

Strategies for translation of English advertisement into Persian

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Abstract

The role of advertising can be perceived quite differently across cultures. Analysts, therefore, are advised to approach advertisements with some understanding of the expectations in a particular culture. Using a corpus of 12 English-language advertisements and their translated Persian pairs, this article investigates what happens to rhetorical figures in the translation process. Three broad translation strategies borrowed from Smith (2006) (transference, source-language-orientated and target-language-orientated) and their implications were discussed in detail. In Persian it was concluded that translators used transference, source-language-oriented, target-language-oriented and literal translation. The use of transference (untranslated retention of original) highlights the foreignness of the product being advertised, relying on the source culture's attractiveness to the target audience. The most popular strategies are those which are source-language-orientated, maintaining the source meaning in the target advertisement. When target language-orientated strategies are employed, translators have more freedom to create advertisements using rhetorical figures. The use of literal translation means to translate every word of an advertisement according to a ST advertisement.

Key words: advertisement, rhetorical figures, transference, source-language-orientated and target-language-orientated, literal

Introduction

Advertising is intrusive in everyday life, in audiovisual and printed media, in sport, on bus and parking tickets, in public transport, on teletext, and of course on the Internet. Its aim is known, its purpose understood, its goals transparent and its techniques relatively predictable. Companies spend copiously on advertising, despite the fact that quantifiable measurement of success is difficult to implement and record. What we (the general public) do not always consider is how that message has been carefully targeted to one culture or many, and the processes by which the final

message came into existence. Advertisements carry the persuasive content to encourage receivers to read on and, hopefully, buy the product. Advertisers deliberately set out to attract and retain attention, and the use of rhetorical figures is calculated to have specific effects on potential consumers. If rhetorical figures do have such an impact, it is understandable that they are so frequently used in advertising, and empirical analysis has shown that they are effective means of persuasion (see McQuarrie and Mick, 1999; Tom and Eves, 1999).

Linguists have demonstrated some of the persuasive devices open to advertisers: Leech's (1966) seminal work on English-language advertising in 1960s Britain highlights the huge repertoire of linguistic choices available to copywriters when creating advertising material, while more recently Cook (2001) focuses on parallelism, metaphor, metonymy, homophones, puns, parody and rhyme, and Myers (1994) includes alliteration, assonance, rhyme, homophones, question forms, ellipsis, parallelism and puns. In a general survey of the field, Brierley (1995) lists language games, repetition, similes, parallelism, paradox, omission and ambiguity, while Tanaka (1994: 68) concentrates on the use of puns and metaphors. Fuertas-Olivera et al. (2001) focus on the interactive dimension of advertisements and note that copywriters use person markers, hedges, emphatics, endophoric markers and evidential when writing slogans and advertisements.

Rhetorical figures occur when an 'expression deviates from expectation, [but] the expression is not rejected as nonsensical or faulty' (McQuarrie and Mick, 1996: 425), and in this sense they are 'mock violations of a norm', violating 'the "normal" use of language or the norms of logic, morality, social rules and physical reality' (Dyer, 1988: 160). The notion of deviation in linguistics is, of course, problematic. Deviation refers to the divergence in frequency from a norm, or the statistical average: the breaking of the normal rules of linguistic structure or the over-use of normal usage (Wales, 1989: 117). So, suggesting that figures of rhetoric deviate assumes that there is a language norm from which they can deviate. This is particularly difficult to quantify: however, Cook says: 'despite the absence of any rigorous definition of norm or deviation, or any indisputable method for identifying instances of them, it remains true that there is substantial agreement among speakers of a language about instances of both' (2001: 142–3). This makes the idea of deviation valid, albeit somewhat subjective.

Discussion

When discussing the translation of the advertisements, Smith (2006) defines the strategies used as being those of transference, source-language orientation or target-language orientation according to the following definitions:

Transference – the advertisement remains in the source language in the target language version;

Broadly source-language orientation – various degrees of change to the source-language advertisement result in a target-language advertisement which maintains the meaning of the source text;

Broadly target-language orientation – the advertisement has been changed to produce a new one in the target language, which does not contain the same matter as the source text.

Translation theory suggests that advertising texts should be translated to create a target-language advertisement which will have a positive impact on the target audience. It is thus not of primary importance whether a particular rhetorical figure is translated by the exact same figure in TT; what is important is that the target-text advertisement should have the same attention grabbing function as the original.

According to this research, it is recognized that besides these categories which were expressed by Smith (2006) in Persian one uses literal translation too, it means that the translators translated all words of an advertisement and didn't change it according to TL and the format of the advertisement didn't change too.

The following are 12 advertisements which were given to translators in order to check the procedures used in translation of them into Persian and beneath each, one or two examples of their translation are brought.

