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**Decoding Transcreation in Corporate Website** 

Localization into Arabic

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**Abstract** 

As adaptation is often associated with localization, and with the promotion

of transcreation as an extra service in the industry, there is a need to analyze

how and to what extent transcreation is used in localization as a type of

target-culture-focused translation. This paper looks into adaptation and

analyzes transcreation as a translation strategy. It investigates online

promotional texts localized into Arabic (for Saudi Arabia) as an under-

researched language in website localization. The analysis follows a

functionalist approach and examines 15 international corporate websites.

The results illustrate components of transcreated texts and shed light on the

use of different procedures to achieve the creative persuasive purpose.

**Keywords:** *Arabic*; *cultural adaptation*; *functionalist translation*;

internationalization; transcreation; website localization

1. Introduction

With the increase of virtual globalization, localization practices have been

adopted in different areas, including services, entertainment, and product

sales. Marketing represents a central aspect in most of these areas. The

digital environment is estimated to absorb between 20 and 30 percent of advertising expenses with an increasing pace (Stenger and Bourliataux-Lajoinie 2014, 132), making digital platforms, particularly websites, pivotal to marketing. Furthermore, the development of technologies such as mobile devices cannot be ignored in meeting marketing objectives (Chaffey, et al. 2014, 5) as they narrow distances between businesses and consumers everywhere and at any moment. These developments have led to new channels and formats, introducing new text types, such as User Interface (UI) elements and hypertexts, thus underlining the need for the theoretical framing of localization within Translation Studies (TS). However, established text types, such as advertisements, need to be researched too due to their presence in localized products and the different process they undergo. In particular, advertising is known to require creativeness and cultural adaptation (see Pedersen 2014). With the emergence of the phenomenon of 'transcreation' for marketing purposes, more insight should be sought to understand its components and how it differs from translation, especially involving the Arabic language. This paper will highlight the goals of localization and internationalization, discuss adaptation, and find a framework for transcreation analysis using a corpus of commercial websites localized into Arabic. The paper aims to break down the transcreation components and procedures in order to better understand its position in translation and in localization.

#### 2. Localization and Internationalization: Interdependent Phases

Linguistic and cultural adaptation have been central in the definitions of localization, including the one introduced early by LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association):

Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold." (cited in Jiménez-Crespo 2013, 13).

Another industry definition includes the notion of 'content' and notes that localization aims to "give a product the look and feel of having been created specifically for a target market" (GALA 2019). In TS, the earliest discussions on localization have been observed to deal mainly with its definition and impact on translation concepts and practices (Folaron 2020, 209). Localization was viewed as one of the concepts "steadily making their way into Translation Studies" (Pym 2005, 17). Certain definitions suggested in TS reiterate the adaptation needs (Quirion 2003, Rémon 2005) with a focus on eliminating the traces of the country of origin (Gouadec 2003; Schäler 2007/2008; Pym 2011) and stressing the cultural appropriateness to the target market (Pierini 2007). Although certain definitions expanded the concept to include the product's acceptability by the target users (Quah 2006, 19-20), more TS-oriented definitions have emerged, highlighting the functionalist approach and the end user's expectations (Jiménez-Crespo

2013, 18). This aligns with Katan (2016) who underlines the application of functionalist theory in localization.

The above definitions highlight localization's desired outcomes without specifying the process that a product goes through. As components of the 'globalization' process, 'internationalization' and 'localization' aim to make the product "general", then adapt it to specific locales (Pym 2005, 17). Internationalization is a preparatory phase but should also account for rewriting the source text in a way that ensures an efficient and consistent translation (Yunker 2003, 124), i.e. "writing for translation" (Musacchio 2019). It aims to remove any cultural peculiarities to achieve the zéro spécifique (Gouadec 2003, 528) or, technically, the "localizationenablement" (Quah 2006, 115). Hence, internationalization and localization are interdependent. The former is believed to have an influence over the latter's success (Jiménez-Crespo 2007, 5), although they seem contradictory regarding the aim and the results (Jiménez-Crespo 2010, 13). From another perspective, internationalization is viewed as the "key element" in the localization industry (Pym 2006, 56). Pym considers it as the "real revolution, and bad scheduling or a lack of testing can cost more heads than a bad translation" (2014, 42).1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Internationalization shares a few of the aims of Controlled Language (CL) in terms of writing for translation or an international audience. For more research on CL, cf. Quah (2006), Bowker (2015), and O'Brien (2019)

In view of the above, the internationalized product, along with the use of the English language as a *lingua franca*, has drawn the attention of several TS scholars to its influence over the translation, which is represented by calquing practices in localized websites (Bouffard and Caignon 2006) and the lack of abidance by the target locale conventions (Jiménez-Crespo 2009). Internationalization is claimed to have direct consequences over languages and the translation process altogether (Guidère 2008, 10) and to limit the translator's creativity as well (Munday and Gambier 2014, 31). This can be due to the possible influence of the linguistically simplified and culturally neutralized text which does not impose the need to transform, adapt or re-create. By this, literal translation can be considered a faster solution that provides an acceptable output. However, literal translation is less successfully able to achieve the text's function and meet the audience's expectations (Guidère 2008, 21). The possible influence of one language over another due to literality has been pointed out in light of the "global/local and central/peripheral dichotomies" (Collombat 2014, 16), which implies imposing the central language genres on the peripheral target languages (Pym 2011, 10).

#### 3. Website Localization and Adaptation

Website localization increasingly gained more significance than software localization due to the volume of work (Jiménez-Crespo 2013). The importance of the former can also be associated with their use as multi-

purpose platforms that are shared across cultures and are more widely visible than printed materials, making the website viewed as a cultural object (Rémon 2005). Therefore, and based on the adaptation requirements discussed above, more importance should be given to the micro-textual adaptation level of the translated content which is used and read and which can have a more direct impact on the target culture, as opposed to the macro adaptation, i.e. the design and the transferred content proportion (Singh and Pereira 2005) or the general communication strategy (Guidère 2008).

