

Translation Norms and Ideology in the Classroom: The Case of the Car Slogans

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Povzetek

Pričujoča razprava sodi v širši kontekst ovrednotenja učinka analize kritičnega diskurza (CDA) kot glavnega orodja za ideološko usmerjeno analizo, ob prevajanju mednarodno prepoznavnih oglasov avtomobilske industrije. Gre za pilotni projekt, ki smo ga izvedli z mariborskimi študenti prevodoslovja druge stopnje. V sodobnem in globalnem svetu so oglasna besedila postala sestavni del vsakdanjega življenja in potrošniško usmerjene družbe, upoštevajoč moralne vrednote, načela, običaje, tradicijo in norme. Čeprav je angleščina prevzela položaj *linguae francae*, je prodajno-promocijski učinek oglaševanja še vedno odvisen od jezikovne in kulturne adaptacije sporočila, namenjenega ciljni publiki, oziroma potrošniku (lokalizacija). Prevajanje oglasnih besedil je povezano z ustvarjalnostjo in kompetencami prevajalca kot medkulturnega posrednika, ki interpretira nove komunikacijske vrednote v okviru določenih ideoloških norm. Kot bodoči strokovnjaki za večjezično posredovanje se študenti prevajalstva zavedajo odgovornosti in izzivov ob izbiri prevajalske strategije, ki bi naj prispevala k enakemu oglaševalskemu učinku v ciljni kulturi. Glede na dejstvo, da je ideologija eden ključnih družbenih diskurzov, je pomembno, da so študenti ozaveščeni o možnosti izbire različnih prevajalskih prijemov, ki zrcalijo določene jezikovne in ideološke norme. Na osnovi prevodov nemških in angleških oglasov avtomobilskih blagovnih znamk se v prispevku posvečamo ideološkim in normativnim vidikom umeščanja informacij v strnjeno strukturo oglasnih sloganov, pri čemer smo posebej pozorni na rabo tikanja in vikanja, okrajšav, izpustov ter morebitnega dodajanja besedila.

Ključne besede: ideologija, norme, analiza kritičnega diskurza, teorija skoposa, oglaševanje

1 INTRODUCTION

Functional translation theory (Reiß/Vermeer 1991) considers translation to be a special kind of communicative action that is culturally specific and can be considered equal to cultural transfer. In our experience, students often experience major difficulties when encountering culture-bound elements and ‘get lost’ when they are required to demonstrate that they are familiar with the target cultural background. As a result, we are often confronted with the problem of culturally dysfunctional translation (Tymoczko 2006; Prunč 2008). Hence, this contribution focuses on our introduction of ideology as a *skopos* and one of the important constraints in the translation of advertising slogans while working with MA students from the Department of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia. As such, we wish to highlight the importance of ideological analysis through Critical Discourse Analysis as a contemporary didactic tool in the training programmes of future professional translators, who should be well aware of their own importance as intercultural communication mediators. Although translation undoubtedly requires adequate linguistic knowledge, culture is no less important. The main task for a translator is to understand the information, i.e. the message of a written text, and repeat it in another language, taking its function into consideration.

It seemed logical to look at advertising slogans in this light, as advertising is socially constructed through the discourse of clients, advertising practitioners and consumers. This makes the advertising process ripe for discourse-analytic exploration (Hackley 2000: 44). Advertising is generally believed to be of critical importance to the success of companies and, although advertisements are ephemeral in that each one is short-lived, their effects are longstanding and cumulative: they leave traces of themselves behind, which combine to form a body of messages about the culture that produced them (Goddard 1998: 3). The translation of advertising slogans is not so very different from other types of translation. However, in order for advertisements to reach a large audience, translating them requires particular skills, including creativity, transcreation, in-depth cultural adaptation and localisation, discourse analysis, semiotics, pragmatics and cross-cultural communication, which always includes ideological aspects.

Due to increasing globalisation, the same products are offered on different markets. This means that numerous advertising texts, such as posters, brochures, catalogues, leaflets, notifications, newsletters, magazines, newspapers or radio and TV-spots are translated and their advertising effectiveness primarily depends on a verbal text that evokes interest. Regarding international advertising, an appropriate translation is the key to a successful advertising campaign. The translators should focus on transferring verbal signs and the correct meaning,

but they also need to take into consideration the cultural transfer. Thus, translating advertising texts can be seen as a symbiosis of the four categories - language, text, image, and culture.

