



Semantic and pragmatic distortion in the translation of English advertising slogans into Ukrainian

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Abstract. The study addressed the problem of translation accuracy in the rendering of English-language advertising slogans into Ukrainian, which remained a challenging task due to their semantic density and stylistic compression. The aim of the study was to identify typical inaccuracies arising in the translation of English advertising slogans into Ukrainian and to determine how translation transformations may affect the conceptual structure and pragmatic impact of the original message. The research employed methods of comparative translation analysis and semantic and pragmatic analysis. The material consisted of English-language slogans used in international advertising communication and their Ukrainian renderings. Particular attention was paid to translation transformations such as omission, modulation, syntactic restructuring, grammatical substitution, differentiation of meaning, and literal translation. The results demonstrated that translation inaccuracies arose when key lexical components or structural features encoding the central concept of the slogan were omitted, replaced, or transformed. Such transformations led to obscuring the core conceptual message, weakening stylistic expressiveness, reducing persuasive force, and blurring the brand identity embedded in the original slogan. The study also showed that the loss of stylistic devices and directive structures diminished the pragmatic effectiveness characteristic of advertising discourse. By systematically correlating particular translation transformations with types of semantic and pragmatic distortion, the research provided a detailed explanation of how translation choices influenced the communicative effectiveness of advertising slogans. Alternative Ukrainian renderings were proposed to illustrate strategies for achieving greater semantic and

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pragmatic equivalence. The practical significance of the study lies in its applicability to translation practice and international advertising communication

Keywords: advertising discourse; translation transformations; pragmatic equivalence; conceptual distortion; translation inaccuracies

Introduction

In globalised communicative space, advertising slogans function as one of the most effective instruments for influencing mass consciousness by shaping consumer behavior, attitudes, and value orientations. As highly condensed verbal messages, slogans encapsulate the core idea of a brand and serve as a powerful means of constructing its identity in the minds of target audiences. Their persuasive force relies not only on semantic precision but also on emotional appeal, cultural resonance, and stylistic expressiveness. In cross-cultural communication, however, these features become particularly vulnerable, as the transfer of a slogan into another language inevitably involves a complex process of negotiation between preserving the original meaning and adapting it to the target culture. This tension gives rise to a fundamental problem: how to ensure the adequacy of translation without distorting the conceptual, pragmatic, and expressive dimensions of the slogan.

The authors S. Shahzad *et al.* (2024) emphasised that a slogan embodies the central idea of an advertising campaign, contributes to forming a positive attitude toward the advertised product, and helps establish and reinforce brand identity. N.K. Vid & V. Kučič (2021) approached the function of slogans primarily from a pragmatic perspective, highlighting their motivational role in persuading consumers and encouraging them to take action, such as purchasing a product or service. Similarly, M.C. Adiniu & A. Uchenina (2023) foreground the persuasive function of slogans, attributing it to their emotive and expressive potential, which enables them

to evoke positive associations with both the brand and the advertised product.

Within this context, the adequate translation of advertising slogans remains a consistently relevant issue in contemporary translation studies. Both excessive reliance on literal translation and overly adaptive translation strategies may distort the core idea of a slogan, thereby weakening brand identity and diminishing the pragmatic and expressive impact of the advertising message. In their work, D.A. Villegas & A.M. Marin (2022) argued for the necessity of adaptive translation methods, whereby the translator adjusts the original text to the target culture in order to achieve functional equivalence through substitutions, omissions, or additions. At the same time, the authors stress that such adaptation may lead to transformations of the original meaning. J. Munday *et al.* (2022) define translation adequacy as the extent to which a translation meets the expectations and requirements of multiple stakeholders, including the client, the target audience, and the translator. C. Han (2020) systematises key approaches to translation quality assessment, identifying reliability, validity, and practicality as the main evaluation criteria.

At the same time, relatively few international studies focus specifically on translation errors and inaccuracies that reduce the pragmatic effectiveness of advertising messages, particularly in relation to Ukrainian-language material. A.G. Sâlcianu (2022) identifies several types of errors that may lead to translation inadequacies, including excessive use of inappropriate literal translation, insufficient adaptation to the target culture, and failure to account

for cultural taboos and local social, religious, or cultural norms. I. Torresi (2021) examined four major categories of translation problems: pragmatic, cultural, linguistic, and textual.

