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Translation problems in advertising: a study of selected South African and German advertising slogans

Schmidt, Petra Monika

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TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN ADVERTISING

A STUDY OF SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN ADVERTISING SLOGANS

Petra Monika Schmidt

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ABSTRACT

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN ADVERTISING
A STUDY OF SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN ADVERTISING SLOGANS

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This dissertation studies translation problems in advertising on the basis of selected South African and German advertising slogans. A part of the study is also dedicated to the analysis of common linguistic features in advertising slogans and their psychological impact on consumer behaviour. It includes a brief outline of the applicability of translation theory to the translation of advertising slogans.

The problems in translating advertising slogans basically result from the "untranslatability" of certain stylistic-linguistic features such as plays on words, idioms, proverbs or rhymes. Most of these features are so embedded in a specific culture that they can only be understood by persons belonging to that culture.

There is no basic formula for the translation of advertising slogans. The translator has to decide whether the slogan should be translated by means of a word for word translation, a paraphrase or imitation in order to be effective and persuasive. Very often, however, the creation of a completely new slogan in the target language is the most effective way of rendering the mood and spirit of the original advertising slogan.

The South African and German advertising slogans in this study were selected at random and stem solely from printed media, such as magazines, newspapers and periodicals. The term "South African" slogans refers only to English product advertisements and not to those originally created in Afrikaans or other languages.

The economic aspects of advertising were largely excluded in so far as they are not essential for the purpose of this study.

To understand the subject of this study, the reader should preferably have a knowledge of Afrikaans, English and German, especially as quotations and slogans have not always been translated.

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Petra Monika Schmidt

14th day of February, 1982.

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PREFACE

Translation studies seem to deal almost exclusively with the problems of literary translation.

Although scientific and technical translation, machine translation, as well as legal and commercial translation have received some attention, translation in the field of advertising seems to have been largely neglected. Hardly any literature is available on the subject in South Africa. This study attempts to highlight some of the problems encountered in the translation of advertising slogans on the basis of examples taken from English and German.

I should like to thank my supervisor, Mrs. M. Heese, for her kind assistance and support. I am also grateful to my friend Jeannette Schulz for taking the time to help me with my English.

1. INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ADVERTISING

Advertising is so complex and has so many different functions that it is difficult to find an adequate, clear and all-embracing definition.

Advertising must be viewed in two ways: as a "tool of marketing" and as a "means of communication".[1]

Among the different and often contradictory definitions of advertising, the one by Agee, Ault and Emery, which does justice to the role of advertising as a means of communication and as a tool of marketing, is very useful for the purpose of this study. These authors define advertising as "the dissemination of sales messages through purchased space, time, or other media to identify, inform, or persuade."[2]

A brief look at the history and development of advertising shows that in a few thousand years advertising developed from a simple means of identifying the location of business establishments to a highly sophisticated means of persuasion and information.[3]

The first advertising medium was essentially vocal - the Greeks, for example, used public criers who went through the streets calling out what they had to sell.[4]

The spoken word as well as pictorial signboards or advertising symbols remained the principal means of communication throughout the Middle Ages.[5]

Printing and the development of newspapers transformed advertising from a simple announcement or visual symbol into a much more elaborate and detailed system of argument, suggestion and persuasion which characterizes advertising today.[6]

Advertising, however, only began to grow and expand rapidly as a result of the Industrial Revolution which triggered off a change from a production-oriented economy to a market- and consumption-oriented economy.[7]

As newspapers became more and more popular and attractive as an advertising medium, new slogans were developed, better copy-writers were employed and more detailed analyses of media, product and market were carried out.[8]

With the growth of business and the development of radio and television, the advertising industry continued to increase and flourish and has, except during the two world wars, shown a steady growth until today.[9]

Advertising has become part of our lives. We are daily confronted with and exposed to advertisements of all kinds which inform us about products or services, influence us and persuade us to buy goods or to make use of the services advertised.

