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## **The Role of Culture in Dubbing TV Advertisements into Arabic: The Case of Chocolate Commercials**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to explore the transcreation of television advertisements that were dubbed from English into vernacular and modern standard Arabic, and to propose translation as an integral part of marketing a product internationally. The study attempts to achieve these aims by looking at the pragmatic concept of presupposition in translation studies, guided by micro-translation strategies of cultural themes. The study employs Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (1984) to analyze the translation of three cultural themes: methods of persuasion, stereotypes, and humor. Further themes, per each cultural themes are explored: persuasion through foreignization, persuasion through localization of norms and preferences, persuasion through adapting types of register, portraying the Arab culture as storytellers, verbalizing stereotypes through linguistic clichés and idioms, hyperbole in humor, and modification of irony in humor. The study concludes that micro-translation strategies: (1) in terms of cultural themes, are not exclusive to either a Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) or a vernacular Arabic dialect; and (2) are used concurrently across cultural sub-themes.

**Keywords:** Advertisement translation, cultural translation, dubbing, localization, transcreation, Arabic dialects, Modern Standard Arabic

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## Introduction

In international marketing, the tangible features of an edible product, such as packaging, labelling, and ingredients are often the primary concern of how this product could be adapted to a target market. Advertising through various media platforms, such as television, radio, the Internet, and print material plays a key role in promoting these features. However, Valdés (2013) documents that “few research attempts have been made to approach marketing and communication studies within translation studies” (p. 311). In the Arab World, audiovisual product advertisement is rarely studied as an overlap of visual and verbal components that make up its audiovisual nature. Hence, this study attempts to bridge the gap between these two components by proposing translation as an integral part to adapting audiovisual product promotion to an Arab audience. The study specifically looks at how certain cultural themes are dubbed into Arabic in advertisements, and attempts to answer two questions: (1) how can the presupposition theory govern the dubbing of television advertisements? and (2) why should commercial texts be translated by specialized translators?

Certain terminologies will need to be defined for this study. First, *localization* will be used in the usual sense of marketing, not in the sense that is common in translation studies referring to the regional adaptation of computer software (Esselink, 2000, 4). Second, the terms *transcreation* and *transadaptation* will be used interchangeably since the study utilizes topics from two fields: audiovisual translation and advertising. Ray and Kelly (2010) state that *transcreation* is “commonly applied to marketing and advertising content that must resonate in local markets in order to deliver the same impact as the original” (p. 2). *Transadaptation*, on the other hand, is used to describe cultural adaptation in the field of audiovisual translation (Gambier, 2004, 5 as cited in Munday 2012, 271). Third, “source text” and “target text” will be abbreviated as “ST” and “TT”, respectively, throughout this paper. Fourth and last, the terms “Western Culture” and “the West” will be used to refer only to countries whose geographic location is in the western hemisphere, and whose major populations speak English. Hence, those countries are Canada,<sup>1</sup> the United States of America and the United Kingdom. These three countries have very similar measures of cultural dimensions, illustrated in Figure 1.

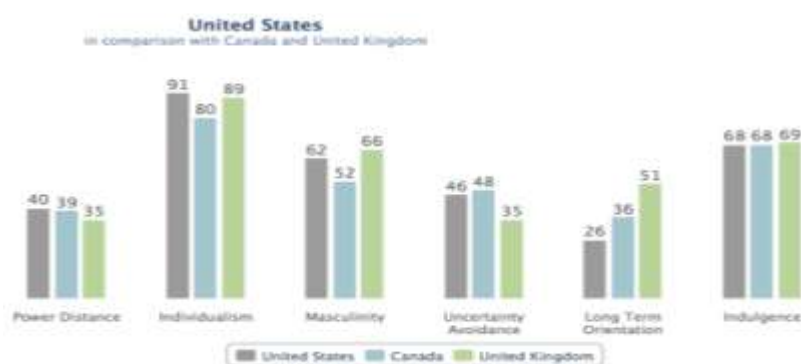


Figure 1: Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, United States in comparison with Canada and United Kingdom.

