

Intersemiotic translation and multimodality as commercial appeal: the case of Lola Cosmetics products labels

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Abstract: This paper constitutes a summarized account of my undergraduate final work which approached the commercial products of the brand Lola Cosmetics and their creative names – an implicit message that goes beyond pure commercial intention. The conjunction of multimodal elements brought up the sense of translating in a peculiar way, dealing with both intralinguistic and intersemiotic movements of transposition. The objectives were to select some of these products and analyze the use of language making a functional analysis of the combination of the verbal and imagetic resources. The main theoretical contributions were Gadamer's view of translation as interpretation (2004), Jakobson's tridimensional view of translation (1959); and Vermeer's and Nord's functional model (2006).

Keywords: Lola cosmetics; Multimodality; Intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation

Contextualization

This paper is situated within the scope of translation studies where translation is faced as interpretation and the association of images and words foster understanding and full perception of messages. In that sense the research deals with both intralinguistic and intersemiotic translations. It also penetrates the cultural implications on the label of products of the brand "Lola Cosmetics", which have peculiar and innovative names identifying the most varied cosmetic products and relating them to terms that belong to a specific social, cultural or political context, in a specific period of time, and aiming to affect a certain target public.

Therefore, the objectives of the present investigation were: to select some of these products and analyze the use of language in a intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation; and to make a functional analysis of the combination of the verbal and imagetic resources by considering the multimodal aspects.

The theoretical contributions subsidizing this analysis were mainly based on the concept of translation as interpretation according to the works of Jakobson (1959); Vermeer, Nord (2006) and following the ideas of Gadamer (2004) on Philosophical Hermeneutics that

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presupposes translation as a competence concerned with overcoming barriers in order to come to a specific understanding and that the phenomenon of translation is, in a way, a key matter of hermeneutical studies.

This way, the analysis takes into account the intention of the author – the person who elaborates the products labels - in the creation of such names and the association intended with text-image elements - multimodal - in its labels.

According to Jakobson (1959), translation processes should be analyzed through three different perspectives: intralinguistic; interlinguistic and intersemiotic translation. The contributions of the Skopostheorie (Nord, 2006), according to which, translation is based on intentions and the purposes to be achieved within a certain reception public comes as an unfolding development of the Functional view of Translation Studies and offer consistent analytical support to our object.

We realize that translation, as a communication channel and as a language activity, provides approximation between peoples, cultures and ideas. The act of translating allows varied types of information to reach the most distinct places, thus making knowledge accessible to a large part of the world population. It is also true within the commercial field where symbols, colors, sounds, verbal messages are all put together in order to build meanings and to make messages reach their destinations. Snell-Hornby (1995) affirms, "Without translation, today's world with the rapid exchange of information would be unthinkable."

As this study engenders and embraces the intralinguistic and intersemiotic dimensions of translation, we refer Jakobson (1959),

1) Intralingual translation or rewording is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language; 2) Interlingual translation or translation proper is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language; 3) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems. (Jakobson, 1959, p.233).

Examples of intersemiotic translation and multimodal resources are constantly found in comic books, and advertisements where there is a combination of words, with visual elements such as figures, images or photos. And, sometimes, even considering the important role of translation to society, it is often unnoticed such is the limitation of the general public in understanding all the amplitude of this process.

Intersemiotic and intralinguistic translations are processes intrinsically connected to culture and communication between social groups. Regarding these aspects, this paper aims to

analyze verbal and nonverbal texts, and to show how transposition from one sign to another is linked to the commercialization – as a sort of communication - and reception of the consumers.

Ika Kana Trisnawati, says:

Skopos theory tries to keep the equivalence between the source and the target text; however, Skopos theory only regards a source text as an ‘offer of information’ to which it will eventually be simulated, as a whole or partially, into an offer of information in a target text by taking into account the target language and culture. (Trisnawati, 2014, p.246)

Based on the aforementioned theories, this research fosters reflection on the relevance of translation in advertising as many brands aim to innovate in their labels to attract the attention of consumers and differentiate themselves in the market, appealing to the emotional dimension of the viewer by means of a coherent connection between text, image and culture.