2. ADVERTISING SLOGANS

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the term "slogan" as follows:

"Scottish Highland war-cry; party cry, watchword, motto; short catchy phrase used in advertising. (f. Gael. sluagh army, gairm shout)[10]

Volker Klotz believes that the original meaning of the word "slogan", namely, war-cry, is essential for the understanding of today's advertising slogan.[11]

Like a war-cry, today's advertising slogan must be concise and catchy. There is no room for detailed information or complicated argument. In the war-cry, the catchword and the advertising slogan it is the effect of the message and the impression which are more important than the actual content. The sound of the message is essential - therefore repetition and rhyme are frequently used devices.[12]

Ruth Römer defines a slogan as follows:

" Unter Slogan versteht man eine Aussage, welche die Ware entweder unverändert oder mit leichten Abwandlungen ständig begleitet, also in jeder Anzeige auftaucht und auch in der Tonwerbung mitgesprochen wird. Der Slogan ist nicht identisch mit der Schlagzeile, die meist über der Anzeige steht..."[13]

Slogans and headlines are often regarded as one and the same thing. There is, however, one basic difference in function: the headline has to make contact with buyers, it has to attract their attention to induce them to read the larger text that follows, whereas the slogan is meant to be effective on its own. The slogan can be independent of illustration and colour and still be effective.[14]

In other respects, headlines and slogans have a similar structure and the same linguistic techniques are applied to both.

2.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING SLOGANS

As mentioned before, advertising is a "powerful communication force and a vital marketing tool".[15] It is "persuasive communication".[16] If advertising fails to persuade people to buy a product, to accept an idea or to use the services advertised, it is largely a waste. Advertisers have come to the conclusion that persuasion is best achieved not by reasoned argument or by appealing to the intelligence of people, but by appealing to people's basic interests, fears, anxieties, hopes and joys.[17] Thus, psychology enters the field of advertising and slogans are, in fact, perfect tools for hidden persuasion.

A. Huxley characterizes the psychological strategies employed in slogans as follows:

"Find some common desire, some widespread unconscious fear or anxiety; think out some way to relate this wish or fear to the product you have to sell; then, build a bridge of verbal or pictorial symbols over which your customer can pass from fact to compensatory dream, and from the dream to the illusion that your product, when purchased, will make the dream come true."[18]

By studying our subconscious needs and yearnings and by identifying them, advertisers build the promise of fulfilment of these hidden needs into the advertising slogans. Advertisers promise consumers that they will become more beautiful, stronger or happier if they use the specific product advertised. In his book, The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard lists eight of our "hidden needs" to which an advertising slogan usually appeals to achieve the desired results:

(1) Emotional security, (2) Reassurance of worth, (3) Ego-gratification, (4) Creative outlets, (5) Love objects, (6) Sense of power, (7) Sense of roots, (8) Immortality.[19]

Charles F. Adams compiled another list of effective advertising appeals in his book entitled Common Sense in Advertising:

(1) The Promise of Economy and greater Financial Ease
(2) The Promise of Self-improvement
(3) The Promise of Self-gratification
(4) The Promise of Increased Family Happiness[20]

Every advertising slogan contains some key thought which triggers off a basic emotion which, in turn, encourages the consumer to buy the specific product.[21]

Although hidden psychology in advertising slogans is best expressed by means of words it should, however, be emphasized that non-verbal communication devices, such as illustration, colour and layout in printed advertisements may also have a psychological effect on consumers. Language, however, remains one of the most important means of advertising and to fully understand the art of persuasion it is necessary to look at the language of advertising and more specifically at the linguistic aspects of advertising slogans.

2.2 LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF ADVERTISING SLOGANS

The language of advertising may be regarded as a special language. Like specialized languages in the legal or scientific fields, the language of advertising has its own distinct traits and characteristics as regards vocabulary, style and syntax.

Although the language of advertising makes ample use of poetic or literary devices, it cannot be regarded as poetry, and although many scientific and technical terms may find their way into the advertising language, it is also not a purely scientific and technical language. Advertising language is a specified language in its own right which, however, contains certain elements of other "language spheres".[22]

According to Robert Caplin, "The purpose of language is to convey thoughts and ideas from mind to mind."[23] The purpose of the

[illegible] advertising is not only to convey an idea but to evoke a required response from the consumer. Advertising language and the language of advertising slogans in particular, must try to achieve the following:

Awareness: Gaining the attention of the consumer with regard to the product and sales message.