Source: Geert Hofstede (2017)

Valdés (2011) argues that “it is essential to consider audiovisual advertising as a social phenomenon” (p. 94). Moreover, Sidiropoulou (2008) states that “advertisements provide insights into both artistic and socio-cultural aspects of language” (p. 338). Therefore, in terms of international marketing, advertising can get tricky because it often taps into cultural topics that are not easily replicated or rendered into other cultures. This challenge becomes even more complex in dubbed advertisements due to textual/linguistic, aural, and visual modes (and hence adaptations) that are present in dubbed advertisements.

It is imperative to note the main challenge in conducting this study was the minimal number of EN-AR dubbed, chocolate-promoting advertisements available online, which made the process in attempting to collect a wider set for the study very constrained.

### **Research Background**

In marketing, advertising is an acoustic, visual, or audiovisual method of promoting a product or a service to the public. Stanton (1984) defines advertising as a “form of marketing communication that employs an openly sponsored, non-personal message [...]” (p. 465). Advertising has different formats; print, such as magazines, newspapers, and wall posters, and non-print; such as television, radio, electronic billboards, and websites. In the Arab World, current advertising practices show that dubbing is a popular audiovisual mode when communicating a foreign advertisement to an Arab audience (Hammond 2005, 267).

Chaume (2012) defines dubbing as “an audiovisual translation mode or practice that consists of replacing the original track of a film’s source language dialogues with another track on which translated dialogues have been recorded in the target language. The remaining track are left untouched (the soundtrack – including both music and special effects – and the images)” (p. 181).

Many scholars such as De Mooij (2004), Valdés Rodríguez (2008), Torresi (2010) and Cui and Zhao (2014) agree that translators of advertisement should be professionals and specialized in the field of advertising.

Unlike in translation studies, the term “localization” in marketing is defined as a practice that adjusts the “product’s functional properties and characteristics to accommodate the language, cultural, political and legal differences of a foreign market or country” (Haveman & Vochteloo 2016, p. 81).

### ***Challenges in Advertisement Translation***

Persuading the viewer to buy or to consider buying a product is the ultimate goal of any advertisement. However, methods of persuasion also differ across cultures. This difference, as explained by Sidiropoulou (2008), is majorly influenced by the cultural elements that are defined in Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions, as we shall see.

Stereotypes in advertising are sometimes important as they make the message that promotes a product more persuasive because cultural beliefs are associated with stereotypes and social expectations (Fasoli, Mazzurega, & Sulpizio, 2016, p. 3). For example, Valdés and Fuentes-Luque (2008) state that a car commercial promoted by a German engineer speaking in the ad denotes reliability, which is “stereotypically associated with German people and products” (p. 139).

Humor in audiovisual translation is another often challenging dimension. The challenge stems from the “duplicity of channels” (Sanderson, 2009, p. 125) that is portrayed in “technical (acoustic and visual synchronization), linguistic and cultural constraints” (Veiga, 2009, p. 2).

Pronoun use across cultures could also be challenging in advertisement translation, as the target text of the addressor and/or the addressee may be presented in a collectivistic or an individualistic context. For example, De Mooij (2004, p. 188) argues that in some languages, the subject pronouns “I”, “we”, and “you” may be dropped from the translation due to the target cultures’ preference(s) and as a result of their low individualism.

In dubbing advertisements, inaccessibility to the visual elements of the advertisement that needs to be culturally adapted is one of the biggest constraints, represented in writing the script for the dubbed advertisement. Valdés (2007) accounts that “some translators have mentioned that when they are commissioned to translate a television commercial, they are rarely given the video, just the storyboard, making it extremely difficult of see the global cohesive effect of the text” (p. 282). However, further exploration of the challenges in dubbing and transadapting advertisements would be beyond the scope of this study.

### Theoretical Framework

A recent work by Cui and Zhao (2014) explores the cultural translation of advertisements through the pragmatic concept of presuppositions. El-Gamal (2001) defines presuppositions as “shared assumptions that form the background of the asserted meaning” (p. 37). Based on this understanding, this study’s analysis employs theories borrowed from psychology and social psychology: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and Geert Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions (1984), respectively. The first theory is illustrated in Figure 2:



Figure 2: Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Recreated from Collin et al. (2012, p. 139).