Jiménez-Crespo highlighted the fact that adaptation is seen as the "additional component that localization provides, as opposed to the textual or wordly nature of 'translation'" (Jiménez-Crespo 2013, 15). Cultural adaptation in particular is commonly associated with localization (Thibodeau 2000, Quirion 2003, Rémon 2005, Schäler 2007/2008, Mangiron and Dong 2018). 'Localization' is sometimes used interchangeably with linguistic and cultural adaptation (Antonucci 2017), which might be one of the reasons that adaptation in localization is considered a "fuzzy concept" (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013, 107). This fuzziness has been explained by the fact that these terms were "frequently used interchangeably in early literature published by industry and TS scholars alike" (Jiménez-Crespo 2019, p. 33).

However, adaptation is considered a translation procedure (Delisle, Lee-Jahnke, and Cormier 1999; Vinay and Darbelnet 2000) with a wide range: The limits of translation are represented by transcription or translation, in which 100 per cent of the ST surface elements are preserved, and free text production (in the target culture), in which none of the ST surface elements are preserved. Between these two poles we find several forms of translation, which are characterized by different percentages of adaptation, depending on the translation skopos. (Nord 2005, 33)

Adaptation is necessary for readers to associate the offered information with their previous knowledge and memories (Nord 2005, 96). In this context, readers get used to certain conventional forms with repetitive kinds of texts with a similar function(s) (Nord 1997, 53). Nord highlights that the assumptions made by the translator should be different from those made by the original author (Nord 1997, 35). Having said that, how does this point of view correspond to a text which is written neutrally for an 'international audience'? The text is "de-culturalized" by the sender to achieve "zero-distance" for both audiences (Nord 2005, 150). Are the translations performed from the point of view of the 'author' or the 'reader' (Ladmiral 2014, 75)?

In this paper, focus will be given to the message effect in promotional contexts, where the appellative intention needs to be expressed in order to persuade the receiver to perform a certain activity (Nord 2005, 55), such as purchasing the product. More specifically, product descriptions (blurbs) will

be looked at as an example. Adaptation techniques will be analyzed, but a general framework of adaptation should be provided as a multi-percentage (Nord 2005) procedure used sometimes interchangeably with transcreation (and with re-writing, as detailed in 3.1). This should help in determining the transcreation markers and how it is performed because deciding the transfer strategy in translation is as important as deciding whether to transfer something and what is transferred (Reiss and Vermeer 1984, 85).

In advertisements, adaptation is viewed as a less costly approach than the creation of original campaigns (Vandal-Sirois 2015, 4). It is more accepted in advertising than in literary translation given the invisibility of an author and the focus on achieving the aims of the text (ibid.). Although translation necessitates "the importation of other ideas, other viewpoints, other worldviews" (Maitland 2017, 07), adaptation does not have to be used blindly (Vermeer 2012, 198, Vandal-Sirois 2015, 13) as it depends on the function of the text. In relation to the practice of internationalization, literal (and fast) translation should ensure cultural adequacy. While culturally customized websites have been found to be rare cases (Singh and Pereira 2005, 15), the mirror website type has been noted to follow a purely technical approach where languages change from one version to another to offer a fast and low-cost adaptation (Guidère 2008, 52). However, literal translation has been observed to be a strategy more commonly followed in English-into-Arabic translated e-brochures, without meeting the intended

function (Obeidat 2015). While this can be attributed to several factors, including dealing with new genres, promotional texts are not new and, therefore, need more investigation. They provoke certain expectations in the recipients' minds. Moreover, advertising translation, referred to sometimes as advertising localization (Guidère 2008, 31), is often provided as an example where adaptation and creativeness are required to persuade the consumer. Advertising online specifically imposes further restrictions and requirements, such as the space, interactivity, the fast screen-reading tendencies and navigating web pages in search of a specific item. Those factors increase the need to quickly draw the consumer's attention and persuade him/her with the product as they navigate.

#### 3.1. Transcreation in Relation to Adaptation

Although transcreation is being presented as a service in the localization context (Yunker 2017, 126), the term 'adaptation' used to be used in earlier research on advertising translation and in relation to persuasion and function (Tatilon 1990). Advertising transfer forms are suggested to include rewriting, adaptation and transposition (or even transcoding; Guidère 2000), i.e. re-writing represents the highest degree of modification<sup>2</sup>. Adaptation, in turn, has two categories: formal and conceptual (ibid.). The former modifies the surface and structure of the original statement to make it receivable by and, if possible, familiar and idiomatic to, the target audience, while the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. (Lefevere 1992) on the conceptualization of re-writing in other contexts.

latter affects the meaning and synchronizes the initial content with the cultural expectations of the final recipient (ibid., 124). As for re-writing, it is viewed in two ways: it either provides a different expressive orientation to the initial message idea, or it develops a totally new idea while respecting the original style (ibid., 129). Terms are multiple when it comes to modification in translation. Gambier notes that the multiple notions destabilize Translation Studies and its students and attributes such changes to the evolution of technologies and the surrounding conditions (Munday and Gambier 2014, 21).

Like other terms which infiltrated into TS, 'transcreation' has received its share of debates. Although the concept of 'transcreation' has been used in different contexts and can be traced to India and Brazil (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013, 196), it started to be revived in translation about a decade ago (Gaballo 2012). Transcreation has been described on several occasions as offering more than translation given the adaptation of cultural nuances it provides (Pedersen 2014, 60). Although different translation theories have given attention to the notion of culture and the importance of transferring the message effect, the notion of 'culture' and rendering the desired persuasive effect were specifically valued in transcreation. It seems that existing notions in translation are making transcreation an "extra service, beyond translation proper, to be paid for as something extra." (Chesterman 2019, 19). Such a view limits translation to word-for-word transfer and puts

transcreation on pedestal. Different translation theories have given attention to the notion of culture and the importance of transferring the message effect. From another perspective, transcreation has been viewed as an independent term which "does not duplicate or fully match any other term, not even the more general term 'translation', and therefore it has its own right to exist" (Gaballo 2012, 96). Although 'transcreation' refers to a specific 'service' offered by agencies, and by this, it seems to have already had its place in the translation industry, the responses of the same study (ibid.) viewed it as a target-audience-focused strategy to adapt a text to local markets. Transcreation is also viewed, for instance, as a "radical adaptive strategy" in game localization (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013, 196). Having said that, a strategy term cannot be measured against or matched with its own umbrella term. It has been noted that the fuzziness in the terms exist among the professionals who conceptualize localization, transcreation and adaptation unclearly (Dam and Zethsen 2019, 214).