Based on an experimental study of translator training, Y. Alolaywi (2022) concludes that translation errors can be broadly classified into structural, lexical, and interpretative categories. The study highlights that the majority of errors fall within the structural category and are associated with difficulties in forming subject-verb agreement, using relative clauses and pronouns, and constructing syntactically well-formed sentences.

Although a number of studies have addressed the translation of English-language slogans into Ukrainian, the issue of translation inadequacy remains largely underexplored, particularly in terms of systematic analysis of erroneous or suboptimal translation solutions. This gap is especially significant given the increasing integration of the Ukrainian advertising market into the global communicative space and the growing presence of international brands targeting local consumers. One of the few studies addressing this issue is that of O.O. Kurbal-Granovska (2024), who draws attention to the problem of over-adaptation in translating English slogans into Ukrainian, a strategy that may dilute global brand identity.

Against this background, it was necessary to address this research gap by examining cases of inappropriate application of translation transformations in the Ukrainian rendering of English-language advertising slogans. Particular attention was paid to translation solutions that distort the core idea of the slogan, blur brand identity, or misrepresent the characteristics of the advertised product or service. The aim of this study was therefore to identify and analyse types of translation inaccuracies that reduce the pragmatic effectiveness of advertising slogans in cross-cultural communication. In cases where existing translations were found to weaken or distort the conceptual and

pragmatic content of the original slogan, the analysis was complemented by proposing alternative Ukrainian renderings intended to more adequately preserve the semantic structure and persuasive effect of the source message. To achieve this aim, the study addressed the following research questions:

Q1: What types of translation transformations most frequently lead to distortions in the Ukrainian translations of English-language advertising slogans?

Q2: How do such translation inaccuracies affect the preservation of the slogan's conceptual message and the global identity of the brand?

Q3: To what extent do these translation solutions reduce the pragmatic and persuasive impact of the original advertising message on the target audience?

Materials and Methods

The empirical material of the study consisted of English-language advertising slogans of internationally recognised brands and their Ukrainian translations used in the local advertising space. The corpus was composed of seven slogans representing globally established brands, including HSBC – “The World’s Local Bank” (HSBC The World’s..., n.d.), Volkswagen – “Think Small” (Daye, n.d.), “Taco Bell – Think Outside the Bun” (A case study on Taco Bell’s, n.d.), Hallmark – “When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best” (Hallmark In Real Life, n.d.), Burger King – “Have It Your Way” (Have It Your Way Slogan, n.d.), Coca-Cola – “The Taste That Can’t Be Beat” (Advertising slogans: 55..., n.d.), as well as the recruitment slogan of the U.S. Marines – “The Few... The Proud... The Marines” (The Few, The Proud..., 2007). The selection of these particular slogans was methodologically justified by several factors. First, all selected slogans belong to internationally recognised brands with a clearly established global identity, which makes them suitable for analysing the preservation or distortion of brand-related

meanings in translation. Second, these slogans are widely circulated and culturally significant, representing different types of advertising discourse, including commercial product promotion (e.g., food and beverages, automotive industry) and institutional or recruitment communication. Third, their Ukrainian translations have been documented either in the local media space or in contemporary translation studies literature, which ensured the availability of comparable source and target texts. Finally, the selected slogans are characterised by a high degree of semantic density, stylistic markedness (e.g., use of idioms, oxymoron, antithesis), and pragmatic orientation, making them particularly relevant for analysing the impact of translation transformations on meaning and persuasive effect. The material was collected from a combination of sources, including electronic advertising databases, publicly available brand communication materials, and academic publications in the field of translation studies (The Few, The Proud..., 2007; Mulyk & Humeniy, 2019; Advertising slogans, 2023). The use of multiple types of sources ensured the representativeness and reliability of the corpus. In cases where Ukrainian translations were not attested in the media discourse, they were taken from scholarly works that analyse translation practices in advertising.

The study employed a qualitative analytical approach, as the primary objective was to examine the mechanisms of meaning construction and transformation. The methodological framework combined comparative translation analysis with semantic-pragmatic and stylistic analysis, which together made it possible to investigate the relationship between linguistic form, conceptual content, and communicative function in both the source and target texts. Comparative translation analysis was used to identify and classify the translation transformations applied in the Ukrainian renderings of the slogans. This method allowed for a systematic comparison between the source and target

texts and made it possible to determine how specific translation operations (such as omission, addition, modulation, differentiation of meaning, grammatical substitution, and syntactic restructuring) affect the structure and content of the slogan. Semantic and conceptual analysis was employed to examine the extent to which the core idea of the slogan is preserved in translation. This approach focused on identifying the key conceptual components encoded in the source text and evaluating their representation in the target text. It was particularly relevant for analysing slogans, as their effectiveness largely depends on the accurate transmission of a condensed conceptual message.