Maslow's theory (1943) is important for the present study because it identifies different human needs that advertisers and translators of advertisements may highlight in an advertisement. Hence, they may choose them as a guide to approach and relate to their target audience.

On the other hand, Hofstede (1984) stipulates that human interaction across cultures differ due to different cultural "dimensions": individualism versus collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity versus femininity (Hofstede 1984), and long-term versus short-term orientation (Hofstede and Bond 1988). The most significant dimensions for this research, guided by the corpus selection, are the collectivistic versus the individualistic characteristics of culture, and culture's measure of uncertainty avoidance. Figure 3 illustrates Hofstede's dimensions (1984) through comparing cultural measures of the Arab World against those of the United States.

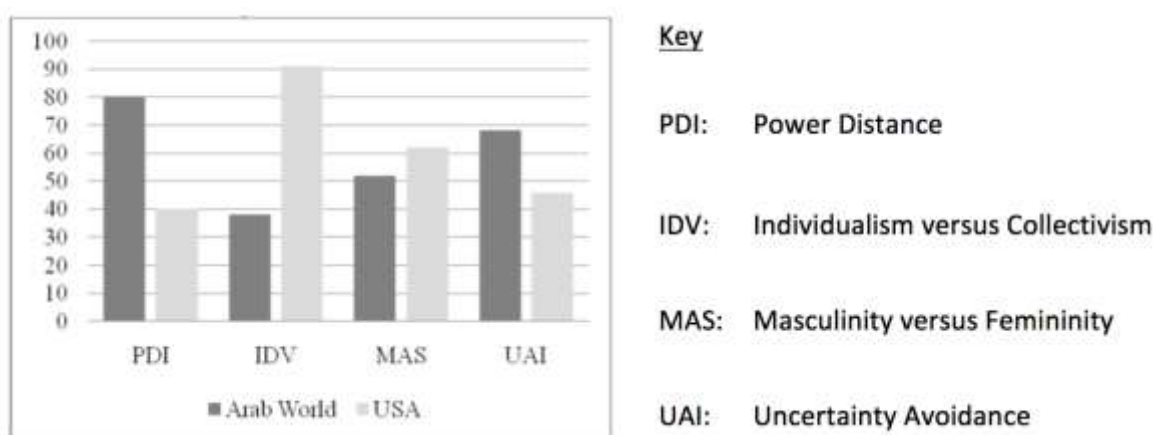


Figure 3: Cultural dimension measures of the Arab World and the United States.

Source: Rohm (2010, p. 6).

Hofstede's theory is significant to this research because it identifies social elements that largely influence and shape global and cross-cultural message communication.

The study employs two sets of micro-translation strategies.<sup>2</sup> The first set was proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995):

1. Borrowing;
2. Transposition;
3. Modulation;
4. Equivalence;
5. Adaptation;
6. Amplification
7. Explication; and
8. Generalisation.

The second set was proposed by Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008), who define it as a “taxonomy” that was influenced by Vinay and Darbelnet(1995) and Delabastita’s (1993) translation strategies. The taxonomy is presented in Figure 4:

Direct Transfer	Transfers something unchanged.
Calque	Transfers the structure or makes a very close translation.
Direct Translation	Translates in a word-for-word procedure.
Oblique Translation	Translates in a sense-for-sense procedure.
Explicitation	Makes implicit information explicit.
Paraphrase	Translates rather freely.
Condensation	Translates in a shorter way, which may involve implication (making explicit information implicit).
Adaptation	Recreates the effect, entirely or partially.
Addition	Adds a unit of meaning.
Substitution	Changes the meaning.
Deletion	Leaves out a unit of meaning.
Permutation	Translates in a different place.

Figure 4: A taxonomy of microstrategies.

Recreated from Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008, p. 92).

### Research Methodology

The advertisements we chose to analyze were obtained from YouTube, and were then re-uploaded to avoid potential content removal by the original publisher. The product category we chose to analyze is chocolate because chocolate advertisements are widely dubbed on Arabic television and, to the best of our knowledge, they had not been thoroughly explored in research.

