

## HOW TO TRANSLATE A DREAM: PRAGMATIC ASPECTS OF PROMOTIONAL TEXT TRANSLATION

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The present article provides some insights into the issues concerning the translation of advertising slogans. Application of phonetic stylistic devices and the effects their usage cause are studied analyzing slogans in English, Latvian and Russian. The analysis is undertaken with an aim to consider the role of phonetic stylistic devices in operative texts, with the focus on advertising slogans, and to identify the most appropriate translation methods to be applied in the rendition of these devices in operative texts across the working languages to ensure the equivalence of the intended effect of the source and target message.

### INTRODUCTION

The economic tendencies that appeared in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which were characterized by the globalization of world manufacturing and consumption, have brought about a need for the development of global brands, and have posed new challenges associated with the marketing of goods and services on an international scale. Brand names, trademarks and advertising slogans are developed to be perceived and favorably interpreted by speakers of different languages and representatives of different cultures. However, an image, name or message that appears appealing to one national or cultural segment of the target audience may be perceived negatively or indifferently by another. Thus, copywriters and brand managers face the challenge of the development of marketing messages that would influence purchasing decisions and buyer behavior of consumers worldwide. In essence, marketing specialists have to consider universal cognitive, semiotic and linguistic features to be inherent in a brand and slogan meaning in order to ensure the successful promotion of commodities.

The impact of the application of phonetic stylistic devices on the perception of the meaning of a message has come under the focus of attention of researchers studying the appellative function of language. The associations certain sounds and

sound clusters induce in recipients are of interest not only for linguists, but also for marketing specialists, as these associations appear to be one of the factors that influence the buyer's behavior.

In the present article an analysis of phonetic stylistic devices is undertaken with the aim to discover the effect on the recipient's perception their application causes, to discuss the role of phonetic stylistic devices in operative texts, with the focus on advertising slogans, and to consider translation methods that could be applied in the rendition of these devices in operative texts across working languages (English, Latvian, Russian) in order to ensure, to the highest degree possible, the equivalence of intended effect of the source and target message.

The article outlines the characteristics of operative texts and considers the translation aspects associated with the rendition of such texts. Rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and assonance are analyzed in contrastive perspective, considering both the theoretical premises and empirical data collected for the needs of the present study. The results of the research may be of practical value both for linguists studying the appellative function of language and for marketing specialists concerned with the localization of brand images and advertising slogans across markets, cultures and languages.

#### OPERATIVE TEXTS: FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND TRANSLATION ASPECTS

Classification of texts with relation to their function has been implemented for various purposes and on various premises. It is frequently extended from the classification of language functions. The most frequently referred to classifications include those of Bühler, Jakobson and Halliday (cf. Baker, Saldanha 2009, 116). Classification of text functions in translation is conventionally performed with reference to Reiss who developed Bühler's classification ([1976] in Reiss 1989, 105–109). According to this scholar, texts are generally grouped into three main types: informative, operative and expressive, that is, texts may perform an informative, vocative and expressive function.

Classifications of language functions differ in the stance the scholars take, the school they belong to, the degree of detail they opt for and the terms they use to denote certain phenomena. As the present article deals with an analysis of phenomena in contrastive perspective, and examines translations as one of the sources of empirical data, Reiss' classification is chosen as the working one.

However, in order to provide a comprehensive framework for reference with relation to language and text function, a consolidated table listing the terms suggested by various scholars to distinguish a receiver/addressee oriented language function is presented below.

**Table 1.** Terms Used to Denote Receiver Oriented Language Function  
(Compiled from Baker, Saldanha 2009; Komissarov 2001; Reiss 1989)

Scholar	Term	Function	Text type
Buhler (1935)	Appellative language function	The appeal to the text receiver	Vocative
Jakobson (1960)	Conative language function	Refers to those aspects of language which aim to create a certain response in the addressee	
Coseriu (1970)	Vocative/ imperative language form	The form primarily seeks to bring out a certain behavior in the hearer	
Reiss (1976)	Appellative language function	The inducing of behavioral responses	Operative

Thus, the recipient oriented texts in the article are referred to as *operative*, and the primary language function they perform is referred to as *appellative*.