1. The most trusted name in news- CNN

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that all words of a ST advertisement were translated but some parts changed to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

موثرترین منبع خبری

A few used literal translation it means that all words of an advertisement were translated but its form was not adjusted according to TT. For example it was translated as:

مطمئنترین نام در اخبار

2. Keeps going and going and going- Energizer batteries

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that all words of a ST advertisement were translated but some parts were changed to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form and didn't keep the repetition of its original. For example it was translated as:

این باتری‌ها عمری طولانی دارند.

A few used literal translation, it means that the repetition of the original advertisement was kept in its translation or the same figure(s) is used in source and target advertisement for example it was translated as:

بیشتر و بیشتر و بیشتر عمر می‌کند.

Some used TT-based translation it means that figure(s) changed in TT (in TT one used figures which are different from the figures used in ST) or in this advertisement instead of repetition, alliteration was used and it somehow changed the meaning.

پایدار، مقاوم، مداوم

3. *Hungry? Grab a Snickers- Snickers*

It was mostly translated in the transference form so it means that they transferred some parts of this advertisement. For example it was translated as:

گرسنه‌ای یک اسنیکرز بخور.
بفرمانید اسنیکرز میل کنید.

A few used literal translation it means that all words of this advertisement are replaced by the SL words for example it was translated as:

گرسنه‌ای؟ یک لقمه از لبخند با لبخند

4. *Be the first to know- CNN*

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that they translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

اولین کسی باشید که آگاه می‌شود.
اولین کسی باشید که خبردار می‌شود.

A few used TT-based form it means that a translator translated its meaning instead of its words. For example it was translated as:

تازه‌ترین اخبار و اطلاعات با CNN

5. *Made to make your mouth water- Opal Fruits*

It was completely translated in the ST-based form so it means that all of the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

دهانتان را آب می‌اندازد.
برای آب انداختن دهانتان درست شده است.

6. No battery is stronger longer- Duracell Batteries

Some used ST-based form it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

قوی تر از باتری های دوراسل را پیدا نمی‌کنید.

قوی ترین باتری ها، باتری دوراسل

A few used TT-based form it means that a translator translated its meaning instead of its words. For example it was translated as:

هیچ باتری ای به مدت طولانی دوام نخواهد داشت.

It was mostly translated in the literal form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

هیچ باتری ای قوی تر و بادوام تر از دوراسل باتری نیست.

هیچ باتری ای قوی تر و پیر عمرتر از دوراسل نیست.

7. Thousands of possibilities. Get yours- Best Buy

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

هزاران فرصت، بهترین را در بست بای بیابید.

حق انتخاب فراوان، شما چه می‌خواهید.

Some used literal form so it means that they translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

هزاران فرصت، برش دار

A few used TT-based forms, it means that a translator translated its meaning instead of its words. For example it was translated as:

هزاران چیز ممکن است نصیبتان شود.

8. *I think, therefore IBM- IBM*

A few used ST-based form it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

فکر می‌کنم بالاخره IBM را انتخاب کردم.
IBM را انتخاب می‌کنم.

It was mostly translated in the literal form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

فکر می‌کنم، در نهایت IBM
فکر می‌کنم، پس IBM

Some used TT-based form it means that a translator translated its meaning instead of its words. For example it was translated as:

از نظر من فقط IBM بهترینه.
پس من به IBM فکر می‌کنم.

Some didn't translate this advertisement, at all.

9. *Afraid of cancer?*

Cancer breakthroughs: the facts you need- Medical Journal

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

ترس از سرطان؟
حقیقت‌هایی که نیاز دارید در روزنامه‌های پزشکی موجود می‌باشند.
از سرطان می‌ترسید؟
واقعیت‌هایی که در مورد پیشروی سرطان باید بدانید.

Some used literal form so it means that they translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

از سرطان می‌ترسید؟
مهارکننده سرطان، حقیقتی که به آن احتیاج دارید.

10. *Fly the friendly skies- United Airlines*

It was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this

advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

آسوده خاطر پرواز کنید.

Some used literal form so it means that they translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

در آسمان‌های دوست داشتنی پرواز کنید.
پرواز بر فراز آسمان‌های دوستی

A few used the transference form so it means that they transferred some parts of this advertisement to TT. For example it was translated as:

با خطوط هوایی یونایتد آسوده‌خاطر پرواز کنید.

Some didn't translate this advertisement, at all.

11. *you deserve the best- A car company*

This advertisement was totally translated in the literal form so it means that they translated all words of a ST advertisement but didn't change its form according to TL. For example it was translated as:

شما لایق بهترین‌ها هستید.
شما شایسته بهترین‌ها هستید.

12. *Because you're worth it- L'Oreal*

This advertisement was totally translated in the ST-based form so it means that the translators translated all words of a ST advertisement but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form. For example it was translated as:

زیرا شما ارزشش را دارید.
چون این شایسته شماست.