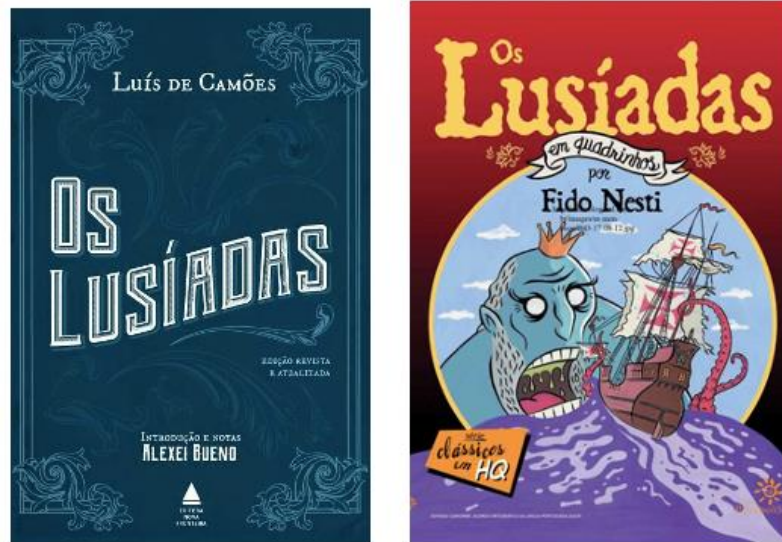
Translation as interpretation: a process raised by creative advertising

Interpretation has gained momentum within terminology as a term to distinguish translation from the oral conversion. Regarding language skills, translators need solid reading comprehension competence. Translators also need sound transfer, and target language production skills, that is, a sequence of cognitive functions which involve understanding - processing information and producing language. Interpreters, on the other hand, need to optimize their memory competence by rendering the information in a quicker way and without the opportunity to research or use technology as an allied.

However, what we are dealing with, in this specific situation, is the understanding process, within translation, which provokes attraction to certain external, visual stimuli when an advertised product is presented. Gadamer (2004, cited by Regan, 2012, p.286) “identifies language acting as the medium for understanding and a means of sharing the complexities of human experience”. In the same line, Benchimol-Barros (2017) advocates that the lexical, semantic and cultural incompatibility of languages is the immeasurable reality of the inaccuracy of translation and this reality is stimulating. These two quotes reinforce the idea that there is no perfect translation, in terms of grammatical structure, and lexical equivalence; however, this incompatibility opens a range of possibilities for the translator . Image 1, below, shows in book covers two different appeals to the “same” core content, but with visual stimuli compromised with the receptive audience : adults x children . Images communicate through

different visual patterns. Interpretation is attached to forms, colors, images provoking distinguished sensations.

Image 1. translation with adaptations provoking message interpretation through visual stimuli.



Fonte: Pinterest Website³

Functional views of translation associated to reception of advertising

The functionalist view of language emerged to oppose linguistic formalism, focusing on the function of language. In the translational context, functionalism turns to the function to which the text seeks to perform, the communicative function of the message, the intention of the author/requester of the translation, especially the final reader. In this aspect, the final objective is what influences the whole translation process, such as the language to be used, the textual structure.

Functionalism studies language taking into account the communicative act. To functionalism, the communicative functions are perceived in their contexts of use, in real situations of everyday life.

Functionalism studies language in its use of context, since it is only possible to construct meanings from the communicative act when the interlocutors share the subject, the situation and understand (even intuitively) the use of certain structures in

³ Available at

:-<[https://br.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=os%20lusiadas&rs=typed&term_meta\[\]=os%7Ctyped&term_meta\[\]=lusiadas%7Ctyped](https://br.pinterest.com/search/pins/?q=os%20lusiadas&rs=typed&term_meta[]=os%7Ctyped&term_meta[]=lusiadas%7Ctyped)> access in March 8, 2024.

detriment of others, such as It is the case of jokes and ironies, for example. (Costa; Zilpser; Polchlopek, 2012, p.24. Our translation)

This quote justifies that Lola's Cosmetics commercial labels include images and slogans which connect the public with familiar and shared cultural items. It allows us to say that the translator – in this case the creator of such advertising labels – had in mind some “pre-translative” aspects, based on what is the intention to be achieved with the translation of a certain message, the target audience, place, the reason that which the translation was requested, the historical period, among other factors. These factors serve as the basis for the author purposes to be achieved in the target audience.