Pragmatic analysis was applied to assess the communicative function of the slogans, including their directive force, persuasive orientation, and potential impact on the target audience. This method made it possible to evaluate how translation transformations influence the illocutionary force of the slogan and its ability to engage the recipient. Stylistic analysis was used to examine expressive devices such as metaphor, idiomatic expressions, antithesis, and oxymoron, which contribute to the memorability and persuasive power of advertising slogans. The inclusion of this method was justified by the fact that stylistic features often carry essential components of the slogan's conceptual and emotional meaning. The analytical procedure consisted of four stages. At the first stage, the English-language slogans and their Ukrainian translations were compared in order to identify the translation transformations applied in the target texts. At the second stage, the semantic and conceptual correspondence between the source and target texts was analysed, with particular attention to the preservation of the slogan's core idea and brand-related meanings. At the third stage, the pragmatic and stylistic effects of the translations were evaluated, focusing on their persuasive and expressive characteristics. At the fourth stage, alternative Ukrainian renderings were proposed

in cases where the existing translations were found to inadequately reproduce the conceptual or pragmatic structure of the original slogan. This methodological framework ensured a comprehensive analysis of advertising slogan translation by integrating multiple complementary approaches and provided a basis for analysing the conditions under which translation transformations may contribute to or hinder the preservation of conceptual meaning, brand identity, and persuasive effectiveness in cross-cultural communication.

Results

The original of the slogan “The World’s Local Bank” (HSBC The World’s..., n.d.) represents a paradoxical “glocal” brand slogan in which opposing concepts are deliberately combined – global reach and knowledge of local cultural and financial specifics. In the translation into Ukrainian as “Банк для всього світу” [Bank dlia vsoho svitu] (Advertising slogans..., 2023), the second meaning is lost through the transformation of omission of the lexical unit “local”, which significantly distorts the idea of the slogan that defines the unique identity of the bank as an international institution and, at the same time, a personal, local bank for individuals and businesses. At the same time, as a result of translation, the oxymoronic and paradoxical effect of the original message is lost. This example illustrates how omission accompanied by the loss of stylistic devices may affect the slogan’s conceptual message and lead to a loss of brand identity and conceptual duality (Q2), especially when key stylistic devices encode the core concept. This conclusion directly addresses Q1, indicating that omission refers to those transformations that most often lead to distortions. For translating this slogan, it would be more appropriate to apply the transformation of modulation by developing the meaning either of territorial accessibility or of sensitivity to local specificity, for example: “Банк поруч з вами” [Bank poruch z vamy] or “Глобальний

банк з місцевим підходом” [Hlobalnyi bank z mistsevym pidkhodom].

In addition to the loss of stylistic devices, the distortion of the key concept of the slogan may, on the contrary, be the result of the appearance in the translation of stylistic devices that were absent in the original. In the original slogan “The Few... The Proud... The Marines.” (US Marines), there is no opposition between the attributes of the Marines, which are expressed in the form of nominative sentences. In the Ukrainian rendering “Обраних небарато. Гордих барато” [Obranykh nebahato. Hordykh bahato] (Advertising slogans..., 2023), the translator introduces an opposition, an antithesis, through the transformation of addition of opposing lexical units (небарато – барато [nebahato – bahato]), and also performs the transformation of omission of the word denoting the key concept defined by the other two units. As a result, an entirely different meaning emerges, distorting the original idea of the slogan. The distortion affected both the conceptual message and the representation of the brand’s identity (Q2). A more accurate translation would preserve the rhythmic structure of short nominative sentences while applying the transformation of differentiation of meaning in rendering the first lexeme in order to enhance the slogan’s expressiveness: “Обрані. Горді. Морські піхотинці” [Obrani. Hordi. Morski pikhotyntsi].

Translation may distort the meaning and concept of the original due to excessive adaptation of the slogan using the transformation of complete syntactic rearrangement. The key idea of the slogan and its pragmatic effect are lost in the translation of the original expression “Think Small” (Volkswagen) into Ukrainian as “Простота докільля” [Prostota dovkillia]. Such a translation is proposed in the work of K. Mulyk & K. Humennyi (2019).

