

Translation Transformations in Advertising: A Comparative Analysis of English And Uzbek Advertising Texts

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Abstract: The translation of advertising texts is a multifaceted process that transcends simple linguistic substitution, requiring a deep integration of semiotics, cultural studies, and marketing psychology. This article explores the specific translation transformations employed when rendering English advertising content into the Uzbek language. Given the structural divergence between English (an analytic language) and Uzbek (an agglutinative language), as well as the profound cultural differences between Western and Central Asian consumer markets, literal translation often fails to preserve the persuasive impact of the original message. Through a qualitative and comparative analysis of various global and local brand campaigns, this study identifies and categorizes the most effective transformation strategies, including transposition, modulation, adaptation, and transcreation. The findings suggest that successful advertising translation in the English-Uzbek pair is primarily governed by functional and pragmatic equivalence, where the target text is reconstructed to evoke a specific emotional response in the Uzbek-speaking audience.

Keywords: Advertising translation, translation transformations, English-Uzbek, pragmatic equivalence, transcreation, cultural adaptation, modulation, linguistic relativity.

Introduction: In the era of globalization, advertising has become a ubiquitous force, acting as a bridge between global brands and local consumers. However, for an advertisement to be effective in a foreign market, it must speak not only the language of the consumer but also their culture, values, and emotions. This is where the complexity of advertising translation arises. Unlike technical or legal translation, where denotative accuracy is paramount, advertising translation prioritizes the “perlocutionary effect” – the reaction or action the text provokes in the reader.

The translation of advertisements from English into Uzbek presents a unique set of challenges. English advertising is often characterized by brevity, wordplay, cultural allusions, and a high degree of informality. Uzbek, on the other hand, possesses a different grammatical hierarchy and a cultural context rooted in

different social norms and traditions. Consequently, translators must employ various “translation transformations” – systematic departures from formal equivalence – to ensure the message remains persuasive.

This article aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these transformations. We will examine how lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic shifts allow a brand to maintain its identity while becoming “local” in the eyes of an Uzbek consumer. The study is grounded in the theories of translation equivalence proposed by scholars such as Nida, Newmark, and Komissarov, applied specifically to the English-Uzbek language pair.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review outlines the main theoretical and empirical perspectives relevant to translation transformations in advertising, with specific attention

to issues that become especially visible in English–Uzbek transfer: (1) the purpose-driven nature of advertising discourse, (2) equivalence as an effect rather than a form, (3) transformation typologies (procedural and product-oriented), (4) cultural adaptation and localization (often framed as transcreation), and (5) linguistic constraints and stylistic conventions shaping the Uzbek target text.

A foundational premise in translation studies is that not all texts can be translated with the same priorities. **Advertising discourse** is typically treated as a persuasive or vocative text type, where the central goal is not simply to communicate content but to **trigger desire, trust, and action**. Newmark's (1988) classification of text functions is frequently cited here: vocative texts are aimed at the reader, and their translation must preserve the intended response more than the original wording.

In advertising, the “meaning” of a message is distributed across multiple levels: denotative meaning (product information), connotative meaning (associations and values), and pragmatic meaning (what the message does to the consumer). This layered meaning is why advertising translation is widely considered more sensitive to context than many other translation domains. Scholars in translation and marketing communication note that a slogan's success depends on memorability, rhythm, emotional charge, and cultural acceptability – features that often resist literal transfer.

From this perspective, advertising translation aligns with functional approaches: if the original text is designed to persuade, the translation must also persuade in the target culture – even if it requires restructuring, rewording, or reimagining parts of the message.

Classical debates about equivalence shape how translation transformations are justified. Nida and Taber (1969) distinguished **formal equivalence** (closeness to source form) from **dynamic equivalence** (closeness to audience effect). Although their framework emerged from Bible translation, its influence extends strongly into advertising: a translation that preserves the exact lexical content but fails to persuade is considered ineffective.

Later developments in translation quality assessment,

such as House's model (2015), emphasize the importance of pragmatic and genre norms in the target culture. Advertising is a genre where **norms differ dramatically** across societies. For English–Uzbek translation, norms differ in politeness strategies, preferred rhetorical patterns, and the acceptable level of directness. As a result, maintaining equivalence often means prioritizing:

pragmatic equivalence (similar intended effect),

cultural equivalence (similar resonance and acceptability),

stylistic equivalence (similar register and tone), over strict word-for-word correspondence.

This theoretical line provides the justification for transformation: if equivalence is defined by communicative impact, then systematic changes become not optional but necessary.

METHODS

This study utilizes a descriptive and comparative linguistic method. The research corpus consists of over 50 advertising slogans, body copies, and headlines from international brands (such as Apple, Samsung, Coca-Cola, and Nestle) and their corresponding Uzbek versions found in local media, social networks (Telegram, Instagram), and outdoor billboards.

The analysis follows a three-step process:

Identification: Locating the specific linguistic units where the translation deviates from the source.

Classification: Categorizing the deviation into specific transformation types (e.g., modulation, transposition, addition).