It can be regarded as widely known that, from a functionalist point of view (cf. Reiss/Vermeer 1984, Nord 1991), the translator's decisions in the translation process should be governed by the function or communicative purpose the target text (TT) is intended to fulfil in a particular target-culture situation. (Nord, 1997, p. 41)

To Nord (2009), translators may choose to change verbal signs to nonverbal signs or vice versa according to the target culture and which method is best to be used to achieve their goal. Translation is, therefore, a process full of intentionality, interculturality and the translator must have a series of communicative skills and knowledge of the two cultures in question in order to make message transposition – *Skopostheorie*.

The *Skopostheorie* is embedded in the functionalist approach, centering its analysis on the textual purpose, and the intention of the author of the text. In this case, the purpose of enchanting and attracting and the intention of selling a product.

For this study, we selected three labels from Lola Cosmetics where we identified the adaption of verbal messages in a context of culture, making creative visual connections: two famous movies; one social national project. The two first labels – images 2 and 3 - were inspired by the film titles, “The Godfather” (*O poderoso cremão*), “I Know What You Did Last Summer” (*Eu sei o que você fez na química passada*), and the third, “*Minha Lola, minha vida*”, based on a Brazilian social project (*Minha casa, minha vida*).

Image 2: Label connecting potential consumers with well-known movie “The Godfather” and associating verbal and non-verbal message meanings.



Source: *Beleza na web* ⁴

The Godfather, a movie directed by Francis Ford Coppola, portrays the life of the most powerful mobster family of the time, the commercial product by Lola is inspired by the name and message conveyed by the movie plot intends to give the impression of an equally strong and effective product. Don Corleone strong and powerful member of an Italian family, one of New York's most important mobsters was envied by rivals. The same characteristics of the supetstar were associated with the product: strength, power and worthy of envy - "*O poderoso...*", says the label "*O senhor de todos os cremes, o mestre de todas as nutrições o encantador dos cachos, o don Juan dos lisos, a paixão das descoloridas, o salvador dos detonados.*", consequently, conveying to the consumer an image of an effective product, and can be considered one of the best, found in the market.

Another visual and expressive aspect to be observed on the label is the image of manipulation (marionette) on the upper part of the label, communicating the power of the conditioner effect, suggesting hair manipulation and control.

⁴ Aavailable at: https://www.belezanaweb.com.br/lola-cosmetics/o-poderoso-cremao/?activebpb=nb&utm_source=google&utm_medium=non-branded-kw&target=kwd-447278303015&utm_campaign=1702384201&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjww_iwBhApEiwAuG6ccP1V4W_5RMPKI_7gDWx1MiibpxtLSqA16yhrwNVkwW-z0CauLNDmIxoCY7AQAvD_BwE. access in March 8, 2024.

Image 3: Label connecting potential consumers with well-known movie “I know what you did last summer” and associating verbal and non-verbal message meanings.



Source: Beleza na Web⁵

Lola's label "*Eu sei o que vc fez na química passada,*" again, alludes to a famous movie, "I know what you did last summer" released in 1997 and directed by Jim Gillespie, the film deals with a group of young people running over a man on the road, and him supposedly dies. To get rid of the guilt and cover up the crime, these young people throw the body in a lake near to the accident scene, however, what they did not expect, is that a year after that, they would receive a note with the message, "I know what you did last summer," and its title awakens the idea of someone who knows other people's secrets and therefore exerts control over their actions.

In the film, this “control” occurs by means of threats and assassination attempts. In a creative and catchy way, the company Lola Cosmetics adapts and associates this title with the guilty feeling of those potential consumers who might have done something “criminal” with their hair, using destructive chemicals on their hair. It is a promise of restoring hair health. The moisturizing product will similarly act to "dominate" and control the harmful situation. Another non-verbal aspect that reveals the association with the suspense movie is the dark background color of the label, to emphasize the mysterious and threatening atmosphere. The colors white and blue used in the label words coincide with those in the image of the movie poster.

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Available at <https://www.belezanaweb.com.br/busca/?q=lola%20from%20rio%20eu%20sei%20o%20que%20voc%C3%AA%20fez%20na%20qu%C3%ADmica%20passada>. access in March 8, 2024.

Image 4: Label *Minha Lola minha vida* connecting potential consumers with the Brazilian government social project *Minha casa minha vida* and associating verbal and non-verbal message meanings.