Two variables govern the corpus used in this study. The first variable is the language variant used to dub the commercial: vernacular or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The vernacular versions of the target ads have further variables: Egyptian dialect and Khaleeji dialect. However, the effect of dialect variation on the dubbing of the ads would not be explored in the analysis because each ad has been produced in the given dialect only. The second variable is the degree of transcreation of each commercial. For this variable, we define *mirror ads* as only those whose visual elements have not been changed because only verbal elements generally vary in a dubbed product. On the other hand, we define *semi-mirror ads* as target ads whose visual elements have been reproduced through employing new actors, or have been slightly modified through the rearrangement of certain clips.



The sampling method of the corpus was *stratification* where “the population is divided into mutually exclusive groups (such as gender or age); then random samples are drawn from each group” (Lamb, Hair, & McDaniel, 2015, p.171).

### Analysis

Based on the analysis of the source and target (i.e. parallel) texts, three mutual cultural themes were identified and studied: methods of persuasion, stereotypes and humor. Further themes were introduced as “sub-themes” from specific common examples found in the parallel texts.

### Methods of Persuasion

In advertising, methods of persuasion are “largely culture-specific” (Torresi, 2011, p. 9). Hornikx, Meurs, and Boer (2010) add that “ads with culturally adapted value appeals are more persuasive and better liked than ads with culturally non-adapted value appeals” (p. 171-2).

#### 1. Persuasion through Foreignization

Consumers in developing countries tend to associate foreign products with better quality (Stoebe, 2013, 58). In two of the eight TTs, this was achieved by employing words that either associated superior product quality with the foreignness of the product, or regions in which these products were made. In Table 1, words corresponding to “quality”, “expertise” and “refinery” were added in TT1.

Table 1 *Persuasion through Foreignization, Example 1*

Line	ST1	TT1	TT1 (back-translation)
2	And in Christmas, the magic is even stronger.	قصة الشغف الحقيقي للجودة...	The story of real passion for <u>quality</u> .
3	Because the ambassador knows how to captivate his guests.	الخبرة العريقة...	The deep-rooted <u>expertise</u> ,
4	Mmmm... Ferrero Rocher.	والإبداعات الراقية.	And the <u>refined</u> creations.

In TT5, the geographic region (Europe) in which the chocolate was manufactured was identified. Afoakwa (2011) states that “many leading suppliers of premium chocolate are headquartered either in the United States or in Europe, the latter of which boasts of a long-standing chocolate manufacturing heritage” (p. 7). Perception-wise, Bilkey and Nes (1982) stress that the “country of origin has a considerable influence on the quality perceptions of a product” (p. 89). Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008, p. 92) put forward that in translation, a strategy where implicit information is made explicit is known as *explicitation*.



Table 2 *Persuasion through Foreignization, Example 2*

Line	ST5	TT5	TT5 (back-translation)
5	The pleasure to choose from a unique collection of finest chocolate.	مُتعة الاختيار من تشكيلة فريدة من أفخر أنواع الشوكولاتة الأوروبية.	The pleasure of selecting from a unique variety of the finest kinds of <u>European</u> chocolate.


Explicating Europe as the origin of the chocolate in TT5 aims to highlight the foreignness of the brand to the viewer, which could further imply the high quality associated with European chocolate.


## 2. Persuasion through Localization of Norms and Preferences

Guerra (2012, 7) stipulates that “the basic goal of the translator when trying to ‘adapt’ the translation is to have a similar effect on the TL readers, ‘domesticating’, in a way, the cultural terms.” Venuti (2008, 15) defines the term *domestication* as “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values [that brings] the author back home.” In TT1, the product was promoted for the occasion of *Christmas*, the central Christian commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, whereas the corresponding TT promoted it for *Eid Al-Adha*, a Muslim occasion that commemorates the sacrifice Prophet Abraham made and celebrates Muslims’ pilgrimage “the Hajj” in Mecca. Thus, contextualizing the product through *adaptation* as a translation strategy was imperative for persuasion, on the presupposition that an occasion relative to the Arab consumer was required to appeal to them.

