italy, Greece and UK. John Carroll, Executive Vice President and Head of Marketing for HSBC USA, explains the reasoning behind the campaign: "Being local means more than just speaking the language. Our offices around the world are staffed by people who understand local customs and needs" (us.hsbc.com 29/03/2003). The importance business affords to culture, rather than 'translation', is clear. On the other hand, recent work in translation studies on globalization (Cronin 2003) and localization (Esselink 2000), both areas that have major practical, ideological and cultural implications for translation, has neglected advertising translation.

Of course, there are many other environmental elements that constrain the translator and the producer of the advert, including country- and regional-specific codes on advertising, what can and cannot be advertised. Sometimes the actual wording of an advert might be prescribed. This is the case in many countries for health warnings on cigarettes, or for the restriction on the use of other languages for economic or ideological purposes. For many years Argentina, for one, has stipulated legal quotas of foreign-language ads that are stricter at times of high local unemployment. In post-handover Hong Kong, ideologically motivated restrictions include fines for traders who fail to display their shop signs using the new Chinese writing, associated with

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[5] My thanks to Kim Wallmach for alerting me to this advertisement.

the Communist revolution (Scollon and Scollon 2003:130-31), and in October 2003 the government of the Basque region of Spain proposed that all businesses and self-employed service providers should produce signs, business cards and promotional materials in Basque as well as Castilian Spanish. These are fertile grounds for research encompassing translation studies and the law.

3. The importance of the visual

The multiplicity of variables surrounding the cultural and communicative contexts of adverts, and the different approaches of the advertisers themselves, require a daunting breadth of analysis. There is an amazingly creative use of linguistic resources in adverts and a notable element of complex semiotic interaction between written text and image, as well as music in TV ads. Up to now, the vast majority of writing on the translation of advertising (indeed, any kind of translation) has focused on the written word alone. There are some good reasons for this. Firstly, the translator of advertising does, after all, normally work on translating/adapting the written text. It is much cheaper for the advertiser to keep the same visuals and alter the text than to change the visuals, which would in effect amount to launching a completely new advertising campaign (see Arens 2002, section 1 above). This may not be possible if there is an indissoluble link between the visual and the textual, and particularly an image play that does not work in the target language (e.g. the recent *Fly Eurostar* high-speed train campaign illustrated by images related to flying). Secondly, most translation theorists are schooled in linguistic or cultural analysis, which have vied for dominance, rather than the semiotics of the visual. Finally, for copyright reasons it is often difficult to secure permissions to reproduce, and therefore comment upon, visual material from high-profile publicity campaigns.

This link between the visual and the word is crucial and requires far more analysis than has so far been offered in translation studies. Even though street signs were the impetus for Vinay and Darbelnet's early (1958) contrastive stylistic analysis of French and English, which has been applied so often to translation, the authors completely overlooked the visual element. Baker (1992:40) does include an example of translation of word by image, a box of teabags sold in an Arab country featuring a picture of the product rather than a description; in fact this is also common in Africa for products targeted at segments of the population who may not be literate. Other well-known descriptive models, notably Lambert and van Gorp (1985), adapted for use in the analysis of subtitling by Díaz Cintas (2003), do encompass contextual elements of the TT, such as book covers and film posters, but give no indication of the framework in which this could be carried out. And yet this can be crucial for the cultural and ideological context. Latin American novelists such as García Márquez have long been marketed in the UK with exotic

depictions of the natural landscape, palm trees, and so on, fitting the authors into a pre-fabricated stereotype of the region. This can affect the way that literature and culture is received in Western countries (see Munday 1998).

With the development of new forms of communication, which are increasingly marginalizing the conventional formal written word, translation needs to take on board some of the recent theory regarding the system underlying visuals. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) term this "visual grammar", following the approach of Michael Halliday's functional grammar of the written word that has influenced so many translation theorists. The visual grammar covers such areas as the functional ordering of elements in an ad and the use of colour as a formal semiotic device. Each of these elements has as much "meaning potential" as the lexicogrammatical realizations in Halliday's grammar. That is, the text creator has a choice as to what to include and how to structure it, and that choice conveys meaning. Regarding the order of elements, in English this would typically be given-ideal information at top left, new-real information at bottom right.