In the original slogan, the concept of the advantages of a small-sized car is encoded. The main idea of the slogan is to draw the

audience's attention to the fact that the compact size of the vehicle is not a disadvantage but rather an advantage (e.g., lower fuel consumption and maintenance costs, as well as greater maneuverability). In other words, the slogan encourages the audience to reconsider the conventional association between large size and automotive superiority.

In the Ukrainian translation, which employs the transformation of full syntactic restructuring combined with grammatical substitution (replacement of a directive speech act with a nominative construction), both the core idea of the slogan and its pragmatic effect are lost. The original slogan is a concise imperative utterance directly addressing the recipient and urging them to reconsider their perception of car size. In the translation, this pragmatic orientation disappears: the directive act implying a cognitive action on the part of the addressee (think) is replaced with an abstract nominal phrase that has no clear connection either to the car itself or to its characteristics. As a result, the personalisation of the advertising appeal is eliminated, the expressiveness of the slogan is reduced, and the key concept of the small size of the car as an advantage disappears. This case demonstrated a significant reduction of pragmatic and persuasive impact on the target audience (Q3), and highlights complete syntactic restructuring as one of the most distortion-prone transformations (Q1).

A more adequate translation would preserve the imperative structure of the original and thus maintain its pragmatic orientation. Several possible Ukrainian renderings may be proposed. One option is “Думай про мале” [Dumai pro male], which most closely reproduces the syntactic structure and brevity of the original slogan. By retaining the imperative form, this version preserves the directive nature of the advertising message and encourages the recipient to reconsider the value of a small car. Another possible translation is “Мисли компактно” [Mysly kompaktno]. This version

represents a semantic modulation in which the adjective small is interpreted as compact, a characteristic more directly associated with the advantages of a vehicle. Such modulation makes the slogan sound more natural in advertising discourse while still maintaining the imperative form and the idea of re-evaluating the value of compactness. Finally, a more adaptive advertising-oriented translation may be “Обирай компактність” [Obyrai kompaktnist]. Although this version modifies the speech act by transforming the cognitive directive think into a call for action (choose), it preserves the key promotional concept and clearly foregrounds the value of compact size as a positive feature of the vehicle. Overall, translations that retain the brevity and directive character of the original slogan while foregrounding the advantage of compact size are more likely to reproduce both the conceptual content and the pragmatic impact of the original advertising message. This directly answered Q3 by showing that preserving directive structure is crucial for maintaining persuasive effectiveness.

The analysis showed that not only excessive adaptation of a slogan in translation but also, conversely, its literal translation can weaken the brand's image and the pragmatic effect of the original. An example is the rendering of the slogan “Think Outside the Bun” (Taco Bell) as “Думай поза булкою” [Dumai poza bulkoiu] (Advertising slogans..., 2023).

The English-language slogan “Think Outside the Bun” demonstrates a creative play on words, drawing on the idiom think outside the box, which signifies unconventional or innovative thinking. In this slogan, the noun “bun” replaces “box”, simultaneously referencing the product (buns as a component of traditional burgers) and contrasting Taco Bell's products with conventional fast-food items such as burgers. Thus, the slogan encourages the audience to adopt a non-traditional perspective, positioning Taco Bell as an alternative to typical fast-food chains.

The Ukrainian rendering “Думай поза булкою” [Dumai poza bulkoiu] represents a literal translation that retains the lexical meaning of the original words and the directive speech act, but fails to convey the idiomatic and figurative aspects inherent in the source text. In particular, the translated slogan loses the connotation of creative or non-standard thinking embedded in the English expression. Consequently, the directive message appears reduced to a superficial reference to a “bun,” without evoking the intended conceptual contrast or innovative framing of the brand’s product. From a pragmatic perspective, the translation diminishes the persuasive and emotive impact of the slogan, as the imperative structure remains but the playful, attention-grabbing quality is weakened. Moreover, the Ukrainian version fails to highlight the brand’s positioning as an alternative to traditional burgers, which is a key component of the original slogan’s marketing strategy. While the English slogan simultaneously emphasises both cognitive engagement (think differently) and product differentiation (alternative to standard fast food), the Ukrainian translation conveys neither the idiomatic meaning nor the strategic contrast, resulting in a partial loss of both semantic and pragmatic effectiveness. This further confirmed that literal translation is another source of distortion (Q1), reducing persuasive and emotive impact of the original message (Q3).