Rhetorical figures which were used in these advertisements and in their translation:

A figure of speech, sometimes termed a rhetoric, is a word or phrase that departs from straightforward, literal language. Figures of speech are often used and crafted for emphasis, freshness of expression, or clarity (see Encyclopedia article about

rhetorical figure 2010). Three rhetorical figures which were used in these advertisements and their translation are brought here:

Anadiplosis: ("doubling back") the rhetorical repetition of one or several words; advertisement number 2 has anadiplosis in word "going" <Keeps going and going and going>

This advertisement was mostly translated in the ST-based form so it means that most of the translators translated every word of the ST but changed some parts to adjust this advertisement according to the TT form and didn't keep the repetition of its original. A few of the translators used literal form, it means that the repetition of the original advertisement was kept in its translation or the same figure(s) is used in source and target advertisements. Some used TT-based form it means that figure(s) changed in TT (in TT we use figures which are different from the figures used in ST) or we can say that in this advertisement instead of repetition somehow alliteration was used.

Assonance: repetition of the same sound in words close to each other.

Advertisement number 6 has assonance in sounds /onger/ <No battery is stronger longer>. Advertisement number 7 has assonance in sound "s" <thousands of possibilities. Get yours>

From the translations which are annexed above it can be concluded that no translator used the same or even different rhetorical figures in his translation; so keeping the same or creating different rhetorical figures in translation is a hard task.

Alliteration: repetition of the same sound beginning several words in sequence. Advertisement number 10 has alliteration in sound "f" <Fly the friendly skies>

Again from the above translations it can be understood that no one used rhetorical figures in their translation.

Conclusion

This research has demonstrated the range of strategies employed in translating figures of rhetoric in advertisements (from non-translation, through two levels of compensation to the maintenance of the same figures in the source and target texts). However, as shown above alliteration is often not compensated for, merely ignored. Alliteration is particularly difficult to translate, as translators are expected to find

words that both carry the same meaning in Persian as they do in English and begin with a particular letter. This is a near impossible task and is reminiscent of Nabokov's (2000) comments about the impossibility of translating poetry. Advertising which incorporates phonetic repetition is close to poetry and all the problems that are attached to its translation.

The rather free translation of the advertisements seems to have been necessary for advertisements based on a sound-figure incorporating the name of the advertised product. The free translation ensures that they still function as persuasive devices in the target language, although it means a change of rhetorical device is necessary (see Smith2006).

So it can be concluded from the above sayings that in translation translators mostly used ST-based form of translation and the translations which used different rhetorical figures are not so much but this rate is much larger than translation which used the same rhetorical figures or in another word we can say that it is a hard job to retain the same rhetorical figures in the translation of an advertisement from English to Persian.

In this research 4 methods are offered for translating an advertisement from English into Persian which are based on methods proposed by Smith (2006) for the translation of advertisements form English to Russian. These 4 methods are:

1. ST-based (in which the translator translates all words of an English advertisement but changes some parts to adjust it according to Persian language)
2. Literal translation (in which the translator translates all the words of an English advertisement but keeps the format of the English advertisement to show its foreignness.)
3. TT-based translation (in which the translator gets the meaning of English advertisement but uses another form to express it in Persian, or to say the advertisement in another form which conveys the same meaning.)
4. Transference (untranslated retention of original which highlights the foreignness of the product being advertised, relying on the source culture's attractiveness to the target audience.)

In all of these categories the translator may transfer the name of the product and doesn't translate the names, so most translators transfer the names into Persian.

The approaches mentioned above have two basic objectives: one is that the message or meaning conveyed to the receivers in the target language must be the same as the original message to the source language receivers; the other is that the translated message must be equivalent to the dynamics of the original, i.e. the translation should communicate, as much as possible, to the target language speakers

the same meaning that was understood by the speakers of the source language, and evoke the same response as the source text. There will never be a common translation code for all cultures. What we can achieve, though, is agreement on a general theory of translation which allows for specific variations when applied to particular cultures, taking into account the specific cultural conventions and the expectations of the members of a particular culture. Thus, as long as the translation of advertisements works admirably, and produces equivalent pragmatic effect, it is more likely to come up with the most persuasive advertisements in their respective language (see Shen Yang 2006).

The data have shown a wide range of strategies open to translators of advertisements and that each of these strategies can result in fully functional advertisements; to claim that one strategy is more effective than another is to impose a structure on the advertising genre which is untenable. Advertising is a constantly changing genre, and the targets of advertisements are not a homogenous, static group. Translators, the experts in both source and target languages and cultures, should be given the freedom to select the most appropriate translation strategy for the translation of advertisements, a choice which reflects the preferences of the target market at that given time (see Smith 2006).

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Filename: advertisement
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Template: C:\Documents and Settings\toosi\Application
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Subject:
Author: najme
Keywords:
Comments:
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As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 11
Number of Words: 3,309 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 18,864 (approx.)