Target culture’s habits also influence the translation of advertisements. Valdés (2000) argues that such adaptation is “influenced by the target culture norms: while the image follows the globalization principle, the linguistic message [is] adapted according to the target” (p. 276). To demonstrate this claim, two lines from commercial no. 8 are analyzed in Table 3. In the ST, the first line described the production process of the left Twix bar. The following line then described that of the right Twix bar. The TT8 versions of these lines, however, described the production process of the right Twix bar first and then that of the left Twix bar.

Table 3 *Persuasion through Localization of Norms and Preferences, Example 1*

Line	ST8	TT8	Screenshot <sup>3</sup>	TT8 (back-translation)
4	Left Twix flowed caramel on cookie,	بس اللي حصل إن اللي عاليمين حطّ كراميل عالبسكوت.		But what happened was that the right one put caramel on biscuit.

5	while Right Twix cascaded caramel on cookie.	وبالصدفة، اللي عالشمال بَرَضُو حَطَّ كاراميل عالبسكوت.		And coincidentally, the one of the left also put caramel on biscuit.
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In this example, the translator was aware of a norm in the target culture: the habitual preference of right over left. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995, 37) define such translation strategy as an *optional (or free) modulation*, which seeks to provide “a solution which rests upon a habitual train of thought.” But the translator of these two lines might have also been skeptical of the viewer’s both cognitive and aesthetic needs (Figure 2) for recognizing visual and verbal symmetry, which made the translation not optimum because the screen shows a Twix bar situated on the left side when the TT narrator described it as a ‘right’ Twix bar. Thus, there is a noticeable semantic disconnection between the visual and the verbal texts. Valdés and Fuentes-Luque (2008, 136) state that “when textual cohesion fails, the intended meaning (message) is miscommunicated.”

Another example within this sub-cultural theme is in ST8, where the two main characters were identified as “founders”, while in TT8 they were defined as “brothers” (أَخْن). In this case, the term “founders” might appeal to the individualism of the characters rather than to a direct familial relationship between them. Kulwicki (2016, 209) states that “the family unit continues to be the most sacred unit in Arab society.” Moreover, White (2011, 394) argues that relations in the Arab world “begin within the immediate family and reach out to extended families, clans, and tribes”. Thus, the notable collectivistic characteristic in the Arab culture could explain why the term “brothers” was chosen as the target term over other terms that could denote social relationships between the two main characters. From an audiovisual perspective, the adaptation was successful because the image (Figure 5) shows a clear resemblance between the characters in terms of outfit and facial features.



Figure 5: Twix, "Ideologies"<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Persuasion through Adapting Types of Register

Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) *transposition* is a translation strategy that concerns changing a sentence's register and degree of generality in the TT. These two aspects – for any sentence – are majorly influenced by the cultural background of a language. To demonstrate this claim, let us look at a line in the first commercial:

Table 4: *Persuasion through Adapting Types of Register, Example 1*

Line	ST1	TT1	TT1 (back-translation)
7	Ferrero Rocher... Share your Golden Christmas.	(فيريرو روشيه) في عيد الأضحى... عطاء من القلب في قالب من ذهب.	Ferrero Rocher in Eid Al-Adha... Giving from the heart in a golden platter.

The lines in ST1 and TT1 have different sentence fields of addressing the viewer. The ST makes the desired action from the viewer toward the advertisement explicit by asking them to “share” the chocolate. This direct communication approach coincides with the Western culture’s high individualism and generally low uncertainty avoidance scores on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions (Hofstede 1984), as Figure 1 shows. Witte and Morrison (1995) as cited in Robinson (2004) state that “Euro-Americans’ verbal messages are explicit and less concerned with context. Members of Asian cultures are more likely to be offended by direct and explicit messages and prefer indirect and implicit messages” (p. 117). The same line in TT1, on the other hand, only implies the desired action from the viewer, putting it in the implicit, metaphorical form of “giving”.