Knowledge: Presenting the sales message clearly and effectively so that the consumer can understand it.

Liking: Creating a liking in the consumer towards the product by relating the message to the consumers' personal life-styles.

Preference: Creating a desire in the consumer to possess the specific product in preference to other products.

Conviction: Convincing consumers that the purchase of the product advertised is for their own benefit.

Purchase: Stimulating action in consumers and making them act in the manner intended by the advertiser.[24]

In his book Advertisement Writing, Frank Jefkins summarizes the above statement by mentioning the AIDA formula which, with the addition of "C" for "Confidence" gives a five-point guide that applies to all "action-seeking" advertising slogans:

" Attract Attention
Compel Interest
Create Desire
Inspire Confidence
Promote Action "[25]

There are several linguistic techniques with which the copywriter can attract the consumer's attention and interest. According to A. Smith the copywriter enjoys "poetic licence" and can dis-

regard established linguistic rules. Incorrect spelling, neologisms and plays on words are just a few examples of techniques used to attract attention.[26] In addition, scientifically sounding words are often used to manipulate the consumer and to impress him with scientific knowledge.[27]

Advertising slogans should be easy to read, easy to understand and easy to remember. They are therefore concise and catchy and do not necessarily have to be logical nor contain any essential information. Their aim is to be memorized so that the consumer will automatically associate a specific slogan with a specific product. A slogan tries to impress the consumer and eventually lure him into buying the product. The following linguistic techniques are often used to achieve this aim:

Repetition

Repetition is one of the most frequently applied linguistic devices in advertising, especially in the case of slogans. It is regarded as an excellent means of persuasion. Le Bon makes the following statement on repetition:

"Man versteht den Einfluss der Wiederholung auf die Massen gut, wenn man sieht, welche Macht sie über die aufgeklärtesten Köpfe hat. Das Wiederholte setzt sich schliesslich in den tiefen Bereichen des Unbewussten fest, in denen die Ursachen unserer Handlungen verarbeitet werden...Daher die erstaunliche Wirkung der Anzeige. Haben wir hundertmal gelesen, die beste Schokolade sei die Schokolade X, so bilden wir uns ein, wir hätten es häufig gehört, und glauben schliesslich, es sei wirklich so."[28]

The consumer unconsciously assimilates those aspects of the product that are frequently repeated and is eventually led into believing that this specific product is superior to others.

There are various forms of repetition:

(a) The repetition of the same slogan in an advertising campaign

(b) The repetition of one or two words occurring in the

slogan

(c) Repetitive figures such as rhyme and alliteration which will be discussed later.[29] [30]

Statement

Le Bon maintains: "Die reine, einfache Behauptung ohne Begründung und jeden Beweis ist ein sicheres Mittel, um der Massenseele eine Idee einzuflössen."[31]

Very often advertising slogans are simple statements which turn out to be effective and persuasive although there is no proof that what they state is true.

According to Ruth Römer, it is the aim of such simple statements to set an example and to encourage the consumer to embark on a life-style similar to the one expressed in the slogan. German slogans that are simple statements frequently use the impersonal pronoun "man":

"M A N W Ä H L T C I N Z A N O . . . W E N N
M A N A B E N D S G Ä S T E H A T"

"M A N T R I N K T M E H R W H I S K E Y ,
M A N T R I N K T M E H R L O N G J O H N "[32]

The German term "man" implies universality and accepted behaviour: "Everybody" drinks a certain drink; "Everybody" buys a certain product. It stimulates the "keeping up with the Jones' " syndrome.

Other examples are statements such as:

"M I L O M E A N S J O L L Y G O O D H E A L T H"

"A F R A G R A N C E A S S P O N T A N E O U S
A S Y O U" (Inspiré Perfume)

"M A R L B O R O G E H Ö R T D A Z U"

(Marlboro Cigarettes)

Command

The command, expressed in the imperative form, is a typical linguistic device of slogans and constitutes a direct appeal to consumers to purchase a specific product.[33]

"M A C H M A L P A U S E . . . T R I N K C O C A C O L A"

". . . N I M M D O C H P H I L I P S"

"T H I N K T H I N" (Suganon Sweetener)

"T I E U P Y O U R I M A G E W I T H C R A V A T E U R"
(Cravateur ties)