It is necessary to differentiate certain views with regards to the position of transcreation in translation practice. Pedersen calls to investigate "why the transcreation industry seeks another word rather than "translation" to describe its activities" (2014, 69). Moreover, "transcreation is claimed to add something to a more prosaic translation, and therefore, to be a specialism that is worthy of being 'moderately expensive' compared to translation's 'moderately inexpensive'. Clients need to pay for that extra

service" (Munday and Gambier 2014, 20). This corresponds with Chesterman (2019) cited earlier. There are also calls for translators to compete in order to distinguish themselves from cheap/volunteer services, or to take the "transcreational turn" to show their creative side (Katan 2016, 377-378).

By looking at these different views, which seem to commodify translation, the term 'transcreation' is being used to keep the prestige of professional translation practice and ensure the sustainability of the translation industry. It emerged and gained momentum due to industry developments and globalization. Therefore, it is important to see how it is being practiced in localization as an industry that has emerged in the same conditions. In this paper, 'transcreation' is viewed as "a recent term but not a new practice" (Dam and Zethsen 2019, 216) whether in the industry or in TS. It will be viewed and analyzed as a strategy of translation and an existing concept in TS, as detailed in the next section.

# 3.2. Conceptualizing Transcreation

Similarities between 'transcreation' and 'localization' also exist. They both follow a functionalist approach (Katan 2016, 374), the same culture and target-audience considerations are at play, the text preparation phase is similar, and in both cases, the terms are associated with marketing and website translation in general (Pedersen 2014). The creativity aspect of transcreation has been viewed as the factor distinguishing it from

localization (Rike 2013). Therefore, transcreation is a translation strategy, while localization is understood as a translation modality (Jiménez-Crespo 2013) that involves many "translation types" and operates on many "digital genres", and a concept accommodated in the concept of 'translation' (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013, 107). In other words, transcreation is performed within localization as one possible strategy for certain textual subcomponents of the whole website.

In the marketing and advertising context, "transcreation seeks to perform all the adjustments necessary to make a campaign work in all target markets, while at the same time staying loyal to the original creative intent of the campaign" (Pedersen 2014, 58). Although the definition refers mainly to the transcreation goal, it is not particular to transcreation. Adaptation and other translation procedures can help in meeting that goal as discussed earlier. Furthermore, the focus on transferring the creative intent falls into the functionalist translation approach. Transcreation is sometimes considered the "creation of a new original" (Benetello 2017). Transcreation is also viewed as a "crosswise strategy" (Costales 2012) and as a productive practice which shows the ability to generate new solutions (Gaballo 2012, 111). A more detailed definition has been provided by Gaballo with a focus on transcreation as a strategy used to deal with untranslatable cases by employing different methods:

Transcreation is an intra-/interlingual re-interpretation of the original work suited to the readers/audience of the target language which requires the translator to come up with new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs to make up for the lack (or inadequacy) of existing ones. It can be looked at as a strategy to overcome the limits of 'untranslatability', but in fact it is a holistic approach in which all possible strategies, methods and techniques can be used. (Gaballo 2012, 111)

This view does not correspond with the definition of a strategy which "applies globally to any given text and is distinguished from ad hoc decisions such as those regarding the application of various translation procedures" (Delisle, Lee-Jahnke, and Cormier 1999, 192). Transcreation does not equal "domestication" or "foreignization" (Venuti 2001) as holistic approaches for instance. It cannot be considered as a simple procedure either (like calquing or borrowing) due to its complex nature. Therefore, it can be seen as a dynamic and functional translation genre-specific strategy, or sub-strategy, that can be applied on a text segment or a whole text, and implies creativity through combining and making use of different strategies and procedures to achieve an aesthetic, entertaining and/or persuasive effect in the audience. Although transcreation is generally viewed as a domesticating approach, it should be noted that it has no clear-cut

orientation as foreign words can be used as well to meet the desired purpose (see examples provided later).

# 3.3. When Are Adaptation and/or Transcreation Used?

The adaptation level has been discussed earlier in the context of websites. However, it is also conceptualized in terms of the type of business or market. In other words, the degree to which the adapted website conforms to the initial site depends on the importance of its target market. The more competitive the market, more liberty is given when the website is adapted; and when the markets are segmented, websites tend to be more conforming to the initial site, mainly to reduce costs (Guidère 2008, 51). Advertisements have a significant persuasive aspect, but also a non-negligible informative aspect. In this context, the information-to-persuasion ratio has been used as a tool to assess the need for transcreation, where "the higher the persuasion and the lower the information, the higher the possibility, and potentially the need, to trans-create." (Torresi 2010, 25).

In sum, transcreation is viewed alternatively as a concept, a strategy and a practice; nonetheless, there is an agreement that research on transcreation in marketing and advertising is lacking (Gaballo 2012, Pedersen 2014) although advertising translation has been frequently discussed in TS (Pedersen 2014, 66). TS scholars have been said "to have abdicated their role as critical investigators of a substantial part of their discipline and passed the buck to the industry, which is free to dictate the preferred

terminology to be used in this sector" (Gaballo 2012, 98). Moreover, while transcreation was discussed in literary contexts for decades, in other contexts, "the term transcreation has only recently gained considered attention" (Pedersen 2014, 63). The emergence of the need for research in advertisement transcreation can be due to the increased need for intercultural communication, particularly through localized websites with their complex processes, multi-agent cooperation and the concerns around and in the industry.

### 4. A Target-Based Approach Employing a "Reference Text"

The process of localization involves multi-agent cooperation and continuous maintenance of textual content. In addition, researchers do not have access to the "internal knowledge" (Pym 2004, 28) about the text workflow, the source language, who performed or updated the translation, or whether machine translation has been used. This study therefore focuses on the final translation as it will be presented to the user or consumer. It also proceeds with the hypothesis that adaptation is a human-based solution. Moreover, the source-target text relation has become ambiguous in the web localization domain (Lee 2009), given the "one-to-many" model in contrast with the "language-into-language" model (Pym 2006, 750). This makes it difficult for the researcher to determine the source language and source text unless he/she has access to the internal process. Therefore, the term 'reference text' (RT) is proposed (Kassawat, forthcoming) for methodological purposes. It

does not aim to replace the source text or to equal the "internationalized text" (Pym 2006) as the former is known for the working agents only and the latter has a specific function in the process. Moreover, conceptualizing the text as a reference enables researchers to avoid direct comparisons of the version in question with another one, which might be updated without the change being reflected in all versions. It allows them to instead analyze the localized versions based on their monolingual functionality in the target language, as seen by the end user. The English text will be used as a reference in the analysis.

