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## A STUDY OF LOCALIZATION AS INTRA SEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

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**Abstract:** Translational practices are rapidly undergoing changes to keep pace with the technological advancements. Globalization led to localization, where products as well as processes are being reshaped according to the local need and priorities. A gap between such changing practices and translation theories makes the applicability of theories more complex. The paper undertakes an empirical research emphasizing the theorization of the replacements that are occurring in the existing translational practices. It focuses on localization of TV Commercials. The data comprises series of *Kalyan Jewellery* commercials from the Web that are localized in south Indian states. *Oreo* commercials are also used to support the argument. References of these commercials with web links are given at the end of the paper. A study of 'intra semiotic translation' that occurs in these commercials containing multiple texts collected can serve as a platform to understand how verbal and non verbal elements are replaced retaining a similar theme. The study intends to look at all semiotic components that participate in the process of localization as translation. The paper can be considered as an initiation towards theorizing localization processes in an empirical mode.

**Keywords:** Globalization, Localization, Intra semiotic translation, Verbal, Non-verbal.

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**Introduction:** The present scenario of Localization in the field of TV Commercials was preceded by the process of Standardization, where the visual data remains fixed and the linguistic components get translated through dubbing/subtitling etc. But, as consumer wealth increased and the production and consumption of goods and services were globalized, local preferences occupied the front row. "Coca-Cola's CEO Douglas Daft was quoted as saying: "We kept standardizing our practices, while local sensitivity had become absolutely essential to success" (di Mooij 2004:180). The changes that are brought in cross cultural interaction blurred the boundaries between 'centre' and 'periphery' in dissemination of audiovisual texts. (M. Bollettieri, E. Di Giovanni & L. Rossato 2014). As a result the trend of localization emerged into the field of TV commercials.

"Localization is the linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content to the requirement and locale of a foreign market; it includes the provision of services and technologies for the management of multilingualism across the digital global information flow" (Reinhard Schaler 2010:1). It deals with multiple texts, where text is not confined to linguistic components but it is a cluster of various semiotic components. "No text can be made entirely of verbal signs because such signs always need some sort of physical support." (Zabalbeascoa 1997:338). Gottlieb (2005:2). Neither can a text be identified in terms of source/target. Commercials which are localized can be identified by comparing multiple texts for their commonalities. In most of the cases, thematic commonality is maintained where the core content of the commercial shall be ready and replacement of elements related to locale shall complete the remaining process. Translation is "any process, or product hereof, in which a combination of sensory signs carrying communicative intention is replaced

by another combination reflecting, or inspired by, the original entity". (Gottlieb 2005:3). Chaume defines audio visual text as "a semiotic construct comprising several signifying codes that operate simultaneously in the production of meaning" as quoted by Gottlieb (2005:2). Hence the whole process of localization is translation.

In the present case of *Kalyan Jewellery* commercials 'Trust' remains a common theme. According to the article "A Discursive-Semiotic Approach to Translating Cultural Aspects in Persuasive Advertisements", written by Ilze Bezuidenhout:

[t]he current trend in advertising is to use emotive situations which transcend cultural barriers in international advertising campaigns such as Nike. (Characters are portrayed in situations where they are encouraged by the slogan and sentiment, "Just do it". Universal themes such as winning and losing are used, to which anyone can relate.)(Bezuidenhout 1998:17)

Under the trust campaign, an old school teacher will be seen taking a mathematics class while it rains and the roof leaks. Droplets of water will be seen falling on the books of children and eventually there is rain inside the class and students get scattered covering their heads with their books. The school teacher travels to an old student who can help him. The student and his family receive him with utmost respect and good hospitality. The school teacher hesitates to ask for help directly and returns. He soon finds his ex-student initiating the reconstruction of the building at the school and hugs him.

There are two major components of localization in this series. The first one is replacement of actors that belong to respective locales. Hindi being pan Indian language, the Hindi actor Amitabh Bachchan remained common in the four south Indian commercials where he plays the role of a school

teacher. But the student's role is replaced through each locale ie., Telugu(Nagarjuna), Tamil(Prabhu),

Kannada(Shivraj), Malayalam(Dilip) respectively.



According to Madhav Prasad, the situations where cinema revolved around female lead character twenty years before, has changed in the southern states, where hero's became representatives of linguistic identity in the wake of linguistic reorganization of the southern states due to cine politics. This situation is reflected in the localization process of Kalyan Jewellers where a pan Indian actor could act in the four commercials of southern states, and the female lead role was also played by a similar artist. So is the case with the children. But when it comes to the question of hero, the linguistic identity of the locale has to be addressed through him and thus replacement of hero's of respective locales became inevitable. Madhav Prasad(2009).

The second and crucial component of localization is a voiceover which serves as a link between the scenes that are shown and what the commercial has to say in relation to the product. A voice over "Manaserigina Nammakam, Kalyan Jewellers, Nammakame Jeevitam" bridges the non-verbal components shown so far with verbal components that trust is the essence of life. This voice over is translated into respective languages of each commercial.

Another important aspect that shows impact on the adjustments done in the above commercials is the degree of distance involved among the locales. Since the above series comprises neighbouring states, the visual components could be retained in terms of background, other artists playing the role, their costumes, mannerisms involved and emotional expressions.

Commercials that are localized across countries involve more visual changes corresponding to the intensity of changes. In the following snapshots from the videos of 'Oreo' commercials of France, Africa, United Kingdom and Pakistan where a daughter explains her father how to eat an Oreo, changes in terms of costumes, background, artists playing the role are clearly evident as against the earlier series of Kalyan Jewellers.

The emotional expressions also vary among the two series. In the UK version, the daughter strictly resists sharing the biscuit with her father where as in other commercials in the series, a soft denial or a gradual acceptance of sharing the biscuit can be observed.



**Conclusion:** Thus it can be derived that localization as intra semiotic translation involves replacement of a whole set of data within the same channel, where verbal and nonverbal components that are adjusted in correspondence to the changed locale support each other. The adjustments that are made in such replacement are subject to many components and in this case the adjustments are seen to be limited in localization across neighbouring states as compared

with the adjustments that are made in the series of commercials that are localized across countries/continents. Updating the translation theories basing on empirical research related to localization, incorporating the role of semiotic components thus expanding the scope of translation from mere linguistic phenomenon, is the need of the hour.

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