Address

Advertising is a non-personal presentation of a product. A direct address in a slogan gives a stronger personal appeal to the message. It makes consumers believe that there is "somebody" who cares. As Ruth Römer puts it: "Die Anrede soll das persönliche Verkaufsgespräch ersetzen."[34]

"I H R B M W H Ä N D L E R E R W A R T E T S I E"

"A L L I E D - T H E B U I L D I N G S O C I E T Y
C L O S E S T T O Y O U"

"S U P E R C. T H E D R I N K T H A T ' S
G O O D F O R Y O U" (Vitamin-enriched soft drink)

Antithesis

The antithesis is a very striking linguistic technique. Opposites such as young-old, today-tomorrow, before-after, frequently occur in slogans.[35]

"C I N Z A N O E I S G E K Ü H L T - H E I S S G E L I E B T"

"M O V E T O M I L D N E S S . S T A Y W I T H T A S T E" (Benson and Hedges cigarettes)

"T O M O R R O W ' S C A M E R A S - T O D A Y" (Konica)

"P E R F E C T B E F O R E A N D A F T E R"
(Bertrams Sherry and Port)

Rhyme and Alliteration

Many slogans are rhymed and can therefore be remembered easily. In addition, rhymes can be very amusing and consumers enjoy repeating them.

"T H E P E R F E C T W A Y T O E N D Y O U R D A Y" (Edblo mattress)

"R A U C H E - S T A U N E - G U T E L A U N E"
(Players cigarettes)

"D O N ' T S T R A I N . G O B Y T R A I N"
(SA Railways)

"I M F A L L E E I N E S F A L L E S
K L E B T U H U W I R K L I C H A L L E S"

Alliteration is also a common feature of slogans:

"F O U R F A V O U R I T E F L A V O U R S F R O M
F R A Y B E N T O S " (Stock tablets)

"F L O W E R F R A G R A N C E B Y F L O R I S "

Plays on words

Many words in slogans have a double meaning:

"Z U M G U T E N T O N G E H Ö R T D U A L "

"W H A T D R I V E S A M A N I S O F T E N
W H A T A M A N D R I V E S " (BMW)

"T R U S T O U R S O U N D A D V I C E " (Phillips)

"K O M M E N S I E N I C H T V O N D E R
B A H N A B " (Deutsche Bundesbahn)

Neologisms

The use of neologisms is also very common in advertising slogans. Spitzer explains the effect of neologisms as follows:

"Durch die Prägung neuer Wörter schafft man eine Vorstellung von kommenden, neuen und besseren Sachen."[36]

The above-mentioned linguistic techniques are the most evident devices characterising slogans. A. Smith summarizes them as follows:

a) "Reklame gebruik stylmiddele wat tipies van die poësie is en wat poësie van prosa onderskei, nl. die spesiale gebruik van ritme en kadens, asook van alliterasie, assonansie, rym; en

b) verbind woorde op 'n ongewone wyse om daardeur

die suggestiwiteit daarvan te verhoog, verdraai die normale woord-orde, oortree die linguistiese reëls en konvensies van die taal en maak gebruik van dubbelsinnigheid en homonimie met 'n gevolglike dubbelsinnige interpretasie."[37]

In Form und Funktion der Werbeslogans, Möckelmann und Zander refer to the findings of Volker Klotz on advertising slogans and point out that many slogans are based on the rhythm and syntax of well-known traditional German songs, sayings and proverbs.[38] They give the following examples:

Slogans based on songs:

"K A B A , K A B A , H Ä L T D I C H G E S U N D"

is based on the traditional song: "Kuckuck, Kuckuck, rufts aus dem Wald".

"D I R U N D M I R - B I N D I N G B I E R"

is based on the nursery-rhyme: "Ich und du, Müllers Kuh".

