

TRANSFORMING CONCEPTS: PRAGMATIC ADAPTATION IN THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH ADVERTISING SLOGANS INTO UKRAINIAN

ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ КОНЦЕПТІВ: ПРАГМАТИЧНА АДАПТАЦІЯ У ПЕРЕКЛАДІ АНГЛІЙСЬКИХ РЕКЛАМНИХ СЛОГАНІВ УКРАЇНСЬКОЮ МОВОЮ

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The article analyzes the pragmatic adaptation of English-language advertising slogans in Ukrainian translations, focusing on the impact of adaptive strategies on the modification of the concepts in the original message. The process of pragmatic adaptation seeks to balance preserving the core concept of the original slogan with ensuring cultural relevance for the target audience. Pragmatic adaptation frequently shifts the focus of the original slogan to better align with the cultural norms of the target Ukrainian audience, emphasizing different product aspects such as practicality or emotional appeal, or adjusting the tone to reflect local linguistic preferences. By aligning the slogan with local values (e.g., safety, care, inclusivity), the brand can build stronger, more positive associations in the local context. Through adaptation, the emotional focus of the original slogan may be softened or intensified, depending on the cultural context, which could shift the message from emotional appeal to practicality or inclusiveness.

The key aim of pragmatic adaptation is for the slogan to resonate with local culture and convey relevant values in a natural way. However, this adaptation may narrow the original slogan's universal appeal, focusing on locally specific concepts. Over-adaptation could potentially dilute the global brand identity. In some cases, idiomatic expressions or other aspects of the original slogan may be lost or altered, reducing its memorability and impact.

The main finding of the article is that pragmatic adaptation transforms the original slogan to fit the Ukrainian linguistic and cultural context, potentially enhancing or diluting its concept. This can alter the associations and values intended by the original slogan, shaping how the brand is perceived in different markets.

Further research could explore pragmatic adaptation in institutional discourses, especially political and legal translations.

Key words: pragmatic adaptation, translation, advertising slogan, concept modification.

У статті аналізується прагматична адаптація англomовних рекламних слоганів в українських перекладах, з фокусом на впливі адаптивних стратегій на модифікацію концепту оригінального повідомлення. Процес прагматичної адаптації спрямований на баланс між збереженням основного концепту оригінального слогану та забезпеченням його відповідності цільовій аудиторії. Прагматична адаптація часто зміщує концептуальний фокус оригінального слогану, щоб краще відповідати культурним нормам цільової української аудиторії, наголошуючи на різних аспектах продукту, таких як практичність чи емоційна привабливість, або коригуючи тон відповідно до місцевих мовних норм. Узгоджуючи слоган із цінностями української аудиторії (такими, як безпека, турбота, інклюзивність), бренд може створити сильніші й позитивніші асоціації в місцевому контексті. Завдяки адаптації емоційна спрямованість оригінального слогану може бути пом'якшена або посилена, залежно від культурного контексту, що може зменшити емоційну привабливість на користь практичності чи інклюзивності.

Основна мета прагматичної адаптації полягає в тому, щоб гасло резонувало з місцевою культурою та природним чином передавало відповідні цінності. Однак адаптація може звузити універсальну привабливість оригінального слогану, зосередившись на локальних концептах. Надмірна адаптація здатна послабити глобальну ідентичність бренду. У деяких випадках ідіоматичні вирази або інші аспекти оригінального слогану можуть бути втрачені або змінені, що зменшує його запам'ятовуваність і вплив. Основний висновок статті полягає в тому, що прагматична адаптація перетворює оригінальний слоган у такий спосіб, щоб він відповідав мовному та культурному українському контексту, потенційно посилюючи або розмиваючи вихідний концепт. Це може змінити асоціації та цінності, передбачені оригінальним слоганом, формуючи сприйняття бренду на різних локальних ринках.

Перспективою подальших досліджень вбачаємо вивчення прагматичної адаптації у перекладах інституційних дискурсів, зокрема політичного та юридичного.

Ключові слова: прагматична адаптація, переклад, рекламний слоган, модифікація концепту.

Problem statement. The translation of advertising slogans remains one of the relevant and priority tasks in modern translation studies, as their adequate reproduction is directly related to maintaining the communicative effectiveness of the advertisement

and its ability to emotionally engage the consumer. In order to fulfill the key functions of advertising – attracting attention, generating interest, stimulating the desire to purchase a product or service by appealing to the motivational needs of the target audience –

advertising slogans are often characterized by creativity [9; 13; 15]. They may contain stylistic devices, slang, occasionalisms, lexical items that refer to sociocultural realities, and more. All of this complicates the reproduction of English-language slogans into Ukrainian, explaining the need for numerous translation transformations and methods of pragmatic and sociocultural adaptation.