The primary function of operative texts is to cause a predicted behavioral response in the addressee/recipient of the message. Operative texts include publicist, political and promotional texts, their aim is to manipulate the recipient making them act as required by the purpose of the text, e.g. support a particular opinion, point of view, vote for a political party or a candidate, or make a certain purchasing decision. According to Reiss (1989, 109), such texts 'can be conceived as stimuli to action or reaction on the part of the reader. Here the form of verbalization is mainly determined by the (addressed) receiver of the text, by virtue of his being addressable, open to verbal influence on his behavior'.

It should be noted that texts rarely perform only one function. Hatim and Mason (in Baker, Saldanha 2009, 116) argue that all texts are multifunctional. They point out that one overall rhetorical purpose will tend to predominate and thus will have a major influence on the text structure.

Operative texts also tend to be multifunctional. Publicist and political texts rely on a purposeful arrangement of information structure as well as on the application of rhetorical strategies and expressive means of language in order to manipulate the recipient's opinion. Promotional texts, in turn, may also present a vast body of information and employ the expressive function of language. At the same time, the information value of slogans may be reduced to a minimum, because the form may be considered to be more important than the content.

Reiss points out that operative texts are doubly or even triply structured: on the semantic-syntactic level, and on the level of persuasion. They may also be structured at the level of artistic organization (cf. Reiss 1989, 109). It is particularly applicable to

the structure of advertising slogans, which often rely on the usage of various expressive means of language to produce a desired impact on the target audience. These means include tropes as well as phonetic stylistic devices such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and assonance.

The role of phonetic stylistic devices in developing brand names and advertising slogans has been recognized by marketers; these phenomena are consciously employed to influence the recipient's behavior. Batey maintains, 'The fact that phonemes, in certain situations, appear to be linked to specific meanings and even emotions is significant with regard to brand meaning (...) Individual letters and phonemes in a brand name contain meaning that can influence attribute perceptions and trigger perceptual reactions to the brand name' (Batey 2008, 61). Communication of the message through a purposeful arrangement of phonemes and phoneme clusters as well as rhythmical organization of the text is ensured not only by linguistic, but also extra-linguistic means.

Operative texts pose potential translation problems, rendition of such texts may be considered the most challenging task a translator might face. Hatim and Munday argue that form and content are often considered secondary in the translation of operative texts, 'Operative texts should be dealt with in terms of **extra-linguistic** effect (e.g. persuasiveness), a level of **equivalence** normally achieved at the expense of both **form** and **content**' (Hatim, Munday 2004, 284, original highlight).

The triple or even quadruple organization of such texts, i.e. semantic-syntactic and artistic organization as well as the one at the level of persuasiveness, make a translator prioritize among the features to be preserved in translation and account for the inevitable loss of either meaning, expressiveness, or the persuasive value of the text.

## PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES IN ADVERTISING SLOGANS

Phonetic stylistic devices most frequently used in the composition of advertising slogans are rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and assonance. In the following section slogans are presented to illustrate the application of these expressive means used either separately, or in combination. When possible, such application is demonstrated using 3 language variants of the same slogan, namely, in English, Russian and Latvian. In the majority of cases, however, equivalent variants do not exist. In these cases the usage of a device is exemplified with a set of slogans employing it in English, and, when available, in other working languages. There is no database available in open access listing slogans in Latvian, so the slogans are collected at various websites. The main reference source for slogans in Russian is a comprehensive collection available at [Textart.ru](http://Textart.ru) (Online 1).

Rhythm is a universal phenomenon of iconic nature. Leech and Short (1981) stress that the intentional rhythmical arrangement of the utterance may not only bring order to the narrative, but also reinforce the perception of certain meaning and convey certain

emotions. This appellative force of rhythm is widely employed in marketing. Rhythm reinforces the message, makes it recognizable and easy to remember. A more or less distinct rhythm is present in the majority of slogans considered.