It is essential that the translator has sufficient knowledge of the target culture's norms and conventions in order to provide a correct and effective translation of the advertisement. A translated advertisement should reflect the ideology of the place where it is produced, but it should also reflect the ideology of the time when it is produced. Consumers should recognize themselves in the advertisement. Nord believes that “[a]lmost any decision in translation is consciously or unconsciously guided by ideological criteria” (2003: 111). Lefevere's view of any translation as a “rewriting of an original text and all rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given way” (1992: 13–26) also applies to the philosophy of advertising translation in the sense that advertising materials sometimes have to be rewritten in order to adapt to the ideology and culture of the milieu at which they are targeted.

2 IDEOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON NORMS

Before we continue our discussion of the relation between ideology, language and translation, it seems necessary to clarify what ideology means and how it functions in society. The field of what has become commonly known as the ‘theory of ideology’ and its influences in different spheres is both diverse and expansive. The term ‘ideology’ has always been accompanied by its political connotation and defined as an instrument for legitimizing the power of a dominant social group or class. Hamilton states that ideology is a system of collectively held normative and, reputedly, factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which its proponent seeks to promote, realize, pursue or maintain (1987: 39).

Lefevere describes ideology as the “conceptual grid that consists of opinions and attitudes deemed acceptable in a certain society at a certain time and through which readers and translators approach texts”, and argues that “translation is governed, above all, by patronage, which consists of ideological, economic and status components” (qtd. in Baker 1998: 137).

Following Lefevere's ideas about the influence of ideology on translation, Calzada Pérez suggests that Translation Studies digs into ideological phenomena for a variety of reasons (2003). One of the most important reasons is the fact that all

language use is, as CDA claims, ideological. This means that translation itself as “an operation carried out on language use” is always influenced by ideology (Ibid.: 2). Behind all choices made by a translator is a voluntary act that reveals the translator’s socio-political and cultural surroundings. Prunč, who introduced the term ‘translation culture’, shares the same perspective and argues that the social construct of a translation culture is configured by a set of socially controlled translation-relevant norms, rules, conventions, expectations, values and habitualised patterns of behaviour (2008: 24–25).

In applying these definitions to our study, we believe that ideology represents the opinions and attitudes of people in given societies and that these opinions and attitudes inform the production and consumption of advertisements. As such, the ideology of a given society affects the way translators translate advertisements in that society. We therefore find it essential to teach our students that the selection of any translation strategy is always either implicitly or explicitly affected by the translator’s ideology. And that, in turn, is constrained by the norms of the society and authoritative bodies such as publishers, institutions, clients and governments. If an advertising campaign does not comply with the ideological constraints of the milieu that it targets, then the adverts may even be banned and, consequently, the products or services will not be sold in that region.

3 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

We believe Vermeer’s Skopos theory, or the theory of purpose, is crucial to understanding a transcultural advertisement, because, from the perspective of this theory, translation is “a process of intercultural communication and the end product is a text that is capable of functioning appropriately in specific situations and context of use” (Schäffner 1998: 3). Functionalist translation theories, particularly the Skopos theory, place great importance on function, in the sense of the intended purpose of the translation and on its cultural embeddedness. Therefore, their most important principles – the priority of the skopos, the translator as an intercultural expert, the importance of a clear translation task and, finally, the translation as cultural transfer – provide an adequate basis for the translation of convention-and-culture bound texts such as advertising texts.

Each text is an individual language entity, as well as a cultural phenomenon, and the task of the translator is to build a constructive and skopos-oriented relation that is reflected in the target text. The target text has to function as an advertising slogan, because the function of the source text remains unchanged. In their role as mediators in transcultural communication, translators are simultaneously communicators and creators of new information because it is their creative power

and activity that help create new social relationships, allow the observation of new phenomena from a critical perspective, create new communicative values and, in this way, a new translated intercultural reality (cf. Reiß/Vermeer 1991, Nord 1991). According to Reiß/Vermeer (1991), the translational transfer of information helps add new communicative insights into the target culture, which is of social use within a certain translation culture (cf. Prunč 2008), and influences the emancipation of people and their entire culturological and social habitus. The major humanistic, translational, anthropological and communicative criteria for defining a real communicator are concentrated on the affirmation of freedom of expression in all its creative forms. “Translating may be defined as transcultural acting, action being understood (as it “is”) as teleological (skopos-oriented, prospective) behaviour. Translation is never (as comparative linguistics might prefer to say) a transcoding of a source text into a target language” (Vermeer 2007:26).

