



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA

## Università degli Studi di Padova

Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari

Corso di Laurea Magistrale in  
Lingue Moderne per la Comunicazione e la Cooperazione Internazionale  
Classe LM-38

Tesi di Laurea

# *Culture in Promotional Texts: a Comparative Study of the Barilla Website and Advertising in English and Italian*

Relatore  
Prof. Maria Teresa Musacchio

Laureanda  
Eleonora Filippetto  
n° matr.1106639 / LMLCC

Anno Accademico 2015 / 2016



## Table of contents

Introduction.....	1
1. Promotional and Advertising Texts in era of Cultural Marketing .....	3
1.1 Promotional texts genres and persuasion .....	3
1.2 Cultural influence and customers' behaviour in marketing.....	22
1.3 Media in contemporary marketing .....	31
2. Translating Promotional Texts .....	37
2.1 Promotion across cultures: Localization or standardization? .....	37
2.2 Misuse and miscommunication of culture in the translation of promotional texts .....	54
2.3 Main strategies to overcome obstacles to efficient communication .....	64
3. A Comparative Study of the Barilla Website and Advertising .....	79
3.1 The Barilla Group: story and marketing strategy .....	79
3.2 Comparative analysis of the Barilla websites .....	86
3.3 Comparative analysis of the Barilla advertising .....	104
Conclusion .....	113
References	
Riassunto in italiano	



## **Introduction**

The aim of my thesis is to explain the impact of culture in promotional texts, especially Business-to-Customers texts, such as websites and advertising.

In the first chapter I have described the main features of promotional text genres and how culture persuades customers. Persuasiveness is conveyed through a particular connection between the source and the target texts; the aim of websites and advertising is to reach effectively the target audience and fulfil the aim of the communication strategy.

There are many strategies that advertising and website designers can choose to improve the effectiveness of the message, however to create a real value, it is always essential to distinguish customers' needs and desires in their cultural environment.

In order to better understand cultural differences among diverse countries, scholars use the Hofstede's model that classifies and categorizes cultural differences and similarities in five different dimensions. In this chapter I have examined this model and others theoretical models in order to respond to the long-running debate between standardization and adaptation of advertising and websites.

The second chapter focuses mainly on the main difficulties and strategies in translating promotional texts. The first part of the chapter examines the difference between standardization and localization; when translating highly persuasive texts, such as B2C websites and advertising texts, there are several factors to consider, and the most important difficulty to overcome is culture adaptation. In order to adapt successfully the source text to the target culture translators have at their disposal several strategies and procedures, such as adaptation, trans-creation, foreignization or domestication.

Finally, the third chapter is a comparative analysis of the Barilla website and advertising between English and Italian. I've chosen this company because Barilla is a well-known, consolidated brand worldwide, and therefore I wanted to examine how Italian culture is transposed in other cultures and countries. In the first part of the chapter there is a brief introduction on the Barilla group story and the mission of the company both in the local and in foreign markets.

In the second part of the chapter I have focused my attention on the main differences between the English websites and the Italian one to examine how culture influenced translator and website designers. In order to give a wider perspective, I have decided to compare not only the American website, but also the British, the Canadian and the Australian one. Finally, in the third part of the chapter I have compared Barilla English and Italian advertising strategies and explained how a disastrous marketing mistake can negatively influence the progress of a company.

# Chapter 1.

## Promotional and Advertising texts in the era of Cultural Marketing

### 1.1 Promotional text genres and persuasion

Promotional texts include “a vast array of texts which share the same purpose: selling something (a product, a service, a company, an attitude or a behaviour)” to somebody (Torresi, 2010:26). According to this definition, Torresi distinguishes four different kinds of promotional texts: B2B (business-to-business), I2I (institution-to-institution), B2C (business-to-customer) and I2U (institution-to-user). The style of these texts is deeply influenced both by the source and the target culture. “Business-to-Business promotional texts are produced by commercial enterprises to promote their products or service to one or more other commercial enterprises” (Torresi, 2010:26), therefore the language used in these texts is technical and information-oriented, the style is relatively neutral and impartial. B2B promotional texts are usually brochures and websites that “can be designed to promote a specific product or a company as a whole” (Torresi, 2010:26).

Institutional promotional texts are produced by institutions to promote the institution itself or to inform the public. This text genre includes texts such as tourist promotion, political campaign, healthcare campaign or foundation and they usually circulate in brochure format or web-materials. On the other hand,

Business-to-Consumer (or B2C) promotion is usually issued by private companies selling products or services, and addressed to individual prospective consumers who are not supposed to have in-depth knowledge about the object of promotion. (Torresi, 2010:26).

In my dissertation I will focus on Business-to-Customer promotional texts, and in particular on the two main groups of this genre: on the one hand, websites and, on the other hand, advertising texts. Websites are sort of online marketing involving customers

in an interaction that aims to inform and to convince customers to purchase a product or a service. Creating a website is different from convincing customers to visit it. In order to persuade users to visit their websites, companies usually set up a combination of marketing strategies such as: advertisements, commercials or links to other websites.

One of the greatest challenges that a company has to face when it comes to create its own website is of course persuasion: to be effective, a webpage has to be immediately attractive and captivating. In order to attract and keep the customers' attention and to encourage the users to revisit the page, companies have to make smart use of colours, graphic design, layout combined with texts, sounds, images and videos. Apart from being graphically attractive, a webpage should be useful and therefore constantly changeable. An effective webpage contains useful and in-depth information that helps the customers to evaluate products and promotions.

“Unrestricted by geographic constraints, websites seek to counter linguistic barriers via translation or localisation to reach international web users” (Lee, 2009:1). There are different kinds of B2C websites and each of them distinguishes itself because of structure, type of company, intended audience and of course the aim of the website itself (e.g. to inform and to persuade somebody or to sell something). In this and the following chapters I will focus on two main types of website:

- Business/Corporate website
- Commercial website and E-Commerce websites

Corporate websites are informational web pages created by companies which aim to inform users about the company itself, its story, its mission and, if appropriate, its products and services.

The Coca-Cola US website<sup>1</sup> is a typical example of corporate website because it shows the main characteristics of this kind of website: information about the company, the business, the people working in the company, information about the partners and especially about the vision and the mission of the company.

The layout is very simple, there are big pictures on a white background, on each picture there are happy teenagers drinking a coke. The interesting aspect is that on each picture there are at least two people, one holding a classic red labelled coke and the other person drinking either a coke zero or a coke life. The bottles are always half-full but never half-empty in order to convey a sense of positivity and optimism.



**Fig. 1.** The homepage of Coca Cola US website.

This picture is a good example of what I have explained above: the picture shows four bottles of coke: two bottles are classic red labelled cokes, whether the other two bottles are: coke zero and coke life. This strategy aims to show customers the diversity of Coca Cola products, which can satisfy different customers' preferences. Furthermore, red, which is the colour of the logo, is always present: the red nails of the girl holding the bottle, the red and white straw (just like the website colours) and all different shades of red on the background.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://us.coca-cola.com/home/>

Finally the image contains a simple but effective slogan “SAVOR THE MOMENT”, the transitive verb “to savour something” means both “to enjoy something” and “to taste something”; obviously it is impossible to taste a moment, however the ambiguity of the verb conveys the idea that drinking a coke and tasting its flavour is like enjoying a wonderful moment.

The logo is the classic one, written in red and positioned on the top of the page. The two main colours of the website are red (that recalls the colour of the bottle label) and white that makes the red show up. On the bottom of the website (Fig. 2) there is a list of links to explore company information and all product details.

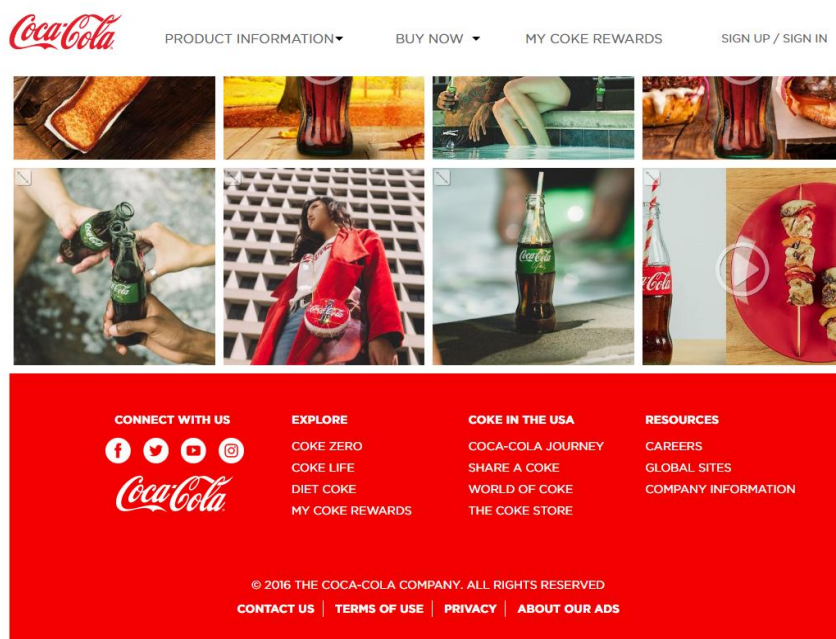


Fig. 2. The homepage of Coca Cola US homepage.

Commercial websites aim to promote, commercialize and especially to sell products and services. This kind of website (for instance Amazon, Ebay, Zalando, Asos and more) aims to sell goods and services via internet, it provides a shopping cart where customers can virtually add their products and then buy them; the website also ensures different payment methods (cash on delivery or prepaid credit card).

For instance, the ASOS webpage<sup>2</sup> is a typical example of a commercial website. ASOS is a British online fashion store that operates internationally. The homepage exhibits the main features of a commercial website: information about the shipping, promotions, sales, coupons and more. There is no information on the company or its mission and that is the main difference between this kind of website and corporate websites.

The layout is very basic and elegant, there are few pictures that depict teenagers laughing and chatting wearing ASOS clothes. As we can see in Fig. 3, the design is very simple but also effective, “This is ASOS” is written in a larger font in order to catch the readers’ attention. The sentence “Your one-stop fashion destination” aims to persuade customers that ASOS is only the online retail outlet that will provide the best products instantly: “one-stop” stores are shops that provide a wide range of products directly in one place.

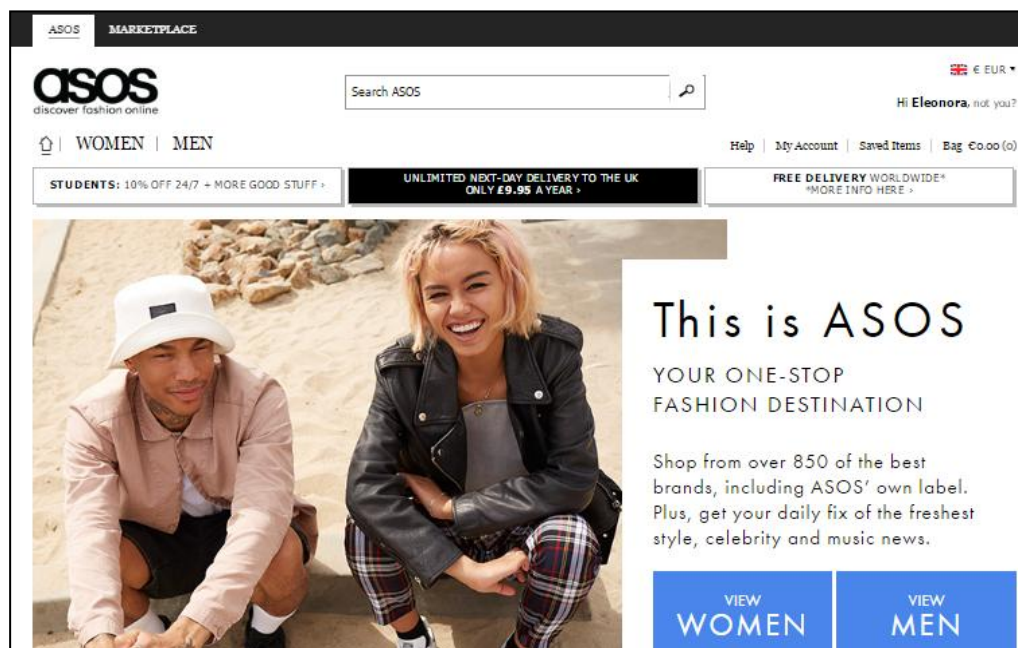


Fig. 3. The homepage of the UK ASOS website.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.asos.com/>

The two main strong points of ASOS advertising are the idea of an online one-stop shop and the free delivery worldwide. The ASOS logo is quite simple as well, it is written in black lower-case letters with the sentence “discover fashion online” that explains the main use of the website, i.e. online shopping. Moreover, colours used in the websites are mainly white and black; black is also the colour of the ASOS logo which shows up against the white background.

On the contrary, there are websites that are both informational and commercial, for instance, the IKEA’s website<sup>3</sup> is almost a fusion between a business website and a commercial one, because on the one hand it shows the typical characteristics of a business website (the story of the IKEA group, its vision and its mission) but on the other hand it sells some of its products directly online, therefore it is also a commercial website.

The design is always very simple, especially because IKEA wants to reflect its idea of simplicity in everything that concerns the company. Simple but smart, IKEA has always aspired to modernize the company, to improve the design of its products, to meet particular eco-friendly and costs control standards.

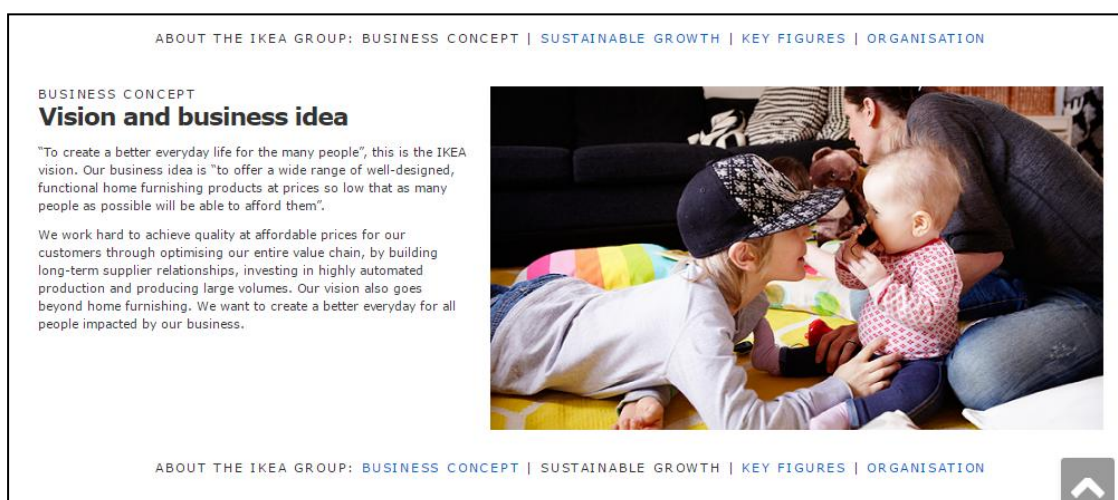


Fig. 4. The IKEA UK website – Vision and business idea.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/>

The IKEA website is quite innovative to its genre because it tends to focus on big advertisement slides, big colourful images and short but effective paragraphs compared to a bare white background. According to Torresi (2010: 129), websites and brochures

Can afford a slightly more narrative or argumentative style, but ideally should never overtax the reader's attention with very dense or specific information, except when information density or specificity is what is expected.

Moreover, the IKEA website often uses this big simple images introduced by effective sentences and short but exhaustive descriptions of products. Fig. 5, for instance, shows some of IKEA's textile products: the slogan is simple but effective "We're a bunch of softies" and just below there is a brief description of IKEA's textiles.

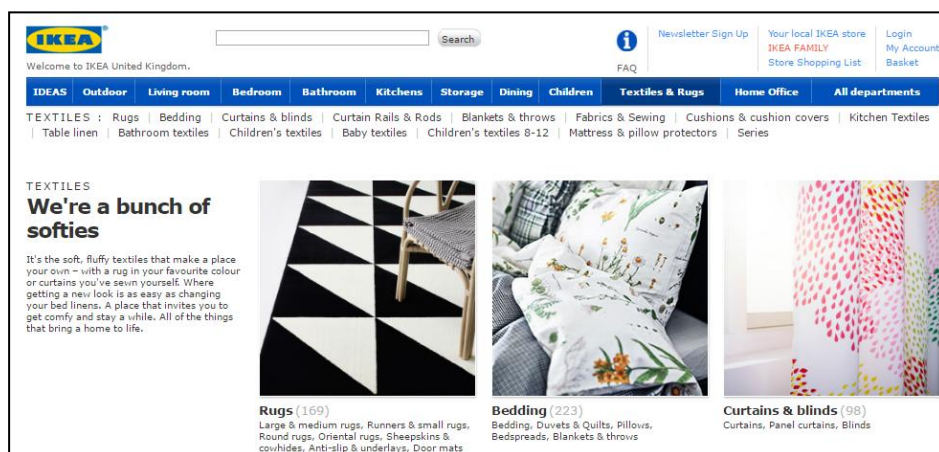
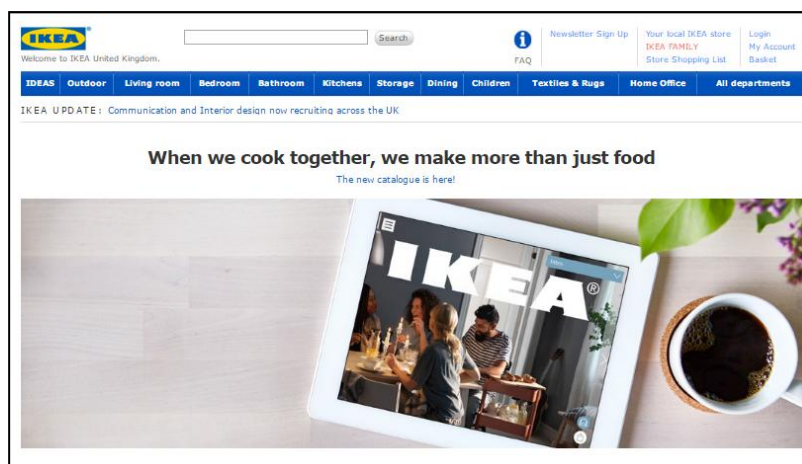


Fig. 5. The IKEA UK website – Textiles.

The top of the website is arranged in big menu items (Outdoor, Living room, Bedroom and so on) that allow the customers to check IKEA's products, their features and their price. What is actually special of IKEA is the logo of the company: it is blue and yellow exactly as the Swedish flag (IKEA is a Swedish company). The logo, the colours, the big slides with furniture sample and the details throughout the website. As Fig. 6 shows, they all contribute to the establishment of IKEA's identity



**Fig. 6. The homepage of the IKEA UK website**

As all these images show, the real effectiveness of the websites is strictly related to their structure, layout and colours, and whether persuasiveness is related to the use of advertising .

Online advertising is a very important aspect in webpages because both business and corporate websites aim to persuade customers to buy products or services. “Advertising tends to appeal to the desired, as the desired is too far from reality” (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010:87). Desires are the customers’ weakness and advertising resorts to persuasive communication in order to convince customers that what they do not have is actually what they need. However advertising is not only restricted to websites, advertising is influences our lives constantly: advertisements can be found everywhere, on television, in newspapers and magazines, on our Smartphone or our mailboxes.

Fig. 7. McDonald's advertisement.



Fig. 8. McDonald's Sandwich.



Nevertheless, nowadays ordinary and nondescript messages in advertisements are no longer effective; in order to gain and maintain customers' attention, advertisements have to be creative and likeable; the content should be interesting and entertaining so that the customer can feel involved. Firms in the food market are fiercely competitive against each other therefore in order to gain and maintain the control of the market, McDonald's had to position itself in an original way and offer distinctive benefits for customers. McDonald's marketing team has designed very original and inventive advertisements to persuade customers that McDonald's is always the best solution. Fig. 7 is particularly creative because it shows how well McDonald's knows its customers: it appeals to what customers really want and desire.

Fig. 8 is both creative, humorous and smart. The consumer can identify himself/herself with the advertisement, because almost every kid or teenager had his/her lunch prepared

by his/her mother. However, everyone would prefer something else; this is the message that McDonald's wants to convey: no matter how good mom's sandwiches are, McDonald's ones are better.

As all the examples above show, an effective persuasive communication involves three aspects: a source, a message and a receiver. The structure of the message fosters the comprehension and memorization of the contents; "all elements of advertising, words and pictures, tend to be evaluated on the basis of their persuasive role in the sales process." (De Mooij, 2004:181). The first step in creating a message is designing a message that effectively reaches the target audience planning a strategy of communication; the main goal of advertising is to persuade customers and to shape their attitudes so that they will believe that the product actually satisfies a certain need.

As Baack and Clow (2007:198) point out: "marketing messages travel in two ways. First a personal message can be delivered through a personal medium. [...] (sales reps, repair department personnel, customer services representatives, etc.) [...]", whereas "The second way marketing messages travel is through the various forms of advertising media". In this case, messages are impersonal and are usually found on television, on the radio or in written media such as newspapers, magazines, sites or simply posters. As Baack and Clow (2007:198) assert, "It is not simply a matter of reach, frequency, and continuity. The message must engage the targeted buyer and influence the individual to the point that he or she will recall and purchase the product". Therefore, it is necessary to design a suitable strategy for each kind of message.

According to Baack and Clow (2007:198), there are three kinds of message strategies "Each may be used to help convince the customer to make a purchase, either through

reason, emotion, or an action-inducing advertisement”. These three categories of message strategies are:

- Cognitive strategies are used to inform the customers. “When a cognitive strategy is used, the advertisement’s key message is about the products’ attributes or the benefits. Customers can obtain these benefits by using the products” (Baack and Clow, 2007:198).

Cognitive strategies also consist of general messages, “direct promotions of product attributes or benefits without any claim of superiority” (Baack and Clow, 2007:198); preemptive messages which focus on a “product’s specific attribute or benefit”; unique selling proposition are “explicit, testable claim of uniqueness or superiority that can be supported or substantiated in some matter.” A hyperbole is a particular approach that makes an untestable claim based upon some attribute or benefit. A comparative advertisement occurs “When an advertiser directly or indirectly compares a good or service to the competitiveness, it is the comparative method” (Baack and Clow, 2007:198).



Fig.9. The homepage of the Amazon UK website.

Fig. 9 from the Amazon UK website<sup>4</sup> is a clear example of cognitive strategy because it illustrates the main features of the “fireHD6”. The message is concise and clear and it aims to inform the users about the attributes (“powerful”) and benefits (“fits in your pocket”) of the product.

- Affective strategies invoke feelings or emotions and match those feelings with the good, service, or company” Baack and Clow (2007:202); this kind of strategy aims to persuade and attract the customer using the customer’s weakness and desires, but also general beliefs and stereotypes. This kind of strategy includes: affective message strategies, emotional advertising and resonance advertising that “attempts to connect a product with a customer’s experience” (Baack and Clow 2007:202).



**Fig. 10. The United Colours of Benetton advertisement.**

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

In the past ten years, Benetton advertising has been harshly criticized, and some countries have also decided to censor entire advertising campaigns because, according to them, those advertisements were offensive, stereotyped and exaggerated. However, according to others, these advertisements are real and deal with true issues of our society. The picture above is part of the Benetton advertising campaign against domestic violence; I have chosen this picture as an example of affective strategy because it clearly invokes a strong feeling and emotion. Benetton wants to show women that the company is aware of this problem and that it supports women: “the colors of domestic violence” refers both to the name of the company (United Colors of Benetton) and the colours of the bruise. The power of this advertisement lies in its emotional force: the images almost seem to convey the idea that women that wear United Colors of Benetton can stand against violence and can be free from injustice.

- Conative strategies “are designed to lead to more directly type of customer response” (Baack and Clow 2007:204); they involve: action-inducing conative advertisements that “create situations in which cognitive knowledge of the product or affective liking of the product may come later (after the actual purchase) or during product usage” and promotional support conative advertisements “that are used to support other promotional efforts”. (Baack and Clow 2007: 204).

The first step to create an effective message is to choose the most appropriate strategy: “to be effective, the message strategy must be carefully matched with the leverage point and executional framework that have been selected as well as with the media that will be utilized” (Baack and Clow 2007:204).

The second step consists in transforming the idea of the message into a convincing advertisement able to catch the customers’ attention and interest. As Clow and Baack

explain, after choosing the right message strategy, it is important to choose the correct “executional framework”. Creative teams have to choose the proper sum of framework, style, tone, words that are used to design the message. The “text is not perceived by the reader as a sum of different dimensions (i.e. verbal, visual, tactile etc.) but as a whole where all components are connected and independent. (Torresi, 2008:1). The two authors present a list of different frameworks that can be used and combined with the previous strategies:

- Animation framework; in recent years the use of animation and cartoons in advertising has significantly increased, especially due to the development and the use of new technologies;
- Slice-of-life is a common framework used in those advertisements that show real life problems and intend to provide the right solution;
- Dramatization ‘executional framework’ is very similar to slice-of-life framework, “The difference lies in the intensity and story format” (Clow and Baack, 2007:207);
- Testimonials;
- Authoritative framework refers to the use of experts that convey a certain authority;
- Demonstrations which aim to show the customer how a particular product actually works;
- Fantasy “executions are designed to lift the audience beyond the real world to a make-believe experience” (Clow and Baack, 2007:207.);
- Informative ‘executional framework’.



