Exploring the concept of transcreation

A theoretical and empirical study of transcreation with BMW as an empirical example

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‘If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.’

(Nelson Mandela)
ABSTRACT

As our world is becoming increasingly global, companies face the challenge of successfully communicating on a global scale to an increasingly varied audience. For communication to be effective across borders, it is argued that companies need to disregard translation and instead ‘transcreate’ their message to make it truly speak to the local audience linguistically and culturally. This process, which is also referred to as transcreation, is the focal point of this thesis. Aiming to contribute with relevant knowledge about the concept of transcreation,

the purpose of this thesis is to conclude on where the phenomenon of transcreation can be placed theoretically, and in which ways it can be distinguished from translation both theoretically and empirically.

To do so, relevant concepts and developments within the field of translation is presented and discussed. Transcreation can involve the creation of new text as well as the translation or adaptation of existing source text elements. Particularly the creation of new content can be argued to elicit the discussion of whether the scope of translation is wide enough to encompass the concept of transcreation, even though the scope of translation has expanded widely in recent years due to increased globalisation and, as a consequence thereof, cultural traffic. To conclude on the theoretical placement of transcreation, the scope of translation is discussed based on definitions offered by Jacobson and Korning Zethsen. Moreover, the concepts of equivalence, faithfulness, Skopos theory, and adaptation are discussed, as they are found relevant in the discussion of what encompass translation. On the basis of the points made in relation to these concepts, it is argued that transcreation can be seen as a mode of translation that relies on the adaptation strategy and Skopos theory. Also the concept of localisation is presented and discussed to clarify how transcreation differ from this process, as they can easily be confused. On the basis of the arguments made in this relation, it can be concluded that localisation is the process of adapting a technical media product to a target locale as opposed to transcreation which is the process of adapting a text – often with an appellative language function - to tailor it linguistically and culturally to its target locale.

Moreover, empirical material representing extracts from the global luxurious automotive manufacturer BMW’s Danish, British, and American websites, respectively, has been subjected to analysis in order to uncover how transcreation can be distinguished from translation in practice. An interesting aspect following from the choice of these three countries is the fact that both Great Britain and the United States are English-speaking. Uncovering the differences in particularly the verbal messages for two countries that
speak the same language is found to be particularly relevant for substantiating the importance of cultural differences to a process of transcreation.

Culture is a central concept to this thesis, as the need for transcreation is argued to be rooted in cultural differences. The functionalist approach to culture is relied on throughout the thesis. Particular focus is put on Geert Hofstede’s framework of national value dimensions, as it is found useful for uncovering cultural elements embedded in the empirical corpus subjected to analysis.

Also the field of semiotics is found useful for identifying the overall communicated messages. More specifically, Barthes’ three types of messages are found relevant for uncovering the verbal and linguistic expressions of the empirical material.

A good understanding of consumer behaviour is argued to be the key to any successful transcreation process. Therefore, theory on consumer behaviour has been included as well, as it is influenced by culture. Especially Marieke De Mooij’s theory on car-buying motives is found relevant for illustrating how such differences should ideally influence any transcreation process.

On the basis of these theoretical elements, analyses of BMW’s online car presentations, constituted by an image and a headline, of three car models on their Danish, British and American websites, respectively, clearly show that BMW have adapted both the visual and the verbal messages in order to tailor them to the respective audiences. Particularly the verbal messages vary significantly.

On the basis of the results from the analysis, a tweak of the Skopos theory is proposed to be relevant to the process of transcreation, as not only the purpose of a given text is argued to be essential, but also knowledge about the brand and product in question, as well as the underlying motives for the target locale in question to buy or trust the product or brand. Such considerations is argued to have been made by BMW, as the nine images and accompanying headlines analysed appear to have been developed with, at least some of, the cultural specifics of the respective target locale in mind, when taking point of departure in Hofstede’s framework of national value dimensions.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1
   1.1. Thesis statement ................................................................................. 2
   1.2. Empirical material ............................................................................. 3
   1.3. Theory and method .......................................................................... 4
   1.4. Delimitations of the thesis ................................................................. 5
   1.5. Structure ......................................................................................... 5

2. CULTURE .................................................................................................... 7
   2.1. Defining culture ................................................................................ 7
   2.2. Approaches to investigating cultures .............................................. 8
      2.2.1. The functionalist approach ....................................................... 8
      2.2.2. The interpretative approach ...................................................... 8
      2.2.3. The approach to culture applied in this thesis ......................... 9
      2.2.4. Criticism of the functionalist approach .................................. 9
   2.3. Culture according to Hofstede ......................................................... 10
      2.3.1. Culture as collective mental programming ................................ 10
      2.3.2. Hofstede’s manifestations of culture ....................................... 12
   2.4. Hofstede’s dimensional model of national culture .......................... 13
      2.4.1. The background for the framework ........................................ 13
      2.4.2. The five dimensions of national culture ................................... 14
      2.4.3. The applicability of Hofstede’s model of national culture ....... 22

3. COMMUNICATION ..................................................................................... 23
   3.1. Defining communication .................................................................. 23
   3.2. The process school .......................................................................... 23
   3.3. The semiotic school ....................................................................... 24
   3.4. Intercultural communication .......................................................... 25

4. SEMIOTICS ................................................................................................... 26
   4.1. Defining semiotics .......................................................................... 26
   4.2. Codes .............................................................................................. 27
   4.3. Visual semiotics .............................................................................. 28
   4.4. Denotation and connotation ........................................................... 29
   4.5. Barthes’ three types of messages ..................................................... 29
1. INTRODUCTION

We live in an era of rapid change. Globalisation has led to ever higher cooperation, integration and interdependence across national boundaries, causing ever more companies to regard the entire world as their marketplace (Blenker and Christensen 2006:67).