Several alternative translations could better capture the conceptual and persuasive intent of the original slogan. For example, “Думай нестандартно – з Taco Bell” [Dumai nestandardno – z Taco Bell] preserves the idiomatic sense of unconventional thinking while explicitly linking it to the brand. Another possible rendering, “Мисли інакше – забудь про бурер” [Mysly inakshe – zabud pro burher], foregrounds the contrast with traditional fast food, thereby maintaining the promotional emphasis on Taco Bell as an alternative. Finally, “Думай по-новому – обери Taco Bell” [Dumai

po-novomu – obery Taco Bell] combines a directive imperative with both conceptual novelty and brand reference, effectively restoring the slogan’s persuasive and emotive functions in the Ukrainian context.

Overall, the analysis demonstrated that literal translation of idiomatically and culturally loaded slogans may lead to a loss of meaning, reduction of stylistic expressiveness, and weakening of the brand’s intended positioning. This confirmed that such transformations affect both conceptual meaning and pragmatic impact (Q2, Q3). A separate group in the corpus of research material was represented by slogans, the translations of which generally retain the key concept of the original, but “blur” the brand identity due to the use of transformations of modulation, omission and differentiation of meanings, weakening the connection between the slogan and the advertised product.

The translation of the slogan “The Taste That Can’t Be Beat” (Coca-Cola) as “Смак, який не змагається” [Smak, yakyi ne zmahaietsia] (Advertising slogans..., 2023), generally preserves the idea of the original but is still not entirely accurate for several reasons. First, “can’t be beat” or “can’t be beaten” is a colloquial idiom meaning “unmatched” or “impossible to surpass in quality”, which is traditionally translated into Ukrainian as «неперевершений» [neperevershenyi] or «непереможний» [neperezmozhnyi]. In combination with the word «смак» [smak], this epithet adequately conveys the idea and the core concept of the original slogan: “Неперевершений смак” [Neperevershenyi smak]. The translator applied the transformation of modulation combined with grammatical substitution (replacement of the passive with the active voice). The modulation here consists of replacement of cause with effect: if a taste cannot be “beaten”, that is, surpassed, then there is no reason for such a taste to compete. However, for the advertising audience the modulated meaning may not be obvious. It “blurs” the original idea, as it becomes

unclear why the taste does not compete (possible inferred meanings may include unwillingness to compete, inability to compete, etc.).

In the translation of the following slogan from the corpus of material, the general emotional idea of sincere care is partially preserved: “When you Care Enough to Send the Very Best” (Hallmark In Real Life, n.d.) – “Коли ви готові віддати найкраще” [Koly vy hotovi viddaty naikrashche] (Mulyk & Humenniy, 2019). The phrase of the target text still conveys a sense of personal involvement and emotional readiness to express one’s feelings. However, several important semantic elements of the original slogan are lost or distorted.

First, the lexical unit “send”, which is central to the communicative situation represented in the slogan, is replaced with the verb “віддати” [viddaty] (to give), based on the application of the transformation of differentiation of meanings. This choice weakens the connection between the slogan and the advertised product, since the act of sending a greeting card is replaced by the much more general notion of giving something. Since the product being advertised is greeting cards, the verb “надіслати” [nadislaty] (in imperative form “надішліть” [nadishlit]) would reproduce the communicative scenario encoded in the original slogan much more accurately. As a result, the differentiation of meaning appears unnecessary in this context, since the situational specificity of the advertising message disappears. Finally, the translation also omits the lexical elements “Care Enough”, which in the original emphasises the intensity and sincerity of the emotional attitude. This omission reduces the expressive force of the slogan and weakens the causal relationship between caring and sending the best greeting card.

A more adequate Ukrainian translation would therefore preserve both the emotional component and the communicative action encoded in the original slogan. One possible rendering is “Якщо/Коли вам не байдуже –

надішліть найкраще” [Yakshcho/Koly vam ne baiduzhe – nadishlit naikrashche], which retains the idea of sincere care while directly referring to the act of sending a greeting card. Another possible version is “Коли справді дбаєте – надсилайте найкраще” [Koly spravdi dbaiete – nadsylaite naikrashche]. This translation preserves the causal relationship between care and action while maintaining the directive and persuasive tone characteristic of advertising discourse. Both variants more clearly reproduce the conceptual structure of the original slogan, in which genuine care motivates the act of sending the very best greeting card.