**Fig. 11. The Italian Nutella advertising.**

The third step is to choose the most persuasive tone, words, structure, images, headline and the whole text style. A company can opt for a positive tone, which aims to highlight the products quality and strong points, or for a more humorous one, whose main aim is to distinguish the company from the others.

Words are tiny but significant elements: the use of simple and convincing words is a strategy that many companies tend to adopt for in order to catch the customers' attention. However simple the message may be, it does not mean that it is plain and obvious: creative teams and marketing managers have to create slogans as simple and creative as possible.



Fig. 12. The English Nutella advertising.

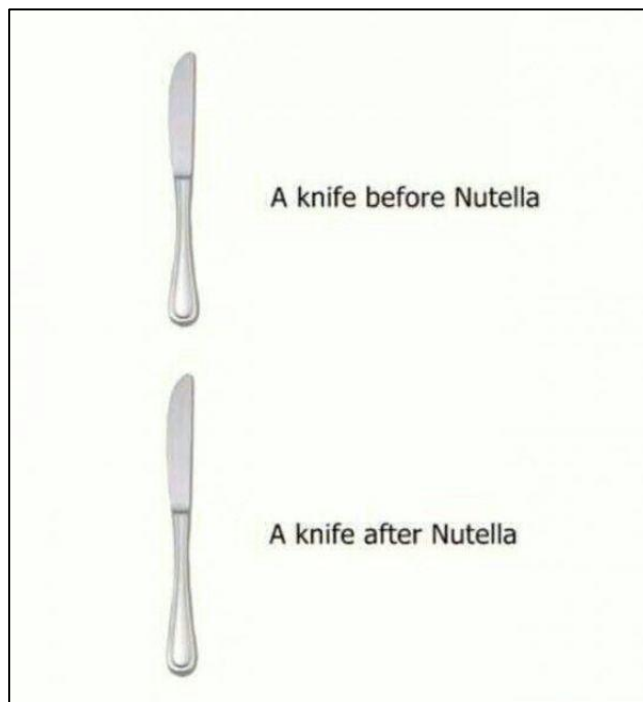


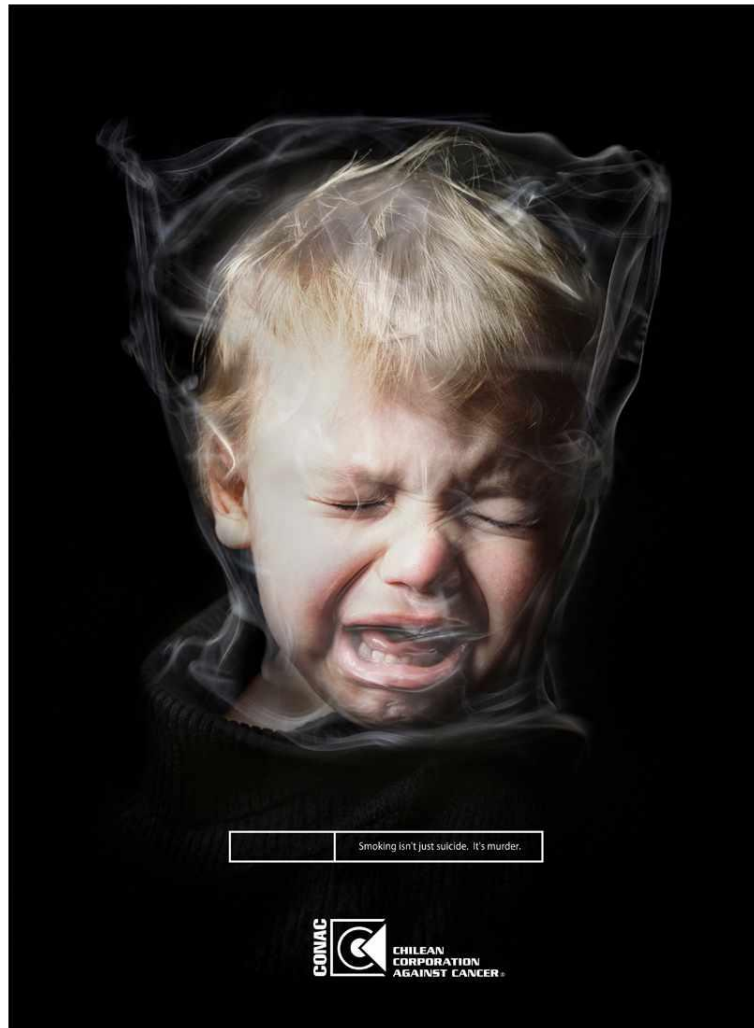
Fig. 13. The English Nutella advertising, from nutella.com

I have chosen these two pictures because they both are perfect examples of clear and straightforward advertisement: one picture and a sentence. In the first picture the knife, which is used to rub the cream, is clean before and after: the idea is that Nutella is so irresistible that it is impossible so leave something on the knife.

The second picture is also smarter. The last thing that someone notices is “only nutella”, however it is the start of the idea: the message that this picture wants to communicate two things: firstly that only Nutella combines with everything you like such as bread, strawberries and pretzel; and secondly that a jar is so big that people can use it with 14 slices of bread, 22 strawberries and 50 pretzel. The numbers are probably not realistic however the message is clear. Images and illustrations are the first elements that the public notices therefore it should be as strong as possible to arouse the public’s interest; according to Torresi (2008:63):

Even an aural concretisation, however, ‘necessarily brings to mind a picture’ that visualises the content of the verbal item. This is inevitable in today’s communication, which is ‘under the influence of the mass media, multimedia and the combination of text and picture’.

The use of strong images (such as in Fig. 11) is a very effective strategy especially in those campaign that aim to sensitize people to a certain problem. Fig. 14 is a picture related to the non-smoking campaign launched by Children Corporation against Cancer and it especially concerns the danger of passive smoking for children. The picture depicts a child choking with smoke; the smoke is represented as a plastic bag to show how dangerous passive smoke can be. Finally, the message “smoking isn’t just suicide. It is murder” intensifies the metaphor of the plastic bag choking the child.



**Fig. 14. Non-smoking campaign by CONAC.**

As I have already explained in this chapter communication involves a message but firstly a source and ultimately a receiver. The source can have a great impact on the receiver's opinions and decisions: the source conveys credibility and trustworthiness therefore choosing a source and spokesperson instead of another can have a great impact on the message in general; Clow and Baack (2007:211) distinguish four kinds of sources:

1. Celebrities; "a celebrity endorser is used because his or her stamp of approval on a product can enhance the product's brand equity. Celebrities also help create emotional bonds with the products" (Clow and Baack, 2007:211). Very often

marketing agents choose famous people as endorsers in different advertisements because, as Kotler and Armstrong (2010:472) also explain, “I messaggi provenienti da fonti molto credibili risultano più convincenti. [...] Questo è anche il motivo della scelta di testimonial famosi (atleti, attori, musicisti o persino personaggi dei cartoni animati).”<sup>5</sup>

L'Oréal is a one of the most famous group worldwide in makeup, cosmetics, hair care and perfume; its main advertising strategy is to diversify its products according to the different segments of market. There are products for young women and aged ones and the message and the endorsers change according to the target. Using attractive sources such as celebrities leads the receiver into a process of identification: the customer behaves in such a way as to appear like or close to the brand endorser. For instance a woman that wants to buy a new mascara will be influenced by the image of a successful woman like Eva Longoria and the message “Become a Lash Millionaire!” (see Fig.15); if she wants to be both beautiful and successful L'Oréal Volume Million Lashes mascara is the perfect purchase. The same influence is visible in the Fig.16, in this case, though, the strategy is different: not only does the advertisement portrait a famous and successful woman such as Helen Mirren, but it also emphasizes its influence using a quote from the actress “Age is just a number and math was never my thing!” In this way the customer not only identifies with the celebrity but also trusts her.

---

<sup>5</sup> My translation in English of the quote: *Messages sent by strongly reliable sources are more persuasive. [...] This is the reason why many advertising campaigns resort to famous endorsers such as athletes, actors, musicians or even cartoon characters.*



Fig. 15. Eva Longoria for L'Oréal advertising.



Fig. 16. Helen Mirren for L'Oréal advertising.

2. CEOs; many companies decide to design an advertising strategy that stars the company CEO itself. As Daboll (2012:1) asserts “while the strategy of ‘CEO as front man’ has been adopted by numerous brands in the past 30 years, it’s never been entirely clear whether this strategy is effective”.
3. Experts include people such as: scientists, professors, doctors, “physicians, lawyers, accountants and financial planners. [...] Experts provide backing for testimonials, serve as authoritative figures, demonstrate products, and enhance the credibility of informative advertisements”. (Clow and Baack 2007: 214).
4. Typical-person sources “Typical persons are one of two types. The first category consists of paid actors or models that portray or resemble everyday people. The second is actual, typical, everyday people used in advertisements.

A source can have two main characteristics: attractiveness, people tend to be persuaded by sources that are attractive on both physical and personal point of view; and credibility since the public is deeply influenced by credible sources that convey trustworthiness.

The third element that completes communication is the receiver. According to some scholars, the receiver’s characteristics and attitudes can enhance the persuasiveness of

communication; each person tends to be more or less influenced by a certain message and the extent to which communication influences them depends on their nature and their personality. What is called receiver includes a vast public. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, promotional texts include business-to-business, business-to-customers, institution-to-institution and institution-to-user texts. Therefore it might be argued that not only customers are receivers of a persuasive message, but also companies, institutions and users are. On this basis, strategies also change according to the receiver of the message. In the following chapter I will focus my attention on customer as receivers and I will analyse how culture influences customers' behaviour.

## **1.2 Cultural influence and customers' behaviour in marketing**

The ability to recognize a potential client is the key element to success. In the era of globalization, marketing has established itself becoming one of the most powerful tools for industries and companies worldwide. Since the market has become increasingly global and competitive and technologies have evolved, marketing is now considered an official branch of study and a societal process that aims to set up profitable and durable relationships with customers in order to create additional value.

Over the years several stages have been developed in an attempt to define the best marketing tendency: at first, marketing was mainly focused on production, its function was to communicate products features and to guarantee goods to customers. Secondly new approaches followed: sales tendency and marketing tendency. This approaches turned out to be ineffective and incomplete because they did not take into consideration that customer is the main agent in the buying process. In customer oriented marketing approaches, the first step is to recognize and understand customers' needs and requests in order to create the value they are looking for. Creating value means that marketing

researchers and agents have to distinguish the customers' main needs. Needs represent a condition of lack and dissatisfaction, which in turn acts as a stimulus to purchase. Needs are not just inborn needs (i.e. physiological and biological such as food, cloths, shelters and more), but also social and individual ones (see Fig. 17 Maslow's hierarchy of needs below); therefore there is no practical solution to this whole of necessities, marketing teams have to investigate this needs and provide different and suitable products and services. When needs come in contact with individual personality and especially culture, they become human desires; desires are changeable and easily influenced. There are several factors that can influence the consumers' decisions:

- Social factors such as family, group reference and role in society;
- Personal and psychological factors: age, life style, occupation, financial situation, perception of needs;
- Cultural factors that are nationality, religion, ethnic group, beliefs, general knowledge.

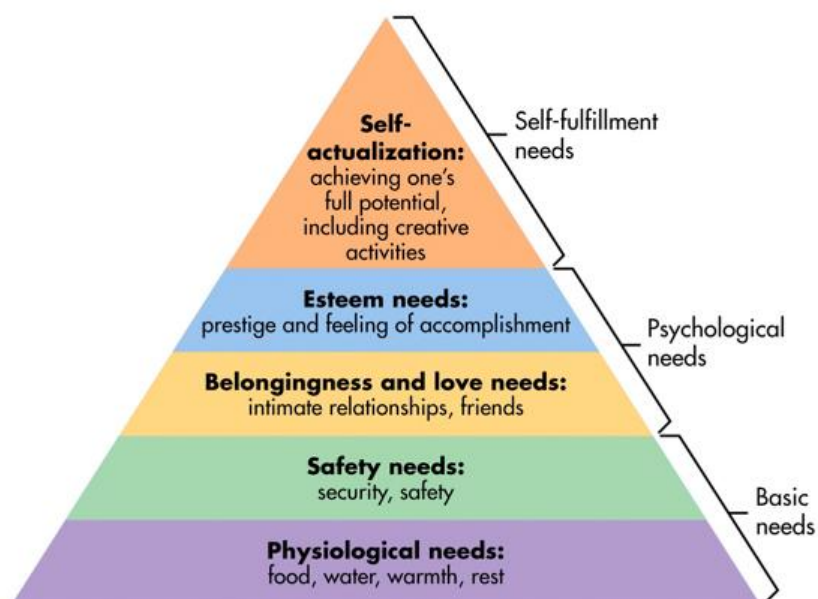


Fig. 17. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

According to De Mooij's (2015b:12) definition, "culture includes shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period in a specific geographical region". Everyday our choices, wishes and behaviour are deeply influenced by our cultural environment, our values and mentality; "an important hypothesis in customer behaviour is that people will buy products that are compatible with their self-concept or that will enhance their self-image. [...] Across nations, differences in cultural values have been measured and categorised into dimensions of national culture." (De Mooij, 2015b:12-13). Thus, not only culture influences our life locally, it also influences global marketing and its strategies.

When it comes to classifying and categorizing one of the most useful and used tool is the Hofstede's model; Hofstede created a model of five dimensions that aims to describe the main differences and similarities among national cultures. According to Hofstede, culture is a collective mental attitude that induces a group to behave in a very similar way. De Mooij (2004:182) lists the five dimensions of the model that can be used to explain the main differences in motives, behaviour, language and communication, including advertising, in "literature across different countries":

1. Power distance is the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally. This dimension confronts large power-distance cultures (e.g. France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Russia and the whole of Asia and South Africa) and small power distance cultures (e.g. Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and Scandinavia).
2. Individualism/Collectivism. Individualistic cultures tend to look after themselves and close relatives and prefer privacy and autonomy. On the other hand,

collectivistic cultures “belong to in-groups who look after them in exchange for loyalty” (De Mooij (2004:182). According to Hofstede, North America and Northern Europe are individualistic countries whether Southern Europe countries are collectivistic. Asia, Latin America and Africa are collectivistic cultures.

3. The factor of Masculinity/Femininity does not only distinguish countries but also values; according to this model, in masculine countries such as the US, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Mexico and Japan main values are ‘achievement and success’ (De Mooij 2004:182), while feminist countries such as Netherlands, Scandinavia, Portugal, Spain, Chile and Thailand focus on values such as ‘caring for others and quality of life’.
4. Uncertainty avoidance “is the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid them.” (De Mooij, 2004:182). On the one hand, strong uncertainty avoidance cultures (for instance Southern and Eastern Europe countries and Japan) tend to avoid rules and formality in life; on the other hand weak uncertainty avoidance countries (for instance England, Scandinavia and Singapore) “tend to be more innovative and less bureaucratic.” (De Mooij 2004:182)
5. Long-Term Orientation. Hofstede distinguishes between long-term oriented and short-term oriented cultures. “Included in *long-term orientation* are longer term thinking, thrift, perseverance and pragmatism. In short-term oriented cultures, people tend to be religious, often with a strong belief in a God [...]” (De Mooij, 2015b:14).

Hofstede’s model has been used by many scholars to understand not only customers’ behaviour but also how cultures influences the decision of customers when it comes to choose a certain product instead of another or according to production methods, brands,

distribution channels and last but not least advertising. First of all, we view cultural values as an integrated part of the consumer's self, not as an environmental factor. "For developing effective advertising the customer must be central. Cultural values define the self and personality of customers." (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010: 86);

In global and international marketing there has been a long-running debate between standardization and adaptation of advertising across different cultures in the world.

According to De Mooij (1997:682)

Globalization and modernization have led international companies to think that marketing, branding and advertising strategies should be standardized. The argument is that with the globalization of markets, information and communication, people's wants, needs and motives will become so similar that it will justify targeting uniform brands and advertising campaigns to customers across cultures.

Standardizing does not only imply advertising and marketing homogenization, but it also suggests that culture, values, language, thinking should be standardized. However as previously mentioned in this chapter, cultures and national identity vary across the world and customers are deeply influenced by their cultural environment when they have to make choices. How could homogenized marketing be actually effective in a world where culture drives customers' behaviour? The answer is: it can not. Recent studies show that adapting marketing strategies to the culture of the target market has a great impact on advertising efficacy. De Mooij (1997: 684) shows the importance of adaptation giving an example of how mineral water consumption changes in the global market place:

Peoples' concern for health can be recognised in consumption patterns which vary by culture. People of weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, for example, have a more active approach to health and exercise relatively more than people of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures. [...] People of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures have a more passive approach to health and relate it to what they eat and drink. One manifestation is consumption of mineral water. Between 1970 and 1997, in the same fifteen countries, consumption of mineral water appears to correlate significantly with uncertainty avoidance (UAI).

Because of the variety of needs and preferences driven by culture and national identity, companies and firms have to find effective and convincing strategies to communicate and promote their products worldwide. However, I will concentrate on this subject in Chapter 2, where I am going to discuss the main issues of promotional texts translation and the most useful strategy to adopt.

Over the years many economists and marketing experts have designed their own theoretic models of how advertising influences, educates and persuades consumers.

- AIDA; The model AIDA, created by St.Elmo Lewis is a model based on a set of stages “which described the process a salesperson must lead a potential customer through in order to achieve a sale. The stages, Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, form a linear hierarchy.” (Chand, 2016).
- The DAGMAR approach, created by Collins in 1961, is more recent than the AIDA model, which goes back to the XIX century, and it was specifically elaborated to analyse the advertising persuasiveness. DAGMAR stands for Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results according to DAGMAR advertising has to perform a specific communication task, “the task has to be accomplished among a well-defined audience within a specified time period.” The hierarchy of effects model of the communication process is: awareness → comprehension → conviction → action.
- In 1989, in order to overcome the DAGMAR model’s limits, Vaughn suggests the FCB grid:

containing four quadrants corresponding to high involvement/thinking, high involvement/feeling, low involvement/thinking, and low involvement/feeling. Products or product categories are plotted in one of the four quadrants on the grid. [...] With this FCB Grid, advertisers can develop advertising strategy keeping in mind the consumers’ relations towards a product according to information (learn), attitude (feel) and behaviour (do) issues. (Chand, 2016).

- In 1997, PERCY & ROSSITER decided to elaborate the FCB Grid, creating the RPG (The Rossiter-Percy Grid). They developed a grid that focused on customers' attitudes. "The main part of the RPG is essentially models of attitude (representing how consumers approach products or brands)" (Chand, 2016). The two decided to take into consideration two different dimensions: high/low involvement and rational/emotional type of motivation.
- The ELM (Elaborated Likelihood Method) was formulated in 1991 by Petty and Cacioppo. According to this model, when the receiver gets a message he/she can analyse this message from either a central route or a peripheral one. As Chand (2016) asserts:

The two factors that most influence which route an individual will take in a persuasive situation are motivation (strong desire to process the message) and ability (actually being capable of critical evaluation). Which route is taken is determined by the extent of elaboration.

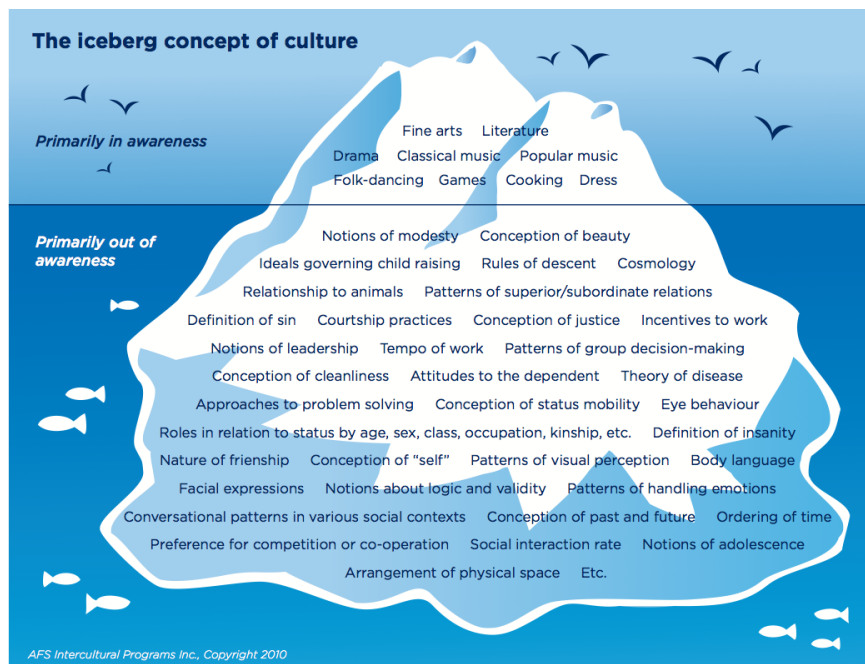
Over the years, the idea that advertising messages can act on customers' beliefs and awareness has widely spread among scholars. This kind of communication is called subliminal advertising. According to the BusinessDictionary.com definition, "subliminal advertising consists of promotional messages the recipient is not aware of, such as those played at very low volume or flashed on a screen for less than a second".

This potentially dangerous kind of persuasion is able to modify consumers' opinions, attitudes and decisions, because the audience is deeply but unconsciously influenced by stimuli that are not recognizable. "Freud (1900, 1905) developed a topographical model of the mind, whereby he described the features of the mind's structure and function. Freud used the analogy of an iceberg to describe the three levels of the mind" (McLeod, 2015)

- The conscious
- The subconscious
- The unconscious

The understanding passes easily between the conscious and the subconscious and from the two it goes to the unconscious, however what lies in the unconscious cannot re-emerge voluntarily. According to Freud, the unconscious is where our ideas, feelings, fears and anxieties hide.

The Iceberg theory is also very useful when combined with the concept of culture. The visible top of the iceberg represents that part of culture we first come in contact: music, fashion, dance, language, food, and more. The invisible part of the cultural iceberg consists of all those aspects that influence the visible part of culture, e.g. religious beliefs, family education, motivations, tolerance, attitudes and more. Culture influences perceptions, opinions and actions and it also defines people belonging to society.



**Fig. 18 The Cultural Iceberg**

In the following chapter I will analyze how technology has changed the way we consume products, but especially how every day the Internet, social media, social networks, Smartphone app influence our behaviour and our decisions, probably using those invisible aspects of culture that lay in our unconscious.

### **1.3 Media in contemporary marketing**

During this century, a wide spectrum of new media has developed and of course traditional media had to specialized in order to reach specific targeted groups. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century media throughout the world have constantly been transforming. According to Fletcher (2010), media can be divided into: “press and magazines, television, direct mail, radio, cinema and internet”.

As far as advertising is concerned, press and magazines are the biggest media sector and include national newspapers, regional newspapers, consumer magazines, trade and professional journals.

However, in the public mind, television is still the predominant advertising medium, actually “when members of the public are asked where they have seen any advertisement, the likelihood is they will say they saw it on television – even if the advertisement has never appeared on television.” (Fletcher, 2010:55).

Direct mail, outdoor and transport, radio and cinema are classified by Fletcher as minor media mainly because they carry less advertising. Probably the internet is both the most innovative, insidious and effective advertising medium. According to Fletcher,

most Internet advertising is for products and brands for which customers want quite detailed information: finance, telecommunications, computers, travel, automobiles, industrial goods, and entertainment are the top seven Internet advertising sectors. (2010:63)

Obviously, advertisers and advertising agencies have to pay media for reporting their message, therefore it is important to survey the type of people the message has to reach, the costs of using the medium and how persuasive and powerful the medium can be.

Computers, Smartphones and the Internet are part of everyday lives and have “facilitated communication (e-mails), research (search engine) and transactions (e-commerce)” (Goodrich, De Mooij, 2011: 246). Therefore nowadays people are not only influenced by information they read on magazines or newspapers and by what they see on television; consumers are constantly influenced: when they open an Internet page popup and banner always show up, when they read their emails they often receive newsletters emails or spam; people are also influenced when they simply use they smartphones because applications often contain advertisements.

Nobody can tell how large the Internet’s share of advertising will eventually grow to become, nor how hard the traditional media will eventually be hit, “but the general consensus is that the Internet’s advertising growth will continue for many years yet.” (Fletcher, 2010:47). Every day we are forced to see, read or listen to advertising messages, and what is actually dangerous is that very often we are not aware of this.

Therefore, Goodrich and De Mooij point out a very interesting issue:

Now that the Internet is increasingly available across the world, and people are also increasingly shopping via the Internet, a specific question is whether consumers buy different products online than they do via conventional retail channels, and whether category differences across countries and their cultural relationships are different or similar to categories bought via the conventional channels.

Throughout this chapter I intend to explain how the use of the Internet and social media has changed the idea of online buying experience, and how and why customer behaviour in retail environment differs from online customer behaviour.

Ten years ago, with the spreading of social networks, “brand building has become a vexing challenge.” (Holt, 2016): creative teams and agency tried “to insert brands throughout the digital universe. [...] But despite all the hoopla, such efforts have had very little payoff” (Holt, 2016.). This issue may seem nonsense because according to common belief, social networks help companies to create a relationship with customers; “Yet few brands have generated meaningful consumer interest online. In fact, social media seem to have made brands *less* significant. What has gone wrong?” (Holt, 2016). In his article published in the Harvard Business Review, Holt explains that the key element that many companies did not take into consideration was that brands succeed when they break through in culture. Again, culture turns out to be the most significant element of success especially for companies because “digital technologies have not only created new social networks but also dramatically altered how culture works. Digital crowds now serve as very effective innovators of culture—a phenomenon I call *crowdculture*.” (Holt, 2016.).

