

A Study of Cosmetic Brand Name Translation in Iran

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Abstract With the acceleration of economic globalization foreign products are being launched into the international market. Consequently, translating brand names successfully into other languages has never been more imperative and vital than today. The translation of brand names is a kind of intercultural communication. Therefore, the translation of brand names is one of the most challenging activities every translator faces. While working on business literature, translation is especially complicated in cosmetic brand names. Since advertising is important in these sort of products and we want to be certain that the product name will convey a friendly image in the foreign countries. This study, presenting an analysis of brand name translation, is based on Nida's functional equivalence as its framework. It is tried to study the problems has been dealt with in the translation process. There are suggested ways to solve them. And the results show that all names have been translated literally or transliterated and the denotative meaning of them employed without any attention to the connotation.

Key words: brand name, functional equivalence, translation, cosmetic

1. Introduction

1.1 Globalized transaction

With the increased emphasis on globalization, there is a constant flow of products and services among nations. The marketing of product and service brands is crucial. Thus, naming brands and having brand names translated into culturally acceptable linguistic symbols becomes ever-challenging business as culturally heterogeneous and linguistically diverse consumers drive the global marketplace (Li and Shooshtari 2003).

When a brand is expanded into a foreign market, a careless choice of a new or translated brand name may generate negative effects on the product and on the company in terms of loss in sales, damage to credibility and damage to reputation. Even a company that uses its original language in the new market to maintain an exotic foreign image may not be able to avoid problems since the original brand name may not be easily pronounceable in the foreign language and may convey an undesirable association or meaning. (Francis, Lam, Walls 2002)

Therefore, a successful translation of the brand name should not only transfer the information concerning the commodity or service, but it also should transfer its cultural significance to the audience in the target culture (target culture audience). This applies particularly to culture-loaded brand names that have different mental associations in different cultures.

When doing international business, the translation of brand names will be the first task facing many companies. A well-translated brand name will be a most valuable linguistic asset to companies. Though great attention is paid to the creation of new international brand names, it seems that little attention is paid to the translation of existing brand names of them.

1.2 Definition of Brand Name

Brand name, an arbitrarily adopted name that is given by a manufacturer or merchant to an article or service to distinguish it as produced or sold by that manufacturer or merchant and that may be used and protected as a trademark. (Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary, 1922).

In markets where consumers purchase brands to reinforce their membership in a certain global segment or to appear cosmopolitan, brands with a global image will fare better than brands with a local or provincial image (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 1999). So these markets use transliteration to capitalize recognition and remind customers of the original brand name.

Aiming to build, reinforce, and or reposition consumers' perception of a certain brand, brand names have the following four functions: distinguishing products, providing information, ensuring guarantee and stimulating consumption. In order to build up a good image in the market and arouse favorable associations as well as purchasing desire in the minds of the consumers, brand names should have the following major characteristics: short in length and sweetness, sonorous and distinct, elegant and apt, original and novel.

Given the uniqueness of brand names translation, the translator must be fully aware of the cultural awareness, aesthetic standards, and consumption modes of both SL and TL readers, and should keep in the mind the intention of the original so as to transfer its message (both linguistic and cultural) maximally, otherwise, a failure to reflect the spirit and dynamics of the source document is a mortal sin (Nida, 1993).

The translator of brand names should strive for the following two effects: (a) the translated brand name should reflect the semantic features of the original one; (b) the translated brand name should have the same or similar function as the original one.

Considering the features of brand names, particularly the fact that they are mostly created to perform such functions as informative, aesthetic and vocative functions, the present paper will chiefly draw upon Nida's principle.

Language has six basic functions: informative, vocative, aesthetic, expressive, phatic and metalingual (Newmark, 1988, p.39). The former three are more closely related to brand names. As far as foreign brand names are concerned, functional equivalence means that the Persian renderings must perform these three functions to the same, or at least to similar extent as the foreign brand names do.

Since culture is often created by a people in their ongoing activities within their particular life-conditions, brand names, which obviously are part of the culture of a people (in this sense refers to spiritual, artifacts), frequently trigger different aesthetic perceptions (or associations) and values in different cultures.

From the viewpoint of lexicology, associative meaning is the secondary meaning supplemented to the conceptual meaning. It differs from the conceptual meaning in that it is open-ended and indeterminate. It is liable to the influence of such factors as culture, experience, religion, geographical region, class background, education, etc. In contrast to denotative meaning, connotative meaning (of which associative meaning is an essential part) refers to the overtones or associations suggested by the conceptual meaning.