Slogans based on proverbs

"K R A W A T T E G U T - A L L E S G U T"

(Ende gut - alles gut)

"S C H O K O L A D ' U N D B R O T M A C H T W A N G E N R O T"

(Salz und Brot macht Wangen rot)

Slogans based on Idioms

die suggestiwiteit daarvan te verhoog, verdraai die normale woordorde, oortree die linguistiese reëls en konvensies van die taal en maak gebruik van dubbelsinnigheid en homonimie met 'n gevolglike dubbelsinnige interpretasie."[37]

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Slogans based on proverbs

"K R A W A T T E G U T - A L L E S G U T"

(Ende gut - alles gut)

"S C H O K O L A D ' U N D B R O T M A C H T W A N G E N R O T"

(Salz und Brot macht Wangen rot)

Slogans based on Idioms

"A B S C H A L T E N U N D T E E T R I N K E N"

(Abwarten und Teetrinken)

"H E R T A - W E N N ' S U M D I E W U R S T G E H T"

(Es geht um die Wurst)

"L I E B E A U F D E N E R S T E N S C H L U C K"

(Liebe auf den ersten Blick)

Slogans are characterized by a simple syntax, brief and grammatically often incomplete sentences. Omissions occur frequently, leaving the consumer with the task of completing the slogans in the way he believes it was intended.

The stylistic and linguistic techniques used in advertising slogans are manifold, ranging from simple repetition to "poetry". They have, however, only <u>one</u> basic function, namely to stimulate needs and to encourage the consumer to purchase a product. Möckelmann und Zander summarize the task of the language of slogans as follows:

" Sie (die Sprache der Werbung) soll... nur den angesprochenen Menschen zum Kaufen und Verbrauchen bestimmter Waren bewegen oder besondere Dienstleistungen in Anspruch zu nehmen. Diese Aufgabe ist ihr einziger Zweck und die alleinige Rechtfertigung ihrer Existenz. Es geht ihr nicht um Mitteilung von Informationen, Gefühls- oder Bewusstseinsinhalten, nicht um Verständlichkeit, Eindeutigkeit oder gar Wahrhaftigkeit ihrer Aussagen, ... sondern allein darum, Wünsche und Bedürfnisse zu wecken, um Waren abzusetzen."[40]

2.3 PROBLEMS IN THE TRANSLATION OF ADVERTISING SLOGANS

The power of advertising depends to a large extent on the use of creative and planning skills to achieve its objectives. The job of a copywriter (the term "copy" refers to the nonvisual part of an advertisement - the text[41]) is a very demanding craft. Most forms of writing are difficult, but copywriting seems to be more demanding than most because it contains elements of different kinds of writing. According to Stobo, "journalism must be clear and topical, political writing must be persuasive, controversial writing must make a case and parry arguments, a lyric poem must have fire and be emotionally stirring, an epigram must be brief."[42]

In his book Advertising, K. Longman quotes Dr. S. I. Hayakawa who even goes so far as to put the copywriter on the same level as the poet, stating that copywriter and poet have four things in common: both make use of ambiguity and both try to give some meaning to the objects and events of our everyday life. The poet, however, is restricted to using words only, whereas, in a printed advertisement, for example, the copywriter can often use illustration, layout, and colours to stimulate the reader.[43]

The copywriter's job consists in "a never-ending search for ideas" and "a never-ending search for new and different ways to express those ideas".[44] In many ways, the translation of slogans and advertisements belongs more to the sphere of the copywriter than to that of the translator, as in most cases, an adequate translation of slogans consists in a creative reproduction of the original. The translator's first objective, when translating advertising slogans, should be to persuade customers to purchase the advertised product. Like the copywriter, the translator of advertising slogans must try to express his message as convincingly as possible.[45]

In an interview with Mrs. van Rooyen, copywriter and translator at the Burograph Advertising Agency in Pretoria, Mrs. van Rooyen stressed that the copywriter as well as the translator of advertising slogans have to ensure that their work includes all the elements mentioned in the so-called "ten point check-list" :

1) Is it sincere and believable?
2) Does it get the audience involved?
3) Is it keyed to the self-interest of the prospects?
4) Does it use the language of the prospect?
5) Is it written smoothly and coherently?
6) Does it provide the necessary information?
7) Is it interesting and persuasive?
8) Does it invite action?
9) Will it pass the inspection of the regulatory agencies?
10) Does it make the reader want the product advertised?