As is clear from previous discussions, culture is a decisive element in advertising and in customers’ behaviour. In the era of social networks users are in contact with many different cultures from all over the world and “social media binds together communities that once were geographically isolated, [...]. Now that these communities are densely networked, their cultural influence has become direct and substantial.” (Holt, 2016.)

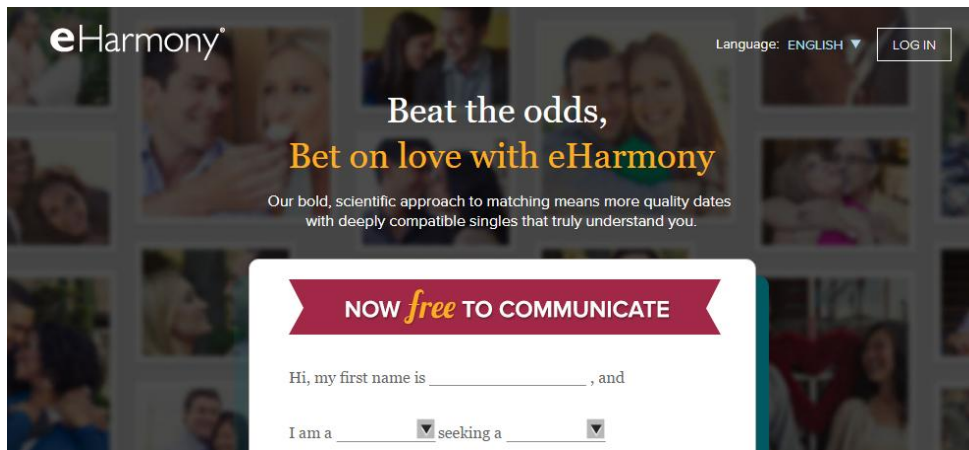
The Internet is a powerful mean and companies have realized that sometimes it could be a double-edged weapon. As might be argued from previous explanation, one of the main reasons for companies’ failure on social network was the idea that due to technology customers’ behaviour would have soon homogenized; however this did not happen, but why? De Mooij (2003:184) answers this question asserting that “ignoring culture’s influence has led many companies to centralize operations and marketing which, instead

of increasing efficiency, has resulted in declining profitability”. As a consequence, creative teams, marketing experts and companies should not homogenized online advertising, but adapt it to the new customers’ expectations:

when it comes to consumer markets, one size no longer fits all. In response, smart retailers and consumer goods companies are starting to customize their offerings to local markets, rolling out different types of stores, product lines, and alternative approaches to pricing, marketing, staffing, and customer service. They’re moving from standardization to localization. (Rigby, Vishwanath, 2006)

What is more, online behaviour is also deeply influenced by the differences among socioeconomic groups. The Internet is highly effective for targeting groups, for instance by interests, activities and by day or night access to the web. Online behaviour changes also according to age, sex and social class.

When analysing the impact of online marketing and advertising, there is a particular branch of B2C websites that I would like to explore in this chapter: online dating websites. “Online dating is a billion dollar industry. Each month around 450,000 searches are done on the keyword online dating.” (Kreitman, 2013); I have decided to analyse this particular type of website in this chapter instead of chapter 1.1 because this type of website exists only because of online social interactions among users. Competitiveness in this environment is particularly fierce, therefore these website have to be as convincing as possible in order to promote interactions: the language should be encouraging, persuasive and reassuring.



**Fig. 19. The homepage of eHarmony online meeting site in the USA.**

According to Kreitman (2013):

Well, of the 170 companies who've had ads running for the keyword "online dating" over the last 3 months, there are 4 that have proven to be more attractive than the competition.

These 4 have Impression Shares of 87% or higher (that means of ALL the searches performed for the keyword "online dating" on Google, the ads of these companies appeared at least 87% of the time). After these 4, the company with the next highest Impression Share is only showing up about 55% of the time.

This data prove how hyper-competitive this market is. These sites usually adopt a series of highly smart marketing strategies: some sites focus on quality, others on reliability (sharing stories from their own community), and others on YouTube channels and videos.

In the following chapter I will focus on the translation of advertising and websites, firstly I will consider the main issues that a translator may face during a translation and secondly I will explain the main strategy that a translator can use to overcome those difficulties.



## Chapter 2.

### Translating Promotional Texts

#### 2.1 Promotion across cultures: Localization or standardization?

Due to the spread of communication, transports, and cash flows, global distances have considerably shortened and international trades are rapidly growing. However not only is international trade developing, but also global competition is undergoing rapid growth because foreign companies are expanding quickly and aggressively. When a company decides to sell its products abroad there are both inner and outer factors to take into consideration. Some factors are controllable (especially inner factors such as product, price, distribution and promotion), however some other are not, for instance circumstances such as politics, economy, competition and last but not least culture. Moreover, each global market should always be classified according to a series of factors such as: demographic characteristics (instruction, population rate of growth, age brackets), geographical constraints (climate, population density), economic issues (GDP, income distribution) and political and socio-cultural characteristics (lifestyle, language and cultural values). Companies that operate internationally can choose to maintain the same strategies they adopted for their local market, or to modify them according to the target market. In promotional texts, some businesses may decide to adopt a standard theme for all markets:

The study of culture for understanding global advertising results from the global-local dilemma: whether to standardize advertising for efficiency reasons or to adapt to local habits and consumer motives to be effective. (De Mooij, Hofstede, 2010:85).

In this chapter I am going to use previous concepts analysed in Chapter 1 to explain why companies should localize websites and advertising when it comes to operate abroad.

As scholars assert, when discussing promotional texts translation, the correct term is not translation but adaptation. As far as websites are concerned the term is localization; in order to understand the meaning of this process it is useful to define the two terms with reference to each other. As Torresi explains, translation can be considered as “mainly connected to the written word and to the transfer of concepts from one language to another”, on the contrary,

adaptation and localization (a more specific term, which is mainly used for advertisements, websites and software) may be seen to stress the cross-cultural aspect of the process and the need to adjust the promotional texts to the target market in order to preserve its persuasive function. (2010:4)

According to the Longman online Dictionary definition “localize” means “to make changes in advertising etc. to make it more suitable for a particular place.” Nauert (2007:1), asserts that localization includes the process of translation and can be defined as

adapting a product to a particular locale (Esselink 2001, quoted by Nauert 2007), therefore it includes a process of understanding, research, knowledge, translation but especially adaptation. Within the localization process of websites, translation is regarded as only part of the process of, “modifying a website for a specific locale. (Yunker 2002:17, quoted by Nauert 2007).

Ideas, beliefs and language are embedded in culture because they originate and develop in culture. Word, texts, and messages developed in a language contain specific cultural references that are meaningful for the source culture but that are not necessarily meaningful for the target one. For example, as De Mooij (2004:186) reports, Western advertising use “value-expressive language to help recognition and memory. Yet some terms that efficiently refer to specific behaviour in one language do not exist in other languages.”

Language reflects the way people live, communicate and experience things because language is evidence of the values of culture. In section 2.2 I will go into the difficulties that arise out of culture translation, and the main errors that a translator may make, such as cultural misunderstandings or mistranslations.

In his work Nauert (2007:4), quoting Lyons (1977), states that:

translation and localization are interrelated concepts which share the features of transfer, but with each field having at least one feature of its own. For instance, translation includes the translation of literature, which is not relevant to localization. Localization includes the technical components and the internationalization process which are not necessarily included in translation.

Linguistic and cultural differences can be shaped but not erased; there are several difficulties that a company has to face when it turns to a foreign market: knowledge of the language and the culture of the country, the foreign currency and its impact on the market, the level of development, and the local market in general. For this reason it is important to choose the most profitable foreign market to penetrate. As De Mooij (2015:648) explains:

Cultural practices may be found in the global market place (wearing jeans, drinking Coca-Cola), but the underlying values that explain motives for buying these are not global. Whereas in some cultures consumers may drink Coca-Cola to quench their thirst, others they may do so for status reasons. International marketers need to know these differences to develop effective global marketing and advertising campaigns.

As already explained in section 1.2, customers' needs and preferences are not homogeneous, the cultural environment of a nation constantly influences values, perceptions, preferences and societal behaviour. People born and raised in the same societal and cultural environment, which mould their values and beliefs, tend to develop the same vision of the world, to behave similarly and to share same preferences and principles. Cultural factors deeply influence both the way people think and the way they consume products. The concept of quality, for example, is not the same everywhere; some countries are more interested in some aspects of products, whereas other countries tend to focus on others.

For instance, McDonald's US webpage<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 1) tends to focus on sustainability and the origin of its products: "95% of our global coffee purchases are Arabica beans from

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us.html>

Colombia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Brazil and Sumatra” (McDonald’s US webpage). There is a long description of the product and plantations, together with data, numbers and references.

On the contrary, the McDonald’s Italian webpage<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 2) tends to focus on the product itself and to the bond between Italy and coffee. The slogan focuses on the fact that McDonald’s aims to safeguard the high Italian standards on coffee and to offer a good product.

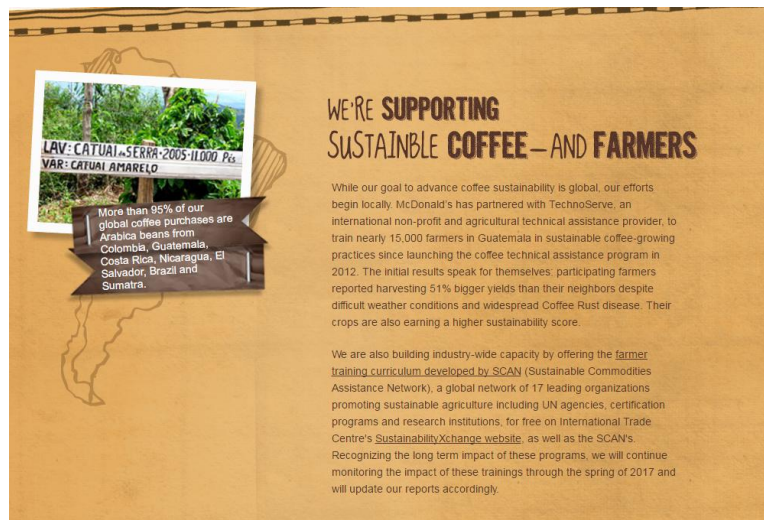


Fig. 1 McDonald’s US website



Fig. 2 McDonald’s Italian website

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.mcdonalds.it/>

In global and international marketing there has been a long-running debate between standardization and localization of advertising across different cultures in the world.

According to De Mooij (1997:682)

Globalization and modernization have led international companies to think that marketing, branding and advertising strategies should be standardized. The argument is that with the globalization of markets, information and communication, people's wants, needs and motives will become so similar that it will justify targeting uniform brands and advertising campaigns to customers across cultures.

Standardizing does not only imply advertising and marketing homogenization, it also suggests that culture, values, language, thinking should be standardized. However, as has previously been mentioned in this chapter and the previous one, cultures and national identity vary across the world and when they have to make choices, customers are deeply influenced by their cultural environment. When it comes to localize a website or an advertisement into another language it is essential to consider all cultural and linguistic differences and adapt successfully the source text to the target one.

In the 1980s marketing strategies aimed to integrate global markets and to homogenize them to local ones: the situation of markets was quite uncertain and western countries were still influenced by a century of ethnocentrism; according to Benson (2002:4)

ethnocentrism is a set of structures that position one's own culture as a centre for the production and distribution of knowledge of other countries, which are to various degrees peripheral to it is the belief in the intrinsic superiority of the nation, culture, or group to which one belongs, often accompanied by feelings of dislike for other groups.

Back in the 1980s some scholars predicted that technology was going to lead the world to a global homogenization of needs and wishes, knocking down barriers between countries. As a consequence, homogenization was also going to let global markets emerge and produce standardized products and therefore standardized advertising campaign. However, companies soon realized that this approach was not successful at all; how could homogenized marketing be actually effective in a world where culture drives customers' behaviour? The answer is: it could not and it can not; "standardized global advertising

campaigns rarely work as well as advertising reflecting local values because of differences in values patterns across borders, which appear not to be converging.” (De Mooij, 1997:682)

De Mooij (2003:198) maintains that “some of the myths surrounding global marketing and advertising are convergence of customer behaviour, the existence of universal values and global communities with similar values.” In the previous chapter I listed the five dimensions of the Hofstede’s model, which describes the main differences and similarities among national cultures; “the model developed by Hofstede explains most of the variations of consumption and customers’ behaviour across countries and enables marketing executives to quantify the effect of culture.” (De Mooij, 2003:198).

For this reason in this chapter I am going to explain this model considering in details the differences and similarities across cultures. Hofstede’s data cover more than 70 countries and for each of them, it provides a scale from 0 to 100 representing the degree of difference between cultures. Countries that score below 50 classify themselves as low on a scale, while countries that scores over 50 classify themselves as high. In the dimension of power distance, for instance, those countries that score high are countries that tend to accept that power is not distributed equally and therefore are named “large power-distance cultures”.

In her paper De Mooij (1997) uses Hofstede’s data on values of national culture to present evidence of how “consumer behaviour varies with cultural patterns and [...] how Hofstede’s 5-D model of culture can be applied to international marketing strategy.” (1997:682). De Mooij managed to demonstrate that people belonging to low uncertainty avoidance cultures have a healthier approach to life and tend to exercise more than people belonging to strong uncertainty avoidance cultures. She also highlights that in masculine

cultures, more females are expected to do the daily food shopping, whereas in feminine cultures, fewer females are expected to do the daily food shopping.

These characteristics, which Hofstede had organized in opposite dimensions, are very useful today to understand why countries opt for a certain kind of advertisement strategy instead of another and how translators can adapt culture-bound advertisements to other cultures. In her book Torresi (2010) claims that in Italian advertising, it is still very unusual to find men doing housework or taking care of babies. Moreover, advertisements are relatively simpler and more traditional than for instance English advertisements. According to Torresi, this tendency “can be traced back to Italy scoring higher than English-speaking countries on Hofstede and Hofstede’s (2005) uncertainty avoidance scale.” (Torresi, 2010:157). She also points out that in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, creative messages tend to be less appealing and reassuring than in low uncertainty avoidance cultures that will probably prefer creative ads rather than bland texts.

The extent to which public and private life is divided depends on the degree of individualism and as De Mooij asserts “to the use of home computing” (De Mooij 1997:686). Individualistic cultures tend to prefer to work at home rather than collectivistic cultures;

Usage and ownership of home computers and related activities is related to individualism/collectivism (IDV). While 1990 ownership of personal computers (Eurodata 91) correlates both with individualism/collectivism (IDV)<sup>3</sup> (.69\*\*\*)<sup>4</sup> and with income (.63\*\*\*), 1995 data (World Economic Forum) of numbers of computers per 100 people for twelve developed countries (United States, Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Singapore, Germany, France, Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and South Korea) show a significant correlation with individualistic/collectivistic (IDV) (.90\*\*\*), but not with income (.27). (De Mooij, 1997:686)

---

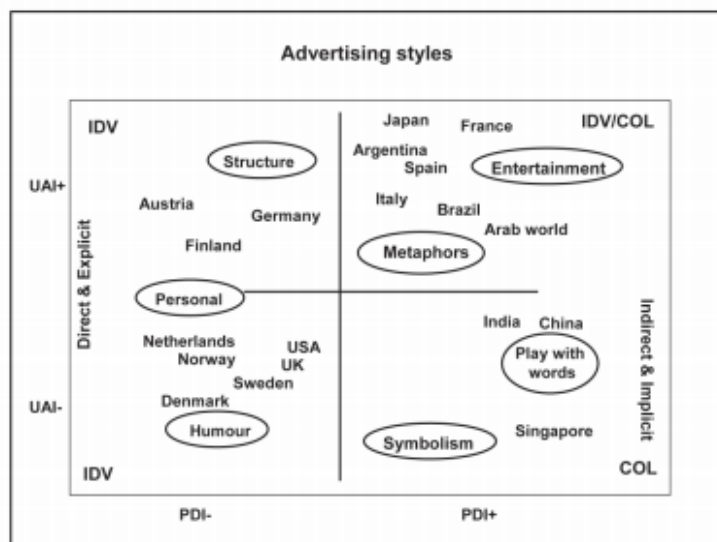
<sup>3</sup> IDV is the abbreviation for individualism/collectivism

<sup>4</sup> “Calculating rank order correlations, expressed in Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient, which reduces the potential influence of single extreme scores. Significance levels are indicated as follows: \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.005.” (De Mooij, 1997:683)

What is more, individualism or collectivism is reflected also in the language and in the way people communicate with each other: according to De Mooij people belonging to the same culture “develop a culture-specific communication style that is, for example, direct and explicit in individualistic cultures or indirect and implicit in collectivistic culture.” (2004:186). She asserts that English is “the only language in the world that spells *I* with capital letter”. This peculiarity is probably due to the fact that England is considered an individualistic culture; in China and Japan, that are collectivistic cultures, “there is no equivalent for the English *I*” (De Mooij, 2004:186-187).

De Mooij demonstrates that consumption decisions are strictly related to need for status, which in turn is related to the degree of masculinity and/or to power distance:

“... dressing fashionably can also be part of the need to be well groomed. Members of small power distance cultures and weak uncertainty avoidance cultures are generally not so well groomed as members of large power distance and strong uncertainty avoidance cultures.” (1997: 687).



**Fig. 3. Interpersonal verbal communication styles.**

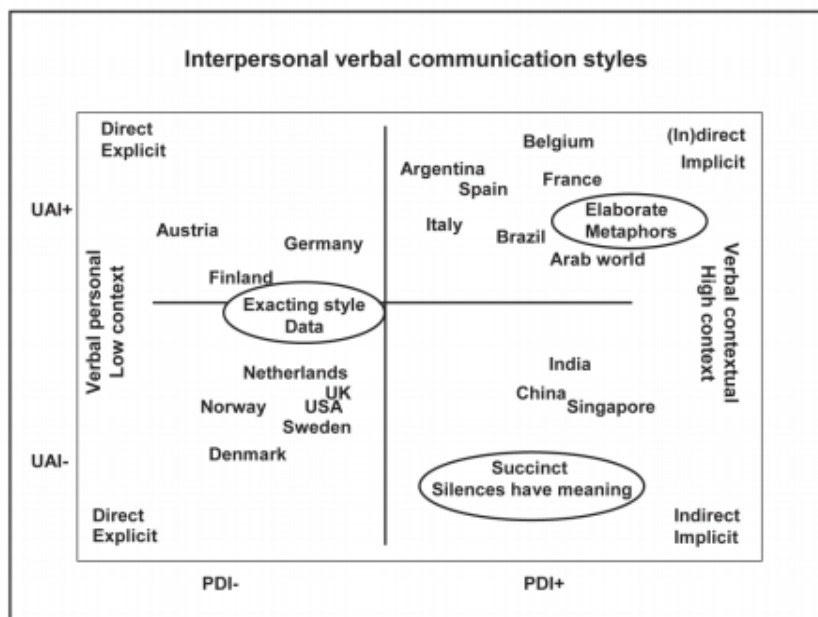
Figure 3 from De Mooij’s (2004) paper clusters countries according to two Hofstede’s cultural dimensions: power distance and uncertainty avoidance in order to explain

interpersonal communication style. Quadrants on the left are characterized by individual-centred cultures.

As De Mooij (2004:193) explains,

verbal personal style is linked with low power distance (equal status) and individualism (low-context), whereas verbal contextual style is linked with high power distance (hierarchy human relationship) and collectivism (high context).

What is more, low-context cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance such as UK and USA tend to prefer an “exacting style” (De Mooij 2004:193), while high-context cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance (ex. Japan) use a more “succinct style”.



**Fig. 4 Advertising style.**

Fig. 4 is the result of applying the concept of interpersonal communication style to advertising. “Advertising styles in the lower un upper left hand quadrant are associated with individualistic cultures of small power distance. Advertising style is direct, explicit, and personal.” (De Mooij, 2004:194). On the contrary “in cultures of strong uncertainty

avoidance, positioned in the upper left hand quadrant, advertising is more serious and structured” (De Mooij, 2004:194).

This model is very useful to understand how communication styles change and shape across countries, for instance the use of direct and indirect communication is the main difference that distinguishes the style of communication and, as a consequence, the style of advertising: “in collectivistic cultures where indirect communication prevails, more metaphors are used than in individualistic cultures. Metaphors of one culture are not necessarily understood in other cultures.” (De Mooij, 2004: 192).

A same topic, a same product or a company has to be promoted differently according to the target culture. Recent studies show that adapting marketing strategies to the culture of the target market has a great impact on advertising efficacy. De Mooij (1997: 684) shows the importance of adaptation giving an example of how mineral water consumption changes in the global market place

Peoples' concern for health can be recognised in consumption patterns which vary by culture. People of weak uncertainty avoidance cultures, for example, have a more active approach to health and exercise relatively more than people of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures. [...] People of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures have a more passive approach to health and relate it to what they eat and drink. One manifestation is consumption of mineral water. Between 1970 and 1997, in the same fifteen countries, consumption of mineral water appears to correlate significantly with uncertainty avoidance (UAI).

Advertising is a communicative tool used by companies to reach an intended audience. In order to persuade as many people as possible the message has to be clear, well-structured and smart. When an advertisement is translated into another language, these requirements have to be respected as well.

Translators dealing with advertising translation have to consider not only visual and non-visual elements, but also the impact of culture on them. Visual and non-visual elements

are full of cultural references: as Torresi (2008:66) states, quoting Eco (2002 and 1965 [1992:72], Williamson (1978:170), De Mooij (2004:190-192),

advertising is one of the multimodal genres which are most suitable for analysing the interplay of verbal and visual elements. In the case of print ads, advertisers need to condense on one page, or a few pages at best, a complex referencing system that allows for the reader's understanding of, and identification with, the represented world and its inherent values.

As explained in chapter 1.1, when advertisers have to create advertisements, they can choose among three strategies: cognitive, affective and conative, and among several frameworks that include: animation, slice-of-life, dramatization, collaboration with an endorser or authoritative figures, and more. When the main strategies and the framework have been decided, the third step is to choose the most suitable graphological combination of visual elements. Issues usually arise from the translation of these elements, and that is the reason why translators need to adapt these elements properly in order to avoid mistranslations.

- Images are usually used to catch the audience attention because the message they convey is immediately received; “images work alongside the verbal text to create a whole reading”. (Goddard, 1998:114)

Fig. 5 is a clear example of how powerful images can be. The picture shows our planet Earth melting on an ice-cream cone and it clearly refers to the serious problem of global warming. Copywriters give careful consideration to the type of people they want to represent. “As soon as people are pictured, they become representative of the social group they are seen to represent – group such as gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, social class, occupation and region” (Goddard, 1998:114)



**Fig. 5. WWF: The Earth Melting**

- Symbols, as Goddard explains (1998:116) “are much more about association of ideas than about any literal or straightforward equation, and much more about group convention than about individual personalised meaning.” One of the most famous examples is the image of the heart to represent the feeling of love. However, symbols are not used equally in all cultures, as Goddard pinpoints some symbols may have different meanings and connotations in other cultures, for instance “heart could represent death” (Goddard 1998:116).
- Layout is quite important as well and it may have cultural references as well. As Goddard states: “writing can also be used to create larger textual shapes by means of different layouts. In this respect, adverts sometimes come very close to the way concrete poetry works” (1998:19).
- Speech or writing. First of all the main difference is of course between written and spoken advertising. Written texts tend to be quite impersonal, less emotional and less individualised, whereas spoken advertisements are considered more direct and captivating. Some companies may actually prefer written texts instead of spoken

advertisements and vice versa. Before 2016, Benetton used to design only written advertisements (such as posters, ads in magazine etc.); however, for the first time ever, this year (2016) Benetton has decided to sponsor an advertising campaign on television.

According to Goddard (1998:80)

As well as having different structural rules about how texts work, different cultures bring different attitudes and values to the reading of any text. If advertisers do not take account of these differences, or if they try to break them down, they need to expect difficulty, if not outright failure.

Translators are quite aware that a good translation does not only depend on translating words, but “it is about encoding the right concepts, and those concepts may well vary from culture to culture” (Goddard, 1998:80). As Lee (2009:2-3) points out in various aspects, “the translation of commercial websites coincides with advertising translation. It is crucial to take into account elements of advertising translation in order to investigate website translation.”

Because of globalization and need of company to spread all around the world, lately website localization has become almost a must for companies who own a web page or site; as Lee (2009:2) asserts: “websites that avail themselves of different language options soon become accessible to everyone with access to the internet, regardless of their fluency in English, the lingua franca of World Wide Web.”

The aim of website localization is to reach as many web users as possible and to reduce, at least virtually, geographical distances and linguistic barriers. Hillier (2003:2) explains that “the problem of presenting multilingual websites to a range of audiences involves more than translating the text from one language to another (which itself is not a straightforward matter)”.

Communication levels and behaviour are deeply influenced by culture factors (such as Hofstede's dimensions). Nowadays website designers have to create websites that are as creative as possible and that suit to cultural norms. As a matter of fact, Hillier (2003:2) asserts that:

if the text is then translated into another language, then the overall design may also need to be changed. This is because the usability of the site will also change. The usability will change due to the users of the new language having different culturally based expectations. Thus, when we design a multilingual website, the cultural context of the audience needs to be taken into consideration.