The slogan “Have It Your Way” (Burger King) may also be regarded as an intermediate case in which the Ukrainian translation does not distort the core conceptual meaning of the original but nevertheless weakens its pragmatic impact. In Ukrainian advertising discourse, the slogan is sometimes rendered as “На власний розсуд” [Na vlasnyi rozsud] (Mulyk & Humenniy, 2019).

In the original slogan, the central concept is that of personalisation and customer autonomy: the consumer is invited to receive the product exactly as they prefer. The imperative construction “have it” functions as a directive speech act directly addressing the potential customer and encouraging them to exercise their freedom of choice. In this way, the slogan foregrounds the brand’s key marketing strategy – allowing customers to customise their meal according to their individual preferences. In the Ukrainian rendering “На власний розсуд” [Na vlasnyi rozsud], the general idea of individual choice is preserved. The phrase conveys the notion that a decision can be made according to one’s personal preference, which corresponds to the conceptual core of the original slogan. However, several important pragmatic elements of the original are weakened in translation.

First, the imperative structure of the original slogan disappears. The English version

directly addresses the consumer and encourages an action, whereas the Ukrainian translation is a nominal phrase that merely describes the possibility of personal choice rather than inviting the customer to exercise it. As a result, the directive character of the advertising message is lost.

Second, the translation removes the implicit reference to the act of obtaining the product. In the English slogan, the verb “have” (it) implies receiving or enjoying a specific item – in this context, a burger prepared according to the customer’s preferences. The Ukrainian phrase, however, does not contain any lexical element referring to the product or to the act of ordering or consuming it. Finally, the loss of the directive form reduces the level of personalisation of the advertising appeal. While the original slogan creates the impression of a direct dialogue with the customer, the translation sounds more like a general statement describing an abstract possibility.

A more adequate translation would therefore preserve the directive structure and the implicit connection with the act of ordering food. Possible Ukrainian renderings include “Замовляй, як хочеш” [Zamovliai, yak khochesh], “Смакуй по-своєму” [Smakui po-svoiemu], or “Обирай свій смак” [Obyrai svii smak]. These versions retain the idea of individual choice while restoring the persuasive and interactive character of the original advertising message.

Overall, the results of the analysis provided explicit answers to the research questions. With regard to Q1, the study demonstrated that the translation transformations most frequently leading to distortions include omission, modulation, complete syntactic restructuring, grammatical substitution, literal translation, and the addition of stylistic elements not present in the original. Concerning Q2, these transformations affect the preservation of the slogan’s conceptual message by distorting or partially eliminating its core idea, weakening the semantic links between the slogan and the advertised product,

and blurring the global brand identity embedded in the source text. In response to Q3, the findings indicated that such translation solutions reduce the pragmatic and persuasive impact of advertising slogans to varying degrees, most notably through the loss of directive illocution, reduction of stylistic expressiveness, weakening of emotional appeal, and decreased audience engagement. Taken together, these results highlighted that the effectiveness of slogan translation depends on a balanced application of translation transformations that preserves conceptual integrity, brand identity, and pragmatic force.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicated that, although translation transformations constitute legitimate translation strategies, their unjustified or excessive use may lead to distortion of the core idea of the slogan, weakening of its stylistic expressiveness and pragmatic effectiveness, dilution of the brand identity embedded in the source message, modification of the slogan’s conceptual meaning, and a reduction in its persuasive impact on the target audience. All these factors may ultimately result in a negative impact of the translated slogan on the target audience. The possibility of such an effect – where the translated text renders an advertising campaign ineffective – is identified by I. Torresi (2021), alongside two other potential outcomes of adapting advertising texts to the target language: a neutral effect (where the translation does not significantly alter the original message) and a positive effect.

The approach adopted in this article aligns with the findings of the Ukrainian researcher O.O. Kurbal-Granovska (2024), who raised the issue of over-adaptation of English slogans in their Ukrainian renderings. The author concludes that an adaptive strategy may narrow the universal appeal of the original slogan by focusing on local concepts, thereby weakening the global identity of the brand. This

conclusion is supported by the present study. However, unlike the aforementioned research, which primarily focuses on the shift of the conceptual focus of the original slogan to fit the cultural context and values of Ukrainian consumers, the present study has gone beyond the analysis of domestication strategies by demonstrating that the effectiveness of translating English-language slogans depends on the translator's ability to account simultaneously for conceptual, pragmatic, and stylistic factors.