Another type of register change is the illocutionary change, defined by Chesterman (2016) as “a change of speech act” where “the translation introduces a rhetorical question, to produce a more dialogic text” (p. 107). In the context of advertisement translation, persuasion is key, and thus phrases that elicit natural ways of conversation in the dialogue text should be thoroughly considered. Gregory and Carroll (1978) argue that audiovisual texts are “written to be spoken as if not written” (p. 42). In TT7, the register of the twelfth line has been changed in translation from an exclamatory statement into a rhetorical question that carries the same meaning loaded in the ST:

Table 5: *Persuasion through Adapting Types of Register, Example 2*

Line	ST7	TT7	TT7 (back-translation)
12	I wanna reshuffle!	!مانورّع ثاني؟	How about we deal again?!

Shakour (2014) claims that “the rhetorical question is one of the most important aspects of argumentative rhetoric. It is an indirect speech act that seeks to express an emphatic assertion, with no expectation of a reply in most cases” (p. 408). The argumentative situation might have been suitable for the translator to make this illocutionary change — from a statement in the source text to a rhetorical question in the target text. Chiad and Sabah (2015, p. 114) allege that rhetorical questions in Arabic are more rhetoric than those in English, such that they could be more implicit in Arabic than in English. In this example, this claim holds such that the source text has one layer of presupposition: the player was not impressed with the hand he was dealt. In the target text, there are two layers of presupposition: the player also was not

impressed with his share of dealt cards, and assumes (through his rhetorical question) that the cards would be dealt again.

### **Stereotypes**

The “classical view of stereotypes”, as Pickering (2001) puts it, is “the idea that social stereotypes exaggerate and homogenise traits held to be characteristic of particular categories and serve as blanket generalisations for all individuals assigned to such categories” (p. 10). Moreover, cultural stereotypes have “culturally salient entities” (Blum, 2004, p. 252-3), and they are a vital asset for short promotional genres such as advertisements” (Torresi, 2010, p. 161).

#### **1. Portraying the Arab Culture as Storytellers**

Becatelli and Swindells (1998) as quoted in De Mooij (2004) argue that “[...] where a different language is spoken, there is likely to be a different set of symbolic references, including myths, history, humour and the arts. Any advertisement that does not tap into such references is likely to be a blander proposition than one that does” (2004, p. 180-81). TT1 makes an interesting case of cultural adaptation along those lines:

Table 6: *Storytelling and History, Example 1*

Line	ST1	TT1	TT1 (back-translation)
1	[female]: There's always something <u>magic</u> about the ambassador's reception...	[رجل]: الذهب... يروي لنا <u>حكاية</u> (روشييه).	[male]: The gold... tells us the <u>tale</u> of Rocher.
3	Because the ambassador knows how to <u>captivate</u> his guests.	الخبرة <u>العريقة</u> ...	The <u>deep-rooted</u> expertise,

The object in the ST was the “ambassador's reception”, which was described as “magical” and “captivating.” In the Western pop culture, which includes advertising, magic and happiness are correlated. Hockley and Fadina (2015) observe that contemporary media in the Western society has contributed to imbuing the mind of the consumer that “a throwaway commercial object [...] with an apparently magical quality [...] will enchant our lives and supernaturally turn the mundane realities of life into deeply satisfying states of happiness” (p. 2-3). In ST1, words such as “magic” and “captivation” emphasize *happiness* in the Western culture. On the other hand, TT1 objectifies “the gold of Rocher” and appeals to anecdotal or narrative words such as (حكاية) “story” and (عريقة) “deep-rooted” to indicate storytelling and association to history. On orality and Arabic storytelling, Herzog (2012) comments that “[...] oral performance and transmission play an important role alongside literacy in Arab-Islamic culture” (p. 627).

This narrative theme in cultural adaptation has also been found in commercial no. 5. While the source text associated falling in love with the state of happiness, the target text has associated it with *fairytale*s and storytelling.

Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008) identify this translation strategy as *substitution*, where the meaning was transcreated in the target text:

Table 7: *Storytelling and History, Example 2*

Line	ST5	TT5	TT5 (back-translation)
1	[sung, male]: I'm so <u>happy</u> , I'm so <u>glad</u> that I've got you.	[غناء باللهجة اللبنانية، رجل]: وجودك معي أجمل <u>حكاية</u> .	[sung in Lebanese dialect, male]: You being with me is the most beautiful <u>story</u> .