(1) 1.1. *Bizword. Breakout Branding* (Bizword)

*biz-word | break-out | bran-ding*

1.2. *Don't dream it. Drive it.* (Jaguar)

*don't dream it | drive it*

In both examples two syllable meter trochee is used, although in 1.2. it is headless (with reference to Fabb, Halle 2008).

Rhythm is often used in combination with other stylistic devices. In the examples presented it is alliteration. Rhythm is used as a secondary device, it reinforces the effect created by the repetition of voiced stops, which, in their turn, communicate the image of power, energy and accomplishment. Rhodes (2006, 277) argues that /b/ in the initial position may symbolically represent an abrupt, loud onset of an action. Moreover, in 1.1. the repetitive usage of /b/ alludes to the brand name being promoted—*Bizword*. Alliteration is considered to be a very successful technique in composing slogans (cf. Sharpe 2000). Slogan 1.2. aims at establishing a certain connection between the concepts of *dreaming* and *driving*. The repetition of the cluster /dr/ reinforces this effect. It may be argued that in this case alliteration along with rhythm facilitates metaphoric representation of a certain meaning.

Rhythm may be also used as a primary vehicle of meaning communication. The effect called *staccato* (cf. Sharpe 2000) is achieved through a combination of three items rhythmically arranged. It is often accompanied with alliteration, but in this case the latter performs only a secondary function.

(2) 2.1. *Pure. Fresh. Clean.* (Colgate Oxygen toothpaste)

2.2. *Buy it. Sell it. Love it* (eBay)

2.3. *Barbados. Goodness. Gracious.* (Barbados)

2.4. *Healthy. Happy. Huggies.*

2.5. *Dream. Dare. Do.* (Girl Guides)

2.6. *Functional... Fashionable... Formidable...* (Fila)

Rhythm is the primary device used in examples 2.1. and 2.2. In examples 2.3.-2.6. it is used in combination with alliteration. The combination of phonetic stylistic devices most masterfully is used in example 2.5. Combination of monosyllabic words and alliteration of the sound /d/ reinforces the *staccato* effect communicated by the slogan.

Such *staccato* pattern is increasingly frequently employed in Latvian and Russian:

(3) 3.1. *Zināt. Spēt. Radīt.* (RTU)

3.2. *Latvija. Dzelzs. Ceļš.* (Latvijas Dzelzceļš)

3.3. *Lēti. Labāk. Lētāk.* (IKI)

3.4. *Надежность. Качество. Скорость.* (Majordomo.ru)

3.5. *Японские. Надежные. Бесшумные.* (Conditioners General)

3.6. *Яркий. Редкий. Домашний.* (Toshiba TV-sets)

As it may be noticed, the only slogan that employs a combination of devices is 3.3. In this case the effect of rhythm is reinforced with alliteration and assonance. The repetition of the sound /l/ reinforces the meaning of the concept '*lėti*' ('cheap'), and establishes metaphoric reference between the concepts '*labi*' ('good') and '*lėti*'. However, rhythm plays a more important role in communicating the message.

Rhyming is used in advertising slogans less frequently than rhythm, which is implicitly present in the majority of slogans. Although rhyme ensures that the message is easily recognized and remembered to even a greater extent than rhythm, it is used with caution because the slogan should not sound simplistic. Foster (2001) points out that alliteration and rhyme are among the most effective means to ensure a slogan is memorable.

Assonance as a means of communicating the intended message is used in all slogans employing rhyme under consideration. In general, assonance is the primary means that creates the effect of rhyming.