## 4.1. A Target-Based Corpus Selection

The corpus for this study was collected for a wider research project on international commercial websites localized into Arabic. A bilingual corpus (Olohan 2004, O'Brien 2014) made up of English and Arabic texts was generated. For consistency and availability reasons, the Saudi Arabia version was the one analyzed for all the websites, whenever a country gateway was available. If a country gateway was not available, the Middle East website was chosen instead. A gateway specifically for Saudi Arabia was lacking only in two cases, which can be attributed to the country's position as one of the main target markets in the Arab world. These two cases did not have instances of transcreation. The collected texts are blurbs consisting generally of a tagline, an image and a short description. A few

cases include just a slogan for a product page. The blurbs are similar in length with a slight difference in high-tech products, where each product page has several blurbs. These texts are both informative and promotional. The tagline is considered the appellative element, while the description provides information but is often designed to persuade the consumer. As the focus in marketing and advertising texts is "on ensuring cultural/local relevance, and commercial intent involved" (Pedersen 2014, 62), product blurbs have been chosen due to their high dependence on the translation function and likely need for transcreation.

First, a pilot project of four websites (49 blurbs, cosmetic products) was explored by comparing the instances of textual adaptation and transcreation. The function markers were specified beforehand but were open for elaboration based on the comparisons and initial results. The initial function markers were based on Gully's (1996) study of Egyptian Arabic advertisements and Pedersen's (2014, 62) study of marketing and advertising texts, namely metaphors, rhetorical devices, local dialect, wordplay, assonance, and alliteration. 34 candidate cases were found to have these markers. The analysis of and observations in the pilot project showed other forms and units of speech which add dynamism to the text, such as literary vocabulary, collocations, exclamatory sentences, and questions. However, the findings at that stage included only two transcreation cases based on the pre-specified markers and expectations for

advertising texts. Therefore, the corpus was expanded to 15 websites for high-tech (840 blurbs), cosmetics (804 blurbs) and furniture products (880 blurbs), to constitute the second stage. The websites were checked in March and April 2019, based on their commercial nature, international reach, and the availability of an Arabic version to be as representative as practicably possible for the given target language for this type of study. Images were excluded from the analysis. They were found to represent the product alone without an obvious relation to the text.

The main corpus (2,524 blurbs) has been investigated following two stages based on Nord's model for translation criticism (2005). The first is target-based, i.e. performing a monolingual analysis of the localized version to check its coherence with the situation in which it is functioning (ibid.), i.e. the persuasive function and expectations from the studied advertising genre. At this stage, the texts were analyzed to see whether any of the markers — both the preliminary markers and those identified in the pilot project — were present. In the pilot project, making direct comparisons between the reference text and the target text did not prove particularly helpful. The target-based approach is therefore well-suited to identifying the function markers, which are monolingually detectable constructs. It ensures an objective analysis without an influence by the reference text.

In the second stage of the investigation, once the Arabic text was assessed, 104 bilingual blurbs containing the markers were collected as candidates for comparison. The reference text was analyzed in terms of its intent and compared against the localized one to investigate the possible translation strategies and procedures that were adopted to provide a creative content.

#### 4.2. Defining the Micro-Analysis Pillars

Based on the pilot project's findings, there was a need to define more thoroughly the procedures and solutions used in order to scrutinize the transcreation cases accurately. The following rationale was adopted:

A 'cultural reference' can be incorporated into the text via substitution or addition. It can include proverbs, food names, songs, character names, symbols, entities, language-specific expressions and idioms, etc. (cf. González Davies and Scott-Tennent 2005). 'Linguistic adaptation' is where the same idea of the RT is reflected using similar wording in a more suitable manner and structure for the target language, for example, by employing common collocations. This corresponds to what Guidère terms *l'adaptation formelle* (form adaptation), where the surface or structure is modified to make the sentence acceptable and if possible familiar and idiomatic (2000, 124). Finally, 'cultural adaptation' is where the message wording and main idea are kept while adapting culturally unacceptable elements. This corresponds to what Guidère terms *l'adaptation idéelle* (conceptual adaptation), which modifies the meaning of the message and synchronizes the content with the target recipient's cultural expectations (ibid.). Finally,

'transcreation' is where the message wording may or may not be inspired by the RT but presents different ideas or puts the same idea in a different frame to achieve the same intended effect. This is based on Gaballo's definition mentioned earlier, which underlines the notion of "re-interpretation of the original work" and introducing "new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs" or producing "novel ideas" (2012, 111). This also corresponds to Guidère's conception of 're-writing', which can be done in two ways: providing a different expressive orientation from the initial message idea and developing a completely new idea while respecting the original style (2000, 129).

#### 5. Transcreation: A Mix of Procedures and Solutions

The function markers identified based on the monolingual analysis include the use of rhetorical devices in 7 non-transcreational instances as part of the textual units and in the majority of the transcreation cases as detailed below. Comparing 104 cases to the RT resulted in categorizing 69 cases as transcreational, as defined in Section 4.2. Interestingly, 14 cases were identified in the monolingual analysis with local-culture constructs but with a close similarity to the RT.

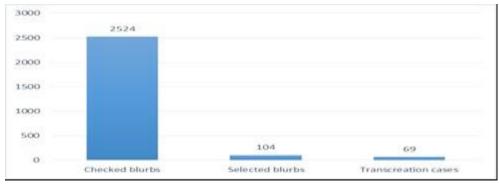


Figure 1 Transcreation proportion in the corpus based on the monolingual analysis

Transcreation seems to be a mixture of different procedures and linguistic solutions put within a new frame, which will be detailed with examples below. Compared to the pilot project, transcreation cases jumped up significantly in the main corpus analysis. However, one factor contributed to this difference: the inclusion of high-tech websites, accounted for 49 of the 69 transcreation cases. This result was expected due to the competitive nature of the high-tech industry where the differentiation from the competitors is the key. More discussion will follow later.