Compared to transformations, adaptive strategies used in the translation of advertisements have been studied to a much lesser extent. Moreover, it is not always possible to clearly distinguish when adaptation is applied (except in cases involving explicit strategies of domestication or foreignization) and when we should speak of a set of transformations that lead to the complete or partial revision of the target text. This article proposes the hypothesis that adaptation takes place when, to some extent, there is a change in the translated text's core concept, as embodied in the original English slogan. Such a concept is comparable to a secondary signified, in Roland Barthes' terms [13], and it is precisely for this concept that the advertising text is created, as it aims to replace the denotative meaning of the product as a means of transport, communication, jewelry, food, etc., with a connotation associated with ideas and values – prestige, health, safety, and others – appealing to basic motivational needs.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

The theoretical foundation of the article lies in research, on the one hand, in translation adaptation and, on the other, in concepts that embody the secondary level of signification in brand discourses.

A well-established tradition in defining translation adaptation is understanding this phenomenon as a complete content and formal transformation of the original by the translation to create a text that meets the needs of the new linguistic environment [16]. V. Demetska notes that “adequate translation in any case presupposes adaptation, and the closer the pragmatic function of the text is to the dominant ones, the more adaptive strategies need to be applied” [1, c. 102]. In translation studies, two types of adaptation are traditionally distinguished: sociocultural and pragmatic adaptation.

Sociocultural adaptation is defined as the adjustment of the text to the cultural realities of the recipient of the text or discourse [4; 5; 7; 11]. Its essence lies in the fact that the translator must decide to which culture – the target or source – the translation should conform, accordingly using either a strategy of domestication or foreignization to adapt to one of the cultures. Pragmatic adaptation [2; 12; 14] is focused on modifying the text to achieve a specific commu-

nicative effect. Sociocultural adaptation can be triggered by the presence of idioms, wordplay, cultural gaps, and the like in the original text [6, c. 105].

Pragmatic adaptation may be applied if the source text exhibits certain characteristics: stylistics difficult to reproduce in the target text, specific syntax, extra-textual factors of the source text (time, place), and others. Halliday mentions parameters of text register as among the criteria of the original text that condition its pragmatic adaptation in translation [10, c. 35]. For example, what may be considered acceptably informal in one language may require a more respectful or formal tone in another. Pragmatic adaptation takes these differences into account so that the translation conveys not only meaning but also the appropriate cultural tonality, aligning with the target audience's expectations regarding style, formality, and persuasiveness of the message.

Among the techniques of pragmatic adaptation, researchers highlight: addition, omission, clarification of the original information with an increase or decrease in the level of implicitness compared to the original; replacement with exotic equivalents; “transfiguration,” which involves omitting a significant part of the information and retaining only the most important (according to the translator) information from the original text; “actualization” with the replacement of units from the source text; interpersonal changes related to modifying the level of formality, participation, and involvement; “partial translation”; radical rewriting of the source text; “illocutionary changes” and others [8; 14].

A summary of studies on pragmatic adaptation techniques [2; 12; 14] shows that this type of translation adaptation does not necessarily imply a complete revision of the source text but may involve a set of transformations ensuring that the communicative effect of the target text is equal in impact to the original. However, this effect may be achieved at the cost of certain formal and semantic losses and, in our view, is measured by the degree of change to the key concept – whether it is modified, narrowed, developed, or entirely replaced. Any operations with the concept of the source text serve as a marker of pragmatic adaptation.

For the objectives of our study, the link between translated slogans and the key brand concepts on which the brand builds its identity, is crucial. In particular, scholars note that the slogan “defines, presents, and helps customers remember the key concepts of a brand or advertising campaign itself” [9, c. 63]. These concepts, or mythological concepts in Barthes' terms, are embodied in the secondary signifieds of the advertised product [13; 15], displacing

the initial meaning of the product with ideas and values that shape its perception as something unique, desirable, and symbolic. According to Barthes [3], such processes are often used in advertising, where brands sell not products or services but ideas and values – those connotative meanings that should replace the product or service for the consumer [15, с. 144], creating stable associations with the product name or the brand as a whole.

The aim of this article is to analyze the adaptive techniques used in Ukrainian translations of English-language slogans, focusing on their impact on the modification of the concept embodied in the original.