Reiß and Vermeer (1991: 96) suggest that “*Die Dominante aller Translation ist deren Zweck*”, that is, texts are always created for a certain purpose, and translation is therefore always purpose-made. According to Nord (2003: 2), only a translation that achieves the intended purpose may be called functional, and each translator of advertisements should therefore be aware of the specific purpose and function of the text in the target setting because “all translation decisions depend on the presupposition the translator has about the target consumer’s interpretation of the message” (Valdés in Munday 2004: 205). The task of the translator is then not to translate an advertisement as closely as possible, but rather to achieve the same – or an even better – effect in the target culture.

The analysis carried out in the class was also based on CDA, which exposes “the ideological forces that underlie communicative exchanges” (Calzada Pérez 2003: 2) and provides the assumption that ideologies are largely acquired and changed through discourse. The social–cognitive nature of ideologies as forms of social cognitions is always shared by social groups. CDA advocates that all language use, including translation, should be interpreted under the influence of various ideologies, which means that translation is always a site for ideological encounters. Van Dijk defines ideology as “basic systems of shared social representations that may control more specific group beliefs” (1996: 7). Álvarez and Vidal suggest that translation can become a form of control used by a ‘superior’ culture to create an image of the original, particularly for those who have no access to the reality of the original (1996: 3–4). They call attention to the abuse of power that translation can enable because all translation implies manipulation, whether conscious or not, of the original. If translators transform themselves from an invisible medium into a main participant in the process of a text’s creation, then they automatically interpret texts by setting them against their general knowledge (about other texts, statements, discourses, conventions) and this knowledge is necessarily shaped by their social position, which makes it ideological:

Translators [...] let their knowledge govern their behaviour, and that knowledge is ideological. It is controlled by ideological norms. If you want to become a translator, you must submit to the translator's submissive role, submit to being possessed by what ideological norms inform you. (Calzada Pérez 2003: 7)

As for micro-stylistic norms in advertisement translation, we relied on the AIDA-principle, which is applied in order to analyse the effectiveness principle of advertising slogans. This principle is still used in the commercial advertising industry. The abbreviation AIDA consists of the initial letters of individual phases in the advertising industry:

A stands for the *Attention* that the advertisements attract via photographs, graphics, inscriptions, and bold print.

I stands for *Interest*, which strengthens interest in the product via the text or the translation.

D stands for *Desire*, or the desire for the product.

A stands for *Action*, with which the recipient is encouraged to act, e.g. purchase the product (cf. Dreike/Bracke 1991: 9).

4 CONTEXT OF THE COURSE AND METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted at the Department of Translation Studies, University of Maribor, Slovenia. We included 30 students ($n = 30$) in their first and second year of the Translating and Interpreting MA programme. They were all native speakers of Slovenian. The participants were both male and female, aged between 22 and 25 years. Through working with the MA students from our department, we discovered that the use of ideologically-based analyses of translations as a didactic instrument contributes to the quality of translation as well as to a better understanding of the translated text's *skopos*. It also provides better insight into the connections between the use of language and the exercise of power, cultural values and standard systems of the source and target cultures. CDA also develops critical thinking skills. We believe that learning to recognise connections between the use of language and the exercise of power is certainly useful. If students learn to uncover the ideological forces that underlie most forms of contemporary communicative exchanges, to negotiate the complex and mixed messages of the media, to identify racist language or any other ideological slant in a newspaper or magazine article, or to detect racial or sexual bias in advertisements or business reports, they will be able to mediate between cultures more effectively.

The instrument used in the study was Van Dijk's method of ideological textual analysis, which, in contrast to strictly linguistically oriented analyses (Fairclough & Wodak 1997), has developed a socio-cognitive analysis of discourse oriented both towards the lexicosyntactic features of texts and towards cultural and social resources and contexts (which are even more important). On the basis of this categorisation, Van Dijk lists structures and strategies of text and talk that are typically ideologically relevant, depending on topic, context, speech act and communicative goals:

- Strategies describing positive action are: emphasis, assertion, hyperbole, detailed description, prominent position; headlining, summarising; narrative illustration, topicalisation; attribution to personality; explicitness; directness; argumentative support and impression management.
- Strategies describing negative action are divided into: de-emphasis; denial; understatement; de-topicalisation; low, non-prominent position; marginalisation; vague overall description; attribution to context; implicitness; indirectness; no storytelling; no argumentative support and no impression management.