As mentioned earlier, 69 transcreation cases were observed mainly in four websites. The most prominent component used in transcreation were rhetorical devices, present in 32 cases in addition to 11 other cases where they were used in combination with other solutions or procedures, making this component represent 62% of all the cases. The use of colloquial language was very limited (only 1 instance), possibly to keep consistency with the rest of the website, which is in Standard Arabic.

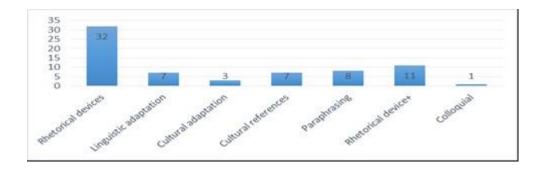


Figure 2 Transcreation components per blurb

Below are a few examples which show the different components which were found in transcreated texts. More focus will be given to the taglines as appellative elements. Back translation (BT) is provided after the Arabic translation (TR). Full context is also provided in the appendix.

# 5.1. Rhetorical Devices as a Transcreation Component

In Example (1), the Arabic version uses the metaphor 'meeting place' to describe the mobile phone's characteristics.

(1) RT: Elegantly refined

BT: The meeting place of brightness and sophistication

Example (2) is about a slow-motion feature. It shows other rhetorical devices. 'Admiration' is depicted as a liquid, and assonance is used in 'GIF' and the verb 'dry' (yağif), making the word endings rhyme.

(2) RT: Add music. Make GIFs. Get likes.

BT: Music with GIF images... an admiration that doesn't dry.

The translation in Example (3) shares the idea of the RT, which describes a Mac mini device, but with slightly different metaphors which suit the Arab user's imagination and the common collocations. Two structures, implying the same notion of power but using different collocations, were used in parallel. An approximately equal length was achieved in each structure, which helped in expressing the strengths of the product in a simple and short form.

(3) RT: Part racehorse. All workhorse.

BT: A runner's speed. A wrestler's capability.

In the last examples, metaphors have been used more than similes. Although the metaphor is derived from the simile, it has an added value. It depends on impersonation, providing movement and life to objects, blurring the simile and making the reader forget the original metaphor and described entity (ibid., 111). This in turn will likely enhance the persuasion function. Furthermore, it can be noticed that the length of the Arabic sentences is close to that of the RT and that the sentences are equally distributed. The previous and next examples show how rhetoric has been combined with other components, such as cultural references, colloquial language, and procedures like addition and linguistic adaptation.

#### 5.2. Cultural References as a Transcreation Component

Example (4) is a heading for an online color testing tool (without a description text). The Arabic sentence is structurally differently from the RT, but both versions share a similar rhetorical strategy. The first part of the translation is a proverb which is equal to 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. The second part invites the reader to try the product and reflects the English intent with an addition to achieve a balanced rhythm as the word 'now' rhymes with 'proof': 'alān' and 'burhān'.

(4) RT: Now it's time to take it for a spin.

BT: Trying is the best proof... try now.

In Example (5), the 'in' and 'out' contrast in English was also used in Arabic. However, a metaphor has also been included, picturing the device and its tools as persons who have hearts. The word 'heart' has been used for paronomasia as it carries two different connotations in Arabic. In the first part, it means the 'core' of the device and in the second, it refers to an anatomical heart. The second part, 'give from their heart', is a common expression in Arabic and is familiar in all Arab countries whether in dialect or in Standard Arabic. It is used to refer to giving, generosity and honesty.

(5) RT: macOS: Built-in tools that go all out.

في قلبه أدوات، تعطى من قلبها :TR: macOS

BT: macOS: There are tools in his heart, which give from their heart.

Cultural references can be used alone as a transcreation component as well. In Example (6), although the RT provides the expression 'eye-opening' to describe the MacBook Pro features, the Arabic version used an adaptation into 'eye-fulfilling' which is a commonly used expression in Arabic and means 'satisfying'.

(6) RT: Eye-opening graphics performance.

BT: A strong graphics performance, it's eye-fulfilling.

Example (7) represents a proverb 'causes may vary but death is the same' to describe a USB adaptor. The same proverb has been used but adapted to the given context, making use of the description.

(7) RT: USB-C. Singularly versatile.

BT: USB-C. The tasks may vary but the port is the same.

5.3. Addition with Rhetorical Devices as a Transcreation Component

Example (8) is about the features of a device camera. The translation is slightly adapted in Arabic. It is similar in meaning to the RT but adds the word 'closely', which also means 'tightly', in order to balance the rhyme.

Assonance has been also used here with the words 'moment' and

'precision': 'laḥza' and 'diqqa'.

(8) RT: Cherish every moment with precision

TR: تذكر كل لحظة بإحكام ودقة

BT: Remember every moment closely and precisely

5.4. Colloquial Tone as a Transcreation Component

Examples of colloquial language were limited in the corpus. The following

example includes Standard Arabic words, but the expressions are more

common in everyday spoken language than in the written language.

Example (9) describes a tablet and the apps it comes with. The words

'adapt' and 'mood' in Arabic are derived from the same root, making a play

on words effect.

(9) RT: Apps: Make your iPad whatever you want it to be.

التطبيقات: معها iPad يتكيف على كيفك. :TR

BT: Apps: with them iPad adapts to your mood

5.5. Linguistic Adaptation and Paraphrasing as Transcreation

Components

Example (10) is about a lip and cheek tint. The translation was identified in

the monolingual assessment stage due to the use of the word 'our darling' –

in the feminine form – which is Arabic-specific and close to everyday

usage. It is considered a transcreation through linguistic adaptation.

Although the Arabic version does not include creative constructs, cultural

references or metaphors, it expresses the expressions 'gogo' and 'girl'

differently to provide more culturally suitable equivalents.

(10) RT: You go-go girl!

كونى على استعداد، حبيبتنا! :TR

BT: Be ready, our darling!

Example (11) is another case of linguistic adaptation for a liquid lip color.

The RT introduces locale-related expressions that do not have equivalents in

Arabic. The Arabic version uses culturally suitable phrases and a style

tweaked in a creative manner to comply with the locale convention. This

aspect was observed in several cases in the same website.

(11) RT: Pop goes your pucker!

لشفاه ملفتة! :TR

BT: For attractive lips!