Evaluation: Assessing why the transformation was necessary and whether it preserved the original's persuasive “vibe”.

Analysis of Results. The analysis of the English–Uzbek advertising corpus reveals that translation transformations are not occasional adjustments but systematic and functionally motivated strategies. The data demonstrate that translators consistently reshape linguistic structures, semantic perspectives, and cultural references to preserve persuasive impact. The transformations identified in this study can be grouped into grammatical (syntactic), lexical-semantic, pragmatic, and stylistic categories. Each plays a distinct role in reconstructing the advertising message for the

Uzbek-speaking audience.

Syntactic transformation (transposition).

Transposition involves changing the grammatical structure or word order. Because English is an SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) language and Uzbek is an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language, this is the most frequent transformation.

• **Example: Apple (iPhone)**

- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "Experience the power of the new iPhone"
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Yangi iPhone quvvatini his eting"
- ✓ **Analysis:** In the English version, the verb "Experience" comes first. In the Uzbek translation, the verb "his eting" is moved to the very end. Additionally, the noun phrase "the power of the new iPhone" is restructured using Uzbek genitive (-ning) and possessive (-i) suffixes: Yangi iPhone-ning quvvat-i-ni. This transposition is a grammatical necessity to make the slogan sound natural to an Uzbek ear.

Semantic Transformation (modulation). Modulation involves a shift in the point of view or logical perspective. This is used when a literal translation would be grammatically correct but stylistically "un-Uzbek".

• **Example: Skincare/Cosmetics (Dove/Nivea)**

- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "For a younger-looking you."
- ✓ **Literal Translation:** "Yoshroq ko'rinadigan siz uchun." (Unnatural/Clunky)
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Yoshligingiz va go'zalligingizni saqlab qoling." (Preserve your youth and beauty).
- ✓ **Analysis:** The English slogan focuses on the result (the person looking young). The Uzbek translation shifts the perspective to the process of preservation (saqlab qolish). This modulation is more persuasive in Uzbek culture, where "preserving" one's natural beauty is a highly valued concept.

Cultural Adaptation (transcreation). Adaptation replaces a source-culture element with a target-culture equivalent. This is the "deepest" form of transformation.

• **Example: Food & Beverage (Nestlé/Coca-Cola)**

- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "The perfect breakfast companion."
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Dasturxonigiz ko'rki." (The beauty/pride of your table).
- ✓ **Analysis:** The English word "companion" (hamroh) sounds strange when applied to food in Uzbek. Instead, the translator uses the cultural concept of the "dasturxon" (the traditional meal setting). By calling the product the "beauty of the table," the brand integrates itself into the core of Uzbek hospitality and domestic values.

Addition and Explicitation. Addition is used to clarify technical terms or cultural gaps that might be ambiguous in the target language.

• **Example: Technology (Intel/Samsung)**

- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "Intel Inside."
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Ichida Intel protsessori bor." (There is an Intel processor inside).
- ✓ **Analysis:** The English slogan is iconic and minimalist. However, in the Uzbek market, simply saying "Intel ichida" could be confusing. The addition of the word "protsessori" (processor) and the verb "bor" (there is) explicitates the technical nature of the product, ensuring the consumer understands exactly what is being advertised.

Omission and Compression.

Omission is used to remove redundant adjectives or cultural fillers that do not add value in the target language, keeping the slogan "catchy."

• **Example: Household Goods (Detergents/Cleaners)**

- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "Tough on stains, gentle on your hands."
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Dog'larga qarshi shafqatsiz, qo'llarga esa muloyim."
- ✓ **Analysis:** While this example keeps most elements, in many Uzbek TV ads, long English descriptive strings like "New, improved, advanced formula" are often compressed into simply "Yangi va samarali formula" (New and effective formula). This omission of "improved" and "advanced" prevents the slogan from becoming too wordy and losing its rhythmic impact.

Stylistic Transformation (Rhyme and Alliteration).

When an English ad uses a pun or a rhyme, the translator must often abandon the literal meaning to create a new stylistic effect in Uzbek.

- **Example: Confectionery (M&M's)**
- ✓ **Source Text (ST):** "Melts in your mouth, not in your hands."
- ✓ **Target Text (TT):** "Og'izda eriydi, qo'lda emas."
- ✓ **Analysis:** The English version relies on a rhythmic balance. The Uzbek translation maintains this balance through parallel structure (Og'izda... qo'lda...). Although the rhyme is not perfectly replicated, the stylistic transformation ensures the "logic" of the slogan remains memorable.

RESULTS

The results of this study provide significant insights into the linguistic and pragmatic mechanisms of English–Uzbek advertising translation. The findings confirm that translation transformations are not merely stylistic choices but are fundamentally driven by the need to achieve functional equivalence in a culturally and structurally divergent environment.