The translator of advertising slogans should never forget that it is the creative originality and the idea that count. Even though his translation is basically a recreation and often an entirely new idea, and even though he is not necessarily bound to the idea of the original advertisement, he can nevertheless be hampered by the illustration that usually goes together with a specific slogan. He has to adapt his words and ideas to this illustration. The copywriter, in contrast, has the possibility to develop his text quite unhampered by any illustration. The creation of advertisements is a joint effort made by specialists - a creative group process in which copywriter, printer and artist, work together and decide on the layout, the illustration and the words. Compromises can be made and the illustration can be altered so as to be adapted to the text of the advertisement. The translator, however, is confronted with the completed illustration. Thus, it might be even more difficult for the translator to find an appropriate and successful slogan in his own language than it is for the copywriter who has all the freedom he can wish for when writing an advertisement.

In South Africa, where both English and Afrikaans are official languages, the translation of advertising slogans is common practice. A. Smith points out that in nine times out of ten, the name, description and copy of a product manufactured in South Africa is originally English.[46] As a result, these advertisements have to be translated into Afrikaans or other languages. According to A. Smith, the translator faces the following problems:

a) He has to adapt his translation to space and time and to the illustration established by the English advertisement.

b) The Afrikaans advertising slogan has to correspond almost entirely to the English advertisement, since many consumers read both advertisements.

c) The image created for a product of an English advertising slogan may not be hampered by the translation of the advertisement into Afrikaans.[47]

A. Smith illustrates this last point with the example of an English advertisement for beer, "Something wonderful...", and the Afrikaans translation "Dou vir die dors". The translation proved to be a failure because "dou" is associated with water and not with beer. In this way, the Afrikaans translation harmed the image of the product.[48]

A. Smith concludes that the Afrikaans translator should try to translate an English advertisement as closely as possible:

"Hierdie tipe vertaling is trouens die beste waar die advertensieteks informasie oor die produk gee, of vir die vertaling van verkoopsidees. Advertensie is tog basies idees en wat 'n goeie verkoopsidee (d.w.s. 'n idee wat gemik is op iets mensliks in die leser, bv. die strewe na sukses, ens.), vir die Engelssprekende is, is dit ook vir die Afrikaanssprekende..."[49]

This does not only apply to English and Afrikaans speakers, but to speakers of other languages as well. It is obvious that whenever an advertisement appeals to one of our basic instincts such as success, security, bodily comfort and others, this is a good selling point in all languages. It then depends on how the translator gets this idea across to the consumer: ... " a good emotional idea gets through the wall of customer resistance in any language."[50]

A. Smith's points b and c apply specifically to the situation in South Africa where both Afrikaans and English are official languages. English and Afrikaans advertisements have to appeal to the same public. This means that advertising slogans of the same product

in English and Afrikaans have to resemble each other closely.

This problem does not arise with advertising slogans in a foreign language (e.g. German) since the public does not have a basis for comparison. Thus, when translating a German advertising slogan into English or Afrikaans, the translator does not have to adhere as closely to the original.

The translator of advertising slogans is not always confronted with the task of creating a completely new slogan. Some slogans can be translated without much difficulty and still be as effective as the original advertisement:

"A DIAMOND IS FOREVER" (De Beers)

is a simple statement which can be translated easily into German:

"EIN DIAMANT IST UNVERGÄNGLICH"

"INTERNATIONALLY ACKNOWLEDGED
TO BE THE FINEST CIGARETTE
IN THE WORLD" (Dunhill cigarettes)

"INTERNATIONAL ANERKANNT. EINE
DER EXCLUSIVSTEN CIGARETTEN
DER WELT"

The only problem with which the translator is faced in this specific advertisement is the translation of "finest". It could be translated by a large variety of terms ranging from "vornehm", "vorzüglich", "geschmackvoll" to "auserwählt". The German translator added an "exclusive" flair to the advertisement by writing "exclusivsten" with a "c" instead of a "k" and "Cigaretten" with a "C" instead of a "Z".

"J O H N P L A Y E R S S P E C I A L
S O M E T H I N G S I N L I F E H A V E
A S P E C I A L Q U A L I T Y"

"J O H N P L A Y E R S S P E C I A L
S O M S B I E D D I E L E W E I T S
S P E S I A A L S ."