The study employs **research methods** such as comparative translation analysis and elements of conceptual analysis, as well as text-interpretative and contextual analysis.

Presentation of the main material. The analysis of Ukrainian advertisements, in which translators employed pragmatic adaptation techniques, showed that, despite maintaining the pragmatic effect intended by the source, adaptation can lead to certain losses both at the level of the slogans' form and at the level of meaning and the underlying concept.

Let's consider the slogans where such losses were identified.

Everything in one touch – Смартфон, в якому є все (Samsung).

The original slogan implies that all necessary functions or capabilities of the device are controlled with a single touch, meaning the user can easily access all applications or services with a simple tap on the screen or button. The main concept highlighted by this slogan is "simplicity" (of using the technology).

The Ukrainian translation, while preserving the key word – the determiner pronoun *Everything / все* with its generalized semantics, completely restructures the English slogan in both syntax and semantics. The translator introduces a defining noun as a result of the addition transformation, performs a transposition by changing the word order, and restructures the simple sentence into a complex one with a relative clause. Simultaneously, the phrase *in one touch*, which is a key aspect of Samsung's marketing message, is omitted.

Although the semantic core *Everything* is retained to represent the concept of "multifunctionality", the translation loses the contextual senses of simplicity and convenience, which are key elements of the original slogan. As a result, the radical revision of the original slogan, through a complex set of translation adaptations, leads to a translation that conveys the idea of the device's universality but loses the focus on easy access to all functions with a single action.

The concept of "ease/convenience" is replaced in the translation by the concept of "universality," which is not the same.

In this case, the marketing message is transformed to emphasize a specific aspect that, in the view of the adapters, is more important for the target audience.

To enhance communicative impact on the Ukrainian audience, local pragmatic adaptation is used in the translation of Volkswagen's brand slogan:

Safety made for everyone – Безпека для вас і ваших близьких.

The pragmatic adaptation here is based on the transformation of comprehensive specification. The determiner pronoun *everyone*, which expresses universal quantification, is replaced with specific personal and possessive pronouns combined with the adjective *близьких* (close ones), enhancing personal address. Thanks to this adaptation, the message in the Ukrainian version, in addition to the concept of "safety," highlights the concept of "care," employing strategies of intimacy, personalization, and reducing the distance with the brand's target audience. Such strategies resonate with the Ukrainian audience, justifying the addition of a new semantic focus.

Thus, in both the original and the translation, the key concept is "safety," but it is conveyed through different semantic accents. In the original, the emphasis is on the universality and accessibility of the safety technology. In the Ukrainian version, a more personal aspect appears – "for you and your loved ones," which enhances the feeling of care for family and close people. This way, the translator aims to evoke a stronger emotional response from the audience, focusing on aspects that may be important to the target group.

In translation of another Volkswagen slogan, the transformation of specification introduces a subtle but meaningful shift in emphasis:

More space for all (Tayron) – *Більше простору для кожного.*

The word *all* in the original is broad and inclusive, suggesting space for everyone in a general sense. It implies that the vehicle provides ample space for all passengers without specifying who they are. The component *для кожного* translates to "for each person" or "for everyone individually" in English. This is a more personalized and specific formulation, implying that the space is not just generally available for all but is specifically meant for each individual passenger. It adds a sense of personal care or attention to each occupant, emphasizing comfort and space for every person.

Thus, key adaptive changes due to the transformation of specification include a re-emphasis of

concepts: General vs. Specific. The original slogan is more general and collective (“for all”), while the translation becomes more specific and individualized (“for each person”). The Ukrainian version adds a layer of personalization, potentially appealing more to individual comfort and attention to detail for each passenger.

This transformation helps make the slogan more relatable and emotionally appealing to a Ukrainian audience by specifying the benefit for each person, rather than just a broad, collective benefit.

The translation of Coca-Cola slogan involves a few notable shifts due to differences in language structure and cultural nuances:

It's the real thing (Coca-Cola) – *Вона справжня*.

In English, *the real thing* is an idiomatic expression that conveys authenticity, uniqueness of something, in this case, the idea that Coca-Cola is the genuine article, the original and best option in its category. The word *thing* is intentionally vague but carries a strong connotation of being the authentic product that others try to imitate.