Website localization serves as a mediator between users and the reality constructed with multimodal signs in different linguistic and cultural contexts by multinational companies. In comparison with literary translation, website localization is characterised by various unconventional elements, such as the uncertain presence or lack of a definite source text, the choice of multimodal materials for translation, and the representation of meanings in different language versions, "verbal and non-verbal elements, therefore, hold equal significance in the translation process". (Lee, 2009:1)

Many companies, websites designers and translators hardly pay any attention to cultural markers in websites (such as colours, layout, time zone, foreign currency symbols and more), however as Hillier (2003:8) states: "culture also affects one's perception of reality. This is relevant because we must perceive and interpret a website in order to use it." In order to analyse website as cultural texts, Singh (2002:35) suggests a model that consists of three dimensions: perceptual, behavioural, and symbolic.

The perceptual dimension aims to analyse the web content according to the "implicit assumptions of society". At this level importance is given especially to several characteristics:

- Spatial orientation that is the structure of the website and deeply influence the way people use the web page. Singh (2002:39) reports the example of a website written in Chinese: Chinese web pages are read vertically therefore they have a different usability from English, which we read from left to right, and Arabic ones that are written and read from right to left.
- Web pages layout, especially as far alphabets and font size are concerned. For instance, in oriental language small size (for instance size 9) font are less legible (Singh, 2002:39).
- Text length is also very important. Usually roman based languages need almost 30% more pages than web pages in other languages.
- Navigation modes, which refer basically to “variations in language readability (left to right, or right to left, or vertical)” (Singh, 2002:39) tend to influence the way people browse web pages.
- Colours categories are also tightly related to culture. According to the study by Berlin and Kay (1969), quoted by Singh in his study (2002:40) “black and white are the most readily distinguished colors across cultures, then is red, green, yellow, blue etc.”

Behavioural dimension refers mostly to cultural values and “the forces that make us behave and react the way we do.” (Singh, 2002:41). Therefore when web pages are designed “careful attention is needed as to how cultural values can be used to make the content culturally congruent” (Singh, 2002:39). According to Singh the most useful and used method to analyse cultural values in promotional texts is the Hofstede’s model, which I have accurately explained above. For instance, on the one hand, collective cultures (such as Japan or China) tend to design websites whose contents focus mainly on family values and community values, whereas on the other hand Individualist cultures

(USA, UK, Germany) prefer to design websites based “on self-direction options, individual customization, and themes reflecting independence and materialism.” (Singh, 2002:43).

Finally, the third dimension Singh presents in his study is the symbolic dimension. At this level the “emphasis is on emic understanding of signs and symbols of the society.” (Singh, 2002:38). Symbols are vehicles of cultural information and “as the web is advertising and a cultural document, it is important to be sensitive as to how signs and symbols are used in the text and graphics.” (Singh, 2002:46). Among the three dimensions, this is the most delicate one to handle because websites designers and translators have to deal with “country-specific symbols, icons, and color symbolism.” (Singh, 2002:47).

- Country-specific symbols include anything that concerns culturally specific knowledge such as the use of “visual metaphors, animal figures, signs, taboo words, graphics of hand gestures, aesthetic codes, forbidden food (beef in India), may need a detailed emic enquiry in the specific culture.” (Singh, 2002:47).
- Icons are very common in cultures, the main issue is to understand it that icon can be understood also by other cultures. “For example the icons of yellow school bus, or red hexagonal sign, and American mailbox with a flag may not be well understood outside U.S.” (Singh, 2002:48)
- Colour symbolism refers to how cultures perceive colours, this because colours, like icons, images, form and words can have different meanings in different cultures. Singh (2002:48) quotes an example from Ricks et al (1974), who explain why

packaging having green label was not well received by some Malaysians, because to them green symbolized the jungle with its dangers and diseases. [...] Similarly in

western cultures white is the color for the bride's gown, while in India widows wear white. (Singh, 2002:48-49).

The examples below are the two homepages of McDonald's webpage, respectively in Italy (Fig. 6) and in the USA (Fig. 7). As for the European market, in 2009, McDonald's introduced a new range of products (such as hamburgers made with local products), but it also adapted the website layout, colours, style and the advertising campaign to the target culture. The German vice-chairman of McDonalds' has declared that this choice is "un simbolo di rispetto nei confronti dell'ambiente", "così il vicepresidente di McDonald's Germania ha motivato l'adozione del colore verde al posto del rosso" (Perilli, 2016). The logo in the Italian website, but also in other European countries, is always the same but instead of red the colour is green; the choice of a different colour relates to the fact that green is the colour of naturalness and freshness.



Fig.6. McDonald's Italia

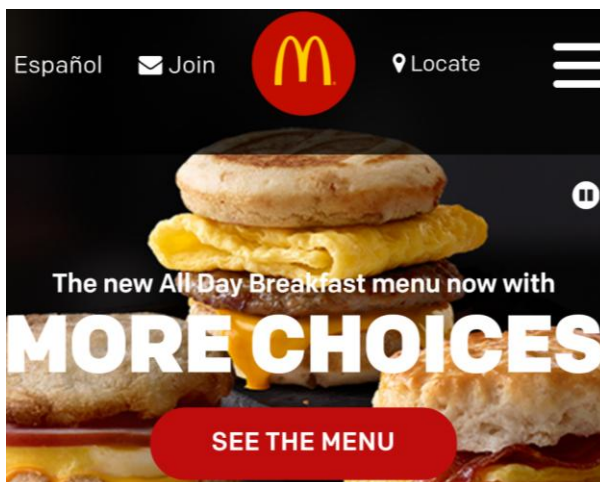


Fig. 7. McDonald's US

In the following sections I will analyze in details the main difficulties in translating promotional texts and the main strategies to overcome these difficulties.

## **2.2 Misuse and miscommunication of culture in the translation of promotional texts**

In her study, Arffman aims to examine the main difficulties of equivalence that arise when translating texts in international reading literacy studies. According to Lörscher (1991, p. 94), which is quoted by Arffman (2007:64),

translation problems are (linguistic) problems that the translator is confronted with when making a translation. A translation problem, more specifically, occurs when the translator realises that s/he is unable to transfer adequately a source language text segment into the target language

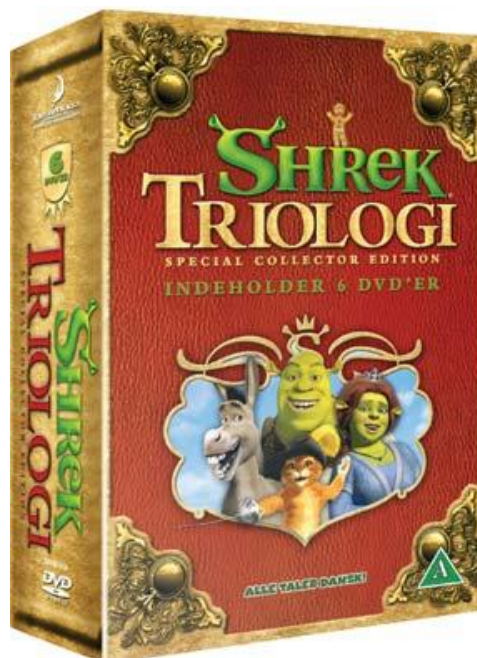
As a result of her comparative study, Arffman (2007:197) lists the main problems of equivalence that occur during the translation of different-language texts:

- Problems related to language-specific differences in grammar
- Problems related to language-specific differences in writing Systems
- Problems related to language-specific differences in meaning
- Problems related to differences in culture
- Problems related to the strategies used and choices made by the translators
- Problems related to editing

As is clear from previous chapters, language and culture are the two main complications in translating both websites and advertising. Although Arffman considers different kinds of texts, she found out that these six categories are the main difficulties that are to be found in mostly all kinds of texts that a translator may find him/herself to translate. Therefore, I will provide examples from different-language websites and advertising where these difficulties are particularly evident.

Problems related to language-specific differences in grammar, to language-specific differences in writing Systems, and to language-specific differences in meaning, usually concern language form. Languages have different phrase, clause and sentence structures, writing systems, word order conventions, ways of indicating given and new information, devices for signalling thematic structures, means of cohesion, etc. (Baker, 1992; Larson, 1984, quoted by Arffman, 2007:65). “The most obvious reason for translation problems is that languages differ from one another, both in form and meaning” (Nord, 1991, p. 159, quoted by Arffman, 2007:65). This, again, is because languages are “rooted in cultures, which have different needs” (Katan, 1999, quoted by Arffman, 2007:65).

When the Shrek trilogy was released in Denmark, designers made a mistake in the box containing the three films. Instead of the word ‘trilogy’, to refer to the three movies, they entered ‘triologi’ (see Fig. 8). This error probably comes from the fact that many Danish speakers say ‘triologi’ /traɪ'ɔlədʒi/, instead of trilogy /trɪlədʒi/.

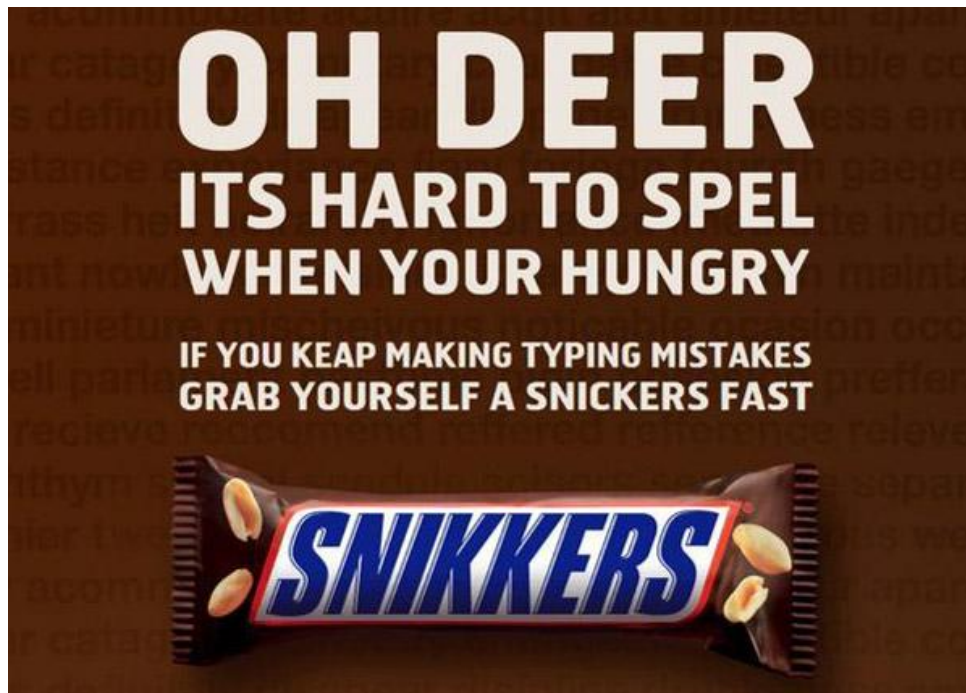


**Fig. 8. Shrek’s Trilogy. Special Collection Edition for Denmark.**

Many companies have difficulties in overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers. In some languages, for instance English and German, it is compulsory to use the subject pronouns; on the contrary other languages, for instance Italian or Spanish do not require the use of explicit subject pronouns. Translators have to be aware of these differences in order to adapt or localize the text properly, otherwise he/she may run into severe grammatical and syntactic mistakes.

Superficial translations can damage the image of the company and adversely affect foreign customers; Nauert (2007:2) actually asserts that “the lack of a systematized transparent translation procedure can lead to ineffective advertising strategies.” What is more, according to Nauert (2007:2) “in addition to the usual complex of translation problems” there are a series of problems to handle when it comes to translate a website, that concern how to make the whole text fit, how to “handle the non-linearity of the highly complex hypertext and how to translate “multimedia elements”, “interactive items”, and how to control the “interplay of continuous text”.

Nevertheless, mistakes can be used arbitrarily to enhance the meaning of the original message. The advertisement designed for Snickers (Fig. 9) is a perfect example of a successful advertising message that contains intended misspelling such as “deer”, “spel”, “keap” and the brand name itself “snickers”.



**Fig. 9. Snickers misspelling.**

Problems of meaning are sometimes underestimated by companies or translators, but they probably are the most insidious ones. When translating a websites, advertisements, brand names or slogans into other languages translator may encounter sentences that are apparently easy or simple to translate but that can have unwelcomed meanings or unexpected connotations. From superficial point view, it might be argued that semantically speaking languages tend to follow universal paradigms, however what changes is the structure of meanings. Arffman (2007:76-77) explains that meaning is both denotative and associative: “denotative meaning – which is also called conceptual, referential, cognitive and descriptive meaning – is a word’s basic meaning that is found in a dictionary (Leech, 1990, pp. 9–12; Lyons, 1995, p. 44; see also Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 56)”; whether “associative meaning – or connotative meaning or connotations [...] refers to the attitudes and emotions suggested by and associated with the word” (Häkkinen 2003, p. 173; see also Harris & Hodges, 1995, p. 42). The example of the

meaning of ‘mother’ provided by Arffman (2007:77) is very useful to understand this clear difference:

the denotative meaning of mother, for example, is ‘a female parent’. The word, however, usually also evokes a lot of mainly positive emotions and feelings, moving us to think of, among other things, love, gentleness, security and our own mother. These are the word’s associative meanings.

Obviously, associative meaning is more difficult to translate than the denotative one because “when a word has the same denotative meaning or denotation across languages, often their associative meaning or connotations differ.” (Arffman, 2007:77).

One of the greatest translation failures probably occurred to the IKEA Group. The Swedish furniture company has a workbench on wheels for children which is sold in their catalogue under the name “FARTFULL”.



Fig. 10. Ikea’s “Fartfull” work bench

Even if in Swedish and other languages this word may be quite “harmless”, native English may find the name “Fartfull” either amusing or offensive.

Also cultures that share the same language may have words or pronunciations that have different meanings. When the Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux had to

develop a slogan for the US market they decided to use the same slogan they had used in the UK. The British slogan, however, was "Nothing Sucks like an Electrolux." which in American English is completely derogative as it means that “nothing is worse than Electrolux”.



**Fig. 11. Electrolux’s US advertising.**

Meaning does not only divide into denotative and connotative but also into literal and figurative meaning. According to the Online Cambridge Dictionary “the literal meaning of a word is its original, basic meaning”, whereas figurative meaning refers to word and phrases that are not “used with their basic meaning but with a more imaginative meaning, in order to create a special effect”. In advertising metaphors, hyperboles, rhymes, paradoxes, puns and irony are often used to involve and persuade the reader and the customers.

The role of advertising is to persuade a prospective consumer of the superior benefits of an advertised brand. Thus, the employment of a rhetorical analytical apparatus is indispensable from a semiotic point of view in addressing how an ad text may be structured persuasively with view to enhancing the credibility of its communication. (Rossolatos, 2012:98).

Metaphors can be both useful and treacherous tools. Translators may decide to translate metaphors with equivalent ones, with other metaphors or rhetorical devices that may convey the same meaning, or simply omitting the metaphor. However translating literally metaphors, puns or idioms is always strongly discouraged because this approach often leads to misunderstandings and mistranslations.

Fig. 12, below, is a clear example of a metaphor that is literally translated from Italian to English. In Italian “in un soffio” is a figurative expression called synaesthesia that means “rapidly”; however the figurative meaning of “soffio” is not necessarily conveyed also by its literal translation “blow”, actually in English “blow” has two meanings, one refers to the act of blowing, but the other meanings, used especially in slang language refers to the use of cannabis. The most appropriate strategy would be to use an equivalent figurative expression in the target language such as “in a flash”, which in English is a figurative expression that means “rapidly, immediately”.



**Fig. 12. Advertising metaphors (Italian)**

A second main issue when translating a website is the rendering of highly cultural specific content because on the one hand target customers may not be familiar with the some aspects of the source texts and on the other hand translating literally culture-bound terms and idea in the target language may cause incomprehension and misunderstandings. The main difference between standardization and localization is that of adaptation. If culture-bound terms are not correctly translated “this often can lead to cultural specific blunders, failing to evoke the intended effect within the target culture.” (Nauert, 2007:2).

Another difficulty that translators have to deal with is cultural stereotypes. Even though stereotypes may be used to actually involve the target audience, they may also represent a great obstacle to an efficient communication. When stereotypes are mainly generalised they result in negative description that can be very offensive for the target audience.

Stereotypes are very frequent in advertising, especially stereotypes related to racism, gender differences, cultural phenomenon or practices. In figure 13, it is clear the racist reference to Obama being black into the White House. This visual parallelism is used to advertise a “chocolate in vanilla” ice-cream.



Fig. 13. Obama inspired ice-cream duet

Cultural stereotypes can be found everywhere and they may have a very negative impact on the company or business image. For instance, in Burgos, Spain, there is a restaurant called “La Mafia. Se sienta a la mesa”, which in English means “Mafia. Please seat at our table”. This strategy can be very useful and successful with foreign customers, especially due to the great success that the movie “The Godfather” (“Il Padrino”) has gained worldwide. However, in Italy, Mafia is a very sensitive and problematic issue and Italian people do not appreciate to be identified with it. Unfortunately Mafia and crime are stereotypes that are straight associated with Italian people. Figures 14 e 15 are real pictures taken in Burgos, the second shows an imaginary South Italy family where the grandmother serves an immense portion of spaghetti to the members of the family. There is a clear resemblance between the men on the left, holding his red glass of wine, and the protagonist of “The Godfather”, Don Vito Corleone, the famous Mafia boss. The slogan “cucina e passione” (“food and passion”), which is written in Italian, may have a double connotation: one clearly refers to the passion for food that is always associated with Italy, but “passion” may also refer to the fact that Italian people are always considered passionate and impulsive. As I could witness in Burgos, many Italian tourists and “peregrinos” found this image, together with the name of the restaurant, both insulting and disrespectful.



Fig. 14. La Mafia restaurant sign. Burgos

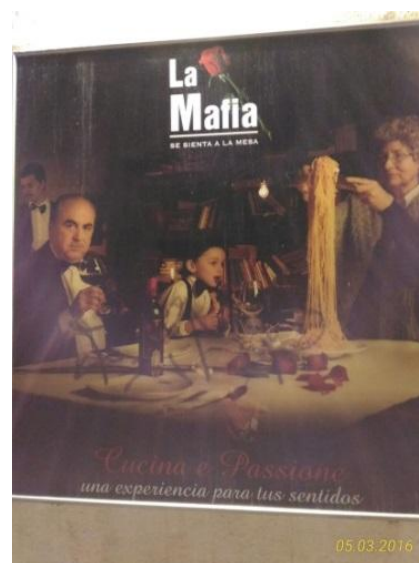


Fig. 15. La Mafia restaurant. Burgos

The larger the cultural distance, the greater the risk of miscommunication. People of different languages and cultures represent different worldviews; translation does not manage to discover all ways of thinking. Mistranslations usually are results of

misunderstandings of either figurative language or idioms, polysemes, or else compact language; and from the translators' desire to improve and naturalise and hence to explicate the texts through addition or concretisation or to simplify them either semantically or stylistically. (Arffman, 2007:211).

Communication failures may interest both the sender of the messages (in this case the translator) when he/she doesn't manage to communicate efficiently the goal of the message and the receiver of the message (in this case the customer) when he/she does not understand what message the sender intended to convey. Therefore, apart from linguistic and culture issues, problems in translation may occur also during the translation process itself. Arffman (2007:85) quotes Neubert (1997), who explains that translation process undergoes three phases:

- Comprehension
- Transferring
- Producing the target text

However, the process is neither linear nor casual.

Translation problems may come about at any of the three phases of the translation process. Translation problems may thus be caused both by difficulties in reading, decoding and comprehending the source text, by difficulties in finding an equivalent target language segment to the source language segment, and by difficulties in actually producing, writing and refining the target text; or they may be combinations of the three. (cf. Hatim & Mason, 1990, pp. 21–22; Krings, 1986, pp. 144–152; Lörsher, 1992, pp. 94–95, quoted by Arffman 2007).

Translation problems and errors may occur at any phase of the translation process, “problems may thus be caused both by difficulties in [...] comprehending the source text, by difficulties in finding an equivalent target language segment to the source language segment”. (Arffman, 2007:86).

Therefore it is essential that the translator is quite well informed about the source text, the target culture, language, the translation theory, translation difficulties and strategies. However, despite all studies and translation studies, errors and mistranslations are still very common. Pepsi, for instance, is fighting a long-lasting marketing battle against Coca-Cola, one of its slogan was “We bring you back to life” meaning that drinking a Pepsi helps to cheer people up. However, when the company addressed the slogan towards the Taiwanese market, the meaning of the slogan became “We will bring your ancestors back from the dead” and nobody dared to buy or drink a Pepsi. (Mikkelsen, 2011).

Over the years scholars have studied many translation strategies to overcome all these difficulties. In the following chapter I will list and summarize the main strategies that can be used to overcome translation difficulties, especially as far as promotional texts are concerned.

### **2.3 Main strategies to overcome obstacles to an efficient communication**

Advertising messages and website elements, as persuasive forms of communication, share the same purpose in all languages, which is to persuade as many people as possible and this can be done only if texts are accessible and understandable. In the previous sections I have presented the main difficulties that occur in the translation of promotional texts; here I will consider the main strategies that a translator can opt for.

There are numerous methods, strategies or approaches that can be used in translation; in this thesis I have decided to focus my attention on the work of three scholars, Torresi (2010), Garcìa (2013) and Xiaojuan (2010), because in my opinion they managed to create a clear and exhaustive classification.

Torresi (2010) states that all promotional texts can be translated using a common strategy, even when they belong to different text genres (for instance website and advertising). However, the approach to the translation needs to be adjusted “to the specific nature of the text in question (for instance depending on its information-to-persuasion ratio) and the situational context of the translation job [...]” (2010:1)

Before presenting all translation strategies, I would like to focus on a particular feature that Torresi (2010) highlights in her definition above: the information-to-persuasion ratio. Information-to-persuasion ratio is a combination of the source, the target and the contexts of distribution; it usually “varies substantially across cultures, depending on specific textual conventions.” (Torresi, 2010:31). Western European cultures B2B texts such as technical brochures and catalogues are highly informative but little persuasive and “are usually translated as closely as possible” (2010:26). The aim of these two text genres is to inform, therefore both language and culture are based on facts rather than emotions and the translated text should resemble the source text as accurately as possible. On the contrary, B2C is a high persuasion and low information text genre that includes websites, brochures and advertising. As Torresi states: “such texts tend to rely more on emotional, evocative language which is often used creatively, e.g. in wordplay.” (2010:27).

As she makes clear, in order to choose the right approach, translators also have to consider the source, the target, the context of distribution and the information-to-persuasion ratio, and of course the combination of the four. The fact of knowing the source is very useful for a translator because very often texts change according to the way people are used to use language or to address to the audience (Torresi, 2010:29); in Italy

public institution [...] tend to use a rather impersonal, unemotional style when promoting their services [...]. In their promotional texts, then, it is likely that the information-to-

persuasion ratio will be oriented towards information, so that the overall impression is that the receiver of the text is being informed rather than persuaded to use a service. (Torresi, 2010:29).

However, it is essential not only to know the source but also the target of a text, in order to make the most suitable choices about the kind of language to use; “the definition of the target may be essential for decisions about the gender, number, register and lexical complexity to be used in the target text.” (Torresi, 2010:29). Targets change according to text and the purpose of the text itself: for instance in B2B or I2I promotional texts, targets are mainly collective entities such as businesses and public organizations, whereas in I2U and B2C texts, targets are usually individuals. (Torresi, 2010:30). However, in B2C promotional texts “the target is not likely to know what it is being promoted yet, and his/her needs and desires are assumed to be induced or manipulated by the promotion itself. This justifies the use of a more openly promotional, less informative style.” (Torresi, 2010:30).

Context of distribution refers basically to the “space (either physical or virtual) in which the text is circulated” (Torresi, 2010:30); very often promotional texts occur at the same time or in the same space therefore it is not easy to get the target’s attention. It is very important to analyse the context of distribution of a promotional text in order to choose the degree of information-to-persuasion ratio to use.

As explained above, Torresi asserts that “all promotional texts can be tackled within the same translational approach” (2010:1), she calls this approach functionalism and asserts that

It may be considered a kind of consumer-oriented translation, which applies to a large number of text genres, [...] it is also an instance of covert translation, [...] i.e. the text appears to have been written directly in the target language. [...] This implies that the source text is usually domesticated, i.e. made to conform as much as possible to the linguistic and cultural norms of the target text. (Torresi, 2010:2).

The functionalist approach refers to transfer of advertising and promotional texts in other target cultures. In this case the word translation is not enough, because the term translation refers mainly to written texts and to “the transfer of concepts from one language to another” (2010:4). When dealing with cultures and cross-cultural references the terms adaptation and localization are more suitable. Adaptation is a form of translation that aims to adapt the source text, language and culture to the target one. It is often used together with localization and trans-creation because these three approaches are mainly used in consumer-oriented translations. As is clear from the previous sections, localization is the most specific term to refer to the translation of advertising, websites or software. Last but not least, Torresi introduces a third type of translation which is trans-creation; trans-creation consists in “re-building the entire promotional text so that it sounds and reads both natural and creative in the target language and culture.” (2010:4).

Torresi (2010) asserts that promotional texts are usually translated in functional terms, and usually translators or advertising agencies prefer to change completely the target text adopting the strategy of trans-creation; however this concept goes against traditional concepts of accuracy and loyalty to the texts. The concept of loyalty refers exclusively to the intended function of the text,

if its function is not preserved , the target text is disloyal to the source text, even if its content and linear meaning are accurately conveyed; on the contrary if the function is maintained the text can be considered loyal, even if this implies creating an entirely new text, with new form and new content (Torresi, 2010:23).