J O H N P L A Y L R S S P E C I A L
M A N C H M A L B I E T E T I H N E N D A S
L E B E N E T W A S G A N Z B E S O N D E R E S

****

The above translations are not word for word translations but are nevertheless relatively close to the original.

The slogan "Think Thin" (Suganon sweetener), is a short command and very effective because of the alliteration "th". A word for word translation into German has exactly the same effect - even the alliteration can be rendered:

D E N K ' D Ü N N

The effect would be destroyed by a more formal translation, for example:

D E N K E N S I E S C H L A N K

It is, however, not always as easy for a translator of advertising slogans to obtain an adequate version of the original advertising slogan. Whenever a slogan is based on some sort of stylistic-

linguistic techniques already described, such as plays on words, rhymes, idioms, proverbs, alliterations and others, the translator is faced with the problem of "untranslatability" which has been repeatedly discussed. The problems he faces are similar to those encountered in the translation of poetry. In this sense, the translation of advertisements can be regarded as an "art".[51]

It is so difficult to translate plays on words, idioms and similar forms of expression because these features are embedded in a particular language and are often part of national customs, characteristics and beliefs.[52]

Countries differ not only in their languages, but also in their habits and outlook on life. As a result of these cultural differences, an advertising slogan which is effective and successful in one country may prove to be unsuccessful in another.

The following advertisement for DOORNKAAT is an example of "untranslatability". It is so deeply embedded in the German culture that it can only be properly understood by native speakers:

"A L S V O R 1 2 3 J A H R E N W I L H E L M
B U S C H S E I N E V E R S E S C H M I E D E T E ,
W A R D O O R N K A A T S C H O N 5 2 J A H R E
L A N G E I N G E D I C H T"

This advertisement could be translated into English but the associations and implications would be completely lost on an English speaking public.

Another problem frequently encountered by the translator of advertising slogans is the use of loan words. They make translation even more difficult because, as Pinchuck puts it, "they have a value in the one language that they cannot possibly

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Another problem frequently encountered by the translator of advertising slogans is the use of loan words. They make translation even more difficult because, as Pinchuck puts it, "they have a value in the one language that they cannot possibly

have in the other. "Start Nach Shanghai & Bangkok" is racier than "Take off for Shangai & Bangkok", because "start" has an exotic tang in German that it does not have in the original English and that "take-off" does not possess."[53]

The use of foreign words seems to add a certain snob appeal and a feeling of exclusiveness to the slogan. They seem to enhance prestige.

English words such as "gentleman", "lady", "world" and others, frequently appear in German advertising slogans.

In Englische Einflüsse auf die deutsche Sprache nach 1945, Carstens remarks the following on the influence of English on the German advertising language:

"Zu dieser Erscheinung im heutigen Deutsch muss besonders Stellung genommen werden: hier ist der Anteil engl. Wortgutes besonders hoch, hier ist aber auch ein Einfallstor für Wörter u. Wendungen gegeben, die lediglich einen engl. Anstrich haben, aber an dt. Schreibtischen entstanden sind. Die bekanntesten Beispiele sind das zur Bezeichnung des männlichen Pendants zum Mannequin gebildete Wort dressman u. vor allem die Bezeichnung Twen, eine Erfindung der dt. Modeindustrie und nicht ein aus dem Engl. übernommenes Wort. Das Engl. hat in diesem Bereich ganz offensichtlich den vornehmeren Klang ... Man gewinnt den Eindruck, das deutsche Volk sei von Natur aus zweisprachig!"[54]

2.4 ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN AND GERMAN ADVERTISING SLOGANS

a) "I N S P I R É A F R A G R A N C E A S S P O N T A N E O U S A S Y O U . . . (Inspiré Perfume)

Although this slogan is not a direct invitation to purchase the product advertised, it is nevertheless effective and per-

suasive. It is a simple statement which directly addresses the consumer by way of comparison: "A fragrance as spontaneous as you". There is, however, no way or proving whether the statement is, in fact, true or not.

The slogan addresses women and appeals to their vanity. Indirectly, the comparison implies : if you are spontaneous, you must use Inspiré. Spontaneity is usually regarded as a very positive quality - and what woman would not like to be spontaneous?