Source: Beleza na Web⁶

Taking into account the cultural context of this social program, aimed at low-income families in Brazil, thus giving them the chance to own their own property for a more affordable value, Lola made a commercial appeal to consumers, offering a more popular and economically accessible product version for its consumers. By analyzing the message displayed on the label of this product, we realize the intended relationship. By reading the text displayed, we notice the similarity that it has with the proposal offered by the social project. On Lola Cosmetics brands website, one reads “*Na Crise Sim Usando Lola Inclusive É... a crise chegou chegando e pegou geral. Nada mais justo e camarada que um produto bapfo para mim, para você e prazamiga. Porque pode ter treta, mas os meus cabelos...*”

Launched in a socio-historical context, in which Brazil was going through an economic crisis, with a deep recession and high unemployment rates, the line “*Minha lola, minha vida*” brings a proposal for more affordable brand products. Intention, purpose, audience, time, place, among other localized factors are present in all these conceptions. Besides, observing all these labels, it is clear the multimodality in all of them: pictures working with verbal text, letters with different colors to get the consumer attention, various resources been used in relation to a commercial appeal.

The power of multimodality in translation and meaning construction

⁶ Available at <https://www.belezanaweb.com.br/busca/?q=lola%20from%20rio%20minha%20lola%20minha%20vida>. access in March 8, 2024.

Kress and Van Leeuwen define multimodality as “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event together with the particular way in which these modes are combined” (Kress; Leewen, 2001p.20 apud Yablonky, 2016).

The combination of different semiotic signs is a strategy used by authors to achieve a goal. Different signs working together, as pictures, verbal text, sound, etc, are means to pass the intended message according to the purpose at hand. The textual multimodality has been gaining relevance in several segments, such as: the movie industry, education, advertising, etc... Mainly in advertising genre, we notice the use of multimodality aiming to capture consumers attention, this way, catching the eyes of the public to a specific product.

Industry has always been using innumerable devices of innovation in order to promote the constant dissemination of its products, due to the aggressiveness and competitiveness of the current economic model, the rhythm of dispute between companies is accelerating, and the one that stands out with best sales strategies is advertising. Multimodality also allows the reader a better understanding of the text, facilitating the assimilation of the final message. The translation of texts and images occurs through the interpretation of meanings, due to the interaction between them.

It means to say that text-image interaction should create the ideal condition for the transmission of the intended message to the ideal audience. Creativity in the combination of these communicative modes is always well regarded.

Last words for now

This study has approached translation as interpretation, oriented by an intersemiotic movement of meaning transposition, by the functionalist view and multimodal textual features. The qualitative and exploratory research has allowed us to realize the wide range of possible associations that can be found in translation analysis of a genre such us advertising. Comparing “*Lola cosmetics*” products with some cultural references such as: films and social government projects as provoked by its creative labels has led us through the functionalist model, where we could observe extralinguistic and intra linguistic characteristics pertinent to the commercial genre. It was also possible to realize textual multimodality being used in the selected products labels, thus, facilitating the understanding of meaning the interpretation of the message, which went beyond informative verbal text. It associated cultural experiences of

potential consumers calling for their attention in a humorous way. We point out that Jakobson's intersemiotic view also helped us in the sense that interpretation run through different signs, (eg, verbal sign and nonverbal sign), and that Gadamer's philosophical view supports the idea that translation is par excellence an interpretive process.

The present work allowed us to expand knowledge in the area of translation associated to commercial vision, and to perceive how these areas can be interconnected and processes help each other's goals. This research can be unfolded by other reasearchs, with other types of analysis, taking into account other theoretical aspects, thus generating a greater depth of research on the subject.

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Resumo: Este artigo constitui um relato resumido do meu trabalho final de graduação que abordou os produtos comerciais da marca Lola Cosmetics e seus nomes criativos – uma mensagem implícita que vai além da pura intenção comercial. A conjunção de elementos multimodais traz à tona o sentido de traduzir de forma peculiar, lidando com movimentos de transposição intralinguísticos e intersemióticos. Os objetivos foram selecionar alguns desses produtos e analisar o uso da linguagem fazendo uma análise funcional da combinação dos recursos verbais e imagéticos. As principais contribuições teóricas foram a visão da tradução como interpretação de Gadamer (2004), a visão tridimensional da tradução de Jakobson (1959); e o modelo funcional de Vermeer e Nord (2006).

Palavras-chave: Lola cosméticos; multimodalidade; tradução intralinguística e intersemiótica

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