- (4) 4.1. *Twice the shine in half the time!* (Brillo)  
 4.2. *The appliance of science* (Zanussi)  
 4.3. *Fly the friendly skies* (United Airlines)  
 4.4. *Let the train take the strain* (British Rail)  
 4.5. *Business brains take Virgin Trains* (Virgin Trains)  
 4.6. *Don't be vague. Ask for Haig* (Haig Scotch Whiskey)  
 4.7. *The world well told* (Los Angeles Times)  
 4.8. *Don't just book it, Thomas Cook it* (Thomas Cook)  
 4.9. *If anyone can, Canon can* (Canon)

Analysing the selection of slogans presented to illustrate the application of rhyming, it may be noticed that repetition of diphthongs is used to create the effect of rhyme considerably more frequently than reiteration of monophthongs. Six out of the nine slogans (4.1.–4.6.) are composed using the words containing recurrent diphthongs, namely, /ai/ in slogans 4.1.–4.3. and /ei/ in slogans 4.4.–4.6. More frequent application of diphthongs may be conditioned by the fact that they have complex prosodic qualities, and thus the utterances containing recurrent diphthongs acquire more sophisticated reverberation that potentially better fits the tunes of commercial jingles.

Example 4.9. differs from other examples in the selection. Although the effect of rhyming is created, it is only the secondary means used in performing the appellative function. The main vehicle in communicating the message is a pun, which establishes association between two concepts—*can* and *Canon*.

- (5) 5.1. *Iekod fixi, tálak tixi* (Kebabs fix)  
 5.2. *Атлас-Люкс. Для тех, кто ценит вкус.* (Atlas-Lux furniture)  
 5.3. *Мезим. Для желудка незаменим!* (Mezim)  
 5.4. *«Миф-универсал» сохраняет капитал.* (Washing detergent Mif)  
 5.5. *Здоровый кот без всяких хлопот.* (Kitekat)

Rhyme is very frequently used in Russian slogans with various degrees of success resulting in messages of various aesthetic value. For instance, the appellative and aesthetic value of

slogan 5.2. is arguable, the rhyme is far-fetched and the line sounds relatively primitive. Slogans 5.4. and 5.5. employ more sophisticated rhythm and perfect rhyming, that is why they may be considered to be rather successful. Rhyming is less frequently used in Latvian, only one example of the application of this device was identified.

Alliteration is a common device in advertising slogans. The following slogans in English employ alliteration as a vehicle for communication of meaning thus adding an expressive value to the message:

- (6) 6.1. *We are what we wear* (Nike)
- 6.2. *What we want is Watney's*. (Watney's)
- 6.3. *World class, worldwide* (Air Canada)
- 6.4. *Welcome to the World Wide Wow* (AOL)
- 6.5. *The Car that Cares* (Kia Motors)
- 6.6. *Nothing hugs like Huggies*. (Huggies)
- 6.7. *The Passionate Pursuit of Perfection* (Lexus)
- 6.8. *Better Buy Bold* (Bold)

The appellative function of slogans 6.1.–6.4. is performed by means of alliteration of the sound /w/. According to Rhodes (2006, 276), /w/ in the initial position may symbolically represent movement, especially back and forth movement. Although it may not be maintained that /w/ denotes movement in all four slogans with a considerable degree of certainty, it may be argued that the image of some dynamic ongoing process is communicated, especially by slogan 6.1. On the whole, it is the most vivid example of a purposeful phonetic arrangement of the text aimed at the creation of a certain effect. /w/ is the only consonant sound used in the line, and as it is a voiced labiovelar approximant, no distinct obstruction occurs in the process of articulation. When pronounced, the slogan sounds like a tune. It is an instance of a successful synergy between the form and meaning.

The repetition of the sound /w/ in slogans 6.2., in which it is accompanied with the assonance of the sound /a/, and 6.3. may be seen as a metaphoric allusion between the form and particular meaning. In 6.2. the repetition of the sound combination /wa/ alludes to the name of the company—*Watney's* [watni:z], thus promoting brand awareness, and in 6.3. the image of a company operating on a global scale is promoted with the help of the reference to the concept *world*, which is referred to twice. Slogan 6.4. employs alliteration to promote the effect of a metaphoric allusion. *World Wide Wow* stands to represent World Wide Web, and thus the image of the company AOL as of a global provider of telecommunications services is reinforced.