## 2. Verbalizing Stereotypes through Linguistic Clichés and Idioms

Toury (2012) suggests that “translations be regarded as facts of the culture that would host them” (p. 18). In the same vein, Baider (2013) argues that “knowing cultural stereotypes and using linguistic clichés are important, since such processes trigger recognition and acceptance within the target culture” (p. 1170).

ST3 frequently uses the phrase *here's to*, which is “an expression used as a toast to someone or something to wish someone or something well” (Spears, 2005, p. 301). In the commercial, the phrase is used to imply the celebratory and well-wishing feelings associated with eating Kit Kat when taking a break. In the TT, however, an equivalent for the term in Arabic has been used: (حبّتين) literally meaning “two-pieces”. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) define this translation strategy as *equivalence* (p. 38-9). The phrase (حبّتين) describes the shape of the V sign gesture. In the West, the gesture rose to prominence during World War II, when then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill flashed a “‘V for Victory’ [...] in a speech to his compatriots” (Cosgrove, 2014). Zelinsky (2011b) notes that the gesture seems to have transcended from the West to the Middle East in 2005, during Iraq's “first general election since the U.S.-led invasion and the removal of Saddam Hussein.” In relation to the TT of commercial no. 3, the word (حبّتين) could explain the activity of coming of age, which might be along the recent popular political trends in the Middle East. Zelinsky (2011a) elaborates that “the V has become a calling card of the wave for reform in the Arab (and Persian) world.” Although there were no V gestures in the visual text to match the verbal choice of “حبّتين”, the music playing in the background of the ad enhances the celebratory and victorious feelings radiated through the target word.

## Humor

### 1. Hyperbole in Humor

Patnoe (2010) defines hyperbole as “a figurative device using self-conscious exaggeration to emphasize feelings and intensify rhetorical effects” (p. 334). In the translation of humor, it is used to amplify a mild humorous presence without substituting the joke. However, we do not associate hyperbole here with Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation strategy of “amplification” (p. 339): the addition of more words in the target text to exaggerate a meaning in the source text.

The first example is found in the sixth line of commercial no. 8. Here, the ST reads “bathed”, while the TT version reads (غَرَّقَ) “make drown”, an exaggerated form of the word in an attempt to create

a humorous effect to the Arab audience. The strategy was also heavily used in commercial no. 3, as indicated in the underlined parts in Table 8:

Table 8: *Hyperbole in Humor*

Line in ST	ST3	TT3	TT3 (back-translation)	Line in TT
11	The “ <u>give me a break</u> from ad breaks” breaker.	واللي انفقت مرارته من كثر الإعلانات.	And to he whose gallbladder has exploded because of the many ads.	11
19	The selfie taker.	حببتين للي يومه سيلفي وري سيلفي.	Two-pieces to he whose day is selfie after another.	16
21	“I’ll always be a kid”,	واللي قلبه شباب مشعل.	And he whose heart is flaming youth.	24
25	To the old-school breaker.	واللي ما تغير بريكه من أيام رمسيس.	And to he whose break has not changed since the days of Ramesses.	26

## 2. Modification of Irony in Humor

In general, an irony aims to “stress the absurdity present in the contradiction between substance and form” (“Ironies” on Dictionary.com Unabridged, 2017). In translation, Mateo (1995) presents thirteen strategies for translating irony in humorous texts. One method is explicitation: “[when an] ironic innuendo [in the ST] becomes more restricted and explicit in TT” (p. 176). Hence, explicitation would be necessary to maintain the function of the ST (humor), despite the loss of the rhetorical tool (irony) in the TT. We first look at commercial no. 8 to see irony explicitation in the TT:

Table 9: *Modification of Irony in Humor*

Line	ST8	TT8	TT8 (back-translation)
8	Both bars <u>as different as the vastly distinct</u> men who invented them.	في الآخر، الصوباعين طلعا زي بعض بالظبط، بس كل أخ لسه مقتنع إن تويكس بتاغه أحلى.	In the end, both [Twix] fingers <u>looked exactly the same</u> , but each brother is convinced that his own Twix is better.