The term ‘glocalization’, according to Torresi (2010:24), is the only term that can “suggest a holistic view of advertising translation, which embrace all its semiotic dimensions and the functionalist view of loyalty”. Holistic translation can be very useful for advertisers or companies because it take into account both cross-cultural and cross-linguistic adaptation; translators may have to adapt not only the text or the headlines, but

also images, fonts and non-verbal elements, “in order to match new values or new figures of speech that were not present in the source text.” (Torresi, 2010:24). As far as the texts and their parts are concerned, advertising translators may choose between two different approaches: on the one hand, an emotional and evocative approach that is used when the text intends to appeal to the target’s emotions and feelings; on the other hand, an accuracy-oriented approach that “is used by translators when the texts contains mainly technical information and its main purpose is to inform rather than move”. (Torresi, 2010).

As is made clear from previous discussions, it is preferable to use adaptation, or localization when translating business-to-consumer text (advertising, websites, and brochures). Websites and advertising in particular, use a very creative and emotional language in order to fulfil their persuasive goal. For this reason, Torresi uses very often the term trans-creation, because it is the strategy through which all the other strategies take form. She highlights the importance of creative language in the translation of promotional texts; as she asserts, “creative language captures the addressees’ attention and enhances memorization by actively involving them in the (re)construction of meaning.” (Torresi, 2010:121). According to Torresi, there are several creative tools that a translator has at his/her disposal: metaphors, puns, neologisms, the use of sounds, syntax, and intertextuality.

Metaphors, as explained in section 2.2, are creative and effective tools for both verbal and visual language; however they are also very difficult to translate therefore they often require the use of two strategies: re-contextualization and re-thinking. Dead metaphors are metaphors that are used so routinely as idioms and are not metaphors any longer (“black gold”, “time is money” etc.): “Dead metaphors, however, can be brought back to

life; this process makes them more involving for the reader who suddenly realizes the irony of their literal meaning, usually taken at face value.” (Torresi, 2010:122).

There are three strategies that a translator may adopt to revitalize dead metaphors:

- Expansion
- Literal translation
- The use of a different metaphor or another creative device

According to Giorgadze (2014:272)

A pun is a figure of speech which consists of a deliberate confusion of similar words or phrases for rhetorical effect, whether humorous or serious. It is a way of using the characteristics of the language(s) to cause a word, a sentence or a discourse to involve two or more different meanings. So humorous or any other effects created by puns depend upon the ambiguities words entail.

Puns are usually quite difficult to adapt; there are few strategies to adopt in order to adapt puns to the target language; puns can be translate into equivalent puns in the target language, however when there is no equivalent pun, then the translator can decide to omit the pun in the target language. Another strategy is to add to the target text a pun where it is not present in the source text in order to create a convincing and persuasive effect for the target audience.

Another creative device is the creation of new words and neologism, “which is frequent in the creation of brand-names which carry semantic meaning.” As Torresi (2010) lists, English neologism are created using particular strategies for instance:

- Prefixes and suffixes (ex. Fruit-tella)
- Affixes
- Compounds (ex. PlayStation)

- Portmanteau words “that result from the process of blending: examples include Swatch (Swiss watch) and Intellution (Intelligent solution)” (Torresi, 2010:123)
- Clipping or shortening
- Grammatical shift

In written and multimedia advertising, playing with sounds is a creative tool as well. Translators and advertising designers can use assonances, consonances, onomatopoeias and alliterations to create effective and original messages.

For instance, the food company Star has launched a new range of products in the Italian and Spanish market, respectively Saikebon (Fig. 16) and Yatekomo (Fig. 17), in order to imitate the great success that instant noodles have in the USA. Even though the products have not gained as much success as expected, I found the adaptation strategy of the products very smart. Both the Italian and the Spanish name of the product changes so that the pronunciation recalls that of an Asian noodles dish. In Italian Saikebon (“sai che bon”) means “you know? This is good” and in Spanish Yatekomo “yo te como” means “I eat you”.



Fig. 16. Saikebon



Fig. 17. Yatekomo

Other creative tools are parallelisms and repetitions. As Torresi asserts,

syntax can be further used in non-standard (although not particularly playful) ways by generating free-standing incomplete or elliptical clauses that, like metaphors, require the addressee's active reconstruction of meaning from the non-linguistic context. (2010:123).

However, playing with words does not only relate to syntax, but also to intertextuality; “intertextuality is the reference to another text genre, either through verbatim or modified quotation, or through the adoption of the stylistic convention of that genre.” (Torresi, 2010:124).

Another important part of advertising is emotional language. There are few examples of emotional style: emotional terms such as dream, fantastic or magic; superlatives and comparatives; terms that carry positive and negative connotations. Torresi states that an effective instance of emotional language is the use of the determinate article “the”, “which makes the object of promotion or its producer/provider unique, wiping out competitors from the scene.” (2010:128). There are also strategies that tend to focus on the reader rather than the product, for instance “the use of first- and second-person personal deictics (*I/we, you, my/our, your*), which creates the intimacy of face-to-face conversation.” (2010:128).

In his paper, García (2013) takes into account especially advertising translation of a source product for a target market and asserts that “the process of translation involves a series of decisions made by the translator based on a wide range of linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.” (2013:353).

According to García (2013), many scholars have studied the source of all translators' decisions and the reason why they adopt certain methods instead of others. During the years, many classifications, descriptions and theories have been made in order to establish

a range of strategies: these strategies, procedures, etc. are adopted in order to achieve the intended aim of the message and “adjust it in line with the addressee’s expectations, which, in advertising, are usually determined by market research studies” (2013: 353).

Taking into consideration Narváez’s study (1999) on advertising translations, García (2013) lists four translation methods (or strategies); the first two are based on the adequacy to the source text, while the last two focus mainly on the target culture:

- Foreignization aims to maintain the look and feel of the source text and to transfer the taste of the source culture into the target one; according to García “this strategy imbues the text with the sense of prestige that the foreign language may have in the TC” (2013:353).
- Literal translation is a method that aims to translate the target text, format, extension and content similarly to the source text.
- Adaptation, as explained in previous sections, aims to translate the target text “in a cultural framework that is acceptable to its addressees, and cultural-specific idiosyncrasies of the TT” (García, 2013:354). Adaptation does not only refer to the verbal elements but also to non-verbal elements such as images and sounds.
- Creation is the fourth strategy that occurs when “a new text is created for the TC with an equivalent pragmatic effect to that of the ST in the SC” (2013:354).

In contrast to translation strategies (the translators’ global approach), translation procedures are used for sentences and smaller units of language within a text for the purpose of transferring elements of meaning from the Source Text (ST) to the Target Text (TT).

According to García (2013: 353-354) the main procedures to use in advertising translation are:

- Amplification is used by translators when they translate expression from the ST using a larger number of words.
- Explicitation is used when implicit elements of the source text are made explicit in the target text.
- Omission occurs when information from the source text is not present in the target one.
- Modulation is used by translators to reflect a change of attitude in the target text compared to the source text.
- Equivalence is used when words or expressions of the source text are replaced in the target text with expressions that conveys the same function even though they may differ in form and meaning. As García asserts, this procedure “is specifically used for the translation of proverbs and idioms.” (2013:354).
- Compensation is used to express an element of the source text in a different place in the target text.
- Condensation indicates the simplification of the original syntax of source text (ex. shortening of the text).

In order to explain all modification that can occur during the translation of advertising García (2013: 354) list five additional strategies:

- Addition (opposed to omission) consists of information added to the target text that was not present in the source text.
- Condensation (opposed to amplification) is used when words and expressions from the source text are translated with a shorter number of words.
- Partial foreignization is used by translators when they decide to keep some elements of the source text also in the target text.

- Partial adaptation occurs when “a ST cultural-specific element is replaced in the TT with a cultural-specific element of the TC.” (García, 2013:354)
- Partial creation aims to create new elements “in the TT to replace another one with different meaning in the ST” (2013:354).

In addition to all these strategies, scholars have analysed other forms of interlingual transfer and cross-cultural communication, and translation is sometimes replaced by other concepts such as trans-editing. The term trans-editing stands for both translation and editing and it was coined to “raise awareness of translation being more than a pure replacement of a source text by an equivalent target text.” (Schäffner, 2012: 866).

Trans-editing includes choices such as adding explanations, removing information, correcting errors of the source texts and “improving grammar and style. Even though there is not a clear dividing line between translating and trans-editing they are two different approaches.

Webpage localization, in particular, needs particular procedures and translation techniques; since trans-editing is a new, efficient and flexible strategy it is used by many translators in the localization of websites. As Xiaojuan (2010:132) asserts “in meeting the demands of localization within the larger context of globalization, trans-editing (and the trans-editing of webpages in particular) has involved more social and cultural adaptation.”

Website localization is a particular form of translation, “which covers a vast array of topics including (among others) economics, politics, science, technology, culture, and entertainment.” (Xiaojuan 2010:133). What is more, as is clear from Chapter 1, websites and brochures are a particular type of B2C texts that should be kept short in order to attract the readers’ attention and not to bore them. Websites are subject to several space and time constraints; some elements and less important information can be omitted and,

what is more, “the layout of a webpage can also be redesigned to cater to the target culture, and information can be reshuffled for the convenience of target readers”. (Xiaojuan, 2010:133)

As far as trans-editing is concerned, there are few strategies to adopt at the lexical and phrasal level and according to Xiaojuan, these strategies are:

- Domestication;
- Foreignization;
- Deletion, which is adopted when no corresponding term exists in the target language;
- Conversion
- Explanation, which is adopted to bridge cultural gaps between the source text and the target one and consists in adding further details in order to explain cultural or linguistic aspects.
- Restructuring strategy is used when translators have to reproduce the source message in target text, therefore they usually omit irrelevant information or reconstruct the text.
- Headings are like titles, and “constitute the front page of a website” (Xiaojuan 2010:141). In order to be effective and capture the readers’ attention, headlines need to carry the meaning of the source text to the target culture.

As Xiaojuan (2010:138) asserts “trans-editors are different from traditional translators because they enjoy more freedom even though they have to trans-edit according to the requirements or needs of the readership.” As far as brands are concerned, usually translators and advertising agencies prefer not to translate brand names for foreign markets because brand names are connected with the product and the company image.

However, as Torresi (2010) explains, there are three situations in which brand names should be translated.

- Graphic adaptation
- Changes introduced to avoid taboos or undesired associations
- Translation to make the meaning of the brand name transparent in the language of the target market

As Torresi asserts:

graphic adaptation usually occurs between different alphabets or writing conventions. Normally, for instance, a Russian brand-names (or company name) has both a Cyrillic version and a version written in Latin characters for the benefits of foreign markets. (2010:21).

However adaptation, especially phonetic adaptation can occur also among languages that share the same alphabet in order to adjust the name to the target language pronunciation.

A very delicate issue for a translator are taboos and unwanted associations. Sometimes graphic and visual elements of a brand name produce “undesired associations” or violate “taboos in the target language and culture”. In order to avoid negative connotations, which would affect the image of the company and probably its sales, these elements are often adapted, or edited. A famous case of unwanted connotation is that of Clairol’s mist stick. Clairol is a personal-care-product division of the US Procter & Gamble company. One of their products is the curling iron “Mist Stick”. Clairol decided to sell its product also outside the States, but decided to keep the same name of the product everywhere without knowing that in German “mist” means “manure”. (Brooks, 2016).

A third strategy is brand-name trans-creation. Sometimes translators may decide to change the name of the company in order to add new meanings or to enrich the original

sense. The Chinese adaptation of the Coca-Cola brand name is a clear example of how translators may need to adapt the form of the source language to the target one.

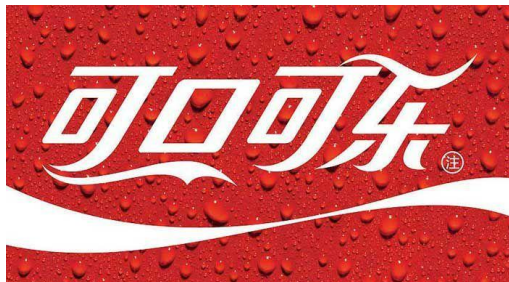


Fig. 18. Coca-Cola brand name in Chinese

Fig. 19. Coca-Cola brand names

When companies decide to sell their products globally they also have to consider the possibility of translating their brand name in the foreign language. Usually it is best not to translate brand names but in some cases the brand name may have a strange or offensive meaning in the target language. This is the case of Coca-Cola brand name in China. Originally the company decided to use Chinese characters that were as close as possible to the Coca-Cola pronunciation; the name therefore was first read and written as “Kekoukela”, meaning “Bite the Wax Tadpole” or “Female Horse Stuffed with Wax”, depending on the dialect. Coke then researched 40,000 characters to find a phonetic equivalent “kokoukole”, translating into “Happiness in the Mouth.” (Fig. 18).



**Fig. 20. McItaly**

Another example of successful brand adaptation belongs to McDonald's. McDonald's is one of the largest companies worldwide and it managed to adapt brilliantly its image and logo to target markets. Italy was quite a difficult market to penetrate because Italian food is usually associated with quality, gourmet, and high-standard cuisine. The slogan "McItaly. Il gusto McDonald's parla italiano" (Fig. 20) is obviously a figurative expression because taste cannot speak; however the expression is very effective and persuasive because the message wants to convey the idea that McDonald's, which is an American food company, is able to create products that can "speak Italian". Again the choice of colours, which are red, white and green, is very strategic because they refer to the colours of the Italian flag, the "Tricolore".

In these chapters I have analysed both difficulties and strategies in translating promotional texts. In the following chapter I will consider the Barilla company, its websites and advertising campaign and I will create a comparative study in order to analyse linguistic and cultural differences between the English and the Italian versions.

## **Chapter 3.**

### **A Comparative Study of the Barilla Website and Advertising**

#### **3.1 The Barilla Group: story and marketing strategy**

This comparative analysis will provide an explanation of the main adaptation and localization strategies used in the Barilla website and advertising. In the first part of the chapter I am going to focus on the Barilla Group, its story, brand mission and brand evolution and I am going to use this information to enrich my comparative analysis.

Barilla was established in 1877 in Parma, by Pietro Barilla. Nowadays, the company owns 29 production plants (14 in Italy and 15 abroad) and exports to more than 100 countries. The Barilla's strategy is to be the number one choice of pasta and it aims to penetrate as many markets as possible. In order to position itself as a leading brand, the Barilla Group aspires to "create emotional and meaning, always putting quality first" (Barillagroup.com, 2016), and has tried to customize its brand in order to fulfil local customers' needs.

Global market penetration started in 1950, when Pietro Barilla travelled to the United States to search for new techniques on production, packaging and marketing. In 1971 Barilla became part of the American company W.R. Grace; in those years, more precisely in 1975, Barilla founded a new line of bakery products, Mulino Bianco (White Mill) which nowadays is one of the most popular bakery lines in Italy. The company remained American until 1979 when Pietro Barilla managed to buy the company back; productivity increased and Barilla became the number one pasta maker in Europe.

Winning the local and the foreign marketplace has always been one of the most important goals for Barilla. The company has persistently fostered its expansion "in new emerging

markets, focusing on large urbanized centers” (Barillagroup.com, 2016); as a matter of fact, as Bujor and Avasilcai, (2015:164) assert:

One of Barilla’s goals is to create new products in order to satisfy the needs of all who will decide to buy and have them for any meal of the day. Carrying this in mind, the company manages to annually launch round 50 new products, this representing the final stage of a long process of four main stages: ideation, development, execution, and launch.

Despite the American experience between 1971 and 1979, the first US Barilla plant was built only in 1999, in Ames, Iowa. From that moment on, Barilla has begun to conquer the American market and pasta became the symbol of the Italian cooking experience. During the years Barilla has managed to increase its value on the Italian local market and penetrate a vast number of foreign markets, taking over both Italian and foreign brands. Barilla nowadays owns Voiello, which was taken over in 1973, Misko, which is number one pasta brand in Greece, Pavesi that was bought out in 1992, Filiz, which is one of Turkey’s leading pasta producers, Vesta that is a brand from South Mexican pasta market and Yemina, number one North Mexican pasta maker. (Barillagroup.com, 2015)

Nowadays, Barilla is one of the leaders in the Italian pasta market and it has achieved also great success worldwide; currently, the company controls the segment of ready sauces with over 40 different recipes; and “it also offers almost “180 bakery products covering different consumption moments for breakfast to snacks”. (GYGP Sustainability Report, 2016:24-25). In his article Platero (2016) provides the readers of ‘Il Sole 24 Ore’ with information on the Barilla company and on the percentage of pasta consumption worldwide:

Oggi Barilla, con il 30% del mercato è il primo marchio per la pasta in America. E se pensiamo che il 50% dei consumi americani è nel Nord Est, secondo analisti interpellati da il Sole 24 Ore, il potenziale su base nazionale è importante. Le iniziative per crescere in ogni angolo d'America sono molteplici.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, Barilla owns 30% of the global market and is the number one pasta maker in America. 50% of American consumption is registered in the North East America; therefore, according to the financial

What is more, according to Dessi, Caboni, Giudici (2013:77) “In 2004, the Italian company launched the Academia Barilla, an international project dedicated to the protection, development and promotion of Italian regional gastronomic culture as a unique part of the world heritage”.

In order to respond to markets demands, the Barilla Group has adopted a segmenting strategy that divides the global market into four areas:

- Italy
- Europe
- America, which include USA, Canada and Brazil
- AAA that stands for Asia, Africa, Australia and Turkey

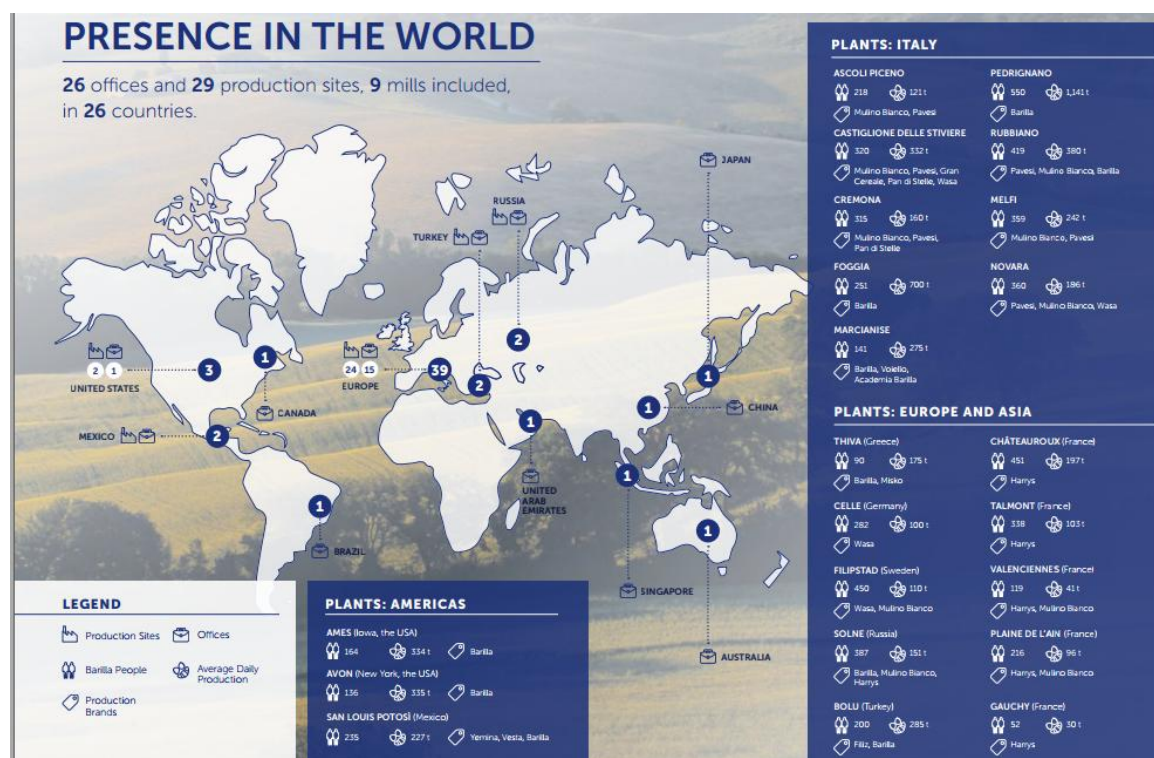


Fig. 1. Presence of Barilla in the world

analysts consulted by Italian newspaper ‘Il Sole 24 Ore’, there is a real possibility that Barilla might expand its business everywhere in America. (My translation in English).

When a company decides to enter a foreign market there are several factors to take into account; firstly, the company has to successfully respond to the necessity of foreignization. Nevertheless, the product that Barilla offers is always the same. Even though it may seem a standardizing strategy, this is actually the reason why Barilla has such a great success around the world. Barilla does not only sell pasta, but is also provides consumers with the culture of pasta. Barilla's strategy aims to enhance the value of the Italian cuisine worldwide and to promote the authenticity and the flavour of the Italian pasta.

Pietro Barilla's slogan "Give people food that you would give your own children" (Barillagroup.com, 2016) summarizes the heart of the company vision and mission.

Many marketing experts have examined the Barilla company in order to expound on the company's great success around the world. Reasons are many. First of all, the spread of the trend of the Mediterranean diet which prizes Italian food and pasta. The slogan of the company "God for You, Good for the Planet" refers to the naturalness of the products and conveys ideas such as health and sustainability which are the values that the company aims to preserve. According to the Barilla GYGP Sustainability Report (2016:34) "It has been demonstrated that the food that should be eaten most frequently is also the food with a lower environmental impact"; as for sustainability, the company has decided to consider the famous concept of the food pyramid, in which food is arranged according to the frequency of consumption, together with the opposite pyramid which instead, reports the impact of food on the environment. The Barilla double pyramid means "eating according to the Mediterranean diet pyramid and producing good in a sustainable manner" (GYGP Sustainability Report 2016:34). From the marketing point of view, the choice of using the Mediterranean diet as guarantee of quality is one of the strong point of this company

because it managed to convey a powerful connotation of “Italianness”. As stated in the Barilla 2015 Financial Report (2015:17)

our philosophy is inspired by the Mediterranean Model, based on a varied and balanced nutritional model, combined with an active lifestyle and a convivial and passionate attitude towards good food.

Another great strength is the massive presence, especially in the USA and Canada, of Italian consumers that acted as ‘ambassadors’ of the Italian products. Barilla has managed to successfully position itself in the global market thanks to the cultural power of its product. The company and the marketing department have shaped the way people perceive pasta focusing mainly on three aspects: the quality of the product, the origin and naturalness of pasta and finally the image of the company. Consumers associate the concept of pasta with a high-quality, tasty, healthy and fascinating product. However, the roots of this success are in the image that the company has presented to consumers. Barilla has established a powerful and longstanding relationship between its brand and its customers.

One of the most celebrated company’s slogan is “Dove c’è Barilla, c’è casa” (“Home is where there is Barilla”). The picture, taken from the real Barilla commercial, shows the typical happy family ready to eat together. The man, who wears a suit, which he was probably wearing at work, is preparing the table, while the woman and the girl are feeding a little cat. The picture is quite different from standard commercials on families; it almost seems a real picture of a real family. This is a clear example of Barilla revolutionary perspective.



**Fig. 2. Barilla commercial 'Dove c'è Barilla, c'è Casa'**

If it is true that pasta is the most symbolic food for the Italians and that home is the place where we find our family, then there is clear parallelism between Barilla and home. In Italy, the brand is ambassador of quality, tradition, family and culture. The strategy of Barilla in the Italian local market is to create an affective connection between brand and consumers.

This slogan is used differently in foreign markets, in the USA the company has preferred to use "The choice of Italy", "e in Francia 'Les pâtes préférées des Italiens' (La pasta preferita degli italiani)." (La Storia siamo noi, 2016 source: Rai.it).

Another important aspect concerning Barilla strategy is the choice of blue as identification colour. The reason of this colour goes back to history; originally, pasta was sold loose and put into a light blue paper envelop. However, due to hygiene reason, packaging became compulsory and Barilla designed its innovative blue packaging with a transparent 'window' to show the pasta inside the box. Nowadays, the packaging has

changed but the identification colour is always blue. From the marketing point of view, blue is the colour of peace and harmony because it activates the parasympathetic nervous system that inhibits the production of adrenalin. Blue conveys the security, reliance and reliability. This is one of the reasons why Barilla chose this colour: to gain the families trust:

Il blu induce alla calma, fissandolo a lungo l'effetto è di quiete ed armonia, perché provoca una maggiore attivazione del sistema nervoso parasimpatico, che inibisce la produzione di adrenalina. Infatti in una stanza blu i battiti cardiaci diminuiscono e la sensibilità al freddo aumenta (Benessereesalute.it, 2016)<sup>2</sup>

However, as for foreign markets the strategy changes. The heart of the strategy is always to create a connection between brand and consumers, nevertheless values have changed. Instead of the traditional approach used in Italy, Barilla has focused on the concept of "Italianness" where the Barilla brand stands for Italian culture, and Italy stands for genuineness and authentic taste. "In the contemporary field of marketing there is still a debate trying to sort out the main traits of 'Italianness', which can be "extracted", hence commercialized". (Demaria and Sassatelli, 2015:311).

In 2015 Barilla launched the "Passion for Pasta" campaign in the USA (GYGP Sustainability Report, 2016:58) that aims to:

- Promote the correct culture of pasta and simple preparations to make it part of everyone's diet.
- Demonstrate the nutritional properties of pasta and its low impact on the environment.
- Explain the benefits of the product with an efficient advertising campaign, with institutions, media and the direct contact with the consumers.