The slogan is divided into two parts. The product name Inspiré constitutes the first part. The second part is made up by the comparison. There is no verb, and this is a very common feature of advertising slogans. The slogan seems somehow to be incomplete - it is left to the consumer to interpret the slogan and to complete the sentence. It may imply something like:

B U Y I N S P I R É B E C A U S E I T I S
A F R A G R A N C E A S S P O N T A N E O U S
A S Y O U A R E

The consumer immediately associates the product name Inspiré with famous French perfumes, with the elegance and exclusiveness of the French culture. Consumers want to become part of this French world and are thus lured into buying the product.

The translation of this specific slogan does not cause any serious problems. No plays on words, idioms, rhymes or other stylistic-linguistic techniques are used to persuade the consumer. The effect of the slogan relies entirely on its appeal to consumer vanity. Thus, a very close translation of the original slogan is possible, for example:

I N S P I R É - E I N D U F T S O
S P O N T A N W I E S I E

or

I N S P I R É - S O S P O N T A N W I E
S I E

****

b) " T R U S T O U R S O U N D A D V I C E "
(Philips)

This slogan is an example of a play on words. "Sound" has a double meaning; it can either be seen as an adjective, meaning : Trust our logical, good or well-founded advice, or as a noun, referring to the sounds we hear, i.e. music: Trust our musical advice. In addition, "to give sound advice" is a frequently used idiomatic expression.

It is a very clever slogan: striking, brief, and catchy and very easy to remember. It is a command, appealing directly to the consumer to "trust" Phillip's products.

The basic function of this slogan is to inspire a feeling of confidence in the consumer. "Trust", "sound" and "advice" all have positive connotations. The consumer is left to believe that he cannot go wrong if he buys this product.

A literal translation of this slogan into German is virtually impossible since the double meaning of "sound" would be lost.

A very close translation in which, however, the play on words is missing would be the following:

V E R L A S S E N S I E S I C H A U F U N S E R E N
G U T E N R A T

This translated slogan, however, would be meaningless as a slogan advertising Phillips products. It could advertise any product or firm. In addition, it is neither brief nor catchy.

When translating plays on words or other linguistic devices used in slogans, the translator should always try to recreate the original slogan. He should try to render the mood and the spirit of the original instead of attempting to obtain a very close translation.

A better translation of the slogan "Trust our sound advice", and one that also renders the play on words and is furthermore based on an idiomatic expression, would be, for example:

B E I U N S M A C H T D E R G U T E T O N
D I E M U S I K

****

c) "T I E U P Y O U R I M A G E W I T H
C R A V A T E U R"

(Gravateur Ties)

The word play in this slogan centers around the term "tie", which refers to both the actual product "the tie", and to the act of putting on a tie, "to tie up". In addition "to tie up one's image" carries the meaning of "to add the finishing touch" to one's appearance.

The persuasive factor in this slogan lies in the term "image". It appeals to the consumer's vanity and to his desire to be "somebody". The slogan promises self-improvement, i.e. a better image if Cravateur ties are bought.

The translation of this specific slogan into German causes some problems, especially as a play on words is always difficult to render in the target language. In addition, the term "image" is problematic because there seems to be no adequate equivalent in German.
A fairly close translation would be:

V E R B I N D E N S I E I H R 1 M A G E M I T
C R A V A T E U R.

The play on words in the English version "to tie ties" is lost in the above translation. A better translation would be:

V E R B I N D E N S I E I H R E
P E R S Ö N L I C H K E I T M I T D E M B I N D E R
V O N C R A V A T E U R

Here the play on words "binden" (to tie up) and "Binder" (tie), has been preserved. Furthermore, "image" should rather be translated by "Persönlichkeit" than by "Image", because "Persönlichkeit" has more positive connotations in German compared to "Image" which is a fairly general term.

d) " D I E G R O S S E N D I E S E R W E L T
T R A G E N R O L E X U H R E N " (Rolex watches)

The slogan is simple and states a seemingly indisputable fact. It is not a direct appeal to consumers to purchase the product advertised. "Hidden perusasion" is its main feature. The slogan appeals to some of our "hidden needs", namely vanity and reassurance of worth. Everybody would like to be part of this world where only the elite wear Rolex watches. The elite is undoubtedly associated

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