In Example (12), a blurb on a lip gloss, the Arabic version uses a slightly

different idea than the RT, but semantically equivalent wording. The

adjective does not describe the action itself but rather the product. In this

and previous examples, the difference between adaptation and transcreation

becomes blurry, since there is a considerable similarity between the English

and Arabic texts on the lexical and semantic levels; yet, it is a different way

of conveying the message.

(12) RT: Sweet surrender!

استسلمي لهذا المنتج الحلو! :TR

BT: Surrender to this sweet product!

5.6. Cultural Adaptation as a Transcreation Component

In Example (13), a blurb on another lip gloss product, the title was adapted

to avoid using the word 'kiss' which can be unacceptable in certain

conservative Arab societies. While the translation simply introduces a

collocation, it transformed the wording by using the notion of 'color' with a

suitable adjective.

(13) RT: A kiss of paradise!

TR: لون جذاب

BT: An attractive color

In Example (14), a description of a similar cosmetic, the word 'bliss' was

not rendered similarly as it could be problematic. It is usually used in

religious contexts in Arabic. The translation included an exaggerating

expression that served the persuasive function.

(14) RT: Pure lip bliss!

شفاه في غاية النعومة! :TR

BT: Very smooth lips!

5.7. Literal Translation or Accidental Transcreation?

The first, monolingual stage of analysis aimed to spot cultural references in

Arabic. However, a few cases were identified as having cultural references,

but during the bilingual analysis, these examples appeared to be close to the

RT wording and ideas. Example (15) is taken from a furniture website and

is about safe blinds and curtains. Assonance was used in the tagline in the

words 'cords' and 'mind', 'hibal' and 'albāl', although the Arabic version

resembles the RT.

(15) RT: Goodbye cords, hello peace of mind

وداعًا للحبال، مرحبًا براحة البال: TR:

BT: Goodbye cords, hello peace of mind

More interestingly, a title similar to a well-known and old song in Arabic

was used in Example (16), which is about a tablet with augmented reality

features. The song is titled 'laughter, joy, seriousness and love' (ضحك ولعب

وجد وحب). It is highly culture-specific and can be persuasive. As the English

words, structure and idea appear in a different framework, the word 'work'

was rendered in a way close to everyday language but is still derived from

Standard Arabic, and the word 'laughter' was added, the strategy can be

considered transcreation.

(16) RT: Work, learn, and play using AR.

ضحك ولعب ودرس وشغل. في الواقع المعزز. :TR

BT: Laughter, joy, learning and work. In augmented reality.

### 6. The Function(s) of the Translation and the 'Source Text'

The examples of transcreation components found in the corpus include various strategies and procedures, which makes transcreation a "holistic approach" (Gaballo 2012) or an inclusive strategy in translation for specific genres. More importantly, the study has revealed certain tendencies of transcreation use in the industry, particularly in light of the "internationalized text" (Pym 2006). The main study shows a limited use of transcreation (69 out of 2524 checked blurbs). Although these cases do not represent the localization practices on other websites, they do not seem to correspond to academic and industry discourses with respect to the targetculture orientation of localization. The study has found that the majority of these published translations do not include cultural markers to enhance persuasion, which were found in only 4.1% of the blurbs in this study. This tendency toward cultural neutrality is not common in the advertising genre. Having said that, the characteristics and norms of an established text type can change under the influence of the process it undergoes, and the influence of the nature and function of the 'source text'. Although not all the website content in this study was analyzed bilingually, the limited use of local constructs suggests that a neutral, international stance was preferred over a local, culturally adapted one.

The findings indicate specific areas in the use of transcreation as well. Transcreation cases were found mainly in the high-tech corporate websites and one cosmetics brand website. This can be explained by two variables: the product type and the level of internationalization. On the one hand, as noted by Guidère (2008), more liberty in the translation is manifested in competitive markets, while conformity to the initial site is adopted in more segmented markets in order to reduce the localization costs. This was evident in the two high-tech websites used in the study, compared to those of cosmetic and furniture product websites. Having said that, in competitive industries, the online content can be considered more visible and critical for online shopping, compared to in-store purchases of products such as cosmetics. Therefore, the high visibility of content can be a motivation for more creativity and local customization. On the other hand, an exceptional case of one cosmetic website revealed that the English text included many colloquial expressions, metaphors, instances of wordplay, and culturespecific references which may not suit other locales. These factors might have imposed more adaptation- and transcreation- oriented paths, which corresponds to Gaballo's explanation of transcreation as "a strategy to overcome the limits of 'untranslatability'" (2012). The same applies to the high-tech websites, where the English text introduced a play on words and metaphors in multiple occasions. On the contrary, the furniture website and most of the cosmetic products websites did not show a similar tendency. Therefore, the culturally and linguistically neutral approach is not necessarily associated to dealing with new genres but also to other economic and source-text-related factors which shape the function and strategy of the translation, over and above the workflow itself.

As for the internationalized text, besides targeting an international audience, it seems to have a double function in terms of its translation purposes. It is designed to facilitate less problematic translation and/or allow more room for cultural customization. The former function serves low-cost-oriented and probably faster localization which provides a comprehensible and culturally neutral product in the target language, i.e. a text with "zero distance" (Nord 2005, 150), whereas the latter function opens the door for major modification to provide the same message effect that suits the target locale. The nature and function of the reference text (as an international version) can have a relationship with the translation strategy choice. This has been true for the majority of the transcreated cases. Having said that, and in view of the same wide audience, channel, and assumed function, the same text type can be translated differently based on the visibility level, the importance of the market for the company, cost and the 'source text' function. The results highlight not only the function of the translation, but also that of the 'source text'. Furthermore, they underline the similarities of approaches used in transcreation and translation, based on the function.

#### 7. Conclusion

This paper was an attempt to investigate the components of transcreation in Arabic-localized content. It started off by discussing adaptation and how it is applied in advertising translation. Then, it provided a framework of transcreation as a translation strategy, having surveyed the literature for different perspectives on transcreation. The research followed a functionalist approach in the corpus selection and in the analysis and aimed to provide insight into the practices through target-based selection criterion. Although the target-based assessment might not have detected all forms of adaptation, it was fit for the purpose of this research using the function markers of the translation and the transcreation concept. The results have shown the proportion of transcreation identifiable in the studied Arabic-localized websites and the various components which shape this strategy. The adopted approach has distinguished the appellative function markers in the target situation rather than extracting them through direct comparison. The approach has been flexible and open to elaborate the criterion.