---

<sup>2</sup> Blue is the colour of peace. When someone stares at blue, his/her parasympathetic nervous system activates and inhibits the production of adrenalin. As a matter of fact, in a blues space or room the heartbeat of a person tends to reduce and the sensitivity to cold to increase. (My translation in English).

In December 2013, Barilla opened the company's first restaurant in New York. The Academia Barilla and the Barilla restaurant business are responsible for the spread of the Italian gastronomic culture and conviviality throughout the world. (Financial Report, 2015).

### 3.2 Comparative analysis of the Barilla websites

In order to explore all difficulties and strategies in translating websites, in this chapter I am going to compare both the Barilla websites and advertising campaigns in different languages in order to examine how culture has influenced Barilla adaptation strategies.

Barilla has three different websites:

- [www.barilla.com](http://www.barilla.com)
- [www.barillagroup.com](http://www.barillagroup.com)
- [www.barillafactory.com/us](http://www.barillafactory.com/us)

The first website can be considered as the commercial website of the company and it promotes the Barilla products, the different types of pasta (short, long) and the various types of sauces made by Barilla; the website provides users with a lot of traditional pasta recipes and interesting tips. This website is available in 23 languages and it adapts and changes according to countries.

- |             |          |                 |
|-------------|----------|-----------------|
| - Australia | - Greece | - Sweden        |
| - Austria   | - Israel | - United States |
| - Canada    | - Mexico | - Turkey        |
| - Finland   | - Norway | - Romania       |
| - France    | - Russia | - Poland        |
| - Germany   | - Spain  | - Hungary       |

- Arab countries
- Belgium
- Brazil
- Switzerland
- Netherlands

As I showed in Chapter 2, there are many problems that translators have to face when localizing a website. Barilla has opted for a foreignizing strategy, which has allowed them to adapt successfully the source material to the target culture. However Barilla managed to preserve the feel and look of the Italian brand in order to transfer the source culture into the target one.

As far as this website is concerned, the main changes regard the layout of the page and the number of products promoted by the website. As a matter of fact, the layout of the Barilla website for the Arab countries<sup>3</sup> is completely different from the others, the search box is on the left; the pull-down menu, the logo of the company and obviously all textual elements are on the right.

Translators always need to consider the target culture in order not to run into unwanted connotations or taboo issues. For instance, in Arab countries, where the majority of the population is Muslim, there are several delicate topics to take into account, such as food containing pork meat; as a matter of fact, in the Arab Barilla website there are no references to sauces containing meat, especially pork meat.

There are only two elements, for which the company has opted for a non-translation strategy: the logo of the company, which is always Barilla for all countries, and the name of almost all products; both in English, Turkish, Chinese or Russian the name of the products are written in Italian (see Fig. 3 and 4).

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://arab.barilla.com/>

The second website<sup>4</sup> is the platform where the company provide its story; it can be considered as the corporate website of the company because it is more informational and it aims to inform users about the Barilla story and development, its mission and vision. This website has been designed in only two languages: English and Italian and it presents the main ideas of the company on food and sustainability.

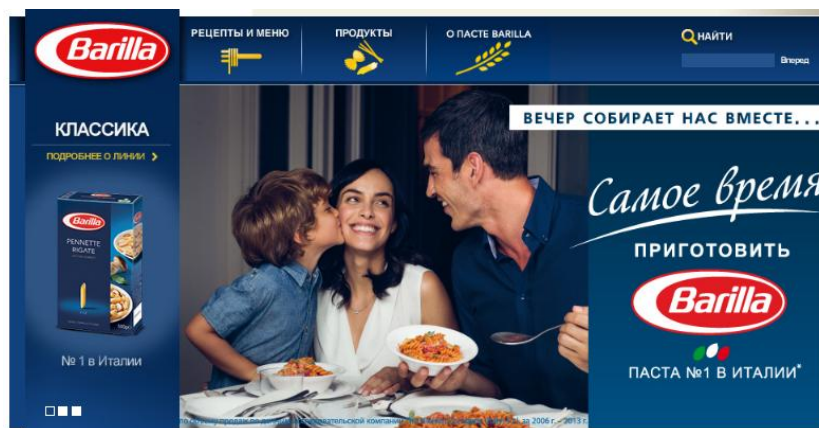


Fig. 3. The homepage of the Chinese Barilla website



Fig. 4. The homepage of the Russian Barilla website

The third website<sup>5</sup> is not directly connected with the Barilla Group official site and it is available in Italian, English and French. As Bujor and Avasilcai assert (2015:165), “in this platform people are invited to imagine stories and concepts, not only on Barilla’s reality, but also on their own worldview, new habits and ways of life”. The identity of Barilla is always present, the platform combines the Barilla logo with the word “Factory” written in

<sup>4</sup> [www.barillagroup.com](http://www.barillagroup.com)

<sup>5</sup> [www.barillafactory.com/us](http://www.barillafactory.com/us)

white on a blue background; blue is actually the representative colour of the company, which is also the colour used for the paper packaging.

In my comparative study I am going to focus in particular on the first two platforms because they both better represent the idea of the Barilla localization strategy. In the first part, I have briefly compared the main formal aspects that distinguish the America, British, Canadian and Australian websites. In the second part of the analysis, instead, I am going to compare the US webpage, which is the website that mostly differ from the other English websites, with the Italian one, in order to examine how both culture and stereotypes influence the structure and contents of the Barilla websites and advertising. In this analysis I have also considered example from the British, Canadian, and Australian websites in order to provide a wider perspective.

As for the official Barilla Group website there is no differences between English speaking countries, as a matter of fact the website domain is simply *.com/en*. However, several differences are present in the Barilla commercial website that actually distinguishes the websites domains according to each country, also English-speaking countries.

- USA, <https://www.barilla.com/en-us>
- UK, <http://www.barilla.co.uk/>
- Canada, [http://www.barilla.ca/ca\\_en/index.jsp](http://www.barilla.ca/ca_en/index.jsp)
- Australia, <http://www.barilla.net.au/>

A first difference regards the layout of the platform. The British page uses a layout that is almost identical to the Canadian and the Australian one; however, the images and the products are promoted differently.

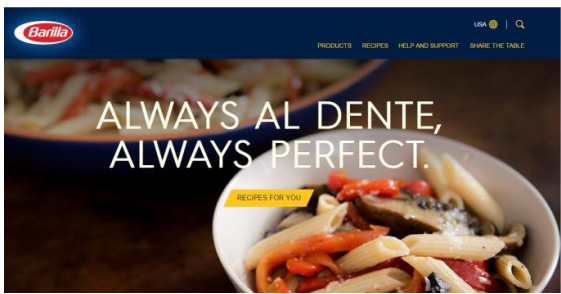


Fig. 5. The US Barilla website



Fig. 6. The UK Barilla website



Fig. 7. The Canadian Barilla website



Fig. 8. The Australian Barilla website

The British, the Canadian and the Australian websites are very similar, however the products, the slogans and the type of promotion change according to the country. For instance, in the Australian website there is a reference to “Coles”. Coles Supermarkets is an Australian supermarkets chain owned by Wesfarmers, therefore this reference is clearly limited to only Australian consumers. Similarly, in the British webpage there is a reference to Tesco, the famous British multinational grocery and general merchandise retailer.

The “Promo” section at the bottom of the page is personalized according to each country; for instance the Canadian platform sponsors the Barilla Canada page on Facebook with a campaign named “Ciao amico!” which aims to “celebrate the authentic culture and cuisine of Italy”. On the contrary, the Promo section of the Australian webpage contains a reference to “Casa Barilla”, the exclusive Italian Cooking School in Sydney.

Over the years Barilla has launched in the market several collections and product ranges, however some website promote ranges that others do not:

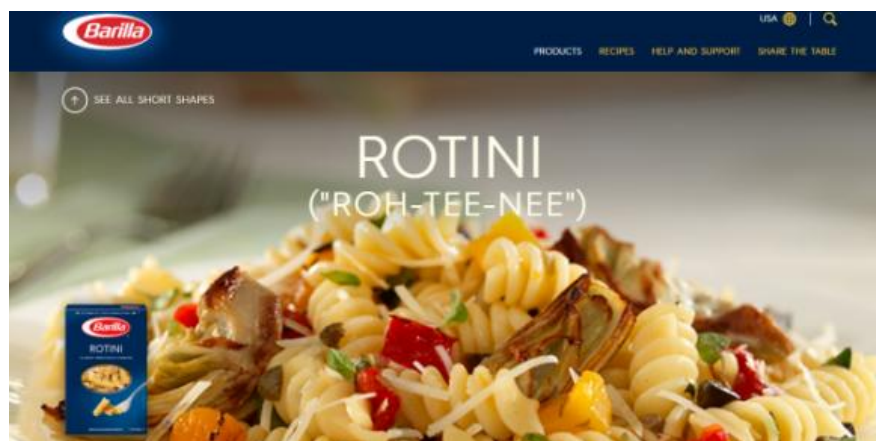
- *Classic blue box* is the most famous the sold range. These products are promoted in all websites.
- *Collezione* range is present as well in all the four webpages, however it is promoted differently. While the Australian and Canadian website use the expression “La Collezione d’Italia”, the UK website states “Collezione. Regional specialities” and the US one “Collezione. Artisanal Collection”.
- *Gluten free* range is promoted both in the Australian and American webpage with the slogan “Gluten Free. Great taste, made with corn and rice”, while on the Canadian packaging the slogan is “Sans Gluten Free” probably on the influence of French as second official language in Canada.
- *Whole grain* range is the promoted by all the four countries, however, while the America, Canadian and Australian websites use the English term “Whole grain”, the packaging in UK uses the Italian term “Integrale” followed by “100% wholegrain”.
- *Protein plus* collection is promoted only by the Canadian and the US website.
- *Pronto* is particular pasta range that does not need to be drained. This product is promoted only by the American and Canadian websites, probably due to the proximity of the two countries and to the fact that they belong to the same market area. The slogan is also the same “One Pan. No Boil. No Drain”.
- *White fiber* range with the slogan “3x more fibers than our regular pasta. Same great taste” is promoted only by the US website.
- *Veggie* and *Organic* series are also promoted only by the American websites.

- *Piccolini* is a particular range of pasta that refers to miniature version of traditional pasta shapes. This selection is promoted only by the Australian website.

Apart from stylistic and formal differences, there are terms that actually differ according to cultures and countries. For instance, in the Australian webpage, there is recipe called “Tortiglioni with chicken and capsicum”. Capsicum according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1989) “capsicum is a tropical plant with seed-pods containing hot-tasting seeds”; however, what the British and Americans call pepper, for the Australians is capsicum.

Another main difference can be found in the use of the terms “aubergines”, which is employed only in the UK website, and the term “eggplant, which is used in the Australian and in the US website to refer to the same vegetable.

Comparing the websites another detail showed up, while the UK and the Australian websites have kept the name “Fusilli” unchanged, in the Canadian and US webpage “Fusilli” are named “Rotini”. What is more, another difference in the name of products is ‘Capellini’ which is the name used in the Australian, British and Canadian website. On the contrary in the US webpage they are called “Angel hair”.



**Fig.9. US Barilla website. Rotini**

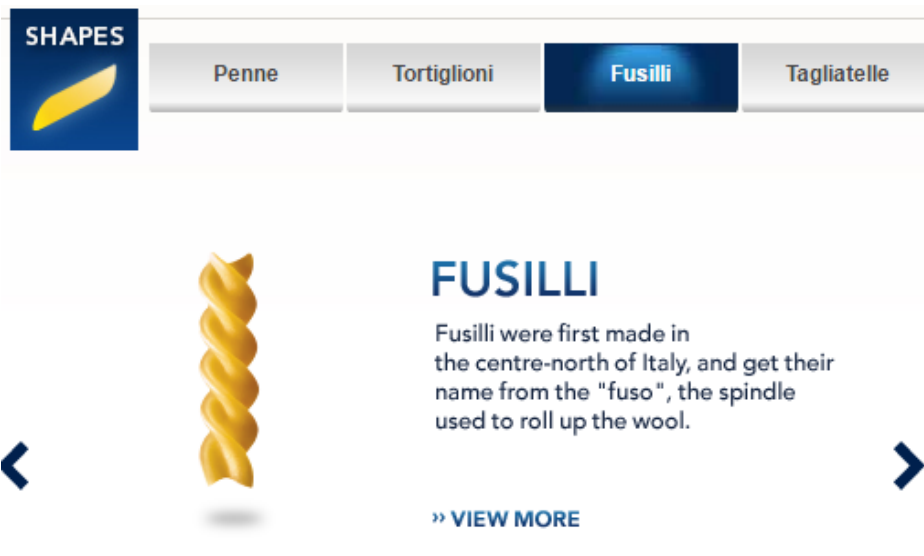


Fig. 10. UK website. Fusilli

What is more, Fig. 11 shows a particular feature that characterizes only the US website. In order to enhance the sense of “Italianness” and the feeling of eating Italian pasta, the webpage provide customers with the Italian pronunciation of pasta names. The pronunciation of Bucatini, which may be quite difficult for non-Italian speakers, is written “Boo-kah-tee-nee”.



Fig. 11. The US Barilla website. Collezione Bucatini

In the following table I have listed the main differences explained above.

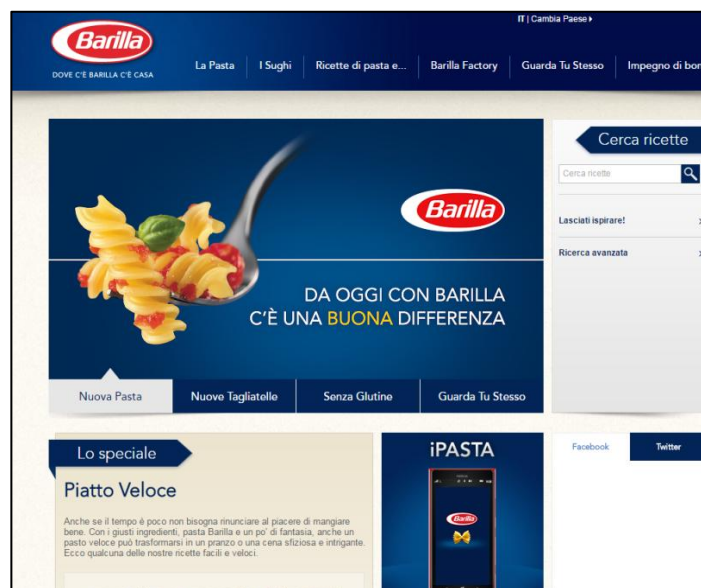
<b>Australian website</b>	<b>UK website</b>	<b>US website</b>	<b>English Canadian website</b>
Capsicum	Pepper	Bell pepper	Pepper
Eggplants  ("Spaghetti with eggplants and walnuts")	Aubergine  ("Penne Rigate with shrimps and aubergines")	Eggplants  ("Barilla rigatoni with eggplant & tomatoes")	Eggplant  ("Conchiglie with Swordfish, Eggplant, and Oranges")
Fusilli	Fusilli	Rotini	Rotini
Capellini	Capellini	Angel hair	Capellini

**Tab.1 List of different terms found in English websites.**

The comparison of two websites in different languages involves a more complex analysis, because there are several factors to consider: language, layout, text structure, colours, words etc. Since I have presented the main differences that I have found in the English websites, in this part of the section I am going to compare the Italian website and the American one, because it is the platform that mostly differs from the others websites, including the Italian webpage. Nevertheless, I have also included examples from the others websites (the Canadian, the Australian and UK platforms) because there are interesting aspects to take into account.

Many elements in the websites have been "foreignized" in order to maintain the look and feel of the source text; for instance the strategy of using the Italian names of the products helps to convey a sort of 'made in Italy' value. However, despite the strong presence of Italian elements, it might be argued that websites have been carefully "domesticated" in order to meet the demands of local markets and consumers.

From a formal point of view, the Italian homepage is slightly more similar to the British, Canadian and Australian one. In the central part of the page there are four different images of the diverse product ranges and each of them is enriched by a different catch phrase; the top of the page is arranged into linear menu items and each of them opens a pull-down menu.



**Fig. 12. Homepage of the Italian Barilla website**

Both in the Italian and the English websites, the Barilla logo is on the top left corner of the page, but only in the Italian homepage the logo is followed by the famous slogan “Dove c’è Barilla c’è Casa”. This clearly refers to the most successful Barilla strategy that managed to create a deep cultural connection between the brand name and the feeling of home.

The image of the brand is very strong in all websites, there are several slogans and catch phrases that show the power of the brand name and its deep connection with the Made in Italy feeling. In Italy, where pasta is a must, competitiveness is very strong, therefore Barilla has been constantly innovating its products; this tendency results from the catch

phrases used in the website: “Da oggi con Barilla c’è una *buona* differenza”, or “Nuove emiliane Barilla, c’è una *buona* differenza”. ‘Buona’ has a double meaning, one the one hand it is metaphorically used to mean “tasty”; on the other hand the meaning is “actual” to mean that there is an actual and concrete difference with other products.

The American website instead, uses a simpler and cleaner style: there is a big picture of pasta covering the whole page; as Torresi (2008:67) asserts:

visuals, can be used to convey the image of a culture into other cultures: for instance, visual renderings of Italianness or “Italianness” in advertising for agro-food products make extensive use of photographic techniques and light to convey an idea of genuineness and authenticity – even when the products are not really made in Italy.

On the picture the motto “Always al Dente, Always Perfect” helps enhance the Italian quality and is also used in the Canadian homepage. The term “al dente” has become so famous in foreign markets that English dictionaries have created their own definition, according to the Merriam Webster dictionary, “al dente” means “cooked but still firm”. The idea of “pasta al dente” goes back to the old promise made by Barilla to produce a type pasta that would maintain its perfect consistence. The expression “al dente”, which has become Barilla ‘hobby-horse’ motto, is nowadays a symbol of high-quality Italian pasta in foreign markets.

This strategy of foreignization, which allows website designers to keep Italian words, is probably the most useful strategy for the Barilla website, because it aims to maintain the look and feel of the source language but especially to transmit the prestige that the foreign culture, in this case the Italian one, may have in the target culture and therefore create additional value. Comparing the different websites I could notice that in the Italian website the reference to “pasta al dente” is not so important, probably because it does not have the same cultural impact.

The sense of “Italianness” is very strong in all English websites. All slogans aim to communicate the feeling of ‘made in Italy’ as synonym of quality. For instance, the Australian homepage (see Fig. 8) slogan focuses on the concept of authenticity with the question “How do you spot authentic Italian pasta?” the answers are three and they are all enriched with symbolic images that aim to catch the reader attention.

- It’s the way it cooks to perfection, which relates to the idea that Italian pasta is cooked “al dente”
- ... it’s the way it taste, because Barilla promotes a product that tastes Italian
- ... it’s the name of the box.

The image of the company helps to enrich the image of its products; Barilla managed, both in Italy and abroad, to create a strong connection between sales and the reputation of the brand name. The strategy of Barilla to create a strong brand image is also present in foreign markets and it becomes very clear when analysing these websites. The sentence ‘it’s name of the box’ clearly means that the Barilla name assures quality, taste but especially the experience of eating Italian pasta.

The message is to encourage consumers to embrace delicious, simple Italian cuisine, and Barilla seeks to further strengthen its local brand identity by appealing to food lovers across Australia. The large integrated marketing campaign in Australia, “Share the Passion” was launched in 2010 by Mr Terry Ryan, Managing Director of Barilla Australia and New Zealand. According to Eckersley in the Australian Food News website, 2010):

Barilla has a proud reputation for representing Italian cuisine around the globe. As Italy’s number one pasta brand, we endeavour to communicate effectively the authenticity, passion and rich Italian heritage of Barilla to the Australian market, [...] Barilla is renowned internationally as the ambassador for Italian cuisine and seeks to attract more Australians to appreciate the subtle, delicate flavours and ‘al dente’ pasta, which Italian cuisine is famous for.

In the British website (see Fig. 6), the main slogan is “Italy’s n°1 pasta has arrived”; the use of emotional and evocative language is connected to the high persuasion ratio of the website. Holding the lead in the world of pasta is a synonym of supremacy especially in terms of prestige and notoriety, which Barilla has gained thanks to its efficient communication.

Comparing and analysing the different webpages I managed to list the words, which appear more frequently in the English websites:

- Inspire
- Famous
- Authentic
- N°1
- Discover
- Great
- Al dente
- Dinner
- Perfection

This is not casual, actually emotional and evocative is frequently used in both advertising and websites; terms such as “dream”, “fantastic”, “magic”, and the term above are clear examples of emotional style because they are emotionally charged; moreover other examples of emotional style are “superlatives and comparatives”, “lexical boosts” such as “number one” and “terms with clear positive or negative connotations” (Torresi, 2010: 128).

One of the main differences between the Italian website and the English ones is the aim of the promotion itself, on the one hand pasta is for Italian people a synonym of family, on the other hand for foreign markets pasta is a synonym of Italy and the aim is to create a journey into an Italian kitchen.

Not only values change, but also promotion itself. There are products in foreign markets that are not sold in Italy and of course vice versa. One of the promotional differences between the two website is the “Alfredo sauce”. The Alfredo sauce is both the most famous ‘Italian’ food in the United States, probably due to its typical Italian name and the

least known sauce in Italy; “Barilla Creamy Alfredo is made with high quality ingredients like REAL Parmesan and Romano cheeses and Real cream that deliver a smooth and balanced flavor the entire family is sure to love”. (Barilla.com, 2016), however, even though in Italy this product is neither tradition nor typical, overseas it has become increasingly popular.



Fig. 13. Homepage of the Italian Barilla website



Fig. 14. Homepage of the Canadian Barilla website

What is more, in the American and Canadian websites there is range of products, called “Pronto”, that is not present in the Italian market. This collection has been produced specifically for the American market in order to shorter time of preparation. This strategic choice is tightly related to culture; people from other countries find pasta preparation long or complex, while Italian people usually cook pasta because it is quick and easy to prepare (see Fig. 13). Marketing agents decide not to extend this range of product in Italy, basically because this product would never sell as much as in the USA, since pasta is considered as a ‘cultural custom’. Along with this idea, Barilla launched in the American market, another ready-to-eat range of products called “Italian-style entrees”. This dishes claim to be “Italian-inspired receipts, made with the highest quality ingredients” (Barilla.com, 2016), however one of entrees is the “Chicken Alfredo” pasta, which, as mentioned above, is not so typically Italian.

As far as culture is concerned, there are several aspects that influence the style and effectiveness of a promotional text. As is clear from previous discussions, translating cultural references may cause the creation of cultural stereotypes that on the one hand may have disastrous effects, but on the other hand may be quite effective in the target culture.

One of the most consolidated stereotype, concerning Italy and especially Italian families, is represented by a big family around a table eating together huge portions of pasta. In the American website there is a section entirely dedicate to “Share the table”. The catch phrase is “Make meals meaningful again” and it clearly reflects the mission of Barilla which is to “create products based on the Mediterranean nutritional model, delivering both taste and nutrition, to help people all over the world share the table together” (Barilla.com). In the Spaghetti Brochure (2014), there is a reference to the term, “Spaghattata” which in the American website is considered “the simple Italian way to share the table”. According to the definition in the brochure, “[spa-ghet-tà-ta] (n): is an impromptu, spaghetti-based meal where friends, family, festivity and informality are just as important as pasta.” The idea is quite exaggerated, it almost seems that Italian have a “Spaghattata” every time they eat together and as a matter of fact, there is no reference to this idea in the Italian website. Nevertheless, this cultural stereotype has become quite popular in foreign markets and it surely enhances the persuasiveness of the Barilla promotional campaign.

Table 2, below, aims to exemplify the main differences in terminology between the English websites and the Italian one. The terms, which are also compared in Tab. 1, are used differently both in English websites and in the Italian site. Some names, such as “Fusilli” and “Rotini”, are used to promote the same product, however, only the British and the Australian website use the same name as in Italian webpage. “Elbows”, instead

are translated in English in all the websites; another difference is the use of the Italian term “Integrale” that only in the UK webpage is kept Italian and then followed by “wholegrain”.

<b>Italian website</b>	<b>Australian website</b>	<b>UK website</b>	<b>US website</b>	<b>English Canadian website</b>
Fusilli	Fusilli	Fusilli	Rotini	Rotini
Capellini	Capellini	Capellini	Angel hair	Capellini
Mezzi Celentani	Elbows	Elbows	Elbows	Elbows
Ruote			Wheels	
Integrale	Whole Grain	Integrale wholegrain	Whole Grain	Whole Grain, Grain Entiers
Senza glutine	Gluten Free		Gluten Free	Sans Gluten Free

**Tab.2 List of terminology differences between English websites and the Italian webpage.**

Using the same model, in Table 3, I have summarized and listed the main differences between the catch phrases used in the different websites. The first difference is the translation of the famous slogan “Dove c’è Barilla, c’è casa”. The Australian slogan is very similar to the Italian original one, it is translated literally and conveys the same meaning. On the contrary, the Canadian translation is shorter because translators opted for a creation strategy and a condensation procedure; the word “home” is positioned at the beginning in order to create a sort of direct parallelism between home and Barilla.

The headlines in the websites are different except the American and the Canadian slogan “Always al Dente, always perfect”. The Italian headline, instead, focuses on the concept

of difference “*buona differenza*”, (as explained previously). While the Australian website focuses on authenticity as a value, the British slogan highlights the fact that Barilla is always the best choice because it is the number one pasta in Italy. All these slogans have been translated according to the Foreignization strategy which conveys the prestige of the source culture into the target one.