In visual grammar, as in lexicogrammar, care has to be taken to avoid sending the wrong message in translation. There is the oft-quoted failure of a washing powder ad translated into Arabic using typical "before (dirty) and after (clean)" illustrations. However, the left (given) – right (new) order of images was not adapted to an Arabic-speaking country where the reading process and information structure of given and new elements is right to left, suggesting that the washing started clean and ended up dirty. Similarly, multinationals advertising in India are sometimes not sensitized to the fact that visuals depicting customs from Northern India are not appropriate for the South, and vice versa. But the semiotic system of the visual is far more complex than this. Scollon and Scollon (2003:91), for example, discuss how 'high modality', marked colour varies across cultures (e.g. red in China, green in Korea, blue in Oman) which would necessitate a shift sometimes even within a small geographical ambit. In a UK context, what difficulties must the Orange mobile phone company have faced in Northern Ireland, where orange is the symbol of hard-line protestantism?

Translation of word or concept by icon or symbol also begs further analysis. Eurostar operate mainly between London, Brussels and Paris and adapt the advertising for each country. In France, their website uses icons such as Big Ben to represent London; clicking on them takes the visitor to information about trains to the UK. Similarly, Belgian railways currently uses digital animations of members of the British royal family for the same purpose, and Eurostar in London uses the Eiffel tower to represent Paris. Wordless ads (or ads with very few words) can reduce the need for translation too. Prénatal produce an identical catalogue of baby clothing for France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK, the photos carrying the bulk of the communication.

TV commercials tend to be a more complex mix. Vodafone uses David Beckham's status as a worldwide football and fashion icon to promote their mobile phones. After Beckham signed for Real Madrid, Vodafone launched a TV commercial on Spanish TV, showing Beckham flat-hunting and texting photos of a prospective property for the opinion of two other players, one dressed in Madrid colours (the local star Raúl) and the other in the colours of his former club, Manchester United (Gary Neville, a close friend of Beckham). It was a commercial designed for the local Spanish market, though its choice of global superstar means that a dubbed or subtitled version could appear in other countries. For the Spanish viewer, it can work on several levels: identification of Beckham, identification of the football colours and the teams they represent, the relationship of the teams to Beckham, and finally identification of the two players involved. However, it is unlikely that many Spanish viewers would have identified Gary Neville by name. They would thus be excluded from the last, "inner" layer of meaning and Neville would merely function as a symbol of Beckham's past affiliations or, if the viewer did not recognize the team colours, as an unknown.

4. Multimodal advertising – a new world for translation

The last two examples in the previous section are an indication that society is moving (if it has not already moved) from the monomodal focus on the formal written book to the complex multimodal combination of discourse, design, production and distribution (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001:1). Presentation through the web is an exemplification of some of the changes. The different versions of the websites of multinationals are concerned as much with the appropriate design for the target culture as with translation. Writing in an online journal of a translation company and employing the well-known cultural framework of Hofstede (1997), Sheridan (2002) discusses the specific expectations of Japanese web-users. He gives an example of the Mercedes Benz website in German and Japanese: the German site is relatively sparse with few choices at each level, whereas the Japanese one is much more complex to navigate. Sheridan explains this by one of the dimensions of culture in Hofstede's model: Germany is a 'long-term oriented' culture (typically concerned with practical value), while Japan is 'short-term oriented' (focusing content on truth and beliefs). Hence the different expectations of what a website should be and the need to 'localize'.

Multimodality, the combination of different semiotic and communication modes and systems, is a revolution for all advertising and media communication. A TV- or web-based ad will commonly combine a range of moving and still visual images, song and music and the written word (in the form of labels, signs, brand name, and perhaps subtitle). There is a mix of modes, with music sometimes encoding action, images emotion, and so on (Kress

and van Leeuwen 2001:2). Kress (2003:117) stresses some of the implications of these developments. Though the following quotation is in the context of school textbooks, it could relate to all communication:

> In the new communicational world there are now choices about how what is to be represented should be represented: in what mode, in what genre, in what ensembles of modes and genres and on what occasions. … these are not decisions that were open 20 years ago.