The problem of distortion of pragmatic equivalence in translating English slogans into Ukrainian is also partially addressed by D. Bihunov & E. Ivashkevych (2021), who analysed individual translations that convey the core idea encoded in the slogan but fail to preserve the wordplay of the original. The authors also highlighted cases where grammatical substitution (e.g., rendering the present continuous tense as the simple present) may affect the key concept of the slogan. At the same time, their study primarily focused on successful translation examples, while only two cases of distortive transformations are discussed. In contrast, the present study identified systematic semantic and pragmatic distortions in the translation of English advertising slogans into Ukrainian by analysing a wide range of inadequately applied transformations, including complete syntactic restructuring, modulation, omission of elements associated with the key concept, stylistic transformations introducing additional concepts absent in the original, grammatical substitution leading to the loss of directive illocution, literal translation resulting in the loss of idiomaticity, as well as omission and differentiation of meanings that weaken the connection between the slogan and the advertised product.

The results of this study contributed to a broader discussion of translation quality in advertising discourse and highlighted the importance of balancing semantic accuracy, pragmatic effectiveness, and cultural adaptation in translating advertising messages. This

integrative approach is consistent with the findings of D.M. Pantea *et al.* (2024), who emphasised the importance of the translator's in-depth understanding of the brand, which requires preliminary analysis of the message content, its communicative intention, rhetorical design, and emotional impact, as well as the preservation and reproduction of the conceptual core embedded in the original slogan. At the same time, the above-mentioned study does not demonstrate which specific translation transformations may lead to distortion of the key concept of the slogan or to the loss of important semantic, rhetorical, and conceptual components in translation. Instead, the present study focused specifically on lexical and grammatical transformations that result in semantic and conceptual distortions in Ukrainian translations. Translation transformations used in rendering English-language slogans into Ukrainian have been extensively studied in contemporary Ukrainian translation scholarship. O. Vasylenko *et al.* (2025) identified such recurrent translation operations as transposition, modulation, adaptation, calquing, antonymic translation and paraphrasing. In addition, S. Riabovol (2022) outlined the effectiveness of transformations such as contextual substitution, generalisation of meaning, omission, addition, sentence partitioning, literal translation, adaptation, and complete revision of the source slogan. N.V. Sheverun *et al.* (2022) noted the frequent use of transcoding, compression and decompression, calquing, generalisation, and antonymic translation.

However, these studies primarily focused on adapting the source text to the norms of the target language, leaving aside the question of when such transformations reduce the effectiveness of slogans in influencing the Ukrainian target audience, as well as ways to enhance the pragmatic and conceptual adequacy of translations. In the study by S. Sichkar *et al.* (2023), the issue of insufficient translation effectiveness is only implicitly addressed, as the authors

noted that “sometimes the differences in the language structures are so substantial that even the employment of all the lexical and grammatical transformations is not approved”, and also point to differences in consumer motivation across source and target cultures, emphasising that “Ukrainian culture tends to assess the product based on personal experience and use rather than elusive messages”.

The results of the present study demonstrated that translation effectiveness is largely determined by the extent to which applied transformations – particularly semantic modulation and complete restructuring of the original slogan – may distort brand identity. The role of slogans in constructing brand image and identity has been examined in Ukrainian scholarship primarily from semiotic and pragmatic perspectives. N. Kravchenko *et al.* (2021) analysed the pragmatic and stylistic aspects of Apple’s brand identity construction, linking it to motivational values of the target consumer, referred to as customer-associated descriptors. Similarly, N. Kravchenko *et al.* (2023) examined the identity of the Harley-Davidson brand in relation to the construction of the target consumer’s identity through key values embedded in the slogan and actualised by interconnected pragmatic and stylistic devices. These ideas intersect with the findings of the present study in that the slogan, beyond its expressive and informative functions, embodies a unique brand identity. Therefore, the loss of identity-related components in translation may render a slogan ineffective, even if its rhetorical and pragmatic potential is preserved or enhanced. At the same time, although these studies are theoretically and methodologically consistent with present findings, they do not address the issue of reproducing brand identity in translation.