As far as the Barilla’s sauces are concerned, the aim of all websites is to emphasise the naturalness and genuineness of the ingredients. Comparing the websites, however, I have noticed that there are no references to sauces in the Canadian website, and that this product range is not promoted either. On the contrary, the “Collezione d’Italia” range is the product that is promoted more similarly among the English websites. The slogans, which have been translated according to the foreignization strategy, are quite similar and they all aim to highlight the ‘experience’ of eating typical regional pasta. The Italian website mentions only the pasta of Emilia Romagna because it is one of the most famous egg pasta regional specialities; the slogan actually says again “*buona differenza*”.

Finally I also listed the Gluten Free range because the slogan is a good example of adaptation. ‘Piacere’, which in English means ‘pleasure’, has a similar meaning to ‘pleasure’, however “pleasure” used mainly to refer to emotions, delight, amusement, rather than food. This is probably the reason why translators have decided to use the term ‘taste’ which instead refers both to the flavour of food and to a ‘brief experience of something’ (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 1989). In this case the translation procedure used by the translator is the equivalence procedure, which is usually used when words or expressions of the source text (‘piacere’) are replaced in the target text with expressions that convey the same function even though they may differ in form and meaning (‘taste’).

	<b>Australian website</b>	<b>UK website</b>	<b>US website</b>	<b>English Canadian website</b>	<b>Italian website</b>
<b>Catch slogan</b>	“Where there is Barilla there is home”			“Home is where Barilla is”	“Dove c’è Barilla c’è Casa”
<b>Headline of the homepage</b>	“How do you spot authentic Italian pasta?”	“Italy’s n°1 pasta has arrived”	“Always al dente, always perfect”	“Always al dente , always perfect”	“Da oggi con Barilla c’è una <i>buona</i> differenza”
<b>Barilla’s sauces</b>	“Made with 100% Italian tomatoes.”	“All natural ingredients, no preservatives.”	“See all of our sauces”		“Guarda tu stesso”
<b>Barilla Collezione</b>	“A sublime journey in the heart of the taste”	“Inspired by Italian regional specialities”	“A dream dinner party begins with Collezione”	“A sublime journey in the heart of the taste”	“Nuove Emiliane Barilla. C’è una <i>buona</i> differenza”
<b>Gluten free pasta</b>	“Great taste made with corn and rice”		“Great taste goes Gluten Free”	“Great taste of Barilla Sans Gluten Free”	“Tutto il piacere della pasta Barilla, senza glutine.”

**Tab. 3 List of the main differences between the catch phrases**

### 3.3 Comparative analysis of the Barilla advertising

As explained in the previous section, communication has always been Barilla's strong point and it has served as springboard to penetrate foreign markets.

Advertising is a key element in promotion, as a matter of fact,

Fu Barilla a guidare la reazione dei produttori italiani, adottando una strategia di crescita assai aggressiva. Incrementò in modo massiccio gli investimenti in pubblicità e promozioni [...] l'intensità delle sue réclame crebbe del 3,8% nel biennio 1993-94, dallo 0,5 % del 1981. (Fratocchi e Presutti 2000, p.251, quoted by Martiriggiano, 2009:27).

To create efficient advertising campaigns, Barilla applies to local advertising agencies; they actually become partners of the company and work together to find the best promotional solutions. This strategy of domestication manages to adapt advertisements to local markets, however maintaining the same brand image and values both locally and internationally. Therefore, advertisements are always different according to countries but they all share the same values.



The Barilla's advertising campaigns started in the 50s. Figure 15 is probably one of the oldest Barilla's advertising poster; it dates back to 1958 and was designed by Erberto Carboni. The style is simple but effective as well. The background is blue, which is also the colour of Barilla, and the image shows a chicken with five eggs followed by the catch phrase "con cinque uova per chilogrammo" ("made with five eggs per kilo").

**Fig. 15. Advertising poster for Barilla (1958) by Italian graphic & industrial designer Erberto Carboni (1899-1984)**

Pietro Barilla wanted to convey the idea of a country and a culture, with which everybody could identify themselves. Barilla was one of the first companies that decided to promote a different image of society, in which women are not simply housewives but protagonists.

In 1967, Barilla released a commercial that nowadays is still considered one of the most innovative and avant-garde commercial from both a linguistic and cultural point of view; the protagonist was Mina, the legendary Italian singer, a symbol of modernity, transgression and freedom. In this commercial, Mina addresses directly to the female audience and invites them to prepare pasta for their “uomo” (man) and “ragazzi” (boys) instead of their husbands and sons; a slogan quite innovative and revolutionary for the 60s; as a matter of fact,

Mina rappresentava un modello di donna moderna e indipendente. E sceglierla come testimonial dimostrò che la Barilla intendeva farsi interprete del cambiamento in atto nella società proprio in un momento storico in cui il paese reale era lontano anni luce dal paese legale<sup>6</sup> (Valoroso, 2013. Corriere.it)

As mentioned in Chapter 1, using testimonials and celebrities is a particular choice of executional framework that helps the advertiser increase the persuasiveness ratio of the message. In one of the most recent advertising campaign, Barilla has picked a great Italian actor, Pierfrancesco Favino and Oscar-winner Gabriele Salvatores as director. The choice of two great Italian artists takes the story of Barilla products back to the times of the commercials shot by Federico Fellini in the 1980s and to great international testimonials later on, “such as Paul Newman in the US, Gérard Depardieu in France and Steffi Graf in Germany”. (Barilla Group: 2014, Revenues 2014:2). Despite being completely different, commercials manage to convey the same idea: Made in Italy and the Italian value of authenticity is always recalled throughout the slogans.

---

<sup>6</sup> Mina was the symbol of the modern and independent woman. When Barilla chose Mina as endorser, the company aimed to start a social change in Italy. (My translation in English).

One of the most famous Barilla's commercials dates back to 2010. The commercial, which is set in Parma, in 1877, shows a man who impersonates Pietro Barilla, walking around his wheat fields with his family. Even though the commercials may seem similar there are several differences to compare.



**Fig. 16. Barilla commercial “Dream**



**Fig. 17. Barilla commercial “Sogno”**



**Fig. 18. Barilla commercial “Sogno”**

Firstly, the duration of the commercials is different, while the English one lasts 0:30 seconds, the Italian one lasts 2 minutes. As a matter of fact, the Italian commercial is more detailed, there are more scenes, nevertheless the English video (Fig. 16) managed to condense the heart of advertising message: Barilla, as Pietro Barilla has done since the beginning of his business, wants to give to people authentic and genuine products. In the Italian version, the teller speaks in English but with a typical Italian accent (for instance

the “r” is spoken in thick foreign accent). This strategy of partial foreignization is very useful because it helps to preserve the value of the source culture. This strategy has also been adopted to translate “But if you have passion, why not try?”, where “why not try” means “how about trying?” and therefore it is a suggestion and not a question. The sentence has been translated literally in order to convey the same idea of the source text: to suggest people to dream or, from the marketing point of view, to eat the Barilla’s pasta. As is clear from Tab. 4, the Italian text is longer than the English one, not only because the video is longer but also because Italian style tend to be wordier, long-winded and to prefer long nominal sentences.

<b>English Commercial</b>	<b>Italian commercial</b>
<p>This is my life’s work → credibility</p> <p>My brothers and I believe that <u>if we give people what we give our own children</u> our pasta from generation to generation could become <u>the choice of all Italian families</u> and someday families everywhere.</p> <p><u>For now it’s just a dream. But if you have passion, why not dream?</u></p> <p>From our family to yours</p> <p>The choice of Italy</p>	<p>Penso che il grano sia una benedizione per l’uomo. Gli dai passione e ti ricambia generoso. Oggi siamo solo io e miei fratelli nella nostra piccola bottega, ma le clienti arrivano già da ogni parte della città per provare la nostra pasta. Sento che con l’impegno di tutti possiamo migliorarci. E se riusciremo in questo, anno dopo anno, dovremo sempre tenere in mente una cosa: <u>diamo alla gente quello che daremmo ai nostri figli.</u> E se lo faremo ogni giorno, e continueremo a farlo con passione, la nostra pasta sarà sempre migliore. Così potremo <u>arrivare nella casa di tante famiglie</u> e portare gioia intorno alla tavola e allora potremo ricercare, perfezionarci, sempre di più, e forse diventare <u>una pasta famosa, magari in tutto il mondo.</u></p> <p><u>Per ora è un sogno, ma se c’è la passione</u></p>

	<u>perché non sognare?</u> Dove c'è Barilla, c'è casa.
--	---

**Tab. 4 Comparison of the Barilla commercial texts in English and Italian**

The famous catch phrase “diamo alla gente quello che daremmo ai nostri figli”, which was supposedly stated by Pietro Barilla, has been translated in English as “we give people what we give our own children”. The meaning in the target text is equivalent to the source one and the sentence is translated quite literally. There is also a vast use of emotional and evocative terms both in the Italian version, such as “passion”, which is used three times, “sentire”, “sogno” and “sognare”, and in the English one, as “believe”, “dream”, “passion”.

Finally, another main difference is the final slogan, while the English commercial opted for “the choice of Italy”, which probably relates to the typical marketing strategy ‘Barilla = Italy’, the Italian slogan is the classic “Dove c'è Barilla, c'è casa, which is also the strategy used in the Italian local market (‘Barilla = home’). Advertising styles in individualistic cultures of small power distance (such as USA and countries of northwest Europe) is direct, explicit, and personal. “The uniqueness of the person or the brand, and the importance of identity and personality are reflected in this style.” (De Mooij, 2004: 194). Usually advertising agencies prefer to create new advertising posters or commercial that better adapt to the target culture. The following pictures are representative cases of different posters that promote the same idea in a different way.



**Fig. 19. Barilla poster “Festa della Mamma**



**Fig. 20. Barilla poster “Mother’s Day”**

I chose these two advertisements because they both refer to the Mother’s Day but they also are a clear example of how promotion varies across culture. In the Italian poster the catch phrase is “Auguri, Mamma”, which is the typical formula used in Italian greeting cards. The second sentence, which has a figurative meaning, is “per me sei la ricetta della felicità”; in Italian “ricetta” has a double meaning, one the one hand it means cookery recipe and on the other hand it may also refer to a medical prescription. In this case the use of “ricetta” is metaphorically used to mean that mothers are those who make people happy because they have a cure for everything.

The last catch phrase is “stasera ti porto alla gara di timballo liscio!”. “Timballo liscio” is a particular figure of speech that in Italian is “freddura”; according to the Garzanti Linguistica (2016) “la freddura è una battuta spiritosa consistente in un gioco di parole”. In English ‘freddura’ is considered as pun, which according to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1989) is a “humorous use of a word that has two meanings or of different words that sound the same”. As a matter of fact the two key elements are “liscio” to mean the classic ballroom dance, and “timballo” (“timbale”) which contains the word “ballo” (“ball”) that perfectly matches with “liscio”.

The English advertisement instead has a simpler and more direct style. The image, which is formed by pasta shapes, represents the word “MOM” and turning the word upside down, it also stands for “WOW”. Similarly to the bouquet in the Italian advertisement, the letter O is represented by the flower-shaped pasta, because usually sons and daughters present their mothers with flowers. The catch phrase is “Thank you for keeping our hearts (and tummies) full”, which connects the advertisement with its main aim of promoting pasta.



Fig. 21. Barilla “Auguri di Buon Natale



Fig. 22. Barilla “Merry Christmas”

The following pictures instead differ from several points of view. Even though the theme and the festivity is the same, these two posters differ both from a stylistic and a formal point of view. Similarly to the Mother's day poster, the Italian Christmas advertisement has been designed as a typical Christmas greeting card. The candle and the holly, which are symbols of Christmas, are formed by different Barilla's pasta shapes. The style is very simple and classic; the slogan is a pun between "pasta" and "posta" ("post", 'mail'). The English poster instead has a more direct style. The image shows a pasta package of penne wearing a Santa Claus hat together with a "spicy marinara" sauce. The slogan is simple but effective "approved by Santa".

Nevertheless, Barilla's advertising campaigns have not always been successful. In 2013 Barilla has been the protagonist of a disastrous marketing strategy that has positioned the company against gay couples. The Barilla chairman, Guido Barilla, clearly stated that Barilla's commercial would picture only conventional families; "Noi abbiamo una cultura vagamente differente. Per noi il concetto di famiglia è sacrale, rimane uno dei valori fondamentali dell'azienda. La salute, il concetto di famiglia. Non faremo uno spot gay perché la nostra è una famiglia tradizionale." (Guido Barilla. Quoted by Strada, 2013. Source: Corriere.it).

These statements, of course, had huge repercussions both in the Italian and foreign markets, which started to boycott Barilla. However, in a sign of how toxic it has become for a company to be viewed as unfriendly toward gays,

Barilla has made a dramatic turnaround in the space of one year, expanding health benefits for transgender workers and their families, contributing money to gay rights causes, and featuring a lesbian couple on a promotional Web site. (Somashekhar, 2014. Source: Washingtonpost.com).

It might be argued that this wrong advertising strategy has been a huge risk for the company; understanding cultural and social differences is the only way to create an

efficient communicative strategy. The gay community issue is very a very sensitive one, therefore a wrong advertising strategy, message or idea can lead to misinterpretations or unwanted results that can seriously offend the audience and consequently influence the efficiency of the entire advertising campaign.

## Conclusion

Promotional texts consist of ideas and cultural conventions. Culture and ideas change across countries, therefore what is relevant for one culture is not necessarily relevant for others. This thesis aims to demonstrate how culture influences and drives customers' behaviour; standardization strategies may be less expensive, but also less effective.

Advertising adaptation and websites localization is the best way to create persuasive and convincing texts in the target culture. Analysing different B2C promotional texts, it might be argued that as for translation methods and procedures, in general, foreignization was the most common global strategy used. However, in terms of translation procedures different strategies were employed in order to adapt the source texts to the target cultures.

To conclude, the comparative analysis of the Barilla website and advertising aims to demonstrate how culture may influence the process of adaptation and localization. A big company as Barilla seeks to create a strong boundary between the brand image and the sense of "Italianness", and to transmit the value of the "made in Italy" worldwide.

However, even though all the Barilla websites and advertisements contain a strong reference to the Italian culture, Barilla had to choose to adapt and localize its websites and advertising for the target culture in order to obtain the maximum level of persuasiveness.



## References

Benessere e salute, Alessandra. "Il significato dei colori: 50 sfumature di blu", *Psicologia*. May, 5 2016. Last accessed August 2016. <http://www.benesseresalute.net/il-significato-dei-colori-50-sfumature-di-blu-6228/>

Amazon UK, <https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

Approfondimento, La Storia siamo Noi. "Pietro Barilla - La pubblicità dei buoni sentimenti", *Costume e società*. 2012, last accessed September 2016.

<http://www.lastoriasiamonoi.rai.it/puntate/pietro-barilla/695/default.aspx>

Arffman, I. (2007). *The problem of equivalence in translating texts in international reading literacy studies: a text analytic study of three English and Finnish texts used in the PISA 2000 reading texts*. Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä. Available at: <https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/handle/123456789/37744> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Asos UK, <http://www.asos.com/>

Barilla Arab Countries, <http://arab.barilla.com/>

Barilla Australia, <http://www.barilla.net.au/>

Barilla Canada (English language), [http://www.barilla.ca/ca\\_en/index.jsp](http://www.barilla.ca/ca_en/index.jsp)

Barilla China, <http://www.barilla.com.cn/>

Barilla Group (2016), Barilla Group: 2014 Revenues. Barilla Corporate Website.

Retrieved from: <http://www.barillagroup.com/en>

Barilla Group (2016), Financial Report 2015. Barilla Corporate Website. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.barillagroup.com/en>

Barilla Group (2016). GYGP Sustainability Report 2016: Good for you, good for the Planet. Barilla Corporate Website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barillagroup.com/en>

Barilla Group 2016, <http://www.barillagroup.com/en>

Barilla Italia, <http://www.barilla.it/>

Barilla Russia, <http://www.barilla.ru/>

Barilla Spaghetti Brochure, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.sharethetable.com/>

Barilla UK, <http://www.barilla.co.uk/>

Barilla USA, <https://www.barilla.com/en-us>

Benson, Phil. *Ethnocentrism and the English dictionary*. Routledge, London and New York, 2002. (Last accessed: August 2016)

Brooks Chad, "Lost in Translation: 7 Funny Product Names." *Business News daily*. April 12, 2012. Last accessed: August 2016. <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/2340-lost-translation-7-international-marketing-mishaps.html>

BUJOR, A., & AVASILCAI, S. (2014). "Co-creation innovation in consumer goods industry: The case of Barilla Group (A)". *Annals of The Oradea University, Fascicle of Management and Technological Engineering*, Fascicle of Management and Technological Engineering ISSN, 1583-0691. Pp. 163-168. Available at: <http://imtuoradea.ro/auo.fmte/files-2015-v1/Adriana%20BUJOR%20-%20CO->

[CREATION%20INNOVATION%20IN%20CONSUMER%20GOODS%20INDUSTRY%20-%20THE%20CASE%20OF%20BARILLA%20GROUP%20\(B\).pdf](#) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Cambridge Dictionary. Cambridge University Press, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/it/>

Chand Smriti, "Different Models Facilitating Communication and Sales Objective Setting". *Your Article Library. The next generation library*. 2016, last accessed August 2016. <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/advertising/different-models-facilitating-communication-and-sales-objective-setting/22323/>

Clow K. E., Baack D. (2007). *Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communications*, Third Edition, by Pearson Education, Inc. Published by Prentice Hall. Available at: [http://sutlib2.sut.ac.th/sut\\_contents/H125411.pdf](http://sutlib2.sut.ac.th/sut_contents/H125411.pdf) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Coca Cola USA, <https://us.coca-cola.com/home/>

Cook, G. (2008). *The language of advertising*. Routledge, London and New York.

Cruz Garcia, L. (2013). "Copy Adaptation, or How to Translate a Source Product for a Target Market". *Meta: Journal des traducteursMeta:/Translators' Journal*, 58(2), pp. 347-372. Available at: <http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/2013/v58/n2/1024178ar.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M. (1997). "Mapping Cultural Values for Global Marketing and Advertising". Paper ESOMAR 50th Congress, Edinburgh, 7-10 September, 1997, *New Ways of Looking at Consumers*, part 11, pp. 681-703. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M. (2003). "Convergence and divergence in consumer behaviour: implications for global advertising". *International Journal of advertising*, 22(2), pp. 183-202. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M. (2004). "Translating advertising: painting the tip of an iceberg". *The Translator*, 10(2), pp.179-198. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M. (2015a). "Cross-cultural research in international marketing: clearing up some of the confusion". *International Marketing Review*, 32(6), pp. 646-662. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M. (2015b). "Cultural marketing: Maximising business effectiveness in a multicultural world". *Journal of Cultural Marketing Strategy*, 1(1), pp. 11-18. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

De Mooij, M., & Hofstede, G. (2010). "The Hofstede model: Applications to global branding and advertising strategy and research". *International Journal of Advertising*, 29(1), pp. 85-110. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Demaria, C., & Sassatelli, R. (2015). "Introduction: Italianicity/Italianess". *Studi culturali*, 12(3), 311-316. (Last accessed: August 2016)

Dessì, S., Caboni, F., & Giudici, E. (2013). "CASE STUDY The new territorial orientation of a transnational company: Italian pasta". *Transnational Marketing Journal*, 1(1), 72-83. Available at: <http://tplondon.com/journal/index.php/tmj/article/view/26> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Eckersley Nicole, "Barilla launches 'foodie' campaign", *Australian Food News. Thought for Food*. August, 26 2010. Last accessed September 2016.

<http://www.ausfoodnews.com.au/2010/08/26/barilla-launches-foodie-campaign.html>

Fletcher, W. (2010). *Advertising: A very short introduction* (Vol. 234). Oxford University Press.

Giorgadze, M. (2014). "Linguistic features of pun, its typology and classification". *European Scientific Journal*. Available at: <http://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/viewFile/4819/4635> (Last accessed: August 2016)

Goodrich, K., & de Mooij, M. (2011). "New technology mirrors old habits: online buying mirrors cross-national variance of conventional buying". *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 23(3-4), pp. 246-259. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Hillier, M. (2003). "The role of cultural context in multilingual website usability". *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 2(1), pp. 2-14. Available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S156742230300005X> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Holt Douglas, "Branding in the Age of Social Media". *Harvard Business Review*. March 2016. Last accessed: August 2016. <https://hbr.org/2016/03/branding-in-the-age-of-social-media>

Hornby A.S., Cowie A. P. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. Oxford University Press; 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1989.

IKEA UK, <http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/>

Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2010). *Principi di Marketing*. 13a edizione. Torino.

Kreitman Adam, "Looking for Love Online: Marketing Lessons from the Top Online Dating Sites". The Daily Egg. Oct 08. 2013. Last accessed August 2016.

<https://blog.crazyegg.com/2013/10/08/marketing-lessons-top-online-dating-sites/>

Lee, Y. (2009). "The medium is global, the content is not: Translating commercial websites". *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the MeCCSA Postgraduate Network*, 2(1).

Available at: <http://ojs.meccsa.org.uk/index.php/netknow/article/view/46> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

Martiriggiano, C. (2009). "Glocal marketing: il caso della comunicazione Barilla sui mercati internazionali". Available at: <http://tesi.eprints.luiss.it/97/1/martiriggiano-tesi.pdf>

(Last accessed: August 2016).

McDonald's Italy, <http://www.mcdonalds.it/>

McDonald's USA, <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us.html>

McLeod Seul, "Sigmund Freud". *Simply Psychology*. Published 2013. Last accessed: July 2016. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html>

Mikkelson David, "Come Alive!". *Business*. 13 May 2011. Last accessed: August 2016. <http://www.snopes.com/business/misxlate/ancestor.asp>

Nauert, S. (2007, April). "Translating Websites". In *Acts of the LSP Translation Scenarios (MuTra). Conference proceedings*. Available at:

[http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2007\\_Proceedings/2007\\_Nauert\\_Sandra.pdf](http://www.euroconferences.info/proceedings/2007_Proceedings/2007_Nauert_Sandra.pdf) (Last accessed: September 2016).

Perilli Benedetta, “McDonald's, il logo diventa verde in Europa”. Last accessed: August 2016. <http://www.repubblica.it/2006/05/gallerie/esteri/logo-mcdonalds/1.html>

Platero Mario, “Negli Usa per restare primi nel mondo”, *Il Sole 24 Ore Commenti*. February, 27 2016. Last accessed September 2016. <http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/commenti-e-idee/2016-02-27/negli-usa-restare-primi-mondo-113651.shtml?uuid=ACcZERdC>

Rossolatos, G. (2012). “Rhetorical transformations in multimodal advertising texts: From general to local degree zero”. *Hermes-Journal of Language and Communication in Business*, 50. Pp. 97-118. Available at: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2054894](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2054894) (Last accessed: March 2016).

Schäffner, C. (2012). “Rethinking transediting”. *Meta: Journal des traducteursMeta:/Translators' Journal*, 57(4), pp. 866-883. Available at: <http://www.erudit.org/revue/meta/2012/v57/n4/1021222ar.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Séguinot, C. (1989). “Understanding why translators make mistakes”. *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction*, 2(2), pp. 73-81. Available at: <http://www.erudit.org/revue/TTR/1989/v2/n2/037047ar.pdf> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Singh, N. (2002). “Analyzing cultural sensitivity of websites”. *Journal of Practical Global Business*, 1(2), pp. 32-53. Available at: [https://www.usj.edu.lb/moodle/stephane.bazan/obs\\_interculturelle/journalv1\\_p32.pdf](https://www.usj.edu.lb/moodle/stephane.bazan/obs_interculturelle/journalv1_p32.pdf) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Torop, P. (2002). "Translation as translating as culture". *Σημειωτική-Sign Systems Studies*, (2), pp. 593-605. Available at: <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=219393> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Torresi, I. (2008). "Advertising: A case for intersemiotic translation". *Meta: Journal des traducteursMeta:/Translators' Journal*, 53(1), pp. 62-75. Available at: <http://www.erudit.org/revue/META/2008/v53/n1/017974ar.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Torresi, I. (2010), *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts*. First published by St. Jerome Publishing, Manchester, 2010. Published 2014 by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group London and New York.

Valoroso Antonella, "Quando la pubblicità Barilla, con Mina, raccontava altre storie". *Corriere della Sera. La ventisettesima ora*. September, 29 2013. Last accessed September 2016. <http://27esimaora.corriere.it/articolo/quando-la-pubblicita-barilla-con-mina-raccontava-altre-storie/>

Vasta, N. (1999). "Advertising across cultures". *Transiti linguistici e culturali*, edited by Azzaro G., Ulrych M., Trieste, vol. II, pp. 287-302.

Vijay Vishwanath Darrell K. Rigby, "Localization: The Revolution in Consumer Markets". *Harvard Business Review*. April 2006. Last accessed: August 2016. <https://hbr.org/2006/04/localization-the-revolution-in-consumer-markets>

Xiaojuan, Q. (2010). "Strategies for webpage trans-editing: A Socio-cultural study". *Working Papers of the Linguistics Circle*, 20(1), pp. 131-152. Available at: <http://mmduvic.ca/index.php/WPLC/article/viewFile/5677/2203> (Last accessed: August 2016).