In slogans 6.5. and 6.6. the phonetic effect is of secondary importance, as the main vehicle of communication of the meaning is pun (car—cares; hug—Huggies). It is difficult to identify the exact effect of alliteration and its impact on the perception of the meaning in slogan 6.6., yet the line is positively appealing. Although slogan 6.7. does not

directly follow the *staccato* pattern, the combination of 3 monosyllabic words alongside the alliteration of the sound /d/ creates the secondary *staccato* effect.

- (7) 7.1. *Purpura krēslas pieskāriens* (Riga Black Balsam black currant)  
 7.2. *Draudzīga dabai, draudzīga jums.* (Biological agriculture)  
 7.3. *Саванна. Среда обитания светских львиц* (Savannah Beauty Salon)  
 7.4. *Живой глаз - живое изображение.* (LG Golden Eye)

The phonetic effect in example 7.1. is created by means of repeating the sounds /p/ and /r/: 2 and 4 times respectively. On the one hand, the effect of alliteration is not as obvious as, for instance, in all the slogans in example 6, in which the sounds are either repeated in the initial position more frequently, or the effect is reinforced by pun or metaphor. On the other hand, the rhythmical arrangement of the line, the interplay between the alliterated sounds and short and long vowels and diphthongs (/u/, /æ/, /ie/, /a:/) ascribe the slogan excellent prosodic qualities. It may be argued that it is one of the most successful slogans in Latvian in the selection presented.

The sound repetition, i.e. reiteration of the sound /s/ in example 7.3., is an auxiliary expressive means because the main persuasive effect is achieved by application of lexical stylistic devices. Word-for-word translated into English the slogan maintains—*Savannah. The environment for social lionesses* [socialites]. The main vehicle communicating the advertising message is the allusion between the name of the salon *Savannah* and the image of a lioness. Example 7.4. is the only example in the selection where the repetition of the sound /з/ appears to be a conscious choice aimed at the creation of a persuasive effect.

In analyzing slogans in Latvian and Russian, it may be observed that alliteration in slogans is used far less frequently than in English. The few examples selected can only conditionally be considered to be instances of the application of alliteration. The particular persuasive effect is elusive.

## ADVERTISING SLOGANS IN CONTRASTIVE PERSPECTIVE

The need to market goods internationally has conditioned the necessity to translate or localize advertising slogans. Comprehensive conclusions of the degree of interlingual translatability of slogans may be made contrasting slogan variants in the working languages. The two examples analyzed below demonstrate the choices translators have made in the rendition of slogans from English into Latvian and Russian respectively, and the focus on either the form, content, expression or persuasiveness they opted for.

- |                      |      |   |
|----------------------|------|---|
| (8) Source Text:     |      | <i>Gillette. The best a man can get</i> |
|                      |      | Gi-let   the best   a man   can get     |
| Target Text Latvian: | 8.1. | <i>Gillette. Vislabākais vīrietim</i>   |
|                      |      | ži-let vis-la-bā-kais vī-rie-tim        |
|                      | 8.2. | <i>Gillette. Labākais vīrietim</i>      |
|                      |      | ži-let la-bā-kais vī-rie-tim            |



Target Text Russian: 8.3. *Gillette – лучше для мужчины нет*  
 жи-лет | луч-ше | для муж | -чи-ны | нет

The stylistic devices used in the original slogan are rhyme and iambic rhythm. The approach employed in translating the slogan into Russian lies in the preservation to the extent possible of the form and meaning, as well as the expressive value of the source text. Rhyme and rhythm are preserved thus providing persuasive value to the target slogan, as well as making it easy to recognize and remember. The iambic metric pattern has been replaced with a trochaic pattern, thus sustaining a disyllable foot.

At the same time, in the Latvian variant equivalence is preserved only at the level of content. Rhyme is sustained neither in 8.1. nor in 8.2. Variant 8.1. '*vislabākais*' is used in the commercial jingle, whereas variant 8.2. '*labākais*' is used on the official website. The second variant is preferable as it has a more precise rhythmical organization.