How to assess a translated brand name? Most marketing textbooks summarize the criteria for ideal brand names as memorable, distinctive, and positive and preferably suggestive of product attributes (Kevin Keller, 1998, pp 131-132). But translated brand names are the products out of their original names; they should share some relevance with their originals to some degree or by some manner. If they are completely irrelevant, and then the new names are re-created, not translated. In order to build a unified brand image across borders and to make consumers easy to associate the new names with the old names, it is advisable, from a marketing point of view, to translate with some associative relevance between them, while re-creation means the total loss of original brand assets and new expensive promotion of the new one. It should also follow the following additional criteria:

1. Phonetic relevance

The new translated brand name should sound similar, if not exactly the same, to its original name. Transliteration can well reach this criterion.

2. Semantic relevance

By semantic relevance, we do not necessarily mean literal equivalence; rather we mean the new translated brand name should be semantically meaningful.

3. Graphic relevance

Languages are semiotic, the brand name and its typeface constitute the visual part of brand image. Sometimes, the typeface can suggest or symbolize the features of a product. In translating brand names from one language into another, it is highly recommended to make a similar visual look by adopting the same typeface or font of letters.

1.3. Translation techniques of brand names

The common techniques are of five kinds: 1) literal translation; 2) transliteration; 3) liberal translation; 4) combined translation; and 5) adjustment.

1. Literal translation

The so-called literal translation in this paper is equivalent to Newmark's semantic translation, which attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structure of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original (Newmark, 1988, p. 39).

2. Transliteration

Newmark (1988, p.81) proposes transference for cultural terms which includes transliteration: Transference is the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. It is the same as Catford's transference, and includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets

3. Paraphrase

Paraphrase is the technique of translating brand names by giving a restatement of the meaning in Persian. It helps bring out the functions and effects of products clearly so as to impress the receptors and in many cases avoid unfavorable associations.

4. The technique of combined translation

Sometimes literal translation, transliteration and paraphrase are integrated to achieve functional equivalence.

5. Adjustment

To employ adjustment as a supplementary technique, this requires that the translator make some adjustments in translation. Addition or deletion, blending, acronym, purposive misspelling, and renaming usually realize it.

5.1 Additions or deletions

Addition refers to adding certain letter, sound or even semantic component in translating English brand names into Persian. Deletion refers to deleting certain letter, sound or even semantic component in translation.

5.2 Blending

Blending refers to the technique of translation by combining two or three words into one word. It is acknowledged that good brand names are not only informative but also concise enough to be memorized.

5.3 Acronym

Acronym refers to the way of translating by combining the initial letters of the Persian characters in a English brand name.

5.4 Purposive misspelling

Purposive misspelling refers to the deliberate misspelling of Persian words in translating English brand names into Persian.

5.5 Renaming

Renaming, as the term suggests, means giving a new name to the original brand name. It is by far the most innovative technique of translation and is mainly used to avoid negative associations.

1.4. Objective

The objective of this report is to provide a more comprehensive overview of brand naming in Iran which includes brands imported.

2. Methodology

2.1. Material

Like other kinds of translations, translation of brand names is not only a code switch between two languages, but a transformation of culture and social conventions. As cosmetics, it also includes cultural factors, which imposes a more severe standard on the sense of beauty. Therefore, apart from following language laws, the translation of cosmetics brand names must pay attention to such non - linguistic factors as gender, age and culture of the customers.

In this research, twenty cosmetic brand names are selected and analyzed on five techniques of brand names translation according to Nida's functional equivalence. The questionnaire is prepared and sent by email to twenty peoples. After gathering the data the researcher analyzed on the basis of functional model.

2.2. Model of the study

According to the principle of functional equivalence, the translated brand names should achieve a perfect linguistic unity among sound, form and meaning.

This paper, taking Nida's functional equivalence as its framework, attempts to study the problems that are often encountered in translating brand names into Persian and suggest ways to solve them. As far as cosmetic products are better available, the researcher decided to choose from cosmetic brand names.

2.3. Procedures

Content analysis is a technique for gathering and analyzing the content of a text, it is used to analyze the translation patterns.