Of course, in most cases, only positive strategies may be applied to the analysis of advertisements. However, the students used Van Dijk's instrument effectively, because it provides a combination of both linguistic and functional methods.

Following CDA theory, and in light of Van Dijk's (1988) framework as a basis for data analysis, the content of all the texts we used was individually examined at a micro level of analysis. The analysis therefore included revealing a generalised conception of foreground/background mechanisms that dealt with the following items:

- Lexicalisation: focuses on the use of biased words, concepts or ideologically laden terms.
- Dominant syntactic choices or grammatical metaphors are powerful ideological tools that consist of various strategies as a response to possible interlingual translation problems such as passivisation, nominalisation, modalisation and addition or omission.

During translation, the students were allowed to use various cultural and learners' dictionaries from English–German to Slovenian and from English–German to English–German. Students' personal notes and observations were recorded in a methodological diary. The researchers explained to the students that they would be uncovering potentially hidden meanings, deciphering linguistic structures, 'reading between the lines' and unveiling the subliminal. Then they asked the students to apply textual analysis while translating. As we focused on the ideological background of advertisements, students were asked to think about religious,

social, moral and ethical norms in Slovenian society. The issue of restrictions imposed on advertisements of certain products (such as spirits and tobacco) was not considered, as we only chose advertisements of products that can be advertised in Slovenia without limitations.

The course, in other words, was not strictly ‘academic’ or theoretical, since the students were offered concrete ways of interpreting contemporary culture and its signals. The important distinguishing feature of advertising discourse is its function, since this is always to persuade people to buy a particular product. The course comprised both English and German source (ST) and target texts (TT). Students shared the same first language (L1), Slovenian, on which we based translation practice.

First, we presented the most significant features of discourse analysis and explained how the students would benefit from them. To explain our choice of material, we provided a short overview of studies on powerful ideological forces within consumer culture (Wernick 1991; Hackley 2000; Ewen 2001). The purpose of the theoretical part was to illustrate how advertising practitioners use the embedded cultural knowledge they have acquired as consumers in the development of their own advertising; it also illustrates how discourses and narratives within cultural and social life become an encoded component of the ideological structures of advertising.

Secondly, we ran a survey among the students on the ideological values that dominate Slovenian society. The students stated that the most important values for Slovenians are: family and traditional family values (30%), a desire for perfection (18%), a hard-working mentality (12%), conservatism and the lack of adventurous spirit (14.3%), healthy lifestyle (15.7%), materialism (8%), and stability and prestige (12%).

Thirdly, the students were given advertising slogans that had already been translated into Slovenian, which we then analysed together in the classroom. We concentrated on how information was structured, how it ‘unpacked’ ideologically influenced constraints and cultural influences and ways in which the creators of texts seek to determine their readers’ viewpoints. The analysis performed by the students focused on linguistic signs (words). Iconic signs (visual representations), which are also very likely to be found in advertisements, and some other non-representational signs, such as graphics, were excluded from this part of the analysis. It should also be noted that the students were asked to analyse only ideologically influenced lexical and semantic choices, not the general structure of the advertising slogans. The students analysed 65 English advertising slogans: 25 for cars, ten for supermarkets and shops, 13 for cosmetic products and 17 for food and drink items.

In the second stage, we concentrated on the following questions, to which the students were later asked to respond briefly, in writing:

- Which linguistic elements of the text may be described as ideological – that is, racial, ethnic, social or sexual assumptions expressed on the level of both lexicon and syntax?
- Are they translatable?
- In what way should we modify the ST to transfer the ideological message?
- Is this ideological message suitable for our culture?
- Should it be conveyed at all?

Before discussing the results of the analysis, we isolated the most important ideologically influenced strategies used in Slovenian translations and used them to summarise the results:

- Use of the polite instead of the familiar form of address (ti/vi).
- Use of the familiar instead of the polite form of address (ti/vi).
- Over-emphasising the product's quality.
- Retaining linguistic items referring to stability and prestige.
- Deletions, sometimes as a result of the conservatism of Slovenian customers.
- Influence of English and German on Slovenian.