(9) Source Text: *Sense and Simplicity*  
 Target Text Latvian: *Vienkārši un ģeniāli*  
 Target Text Russian: Разумно и просто

Example (9) features the official slogan of the company Philips. The appellative effect of the original slogan is created through the application of rhythmical arrangement of the text as well as alliteration of the sound /s/. The Latvian and Russian variants are slogans presented on the official websites in the respective languages.

Both the Latvian and Russian variants represent the lexical meaning of the original phrase. In both cases nouns used in the source text (sense and simplicity) have been translated using adverbs: '*vienkārši un ģeniāli*' ('simply and ingeniously') and 'разумно и просто' ('sensibly and simply') respectively. The equivalence is established mainly on the level of content. Rhythmical arrangement of the line is more explicit in the Russian translation, in the Latvian variant rhythm is elusive yet present. The effect of alliteration is lost entirely. However, both target variants may be considered successful, as they communicate the intended message with the minimal loss of stylistic coloring.

The examples discussed demonstrate the challenges associated with the translation of advertising slogans. Equivalence at all levels of text organization, i.e. the form, meaning, expressiveness and persuasiveness, is very difficult to achieve and in the majority of cases there is a loss or partial loss of certain features.

## CONCLUSIONS

Interest in issues associated with the translation of operative texts, advertising slogans in particular, is conditioned by the contemporary drive of multinational corporations to market goods internationally. In order to induce a desired reaction in the target consumer and ensure a positive purchase decision, copywriters should consider both linguistic and extra-linguistic aspects of message communication.

The present article has provided some insights into the issues concerning the translation of advertising slogans. The application of phonetic stylistic devices and the effects their usage cause have been studied analyzing slogans in English, Latvian and Russian, and several conclusions have been made.

The complex organization of operative texts, i.e. at the level of semantic-syntactic and artistic organization and at the level of persuasiveness, makes these texts difficult to translate. Translators have to prioritize among the features to be preserved in translation and account for the inevitable loss of either meaning, form, expressiveness, or the persuasive value of the text.

Rhythm is a phonetic stylistic device most easily reproducible in translation. It is more difficult to reproduce rhyme, especially if the content of the message is considered to be more important than its form. Nevertheless, there are examples of successful transmission of both form and meaning from the source to target language.

Rhyme is a device not always successfully reproduced in the translation of advertising slogans. Although there are instances of successful transmission of rhyme from the source to target language, translators prioritizing between the preservation of either form or meaning frequently opt to establish equivalence at the level of content.

Such devices as alliteration and assonance are very difficult to reproduce. The stylistic effect created by the reiteration of particular sounds is often neglected, and the preservation of the content is given priority in translation. Examples of successful reproduction of the instances of alliteration and assonance across the working languages have not been found.

Having analyzed the application of phonetic stylistic devices in the composition of advertising slogans in three working languages it may be maintained that in English these devices are used considerably more frequently and often more masterfully. The same observation may be made about the application of lexical stylistic devices, which have not been considered in the article. It may be explained by the fact that the marketing industry promoting goods and services in the Latvian and Russian language speaking environments is in the initial stage of its development, since it emerged relatively recently after the reestablishment of free market economies in the post-Soviet space.

Issues concerning translation of operative texts present a perspective field for further research that may be of considerable practical significance.

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## KAIP IŠVERSTI SVAJONĘ: PRAGMATINIAI REKLAMINIŲ TEKSTŲ VERTIMO ASPEKTAI

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Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariami kai kurie reklaminių šūkių vertimo aspektai, didžiausią dėmesį skiriant fonetinėms stilistikos priemonėms, vartojamoms reklaminių šūkių ekspresijai sustiprinti. Siekiant nustatyti tinkamiausias tokių šūkių vertimo strategijas, lyginami reklaminiai šūkiai anglų, latvių ir rusų kalbomis ir nagrinėjamas fonetinių stilistinių priemonių poveikis konstatuojamųjų sakinių paveikumui. Siekiama nustatyti tinkamiausias reklaminių šūkių vertimo strategijas darbinėse anglų, latvių ir rusų kalbose ir užtikrinti originalo (šaltinio) pranešimo ekvivalentiškumą vertimo kalboje.