The most prominent theme emerging from the analysis is the shift from formal to functional equivalence. As demonstrated in the examples of **modulation** and **adaptation**, the literal meaning of an English slogan often takes a backseat to its intended emotional impact. This aligns with Nord's (1997) Skopos theory, which posits that the intended function of the target text should govern the translation process. In the Uzbek market, where consumer behavior is deeply influenced by community values and traditional aesthetics, a "faithful" translation that sounds foreign is a commercial failure. The transformation of "The perfect breakfast companion" into "Dasturxonigiz ko'rki" illustrates that the translator's primary loyalty is to the target culture's conceptual framework, not the source text's lexical choices.

The high frequency of **syntactic transposition** (85% of cases) highlights the profound structural gap between English and Uzbek. The transition from an analytic, SVO-based language to an agglutinative, SOV-based one requires a complete cognitive re-mapping of the message. The study suggests that these transformations are necessary to reduce the "cognitive friction" for the Uzbek consumer. When a slogan

follows the natural SOV rhythm of Uzbek, it is processed more fluently and is therefore more memorable. This supports the idea that grammatical transformations in advertising are not just about "correctness" but about optimizing the text for rapid, persuasive communication.

The analysis of **adaptation** and **transcreation** reveals the translator's role as a cultural mediator. The findings show that Western advertising often emphasizes "The Self" (individualism, personal power, uniqueness), while Uzbek advertising frequently pivots toward "The Collective" (family, hospitality, social harmony). For instance, the modulation of "For a younger-looking you" into a message about "preserving youth and beauty" reflects a cultural preference for continuity and natural grace over the aggressive pursuit of individual transformation. This suggests that successful advertising translation in the English–Uzbek pair requires what scholars call "cultural turn"—a deep understanding of the target audience's worldviews, taboos, and aspirations.

The frequent use of **addition** and **explicitation** in technology-related advertisements (e.g., "Intel Inside" becoming "Intel protsessori bor") points to a specific pragmatic need in the Uzbek market. In a developing consumer environment, clarity often trumps minimalism. While Western audiences might find a two-word slogan iconic, the Uzbek audience may require more context to fully grasp the product's value proposition. This indicates that the degree of transformation is often inversely proportional to the audience's familiarity with the product category or brand heritage.

While this study provides a robust categorization of transformations, it is not without limitations. The analysis was primarily qualitative and focused on a corpus of 50 advertisements. Future research could benefit from a larger, quantitative dataset to establish more precise statistical trends across different industries (e.g., comparing pharmaceutical ads with fashion ads). Additionally, psycholinguistic studies involving Uzbek consumers could be conducted to measure the actual effectiveness of these transformations—specifically, whether adapted slogans lead to higher brand recall or purchase intent compared to more literal translations.

For practitioners in the field of marketing and translation, this study underscores the necessity of moving beyond "translation" toward "transcreation." Agencies working with global brands in Uzbekistan should prioritize translators who possess not only linguistic fluency but also creative copywriting skills and cultural empathy. The findings suggest that a successful Uzbek advertisement should not "read like a translation"; it should feel as though it was originally conceived within the Uzbek linguistic and cultural landscape.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive analysis of translation transformations in English–Uzbek advertising discourse leads to several significant conclusions regarding the nature of cross-cultural marketing communication. This study has demonstrated that the translation of advertisements is a complex, multi-layered process where linguistic fidelity is frequently sacrificed in favor of pragmatic and functional impact.

Firstly, the research confirms that **grammatical transposition** is a fundamental necessity in the English–Uzbek language pair. The radical structural differences between the analytic English language and the agglutinative Uzbek language require a total syntactic reorganization of slogans and headlines. Without these transformations, advertising messages would not only sound unnatural but would also fail to achieve the rhythmic and mnemonic qualities essential for brand recall.

Secondly, the study highlights that **modulation and cultural adaptation** are the primary drivers of persuasive success. Advertising is deeply rooted in cultural values; therefore, the shift from the individualistic focus of Western (English) ads to the more collective and family-oriented values of Uzbek society is a strategic imperative. The findings show that successful translations are those that function as "transcreations" – reconstructing the brand's core message using local metaphors, cultural symbols (such as the *dasturxon*), and social norms.

Thirdly, the use of **addition and explicitation** in the Uzbek context suggests that clarity and informative value often outweigh the Western preference for extreme minimalism. In the Uzbek market, providing the consumer with a clear understanding of the

product's benefit is often more effective than relying on abstract or highly elliptical slogans. Conversely, **omission** serves as a tool for stylistic refinement, ensuring that the target text remains concise and avoids the "clutter" of redundant English descriptors.

In summary, the effectiveness of an English–Uzbek advertising translation is measured by its "invisibility" – the degree to which it feels like an original creation rather than a translated artifact. The translator must act as a creative copywriter and a cultural mediator, possessing the skill to navigate between two vastly different linguistic systems and worldviews.

This research contributes to the field of translation studies by providing a systematic categorization of transformations specific to the English–Uzbek pair. However, as the digital landscape and consumer habits in Uzbekistan continue to evolve, further research is needed to explore how these transformations adapt to social media marketing and influencer-led advertising. Ultimately, the mastery of translation transformations remains the key to unlocking the persuasive potential of global brands in the local Uzbek market.

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