The new technologies, for example, offer a new reading form, where parallel language versions of a website exist a mere click of the mouse button away. Here a different experience can be prepared for different clientele. The webpage of one Mallorcan real estate agent (www.arcasmarti.com), for instance, has the same visuals but a very different sales pitch for its German customers compared to the national (Spanish) or international (English-speaking) buyers. While the English, a more or less literal translation of the Spanish ST, speaks of "many pinturesque (sic.) places with fantastic landscapes. Beautiful beaches with small coves, the crystal blue sea … just a few metres from your doorway", the German text has a much more varied landscape:

> On narrow or wide beaches, right on the water or inland looking out on the blue Mediterranean, in a picturesque, romantic fishing village, living far away from the nearest neighbours on the next mountain, everywhere you can live marvellously here. (my translation)

These versions, obviously tailored to what the advertiser feels are the preferences of the particular market segment, exist in parallel. Visitors can choose their preferred version from flag icons on the homepage. This is not always an obvious choice. For example, a Dutch, Scandinavian or any other potential buyer with knowledge of all three languages could easily choose any of these parallel texts. Noticeably excluded from their preferred linguistic experience, which may imply intended exclusion from the sales offer, are those who would prefer to deal through the local mallorquín language.

   This change from book to screen has therefore created whole new reading paths, with the users following hyperlinks and dealing with pop-up ads that may not necessarily appear in their first language or indeed in any written language at all. Translation at the same time becomes more frequent with the popular option offered for automatic translation on many webpages, a phenomenon in itself worthy of further investigation.

   The meaningful choice of mode also needs to be explored in translation. So, for example, the material qualities of production may be expressed not in the material substance or the visual but in the quality of voice. Kress and van

Leeuwen (2001:76) describe the rough voice of jazz legend Louis Armstrong as "the vocal equivalent of the weather-beaten face, the roughly plastered wall, the faded jeans, the battered leather jacket". They go on to stress that the value a society places on this voice depends on the geographical and cultural contexts: highly valued in many jazz circles but likely to be out of place in a Western classical music scenario. Different elements of roughness (of voice, material and the visual) often combine, reinforcing one another, as in TV ads in Britain for Ronseal, a product that protects exterior wood, which cast a middle-aged (read 'experienced') white male dressed in overalls or shirt and jeans, speaking in a roughish, down-to-earth accent, asserting that Ronseal "does exactly what it says on the tin". More internationally (where cigarette adverts are still permitted), a similar phenomenon can be seen in Marlboro tobacco ads depicting cowboys in jeans riding across open country. At the other end of the spectrum, perfume ads for women tend to be marked by smoothness and sophistication with brilliant light, pure colours, silk or satin material and a smooth voice (often French or Italian, at least in the UK and Spain) of a beautiful young woman invoking a foreign name or slogan.

Hybrid text examples may be especially worthy of investigation. From 1997 the Boddingtons 'cream of Manchester' beer ads on TV in the UK featured an attractive and, in dress and appearance, a seemingly sophisticated girl who, when she opened her mouth, spoke with a broad, uneducated Manchester accent and emphasized her coarseness by gulping the beer down and wiping her mouth with the back of her hand. If this, or a similar ad, were to be translated or adapted or re-written for another country, vital decisions would have to be made concerning the image to be projected and how this would be conveyed visually, orally and materially in the choice of character and scenario, taking into account how these and other elements vary cross-culturally. In some countries, of course, alcohol or alcohol advertising is banned, rendering any form of obvious translation irrelevant. Once again, the written or spoken word is only one element in an increasingly complex equation. Interesting proof that voice conveys meaning far beyond the mere words comes from the increased popularity of Manchester accents for ads partly as a result of the success of the Boddingtons campaign. (www. manchesteronline.co.uk/news/s/16/16111_manc_twang_back_in_fashion. html)

5. Conclusion

I set out to show that until recently translation theory has generally ignored advertising or else included it as an illustration of part of a more general theory of translation. Similarly, marketing and brand management have tended

to make little mention of translation. Concepts such as audience, equivalent effect, skopos and cross-cultural study are clearly of prime importance in this area. However, the focus of translation has been very much on the conventional, progressively outdated, written text despite advertising being one of the clearest examples of the new multimodal, multimedia world of communication. It is my firm belief that translation studies must move beyond the written word and that the visual, and multimodal in general, must be incorporated into a fuller study of the translation of advertising. Advertising too could benefit from a greater understanding of the processes and issues surrounding translation. This could be a rich and exciting interdisciplinary field of study with positive benefits for the study of translation in many other contexts.

JEREMY MUNDAY
Deputy Director, Centre for Translation Studies, Department of Linguistic, Cultural and Translation Studies, University of Surrey, Guildford GU2 7XH, UK. j.munday@surrey.ac.uk

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