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In what follows, we present the results of the students' analyses.¹

The results presented in Table 1 demonstrate that the most frequently used strategies are the use of a polite form of address, retaining ideologically influenced elements of stability and prestige, and emphasis on the product's quality, which earned the highest number of occurrences. Stability and prestige as primary social values of contemporary Slovenian society were carefully retained in all 25 of the car advertisements. In the students' opinion, this strategy made a product appear more reliable.

1 There were some English advertising slogans that were not translated, e.g. 'Simply Clever' (Škoda), 'Go Further' (Ford), 'New Thinking, New Possibilities' (Hyundai), 'Passion for life' (Renault) itd.

Table 1: The results of the analysis of 25 car advertisements

Strategies	25 car advertisements
Use of a polite instead of familiar addressing form (<i>ti/vi</i>)	18
Use of a familiar instead of a polite addressing form (<i>ti/vi</i>)	None
Over-emphasizing the product's quality	15
Retaining linguistic terms applied to stability and prestige	25
Deletions	1
Influence of English and German on Slovenian	None

The use of a polite form of address may be attributed to the translators' wish to achieve more effective communication by conforming to target social conventions, as the advertised products are expensive and potential customers should be shown respect. If they were addressed differently, the clients would probably feel ill at ease. The students came to the conclusion that potential consumers would not prefer a more intimate form of address. They also suggested that when translating other advertising slogans (e.g. for food, cosmetics, etc.) that are more likely to be consumed by younger people, the use of a familiar form of address would be welcomed, as it would allow the consumers to identify with the product more easily.

The polite form appeared in the following examples:

- (1) Citroen – 'Just imagine what Citroen can do for you' – '*Niti predstavljate si ne, kaj vse lahko Citroen stori za vas*' (You cannot even imagine what Citroen can do for you – polite form of address).
- (2) Opel – '*Wir bauen Ihr Auto*' was translated as '*Delamo vaš avto*' (We produce your car – polite form of address)
- (3) Pirelli – '*Die Beine Ihres Autos.*' '*Noge vašega avtomobila*'. (The legs of your car – polite form of address)

In some examples, any form of address was omitted, as in the following cases. Students found it unusual and concluded that the absence of any address makes it more difficult for the potential customer to identify with the product. In the following examples, the use of the polite form of address "Ihr" would be appropriate to follow the idea of the original slogan.

- (4) Audi - '*Ihr ganz persönlicher Audi Q2.*' '*Povsem individualen Audi Q2*' (Entirely individual Audi Q2)

- (5) Volkswagen - ‘Damit nicht nur **Sie**, Sondern auch die Töne richtig sitzen.’ ‘Za odlično razpoloženje in popolno harmonijo zvoka.’² (For a good mood and a perfect harmony of sound)
- (6) Golf - ‘**Ihr** GTE macht nicht nur Spaß. Er klingt auch danach.’ ‘Golf GTE ne naznanja enkratnega užitka v vožnji le s svojim videzom, pač pa tudi z zvokom.’ (Golf GTE does not suggest a unique enjoyment of driving only with its look but also with its sound)

In several cases, the quality of the product was further emphasised by adaptations and additions. The students concluded that Slovenian customers are more traditional and may not trust foreign products. Therefore, they need to be convinced over and above those in the original country of production.

- (7) Peugeot – in the Slovenian translation, the slogan ‘The drive of your life’ was modified to ‘Užitek v dovršenosti’ (Enjoyment in perfection)
- (8) Mercedes – Benz - ‘Dieselmotoren – Zeit für Helden,’ ‘Izjemni dizelski motorji’. (Outstanding diesel motors). Students also assumed that the literal translation of “Helden” as “junaki” would appear too abstract and may confuse Slovenian consumers, as it would be unclear who precisely the heroes are: the motors or the consumers?
- (9) ‘Opel - SCHLÜSSELLOS.’ ‘**ČAROBNI** DOTIK.’ (Magic touch)
- (10) Golf - ‘Erleben Sie den Auftritt einer Legende.’ ‘Spoznajte legendo v **novi** podobi.’ (Get to know the legend in a new form). In this case, the students believed that the edition of the adjective “new” implies an important ideological message for Slovenian consumers that anything that is new is automatically better than previous versions.