The results of this study confirmed the general assumptions of previous research regarding the importance of preserving the conceptual core, pragmatic intent, and persuasive potential of advertising slogans in translation,

while at the same time offering new analytical insights into the mechanisms of semantic and pragmatic distortion caused by specific translation transformations. These findings made it possible to formulate a comprehensive understanding of translation adequacy in advertising discourse as a dynamic balance between semantic accuracy, cultural adaptation, and the preservation of brand identity, thereby providing a more nuanced framework for evaluating and improving the quality of slogan translation in cross-cultural communication.

Conclusions

The present study examined cases of inaccurate translation of English-language advertising slogans into Ukrainian, focusing on translation transformations that distort the conceptual content and pragmatic impact of the original advertising message. The analysis of the research material has shown that the main inaccuracies in translating English-language slogans into Ukrainian have been associated with the use of translation transformations that lead to a distortion of the slogan’s core idea and, consequently, to a “blurring” of brand identity, the characteristics of the advertised product or service, as well as to a reduction in expressiveness compared to the original.

It was found that the most frequently occurring transformations, which, if used improperly, can distort the idea and pragmatics of the original, include: omission, modulation, complete syntactic reorganisation, grammatical substitution, differentiation of meanings, as well as literal translation. The findings had shown that translation inaccuracies most often arose when key lexical elements or structural features of the slogan are omitted or replaced, resulting in the loss of important semantic and pragmatic components. In particular, the omission of lexemes representing the central concept of the slogan may obscure the connection between the advertising message and the promoted product or service.

As demonstrated by a comparative translation analysis, the negative effects most often arose when stylistic devices crucial for conveying the slogan's key concept, such as oxymoron or antithesis, were lost in translation, as well as rhythmic syntactic structure, the transformation of which diminished the expressive and rhetorical impact of the original slogan. Similarly, the transformation of directive constructions into descriptive or nominal phrases may reduce the level of personalisation and persuasive force characteristic of advertising discourse.

In addition to identifying problematic translation solutions, the study proposed alternative Ukrainian renderings for several slogans in order to illustrate possible strategies for achieving a higher degree of semantic and pragmatic equivalence.

From a practical perspective, the findings may be useful for translators, advertising specialists, and brand managers working with multilingual advertising campaigns. Further research may expand the corpus of analysed slogans and explore additional factors influencing the effectiveness of slogan translation, including cultural connotations, audience perception, and the interaction between linguistic and visual components in advertising communication.

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Семантичне та прагматичне спотворення в перекладі англійських рекламних слоганів українською мовою

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Анотація. Дослідження було присвячене проблемі точності перекладу англійських рекламних слоганів українською мовою, що є складним завданням через їхню семантичну щільність і стилістичну стислість. Метою дослідження було виявлення типових неточностей, що виникають під час перекладу англійських рекламних слоганів українською мовою, а також визначення впливу перекладацьких трансформацій на концептуальну структуру та прагматичний ефект вихідного повідомлення. У дослідженні було використано методи порівняльного перекладознавчого аналізу, а також семантичного і прагматичного аналізу. Матеріал становили англійські слогани, що використовувалися в міжнародній рекламній комунікації, та їхні українські відповідники. Особливу увагу було приділено таким перекладацьким трансформаціям, як опущення, модуляція, синтаксична реструктуризація, граматична субституція, диференціація значення та буквальный переклад. Результати дослідження засвідчили, що перекладацькі неточності виникали у випадках, коли ключові лексичні компоненти або структурні елементи, що кодують центральну ідею слогана, опускалися, замінювалися або трансформувалися. Такі трансформації призводили до розмиття основного концептуального змісту, зниження стилістичної виразності, послаблення переконливого впливу та втрати або послаблення брендової ідентичності, закладеної у вихідному слогані. Дослідження також показало, що втрата стилістичних засобів і директивних конструкцій знижувала прагматичну ефективність, характерну для рекламного дискурсу. Системне співвіднесення типів перекладацьких трансформацій із конкретними видами семантичних і прагматичних спотворень дозволило глибше пояснити вплив перекладацьких рішень на комунікативну ефективність рекламних слоганів. У низці випадків запропоновано альтернативні українські варіанти перекладу, що демонструють можливі стратегії досягнення більшої семантичної та прагматичної еквівалентності. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у можливості застосування його результатів у перекладацькій практиці та міжнародній рекламній комунікації

Ключові слова: рекламний дискурс; перекладацькі трансформації; прагматична еквівалентність; концептуальне спотворення; неточності перекладу