The analysis of the reference text in relation to the translation strategies per product type has brought to the fore economics-driven practices and tendencies which affect the function of the translation even within the same genre. Although internationalization has been thought to be conducive to

transcreation, the results of the monolingual analysis showed a shortage of cases with local traits and more cases of cultural neutrality. Nonetheless, this area still needs more investigation to reveal whether internationalization is always used and what influence it has over localization.

While the study looked into the transcreation practice in Arabic, which is an under-researched language in localization, it can be applied to similar research in other languages in order to explore locale-based variables in terms of the adopted translation strategies. With the paucity of studies on transcreation in the advertising context, and in localization in Arabic in particular, this paper hopes to contribute to the existing theoretical and empirical data through the adopted methodology and the findings. It is hoped that the results will help translation students and professionals have a better understanding of the components of transcreation and how different translation strategies are used to meet the function of a text.

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## 9. Appendix

From www.apple.com (Texts accessed: 23/04/2019)

Example (3)

## Part racehorse. All workhorse.

In addition to being a great desktop computer, Mac mini powers everything from home automation to giant render farms. And now with eighth-generation Intel quad-core and 6-core processors and Intel UHD Graphics 630, Mac mini has even more compute power for industrial-grade tasks. So whether you're running a live concert sound engine or testing your latest iOS or iPadOS app, Mac mini is the shortest distance between a great idea and a great result.

## سرعة عدّاء. قدرة مصارع.

يس Mac mini جهاز كمبيوتر مكتبي في غاية الروعة فحسب، بل هو أيضاً جهاز مسؤول عن كل الاعمال، دءاً من عمليات أتمتة المنزل وصولاً إلى مجموعات التصيير العملاقة. وبفضل معالجات Intel رباعية النوى بسداسية النوى من الجيل الثامن ومعالج رسومات Intel UHD Graphics 630، يتمتع Mac mini الآن قدرة حوسبة أكبر تلبي متطلبات المهام الاحترافية الضخمة. وهكذا سواء أكنت تشغّل محركاً صوتياً لحفلة بوسيقية حية أم تختبر أحدث تطبيقاتك على نظام iOS، يوفر لك Mac mini الطريق الأقصر للانتقال من فكرة ائعة إلى نتىجة مذهلة.

Example (5)

macOS

macOS

في قلبه أدوات، تعطى من قلبها. Built-in tools that go all out.

## Example (6)

Graphics

## Eye-opening graphics performance.

## رسومات الغرافيك داء رسومات قوي، يملأ العس.

تميز MacBook Pro مقاس 13 إنش برسومات غرافيك مدمجة قوية مع ذاكرة وصول عشوائي ديناميكية

### Example (7)

### USB-C. Singularly versatile.

The USB-C port puts everything you need in a port all in one place. It provides charging, speedy USB data transfer (up to 5Gb/s), and video output in a reversible design that's onethird the size of a USB 3 port, giving you the flexibility to easily connect your favorite devices.

Example (9)

## USB-C. تعدّدت المهام والمنفذ واحد.

يمنحك USB-C استخدامات المنافذ كلها في مكان و احد، إذ يوفر إمكانية الشحن والنقل السريع للبيانات عبر USB (لغاية Gb5/ثانية)، وإخراج الفيديو في تصميم يعمل على الجهتين بثلث حجم منفذ 3 USB، ما يعطيك مرونة توصيل أجهز تك المفضلة بسهولة

## Apps

Make your iPad whatever you want it to be.

iPad Air comes loaded with Apple-designed apps you'll use every day, like Photos, Maps, Messages, Mail, and Safari. You'll also get a suite of powerful productivity apps, including Pages, Numbers, and Keynote. And you can get creative right out of the box with GarageBand and iMovie.



بأتبك iPad Air محملاً بتطبيقات من تصميم مجموعة من التطبيقات الفعالة التي تساعدك على الإنتاج والإنجاز، بما في ذلك Numbersg Pages Keynoteg. وإذا أردت أن تطلق العنان لإبداعاتك الفنية المبتكرة فما عليك سوى استخدام iMovieg GarageBand.

معها iPad يتكيف على كيفك.

### Example (16)

## Work, learn, and play using AR.

Augmented reality combines digital objects and information with the real world to create entirely new experiences. iPad is the perfect device for truly immersive AR — with front and back cameras, the A12 Bionic chip with Neural Engine, a large, vivid display, and sensors for motion tracking.

### ضحك ولعب ودرس وشغل. في الواقع المعزز.

يدمج الواقع المعزز العناصر والمعلومات الرقمية في العالم الواقعي لابتكار تجارب جديدة كلياً من العاقعي لابتكار تجارب للدستمتاع بتجارب واقع معزز غامرة للحواس بفضل الكاميراتين الأمامية والخلفية، وشريحة Neural Engine، وشاشته الكبيرة بأنوانها الزاهية، ومستشعراته الخاصة لتعقب الحاحة.

## From <a href="www.benefitcosmetics.com">www.benefitcosmetics.com</a> (Texts accessed: 19/04/2019)

## Example (10)

♥♥♥♥♥ 3 Reviews

Gogotint Cheek & Lip Stain bright cherry tinted lip & cheek stain

💜 💜 💜 💜 2 عروض

تنت Gogotint للخدود والشفاه تنت كرزى مشرق للشفاه والخدود

WHY WE LOVE IT

You go-go, girl!

Turn on the cheekiness with this bright cherry red tinted lip & cheek stain! Our precise lip applicator glides right on lips for a juicy burst of colour and blends beautifully onto cheeks for a sweet, vibrant flush that lasts for hours.

. s 151 f

كوني على استعداد، حبيبتنا!

تألقي بهذا الكنت ذات اللون الأحمر الكرزي للشفاء والخدود! تنساب أداة الثطييق الكثيقة بسلاسة على الثقاء للمسة ملونة النيذة وتُمرَّر على الخدود لتُورد ربَّيق وذابض بالحيوية بدوم أساعات.

Example (11)

punch pop!

liquid lip colour

WHY WE LOVE IT

🤝 💝 💝 💝 عنابة العرض الأول

مستحضر !punch pop

أماذا نحبه

Pop goes your pucker!

It's liquid lip colour with a pop of juicy colour, vitamin E & shine! This cushiony, creamy lip colour is punches of fun!