In the Ukrainian translation the feminine pronoun *вона* refers to Coca-Cola (as it is often feminine in many Slavic languages), but the abstract *the real thing* is lost. As a result, the idiomatic nuance that Coca-Cola is not just any cola but “the real thing” – the original, unmatched, and irreplaceable is not captured. The Ukrainian version simplifies the concept, translating it in a more literal way, where *вона справжня* emphasizes the authenticity of Coca-Cola but without the same idiomatic flair or emphasis on Coca-Cola being the ultimate example of its kind. By applying pragmatic adaptation, the translation sacrifices some of the idiomatic richness of the original in favor of clarity and simplicity.

In the translation of the Mazda's slogan, pragmatic adaptation leads to the creation of a new slogan in form and content:

Big Yet Agile – Грай на повну (Play to the Full).

Despite the fact that this adaptive strategy makes the Ukrainian slogan more expressive and creative, it results in the loss of the stylistic device of antithesis and the concepts it marks – “big” and “agile”. In our view, a more successful translation for preserving the original conceptual intent would be a literal translation, such as “Потужний, але спритний”, which conveys the idea of a combination of size and agility, thus retaining the contrast and dynamic quality of the original.

The translation of the *Carlsberg's* slogan involves local adaptation based on a set of translation transformations:

Brewing in pursuit of better. At Carlsberg, we are always burning for better beer and a better tomor-

row – В гонитві за кращим. Варимо пиво для кращого сьогодні та завтра

In the original, the phrase *we are always burning* adds a strong emotional and motivational element, suggesting deep passion and relentless drive. The verb *burning* is vivid and expressive, highlighting the company's intense desire for improvement. Thanks to the transformation of omission, the Ukrainian version removes the intense imagery of burning and focuses more on the practical activity of brewing. This leads to a softening of the emotional intensity and passion found in the original slogan. In translation the time frame is expanded from focusing solely on the future (*tomorrow*) to include both present and future (*сьогодні та завтра*).

The Ukrainian translation *В гонитві за кращим* effectively conveys the concept of striving for improvement, but omits (due to the transformation of omission of Brewing) the more specific reference to beer. This simplification may slightly reduce the depth of the original concept, which ties the broader idea of betterment to the product (beer).

In summary, the Ukrainian translation captures the main concept of the original slogan but with a reduced emotional intensity in favor of more neutral phrasing, a broader focus on both present and future benefits, and a more practical tone. The result is a slogan that feels slightly less passionate and more grounded.

Conclusions. The process of pragmatic adaptation requires a balance between maintaining the core concept of the original slogan and ensuring that the adapted version is culturally appropriate and relevant. While this process often leads to modifications in the slogan's concept, it aims to preserve the intended message and the brand's identity. Pragmatic adaptation often alters the central concept of the original slogan, shifting its focus to better align with the cultural norms and contextual expectations of the target audience. In doing so, the adapted slogan may emphasize different aspects of the product (e.g., practicality, emotional appeal) or adjust its tone and style to reflect local linguistic preferences.

By shifting the focus of the slogan to align with local values (e.g., safety, care, or inclusivity), the brand may build stronger, more positive associations in the local context. The key idea in the original slogan might focus on a particular emotional response (e.g., passion, excitement, or inspiration). However, through pragmatic adaptation, the translation can soften or intensify these emotions, depending on the local market's cultural context. This can lead to a shift in focus from the original message's emotional appeal to a more practical or inclusive message. Such

changes can modify the audience's perception of the brand, possibly making it appear more relatable or grounded, but may also diminish some of the original emotional impact.

One of the key goals of pragmatic adaptation is to ensure that the slogan resonates with the local culture and that it conveys relevant values in a way that feels natural to the audience. By adjusting the message to be more aligned with the cultural context (e.g., focusing on family, community, or practical benefits), the slogan can strengthen the connection between the brand and the target audience's values, and result in new or adjusted associations between the advertised product and the values that resonate with the audience.

However, in doing so, the original universality of the slogan's message may be lost, as the adaptation often narrows the focus to locally specific concepts. If the adaptation deviates too far from the original

message, there is also risk that the global brand identity might be diluted. Pragmatic adaptation can sometimes weaken the original slogan's associative power. For instance, an idiomatic expression in the original language may be lost or altered in translation, leading to a less impactful or memorable slogan.

In conclusion, the process of pragmatic adaptation transforms the original slogan to fit the linguistic and cultural context of the target market, which can either enhance or dilute the slogan's concept. It can also lead to shifts in the core associations and values intended by the original message, ultimately shaping how the product and brand are perceived in different markets.

A prospect for further research could be the analysis of pragmatic adaptation in translations of various institutional discourses, in particular, political and legal.

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