3. Data Analysis and results

In this section, the analysis of data is conducted on techniques of data only all other words are going to be studied one by one. Nida's functional. Because of not having a great bulk of

1. Etod (lipstick)

Persian Counterpart: /Etood/ is transliteration
/Etod/ is adjustment

2. Persian (powder cream)

Persian Counterpart: /parian/ is adjustment
/pershian/ is transliteration
/pershen/ is deletion and transliteration

3. Flomar (kind of stick for cheeks)

Persian Counterpart: /flomar/ is transliteration

4. Oreal (mascar)

Persian Counterpart: /ureal/ is transliteration
/or al/ is adjustment (deletion)
/oreel/ is transliteration

5. Ever Sheen (eye liner)

Persian Counterpart: /Hamishe derakhshan/ is literal
/Ever sheen/ is transliteration
/hamishe saaf/ orsheen/ is paraphrase/ adjustment (addition)

6. Ever Bilena (stake pan)

Persian Counterpart: /ever bilena/ is transliteration

7. Carol (pankak)

Persian Counterpart: /naghmeh/ is literal
/karool/ is transliteration
/karel/ is adjustment (deletion)

8. Ever Beauty (powder cream)

Persian Counterpart: /hamishe zeeba/ is literal
/ever beuty/ is transliteration

9. Miss Rose (eye liner)
Persian Counterpart: /khanoom roz/ is paraphrase
/miz roz/ is transliteration
/khanoom roz/ Miss roz/ is literal/ transliteration
10. Lilyum (nail polish)
Persian Counterpart: /lilium/ is transliteration
/li lium/ is transliteration
11. Ruby Rose (eye shadow)
Persian Counterpart:/rubi roz/ is transliteration
/roz ghermez/ is literal
12. Dallas/ Jewel (fingernails)
Persian Counterpart: /daalaas/ jool/ is transliteration/adjustment (deletion)
/daalaas/negin/ is transliteration/ paraphrase
/daalaas/ joovel/ is transliteration/adjustment (addition)
13. Igora Royal/lady/ silk (hair colors)
Persian Counterpart: /igoora royal/ is transliteration
/laydi/khanoom/banoo/ is transliteration/ literal/literal
/abreesham/silk/ is literal/ transliteration
14. Jacsaf (perfume)
Persian Counterpart: /jaksaf/ is transliteration
/jaaksaf/ is transliteration
/jasaf/ is adjustment (deletion)
15. Nice/ chi chi (kind of perfume)
Persian Counterpart: /khoob/chi chi/ is literal/ transliteration
/nice/chi chi/ is transliteration
/mode rooz/aali/ is paraphrase/ literal
16. Nivea (shaving foam)
Persian Counterpart: /neva/ is adjustment
/nev a/ is transliteration
/neve a/ is transliteration
17. Fa (deodorant)
Persian Counterpart: /fa/ is transliteration
18. Balea (depilatory)
Persian Counterpart: /baleh a/ is transliteration
/bali/ is adjustment
/bali/ is adjustment
19. Miracle (cream for eye)
Persian Counterpart: /moogeze/ is literal
/mirak/ is transliteration
20. AxE (body spray)
Persian Counterpart:/ax e/ is transliteration
/exi/ is adjustment (misspelling)
/Ax/ is adjustment (deletion)

21. My (sun screen cream)

Persian Counterpart: /my/ is transliteration
/man/ is literal

4. Conclusion

Brand name translation is getting more and more important to companies in today's world economic environment, and has become a hot topic in commercial language translation, worthy of further study. It is suggested that translators and translation organizations consider offering such service to their clients. So as to the aim of this study was presenting appropriate equivalence of cosmetic brand names on basis of functional meanings. The results show that translators tend to use transliteration technique for translating brand names, though as suggested method, translators must maintain that association meaning behind the brand name as it do in its source.

Comment: Though the names seem clear and simple on the surface, they have some connotative meanings. All names have been translated literally or transliterated and the denotative meaning of them employed without any attention to the connotation. In order to avoid the loss of meaning due to the cultural differences, the renderings can be more attractive and acceptable to the target audiences.

Two suggested Methods of Brand Translation

In international names and brands translations, two generic methods of brand name translation are used:

- Direct translation for the brand name's meaning and
- Phonetic translation for the brand name's pronunciation.

For an unknown brand, a phonetic translation is helpful, whereas for an existing strong brand name, it is better to retain the original name.

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