لشفاه ملفتة!

يتموز ملمع الشقاء السائل هذا بتقحة فاكينة ملونة وفيتامين إي! كما يصنفي هذا الممنتحضر الكريمي الناعم لمسة من المرح!

Example (12)

WHY WE LOVE IT

♥♥♥♥♥ 23 Reviews sugarbomb ultra plush

shimmering pinky nude lip gloss

💝 💝 💝 😭 مثابة المرض الأول

مستحضر sugarbomb ultra plush ملقع تناه نود وردي متلالئ

لماذا نحبه

Sweet surrender!

Our plush glosses glide on extra smooth and feel ahhhmazing. The six irresistible shades, from sultry nudes to punchy pinks, come in soft-squeeze tubes with a custom tip designed for perfectly even application.

استسلمي لهذا المنتج الحلو!

تنساب مستحضر اثنا لتلميع الشفاه ينسومة لتمنحك شمورا رائما! تأثي الدرجات الست الساحرة، من درجات الذود الجذابة إلى الدرجات الوردية الأسرة، في أنابيب ليّنة ومزرّدة بحافة صمّت خصوصا لاستخدام مثالي.

Example (13)



A kiss of paradise!

مستحضر coralista ultra plush ملمّع تىفاہ مرجانيّ تىقًاف

💜 💜 💜 💜 عثابة العرض الأول

أماذا نحيه

## لو ن جذاب

تتساب مستحضراتنا لتلميع الشفاه بكل نعومة لتمنحك شعورا رائعا! تأتي الدرجات الست الساحرة، من درجات النود الجذابة إلى الدرجات الوردية الأسرة، في أنابيب لَيْنَةَ مزوِّدةَ بِحافة صمَّمت خصيصا لاستخدام مثالي.

- پوفر نعومة حريرية عند وضعه
  - تركبية فاخرة

WHY WE LOVE IT

Our plush glosses glide on extra smooth and feel ahhhmazing. The six irresistible shades, from sultry nudes to punchy pinks, come in soft-squeeze tubes with a custom tip designed for perfectly even application.

- Sheer coral
- Silky smooth wear
- Luxurious formula

### Example (14)

2 Reviews

hervana ultra plush

berry pink lip gloss

WHY WE LOVE IT

## Pure lip bliss!

Our plush glosses glide on extra smooth and feel ahhhmazing. The six irresistible shades, from sultry nudes to punchy pinks, come in soft-squeeze tubes with a custom tip designed for perfectly even application.

- Berry pink
- Silky smooth wear
- Luxurious formula

💜 💜 💜 💜 عثابة العرض الأول

## مستحضر hervana ultra plush ملمع شفاه وردي توتي

## شفاه في غاية النعومة!

تتساب مستحصراتنا لتلميع الشفاء بكل نمرمة وتجملك كبدين رائمة. يتوهر هذا المستحصر في ست درجات ساحرة، من درجات النود الجنابة إلى الدرجات الوردية المتردة، ويأتى في آذابيب من السهل الضغط عاليها مع طرف صمّم خصيصا لتطييق

- تركيبة حريرية ناعمة
  - تر كنية فاخرة

From www.ikea.com (Texts accessed: 18/04/2019)

## Example (15)

Goodbye cords,

Goodbye cords, hello peace of mind You may not realise this, but the cords on blinds and curtains pose a strangulation risk for small children. We believe children are the most important people in the world, which is why we work hard to make homes safer. So, we set about adapting our range of blinds and curtains to make your windows as safe as possible. We spent four years coming up with safe alternatives, and where we couldn't, we simply removed the product from our range.

ودات منصين، مرحبًا براحة البال قد لا تكون مدركًا ذلك، لكن حبال الستائر والستائر المعتمة تشكل خطر اختناق للأطفال الصغار. نحن نعتقد أن الأطفال هم أهم أفراد هذا العالم، ولذا نعمل بجد لجعل المنازل أكثر مم اللم الرانا لغا العالم، ولذ العمل بب لبعل العاران ا أمانًا. وقد بدأنا في تكييف تشكيلتنا من الستائر والستائر المعتمة لنجعل نوافذك آمنة قدر الإمكان. أمضينا أربع سنوات من أجل التوصل إلى بدائل آمنة، وفي الحالات التي لم نتمكن فيها من ذلك، قمنا بازالة المنتج من تشكيلة

From www.samsung.com (Texts accessed: 22/04/2019)

Example (1)

## **Elegantly refined**

The Galaxy On7 Prime boasts a stunning brushed metal finish with zero camera protrusion to ensure an overall ultra slim design. Its enlarged screen features flowing curved edges for optimal viewing and comfortable single handed use.

## ملتقى التألق بالرقي

يتميز بطبقة معدنية مصقولة مع كاميرا غير بارزة على الإطلاق لضمان تصميم نحيف للغاية. كما أن شاشته الكبرة تمتاز بحواف منحنية بشكل انسيايي يتيح لك مشاهدة مثلى وسهولة الاستخدام بيد واحدة.

### Example (2)

# Add music. Make GIFs. Get likes.

Super Slow-mo lets you see the things you could have missed in the blink of an eye. Set the video to music or turn it into a looping GIF, and share it with a tap. Then sit back and watch the reactions roll in.

## الموسيقي مع صور GIF ... إعجاب لا يجف.

تتيح لك ميزة التصوير بالحركة البطيئة جداً متابعة كل ما فاتك في غمضة عين، فيمكنك إغناء فيلم الفيديو بمعزوفات موسيقية أو تحويله إلى صورة GIF، ثم شاركه بمجرد ضغطة واحدة. استرخ الآن وراقب تفاعل الجماهير في كل مكان.

## Example (8)

# Cherish every moment with precision

Capture true-to-life pictures of every special moment with the Galaxy Tab A (7.0, 2016)'s fast and sophisticated camera. You can take clear panoramic images, vertically and horizontally, or even create an animated GIF using burst.

## تذكر كل لحظة بإحكام ودقة

تمتع بالتقاط صور حقيقية لسائر اللحظات الخاصة عبر كاميرا جهاز Galaxy Tab A (7.0", 2016) التي تتميز بالسرعة والتطور. يمكنك التقاط صور بانورامية واضحة رأسية وأفقية أو حتى إنشاء رسوم GIF متحركة باستخدام الدفعة.