It is also interesting that the imperative was preserved in the translation. The students noticed an almost complete absence of the imperative, common in English advertisements, in other slogans and concluded that Slovenians did not like to be told what to do or, in this case, what to buy. In the students’ opinion, this may be a consequence of the mentality of a small nation. Students claimed that, historically, Slovenia had always been a part of other countries or kingdoms. As a result, although Slovenia has been independent for more than 20 years, Slovenians may still interpret the use of the imperative form as a threat that somebody wishes to take control of them. It should be clarified at this point that these are the students’ assumptions and spontaneous ideas that were recorded during the analysis. The focus of the research was not on the issues of the Slovenian national

2 Another inaccuracy in the second example is that the original word-play also got lost in the translation, despite that fact that the translator could have used the Slovenian phraseological expression “*nekaj sede v ubo*” to achieve the effect of the original.

psychology. This is the reason why we are not providing any theoretical foundation for these assumptions.

There was also one case of an explicit deletion of the adjective ‘passionate’ in the next example:

- (11) Lexus – ‘The passionate pursuit to perfection’ was shortened in the Slovenian translation as ‘*Stremljenje k popolnosti*’ (Pursuit to perfection). Although it is difficult to speculate, the students suggested that this may have happened for ideological, even censorial, reasons. In their opinion, Slovenian customers may have found this reference too explicit and even ‘inappropriate’. Nevertheless, this was only a suggestion, as we did not use any other surveys on the evaluation of a set of values in Slovenian society other than those of the students.

6 CONCLUSION

By understanding how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through discourses, future translators will be able to operate better at different levels during text (re)production and translation of a message. This contribution outlines a course in which the students were presented with advertising slogans in English and German. Both the authors of this contribution and the students of the course concentrated on the ways in which information was structured as well as on ‘unpacking’ ideologically influenced constraints and cultural influences. As a next step, the students were asked to use the discourse analysis tools they had been acquiring to analyse Slovenian translations of the same advertisements and to offer their own suggestions in cases where they were not satisfied with the official translation.

The aim of this method was to analyse the students’ knowledge of the source and target cultures, cultural expectations in the transfer of information, and the skopos (purpose) of the translation. We wanted to investigate whether the students were able to recognise the special functions of textual structures in the communicative process. We suggest that by understanding how social relations of power are exercised and negotiated in and through discourses, future translators will be able to operate better at different levels during text (re)production and message translation, above and beyond the language level, that is, at the communicational, social, empathetic and cultural levels as well.

We decided to use advertising slogans because the practical benefits of the translation of this material should not be overlooked, since the globalisation of

economies and trade intensification compels companies to communicate with consumers of various languages and cultures. The need for communication will continue to grow and, consequently, so will the need for translation. An understanding of the ideological and functional processes behind the re-creation of advertising slogans in the TL will enable students to comprehend the needs of the global market better. We strongly believe that this is essential for any translator who wishes to enter the translation field of advertising and commercials; as consumer needs are endless, so this field can be highly profitable.

The objectives of our project were twofold: we sought to analyse the various linguistic components of each advertising slogan and to identify the ways in which it transfers cultural and ideological aspects of the source culture. While analysing the examples, students became highly adept at ‘unpacking’ the ideological content of any given advertisement and then at considering how that content depended upon the shared values of a particular interpretive community (such as a nation, a culture or a sub-culture) in order to achieve its aims. In the second and third stages, the students were asked to analyse the translations of slogans into Slovenian and then to offer their own translations, if necessary. Our task was to consider the ways in which advertisements use carefully chosen ‘signifiers’ to appeal to their ‘implied’ readers in the context of ‘think global, act local’.

As we worked our way through numerous slogans, we became increasingly mindful that, for our cultural translation students, advertisements provided ideal lenses through which to observe the formation of personal, social and cultural identities, especially as influenced by the corporate media. We soon found ourselves discussing the role and importance of a translator as not merely a cultural but also an ideological mediator. We wanted to make it clear that translation is actually constructed in a specific socio-cultural context, not in a vacuum without any ideological impact. We also wanted to emphasise that it would be naive to think that translators are absolutely independent and that their choices and strategies are not influenced by different socio-cultural norms informed by ideology. Translation always serves as a medium for transmitting ideological norms in a subtle, invisible way. A comparison of the ‘hidden’ ideological backgrounds of advertising slogans in the source and target cultures revealed the ideological messages encrypted in the advertisements, of which any translator should be well aware. Our experience confirmed that dominant strategies of translating cultural references are neither fixed nor permanent. The strategies and decision-making implied when dealing with ideological backgrounds are dynamic and may change depending on the background knowledge and age of a translator.

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