## Reference List of Figures

### Chapter 1

Fig. 1. The homepage of Coca Cola US website. Retrieved from: <https://us.coca-cola.com/home/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 2. The homepage of Coca Cola US homepage. Retrieved from: <https://us.coca-cola.com/home/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 3. The homepage of the UK ASOS website. Retrieved from: <http://www.asos.com/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 4. The IKEA UK website – Vision and business idea. Retrieved from: <http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 5. The IKEA UK website – Textiles. Retrieved from: <http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 6. The homepage of the IKEA UK website. Retrieved from: <http://www.ikea.com/gb/en/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig.7. McDonald's Advertising. Saved by adruby.com. Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/pin/565483296933047182/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 8. McDonald's Sandwich. Retrieved from: [http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mcdonalds\\_sandwich\\_2](http://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/mcdonalds_sandwich_2) (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig.9. The homepage of the Amazon UK website. Retrieved from: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 10. The United Colours of Benetton advertisement. Retrieved from: <https://thisisnotadvertising.wordpress.com/tag/united-colors-of-benetton/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 11. The Italian Nutella advertising. Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/pin/320740804685009367/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 12. The English Nutella advertising. Source: Archer Jack, "Nothing better than good advertising. Here a few that are impossibly creative with brilliant copy that will make pretty much everyone", *Airows.com*, August, 06 2014. Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/pin/551972498053522782/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 13. The English Nutella advertising. Retrieved from: [www.nutella.com](http://www.nutella.com) (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 14. Non-smoking campaign by CONAC. Source: Blonde Agency FCB, Chile, Published: April 2008, Posted on AOTW: April 03, 2008. Retrieved from: [https://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/conac\\_blonde](https://adsoftheworld.com/media/print/conac_blonde) (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 15. Eva Longoria for L'Oréal advertising. Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/retailandconsumer/10399946/LOreal-goes-green-in-bid-to-boost-customers-to-2bn.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 16. Helen Mirren for L'Oréal advertising. Retrieved from: <http://home.bt.com/lifestyle/fashion-beauty/watchdog-clears-loreal-ad-featuring-helen-mirren-after-claims-she-was-airbrushed-11363991283372> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 17. Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Source: McLeod Seul, "Sigmund Freud". *Simply Psychology*. Published 2013. Last accessed: July 2016. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html>

Fig. 18 The Cultural Iceberg. Retrieved from: <http://www.afs.org.in/afs-and-intercultural-learning/culture-as-an-iceberg-graphic/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 19. The homepage of eHarmony online meeting site in the USA. Retrieved from: <http://www.eharmony.com/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

## **Chapter 2**

Fig. 1 McDonald's US website. Retrieved from: <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 2 McDonald's Italian website. Retrieved from: <http://www.mcdonalds.it/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 3. Interpersonal verbal communication styles. Retrieved from : De Mooij, M. (2004). "Translating advertising: painting the tip of an iceberg". *The Translator*, 10(2), pp.179-198. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 4 Advertising style. Retrieved from: De Mooij, M. (2004). "Translating advertising: painting the tip of an iceberg". *The Translator*, 10(2), pp.179-198. Available at: <http://mariekedemooij.com/articles/index.htm> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 5. WWF: The Earth Melting Artist. Source: Advertisement agency VVL/BBDO, Title: WWF: The Earth Melting Year of Creation: June 2004, Genre: Advertisement Image URL: <http://www.businesspundit.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/3.jpg> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig.6. McDonald's Italia. Retrieved from: <http://www.mcdonalds.it/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 7. McDonald's US. Retrieved from: <https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us.html>  
(Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 8. Shrek's Trilogy. Special Collection Edition for Denmark. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.laserdisken.dk/html/visvare.dna?vare=11959323431749191> (Last accessed:  
March 2016).

Fig. 9. Snickers misspelling. Retrieved from: <http://mascola.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/intentional-misspellings.jpg> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 10. Ikea's "Fartfull" work bench. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.languageconnections.com/blog/funny-marketing-mistranslations/> (Last  
accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 11. Electrolux's US advertising. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.dailycognition.com/index.php/2009/07/05/13-funniest-mistranslated-slogans-ever.html> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 12. Advertising metaphors (Italian) Image by Carol O'Sullivan 2009. Retrieved from:  
[https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/sites/default/files/nnt/ExploringTranslation/page\\_26.htm](https://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/sites/default/files/nnt/ExploringTranslation/page_26.htm) (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 13. Obama inspired ice-cream duet. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.colomboherald.com/business/racism-in-advertising-50-shocking-examples>  
(Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 14. La Mafia restaurant sign. Burgos. By Eleonora Filippetto, May, 05 2016, Burgos

Fig. 15. La Mafia restaurant. Burgos. By Eleonora Filippetto, May, 05 2016, Burgos

Fig. 16. Saikebon. By Eleonora Filippetto, May, 06 2016, Burgos

Fig. 17. Yatekomo. By Eleonora Filippetto, May, 05 2016, Burgos

Fig. 18. Coca-Cola brand name in Chinese. Philip, “10 Brands Should Worship Brand Translator”, Posted On: 23rd November 2012. Retrieved from: <http://marketingtochina.com/10-brands-should-worship-brand-translator/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 19. Coca-Cola brand names. Retrieved from: <http://www.facegroup.com/3-reasons-social-media-is-different-in-china/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

Fig. 20. McItaly. Retrieved from: “Se un panino vende l’anima (non sua). McItaly dal Guardian all’URSS, passando per Zaia e Slow Food”, February, 25 2010. Retrieved from: <http://marraiafura.com/se-un-panino-vende-l-anima-non-sua-mcitaly-dal-guardian-all-urss-passando-per-zaia-e-slow-food/> (Last accessed: March 2016).

### **Chapter 3**

Fig. 1. Presence of Barilla in the world. Source: Barilla Group (2016). GYGP Sustainability Report 2016: Good for you, good for the Planet. Barilla Corporate Website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barillagroup.com/en> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 2. Barilla commercial ‘Dove c’è Barilla, c’è Casa’. Guglielmi Martina, “Pubblicità: l’idea che accende il tuo brand” *WebHouse, dove il web è di casa*. September, 04 2015. Retrieved from: <http://www.webhouseit.com/pubblicita-idea-che-accende-brand/>. (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 3. The homepage of the Chinese Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.com.cn/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 4. The homepage of the Russian Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.ru/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 5. The US Barilla website. Retrieved from: <https://www.barilla.com/en-us> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 6. The UK Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.co.uk/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 7. The Canadian Barilla website. Retrieved from: [http://www.barilla.ca/ca\\_en/index.jsp](http://www.barilla.ca/ca_en/index.jsp) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 8. The Australian Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.net.au/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig.9. US Barilla website. Rotini. Retrieved from: <https://www.barilla.com/en-us> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 10. UK website. Fusilli. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.co.uk/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 11. The US Barilla website. Collezione Bucatini. Retrieved from: <https://www.barilla.com/en-us> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 12. Homepage of the Italian Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.it/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 13. Homepage of the Italian Barilla website. Retrieved from: <http://www.barilla.it/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 14. Homepage of the Canadian Barilla website. Retrieved from: [http://www.barilla.ca/ca\\_en/index.jsp](http://www.barilla.ca/ca_en/index.jsp) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 15. Advertising poster for Barilla (1958) by Italian graphic & industrial designer Erberto Carboni (1899-1984). Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/explore/manifesto-pubblicitario-931389495347/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 16. Barilla commercial “Dream”. Source: James McCaffrey in: Barilla Commercial [Vol.32]. Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9\\_HZmjJJsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9_HZmjJJsI) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 17. Barilla commercial “Sogno”. Source: James McCaffrey in: Barilla Commercial [Vol.32]. Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9\\_HZmjJJsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9_HZmjJJsI) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 18. Barilla commercial “Sogno”. Source: James McCaffrey in: Barilla Commercial [Vol.32]. Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9\\_HZmjJJsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9_HZmjJJsI) (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 19. Barilla poster “Festa della Mamma”. Retrieved from: <http://www.monetizzando.com/barilla-creativita-e-social-media-marketing-lug014/barilla-social-media-marketing-festa-mamma/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 20. Barilla poster “Mother’s Day” . Saved by Simone Longato ADV Barilla - Old and New Advertising Mother's Day 5/12. Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/pin/497366352573053558/> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 21. Barilla “Auguri di Buon Natale. Retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/GodSaveTheMktg> (Last accessed: August 2016).

Fig. 22. Barilla “Merry Christmas” Retrieved from: <https://it.pinterest.com/longatosimone/adv-barilla-old-and-new-advertising/> (Last accessed: August 2016).



## **Riassunto in italiano**

Lo scopo di questa tesi è dimostrare l'importanza e l'impatto della componente culturale nella traduzione dei siti web e dei testi pubblicitari. Nell'era della globalizzazione i siti web e le pubblicità sono diventati strumenti di promozione indispensabili per aziende e istituzioni.

Il grado di persuasione dipende soprattutto dalla stretta connessione fra sorgente, destinatario e messaggio; lo scopo dei testi promozionali è, infatti, quello di coinvolgere quante più persone possibili.

La prima parte dell'elaborato si concentra principalmente nella descrizione dei diversi generi di testi promozionali, che si dividono in testi indirizzati ad aziende o istituzioni e testi indirizzati ai clienti finali. Come spiega Torresi (2010) nel suo libro, i testi promozionali B2C (Business-to-customer) comprendono siti web, pubblicità e brochure e sono il genere con il più alto livello di persuasione.

Ci sono varie strategie che un pubblicitario, o un progettista di siti web deve tenere in considerazione per creare un testo promozionale efficace, sia nella cultura sorgente sia di destinazione. Per essere efficace un testo promozionale deve essere chiaro semplice ma allo stesso tempo accattivante e incisivo; è necessario fare un uso saggio non solo del testo o della sua struttura, ma anche d'immagini, colori e suoni. Il messaggio aiuta la comprensione e la memorizzazione dei suoi contenuti; tuttavia per essere davvero efficace e influenzare il comportamento dei potenziali consumatori, un testo promozionale deve considerare le differenze culturali come un elemento chiave. Baack and Clow (2007) distinguono tre diverse strategie per la realizzazione di messaggi persuasivi: strategia cognitiva, strategia affettiva e strategia conativa. La prima, tende a preferire uno stile informativo, è caratterizzata da messaggi generali che hanno lo scopo

di informare il consumatore dei principali benefici del prodotto. Al contrario la strategia affettiva, utilizza un linguaggio emotivo che mira a evocare un certo sentimento. Infine la strategia conativa è più legata al cliente e mira a dimostrare i benefici reali del prodotto in seguito all'acquisto o durante l'utilizzo del prodotto stesso.

Ci sono poi una serie di scelte riguardanti lo stile, le parole, lo humour, le immagini, i suoni e tutte concorrono a sviluppare e migliorare il messaggio di partenza.

Tuttavia per poter creare messaggi veramente efficaci è necessario conoscere il destinatario, i suoi bisogni e desideri. Un metodo efficace per capire e distinguere le varie differenze culturali è il modello elaborato da Hofstede; questo modello classifica le differenze culturali secondo cinque dimensioni: distanza di potere, individualismo, mascolinità, avversione all'incertezza e orientamento al lungo termine. Questo modello e altri modelli teorici sono stati usati dagli studiosi per osservare le varie discrepanze culturali, ma soprattutto per poter rispondere al dilemma fra standardizzazione e localizzazione.

Nell'era della globalizzazione è necessario tuttavia distinguere anche i vari tipi di mezzi attraverso i quali i testi promozionali trasmettono i loro messaggi. Innanzitutto i mezzi di comunicazione sono numerosi, i più importanti sono: la televisione, i giornali, la radio e la rete Internet. Quest'ultima, in particolare, ha cambiato considerevolmente la comunicazione fra utenti. Molto spesso, infatti, siamo inconsapevolmente esposti a messaggi pubblicitari che però hanno forme diverse da ciò cui siamo abituati: pop up, banner, collegamenti ipertestuali, spam e altro.

Per comprendere appieno l'importanza della cultura è necessario considerare la traduzione di siti web e pubblicità, in lingue diverse da quella di origine, in modo da poter esaminare l'impatto che la cultura può avere, sia positivamente sia negativamente, nella

traduzione. Aziende o imprese che operano all'estero possono decidere di usare una strategia standard per tutti i mercati target oppure di adattare le proprie strategie al mercato di destinazione. Perciò è necessario distinguere i due concetti di standardizzazione e di localizzazione.

Con la diffusione del concetto di globalizzazione, i confini fra stati e i mercati si sono avvicinati, e ciò ha portato molte aziende a pensare che le strategie di marketing e di pubblicità dovessero essere standardizzate; tuttavia il concetto di standardizzazione non riguarda solo le strategie pubblicitarie di marketing, significa anche omogeneizzare quelli che sono i bisogni, i desideri, il modo di pensare, ma soprattutto le differenze culturali fra diversi stati. Il rischio della standardizzazione è di creare testi promozionali che non rispettino le differenze culturali che caratterizzano i vari paesi; quando si traducono testi B2C, che sono altamente persuasivi, la componente culturale è fondamentale, perciò non si può parlare di omogeneizzazione, ma di adattamento e localizzazione. Per adattare perfettamente un testo al pubblico target è necessario considerare ogni aspetto del testo; per quanto riguarda la pubblicità, questa può essere scritta o parlata. Nella pubblicità scritta, il testo deve essere tradotto e adattato alla lingua e cultura di destinazione, ma non è l'unico elemento da tenere in considerazione. Le immagini, i colori e i simboli sono egualmente importanti; anch'essi, infatti, possono avere un significato diverso nella cultura di destinazione, ad esempio, il bianco nella cultura occidentale è il colore della purezza (infatti, è il colore usato per il vestito della sposa), tuttavia nella cultura indiana il bianco ha un significato totalmente opposto e viene usato dalle vedove in lutto. Le pubblicità televisive o alla radio invece devono tenere in considerazione non solo testo e immagini, ma anche suoni e musica.

Come la pubblicità, anche i siti web devono essere adattati per gli utenti target. Tuttavia, tradurre siti web in lingue diverse presuppone un lavoro che va oltre il semplice testo, ci

sono, infatti, elementi come le icone, la lunghezza del testo, pulsanti di navigazione e categorie di colore che possono essere complicati da adattare; ad esempio tradurre un sito web per un paese arabo significa anche disporre il testo in modo che venga letto da destra verso sinistra.

Per quanto riguarda la comunicazione, ci sono molte difficoltà che un traduttore deve affrontare per tradurre al meglio un testo promozionale. Secondo Arffman (2007) queste difficoltà si possono classificare in:

- Difficoltà riguardanti differenze linguistiche e grammaticali
- Difficoltà riguardanti le differenze del sistema di scrittura
- Difficoltà riguardanti differenze di significato
- Difficoltà riguardanti le differenze culturali
- Difficoltà relative alle strategie usate dal traduttore
- Difficoltà di editing

Le prime tre difficoltà riguardano principalmente la forma della lingua. Le lingue, infatti, differiscono dalle altre sia nella struttura sia nel significato. E' necessario quindi conoscere a fondo sia la lingua di partenza che quella in cui il testo verrà tradotto in modo da evitare errori linguistici o grammaticali. Per quanto riguarda il significato, le parole sono imbevute di riferimenti culturali, perciò molto spesso una parola può sembrare linguisticamente corretta, ma avere un significato ambiguo o nascosto che solo chi conosce a fondo la lingua target può captare. Gli errori di significato possono essere anche molto gravi dal punto di vista comunicativo del messaggio, perché possono minare l'intero scopo del messaggio stesso e in alcuni casi influire negativamente sull'immagine del prodotto o dell'azienda. Ad esempio l'azienda statunitense Clairol ha pubblicizzato per qualche tempo il ferro arricciacapelli 'Mist Stick' prima negli Stati Uniti e poi si è

rivolta al mercato straniero; tuttavia l'azienda ha deciso di mantenere inalterato il nome del prodotto. Questa strategia di marketing si è rivelata disastrosa in Germania, perché l'azienda non aveva considerato che in tedesco 'mist' significa 'letame', e che stava vendendo un prodotto che i tedeschi avrebbero chiamato 'bastone di letame'.

Le differenze di significati, tuttavia, non sono le sole difficoltà da affrontare; un'altra difficoltà riguarda la traduzione di termini culturali perché i clienti di destinazione possono non avere familiarità con la cultura del testo originale. Tradurre letteralmente riferimenti culturali è molto rischioso perché può creare incomprensioni o fraintendimenti nella lingua target. Per affrontare queste difficoltà, gli studiosi nel corso degli anni hanno sviluppato diversi metodi e strategie di traduzione. Secondo Torresi (2010), per tradurre i testi promozionali come siti web e pubblicità, i traduttori possono usare una strategia comune, tuttavia prima di tutto è necessario distinguere il livello di persuasività-informazione di un testo. I testi B2C sono altamente persuasivi perciò è preferibile utilizzare un linguaggio creativo, emozionale, ed evocativo.

Torresi distingue fra 'foreignization', che ha lo scopo di tradurre un testo mantenendo però l'aspetto e i contenuti del testo di partenza, e 'domestication', che al contrario mira a conformare il più possibile il testo di partenza nella cultura e nella lingua di destinazione. Torresi inoltre introduce un ulteriore approccio di traduzione, che a suo avviso permette una migliore 'localization' di siti web e pubblicità. Questa strategia lascia molto spazio alla creatività del traduttore, che per adattare al meglio il testo nella cultura target ha a disposizione diversi elementi come: metafore, giochi di parole, neologismi e può fare un uso particolare di suoni (per esempio con assonanze, allitterazioni, e onomatopie). Le metafore sono la figura retorica forse più utilizzata nei testi pubblicitari, ma sono anche particolarmente difficili da tradurre e spesso è necessario utilizzare strategie di traduzione come 're-contextualization' or 're-thinking'.

Nel suo articolo García (2013) distingue fra strategie e procedure di traduzione. Le prime rappresentano l'approccio generale che il traduttore decide di dare alla propria traduzione e si dividono in:

- 'Foreignization' che è una strategia che mira a mantenere inalterato l'aspetto e i contenuti del testo di origine e trasferirli nel testo di destinazione. Lo scopo è di esaltare il prestigio che la cultura di origine può avere in quella di destinazione.
- 'Literal translation', che in italiano corrisponde alla traduzione letterale, è un metodo che ha lo scopo di tradurre nel modo più simile possibile il testo e i contenuti di origine nella lingua di destinazione.
- 'Adaptation', o adattamento, viene usata per tradurre testi con un'elevata presenza di riferimenti culturali e permette di adattare non solo il testo, ma anche immagini e suoni.
- 'Creation', o creazione, viene utilizzata quando è necessario creare un nuovo testo target in modo che abbia un effetto equivalente a quello della cultura di origine.

Per quanto riguarda le procedure di traduzione, queste si basano principalmente su frasi o unità più piccole di testo in modo da trasferire nel modo più dettagliato possibile, il significato del testo di origine nella lingua target. Secondo García (2013) le procedure di traduzione principali sono:

- 'Amplification' (amplificazione) che viene usata dai traduttori quando un'espressione nella lingua sorgente viene tradotta usando un numero maggiore di parole.
- 'Explicitation' che è utilizzata quando elementi impliciti del testo di origine vengono resi espliciti nel testo target.

- ‘Omission’ che è usata quando delle informazioni del testo di partenza vengono omesse per rendere il testo target più chiaro.
- ‘Modulation’ viene utilizzata per sottolineare un cambiamento di attitudine nel testo target rispetto a quella del testo originale.
- ‘Equivalence’ viene usata quando parole o espressioni del testo sorgente vengono rimpiazzate nel testo di destinazione con espressioni che hanno la stessa funzione, anche se differiscono in forma o significato.
- ‘Compensation’ si riferisce a uno spostamento di un’espressione nel testo target rispetto alla sua disposizione nel testo sorgente.
- ‘Condensation’ indica una semplificazione della sintassi del testo originale.

Per quanto riguarda i testi promozionali, queste strategie possono essere usate per superare diverse difficoltà di traduzione. Possono essere utilizzate ad esempio per tradurre il nome di una marca all’estero. Come spiega Torresi (2010), è sempre preferibile non tradurre il nome di un’azienda, tuttavia ci sono dei casi in cui ciò è necessario, per esempio per adattare il nome al sistema linguistico e grafico del paese straniero (es. cinese) o perché quel nome ha un significato diverso o ambiguo nella lingua straniera.

Ad esempio l’azienda della Coca Cola ha dovuto tradurre in ideogrammi cinesi il nome della propria azienda, tuttavia per mantenere la stessa pronuncia, i traduttori avevano scelto un brand name che da un lato rispettava la pronuncia classica americana, ma dall’altra gli ideogrammi avevano un significato completamente diverso (‘cavalla colma di cera’). In seguito, l’azienda si è prodigata per rimediare a questo grande errore di marketing, e cambiando leggermente la pronuncia del nome, è riuscita a creare una serie d’ideogrammi che significano ‘felicità in bocca’.

Un'azienda può inoltre decidere di cambiare alcuni aspetti della proprio marca come ad esempio il colore o la forma del logo, in modo da adattarlo alla cultura target. Questa è ad esempio la scelta di McDonalds' che dopo le numerose polemiche sulla macellazione della carne e sull'impatto ambientale, ha deciso di optare in Europa per un logo verde. Il verde, infatti, è un colore che trasmette freschezza e genuinità.

La terza parte dell'elaborato rappresenta un'analisi comparativa del sito web della Barilla in inglese e italiano e fornisce degli esempi di come la pubblicità cambia dall'italiano all'inglese e viceversa.

L'azienda Barilla è una delle aziende più affermate nel settore pasta secca, sia in Italia sia all'estero, perciò rappresenta una buona scelta per mostrare come l'azienda abbia utilizzato la cultura italiana per coinvolgere il più possibile i settori di mercato stranieri. È stato anche analizzato il modo in cui la cultura italiana del 'made in Italy' viene trasferita nella cultura straniera in modo da creare valore per il brand name e il prodotto stesso.

Barilla è stata fondata nel 1877 da Pietro Barilla e oggi possiede ventinove stabilimenti, quattordici in Italia e quindici all'estero ed esporta in più di cento paesi. Un'azienda solida, che punta molto sul 'made in Italy', ma che ha anche cercato di creare strategie diverse per il mercato locale e il mercato straniero. In Italia, Barilla grazie al suo slogan 'dove c'è Barilla c'è casa' ha cercato fin da subito di creare un profondo legame fra il brand e la sensazione di sentirsi a casa. Questa strategia affettiva, mira a coinvolgere il potenziale cliente nell'acquisto di un prodotto grazie al quale potrà sentirsi in famiglia.

La strategia utilizzata all'estero invece, mira a creare un forte legame fra il brand name e il valore del 'made in Italy'. Slogan come "Italy's n°1 pasta has arrived" o "the choice of Italy" hanno contribuito a creare una sorta di esperienza italiana attorno al prodotto. I

potenziali clienti associano la pasta a un alimento ricco, gustoso, e come spiega Barilla, sano.

Nella traduzione e creazione dei siti web stranieri, Barilla ha preferito una strategia di ‘foreignization’ che gli ha permesso di adattare il sito web alla lingua e cultura target, tuttavia mantenendo l’aspetto e i contenuti del sito italiano. Tutti i prodotti Barilla infatti sono scritti in italiano, anche in paesi dove l’alfabeto italiano non è utilizzato (es. Cina, Russia o paesi arabi).

Per fornire una prospettiva più ampia sono stati comparati non solo il sito americano e italiano, ma anche quello inglese, australiano e canadese. Ci sono delle differenze infatti anche in culture che condividono la stessa lingua; comparando i diversi siti in inglese, risaltano delle differenze che riguardano il layout del testo, la scelta degli slogan pubblicitari, le scelte promozionali dei prodotti e differenze anche linguistiche. Ad esempio nel sito australiano viene usato il termine ‘capsicum’, mentre nelle altre pagine inglesi ‘pepper’ con lo stesso significato di ‘peperone’.

Comparando i diversi siti inglesi con quello italiano risulta più chiara la differenza fra le strategie di marketing dell’azienda. Da un lato il sito italiano punta sul classico slogan “dove c’è Barilla, c’è casa” e sul concetto di ‘differenza’ come elemento di valore. Nei siti di lingua inglese invece l’attenzione ricade sui concetti di autenticità, genuinità e di ‘made in Italy’. Alcuni slogan come ad esempio “A sublime journey in the heart of the taste” or “A dream dinner party begins with Collezione” hanno lo scopo di creare una sensazione di prestigio nei confronti del prodotto italiano.

Per quanto riguarda gli spot e i poster pubblicitari, c’è un largo uso di termini che evocano sentimenti come ‘passione’, ‘sogno’, ‘sognare’, ‘sentire’ oppure ‘dream’, ‘believe’ and ‘passion’.

Nonostante sia un'azienda consolidata e famosa nel mondo, negli ultimi anni Barilla si è resa protagonista di una scelta di marketing alquanto discutibile. Il presidente dell'azienda Guido Barilla aveva infatti riferito durante un'intervista che la Barilla non avrebbe mai finanziato una campagna pubblicitaria che ritraesse famiglie con coppie omosessuali. L'affermazione del presidente aveva però da subito riscosso un grave dissenso da parte della comunità LGBT che aveva iniziato a boicottare la Barilla in tutti i social network. Per rimediare, Guido Barilla ha deciso di scusarsi pubblicamente con la comunità offesa e oggi l'azienda ha cambiato il suo approccio nei confronti di questo numeroso target di mercato investendo nella causa per i diritti degli omosessuali. Questo episodio è un'ulteriore prova dell'importanza del rispetto delle differenze sociali e culturali, che oggi le aziende non possono permettersi di ignorare.