The verbal text of the ST briefed that the resulting Twix bars are nonidentical while the visual text showed that the bars are indeed identical. This non-parallelism has created a humorous effect in the source text. In the TT, however, irony was not employed, but rather made explicit by explaining the situation: the resulting Twix bars were identical, but seemed non-identical to their creators (i.e. the brothers).

The second line of commercial no. 7 demonstrates another case in which irony was made explicit in the TT to elicit a humorous effect and thus, enhance the comedic aspect in the commercial:

Table 10: *Modification of Irony in Humor*

Line	ST7	TT7	TT7 (back-translation)
2	[the Joker]: How about the Joker plays with you?	[الجوكر]: إيه رأيكو الجوكر هو اللي هيلعب بيكو؟	[the Joker]: What would you think if the Joker plays [using] you?

Yus (2013, p. 80) notes that jokes in absurd scenarios are strengthened with when characters are personified. In the ST, the Joker card is personified as a participant in the card game. However, it is important to note that the phrasing in the line could carry two meanings, such that the Joker proposes: (1) his interest in being a participant in the card game, or (2) being the only participant in the card game, and uses the other participants as play cards (i.e. personification).

Regardless of the intended meaning in the ST, the verbal text aims to promote an ironic situation. In contrast, the TT's approach toward maintaining the ironic rhetoric function was by utilizing one of the possibly intended meanings and thus making the meaning explicit through translation. Fortunately, the choice made in the TT was still consistent with the ST's meaning because the relationship between the visual and the verbal elements of both texts were maintained. This is depicted through the source and target scenes where the card game players seem unimpressed following the Joker's rhetoric (and ironic) question, as we can see in Figures 6 and 7..



Figure 6: Modification of Irony in Humor, Example 1<sup>5</sup>





Figure 7: Modification of Irony in Humor, Example 2<sup>6</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

This study explored presupposition in the translation of three cultural themes —methods of persuasion, stereotypes, and humor— in television advertisements that were dubbed from English into Arabic. Each theme had further sub-themes with their almost consistent micro-translation strategies, which were proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) and Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008). The analysis in this study has shown that micro-translation strategies are not exclusive to either language variant (Modern Standard Arabic or vernacular), and that the strategies could occur concurrently across the cultural sub-themes identified in the study.

Based on the results of the analysis, it might be safe to state that presuppositions influence the creation and perception of dubbed television advertisements. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) — the first tool governing presupposition — shows how the translator's authority prevails as he is expected know of the target culture's needs from the advertisement, and thus create the dubbing text according to those needs.

Hofstede's Cultural Typology (1984) — the second tool governing presupposition — demonstrates how the social psychology of the target audience also guides the translator's target text, essentially through individualism versus collectivism and uncertainty avoidance measures.

Cultural rather than linguistic approaches to dubbing advertisements seem to prevail in the Arab World as they allow for more flexibility for the translator. However, the potential risk of deviating from the message intended might not only introduce the issue of unfaithfulness in translation, but also a potential negative reputation about the commercial and the company adopting the promoted product.

Future studies on audiovisual advertisement translation could further explore current corporate practices in cultural advertisement translation, and whether their marketing departments predetermine these practices as a method of standardizing their international marketing approaches.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> A 2011 census showed that 56.9% of Canada's population identifies English as its mother tongue language (Statistics Canada 2016).

<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, macro-translation strategies, as indicated by Schjoldager, Gottlieb, and Klitgård (2008) generally concern "source-text oriented" versus "target-text oriented" translation strategies.

<sup>3</sup> "TWIX - "Ideologies" Commercial." YouTube.com. siuoo, 13 Dec 2012. Screenshot. 4 Feb 2017.

<sup>4</sup> TWIX - "Ideologies" Commercial." YouTube.com. Siuoo, 13 Dec 2012. Screenshot. 4 Feb 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Joker Snickers Commercial!. YouTube.com. The Definitive Batman Resource: Legions of Gotham, 15 Dec 2013. Screenshot. 4 Feb 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Snickers® - "Joker" Arabic Commercial. YouTube.com. TSAWUQ COM, 22 May 2014. Screenshot. 4 Feb 2017.

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