With new online media fragmenting and greatly complicating the traditional range of communication platforms, companies today are forced to address an increasingly varied audience and find a voice on a growing range of unfamiliar platforms. The marketing and advertising environment is evolving rapidly to meet the needs of the resulting, increasingly challenging, communication process.

The debate on whether to standardise or adapt marketing communication has been ongoing since Levitt, one of the spokesmen for standardisation, argued that companies need to globalise at several levels, including marketing, in order to survive in the rapidly changing business world. His article, ‘The Globalization of the Markets’, further proposed that companies should focus on intercultural similarities between consumer groups from various national cultures, rather than focusing on cultural differences and the potential problems caused by the cultural diversity (Levitt 1995 in Norlyk 2006:78). In a marketing communication process, then, this would involve creating a marketing campaign for the dominating home market and subsequently translate the campaign into the respective languages of other relevant markets.

The problem with this strategy is well described by Anholt, who points out that:

‘Translating advertising copy is like painting the tip of an iceberg and hoping the whole thing will turn red. What makes copy work is not the words themselves, but subtle combinations of those words, and most of all the echoes and repercussions of those words within the mind of the reader. These are precisely the subtleties which translation fails to convey. Advertising is not made of words, but made of culture’ (Anholt 2000 cited in De Mooij 2004:180).

This is in line with the main arguments made by proponents of an adaptation strategy who stress the importance of a specific cultural context for an individual consumer. A common assertion is that cultural differences cannot be ignored, as they are embedded in language, values, beliefs, and communication styles, and therefore influence how consumers perceive a given message or product (Norlyk 2006:78). An adaptation strategy is therefore argued to involve not merely translating, but more drastically recreating or adapting the original messaging and content according to the cultural specifics of each target market. As stated by the global brand services agency Tag Worldwide on their website, ‘If you want to realize your brand’s potential, it has to be tailored for its audience. And when you’re a global brand, translation isn’t
enough. You need to make sure you speak to your audience using the right cultural nuances too’ (Tag Worldwide 2013).

In recent years, this process has commonly been referred to as transcreation, which will be the focal subject of this thesis.

According to Marieke De Mooij (2003:184), many companies have experienced declining profitability rather than the increased efficiency they expected to see from centralising their operations and marketing. Perhaps as a result of such experiences, market research indicates rising demand for transcreation services (Common Sense Advisory 2011a), suggesting that many companies are coming to appreciate the importance of taking cultural differences into account when communicating across cultural borders. Interestingly, this tendency also implies that cultural diversity is unlikely to be eliminated any time soon, in spite of our increasingly globalised world.

On the basis of these observations, I believe the concept of transcreation to be key to enhancing the efficiency of any communication which spans cultural borders. However, relatively little literature about the concept exists. The starting point for this thesis was therefore to take a closer look at the concept, its relation to translation, and the strategies involved in a transcreation process.

During my initial research on the subject, I stumbled upon the marketing communication of the high-end automotive manufacturer BMW. Visits to their Danish, British and American websites revealed three distinct online marketing communication strategies, both in terms of the copy and the imagery. Given the difference in the American and British websites (both English-language), BMW seem to be considering not only linguistic differences, but also cultural. This observation substantiates the importance of culture to the concept of transcreation, which is why culture is considered a key concept for the purposes of this thesis.

1.1. Thesis statement

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the concept of transcreation. This will be done by answering the following thesis statement:

Where can the phenomenon of transcreation be placed theoretically, and in which ways can it be distinguished from translation both theoretically and empirically?

To address this problem statement, I will answer the following research questions:

Theoretically:

- *What is the relation between transcreation and translation?*
- *How does transcreation differ from localisation?*
Empirically:

- What cultural signals, if any, are embedded in the empirical material?
- Can the differences in the encoding of the visual and verbal expression in the empirical material be attributed cultural differences?
- What does the nature of the differences suggest in terms of the discussion on the theoretical placement of transcreation?

The thesis is divided into a theoretical part (part I), in which I will attempt to answer the theoretically based research questions, as well as an empirical part (part II), in which I will attempt to answer the empirically based research questions. Finally, the last part (part III) will conclude on the overall findings.

This thesis should be seen as a contribution to existing literature on transcreation. This contribution will be based on the theoretical discussion, as well as on the findings of the empirical study, which is based on a cross-cultural content analysis of selected BMW web texts, which will be presented further in section 1.3. The conclusions made in part I will thus provide insights into the concept of transcreation in the context of marketing communication, whereas the conclusions made in part II will provide a fuller picture of the transcreation concept by identifying how transcreation differs from localisation and, in particular, translation in practice. Such knowledge may be useful for informing future academic research, and also for developing and improving future transcreation processes and outcomes.

### 1.2. Empirical material

In order to carry out an empirical study of transcreations, an empirical corpus of web texts, which are assumed to have undergone a transcreation process, will be subjected to analysis in part II. More specifically, these web texts can be described as presentations of three car models featured on the German automotive manufacturer BMW’s Danish, British and American websites. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, only certain components taken from each website will be subjected to analysis, namely an image with a headline in it. Specifically, the Danish, British and American presentations of three identical car models will be examined. In total, then, the empirical corpus subjected to cross-cultural analysis comprises nine web texts in the form of an image and a headline. These elements of each car presentation on the respective websites have been chosen because they can be argued to have the same promotional form and content as advertisements – a text genre which, whether print, out of home, or online, is particularly prone to transcreation, as will be explained in a later chapter. This is mainly due to the image and the headline, the latter being argued to be the most important linguistic element of advertising texts, as the function of it is to encourage readers to continue reading the remaining body copy and, ideally, buy the advertised
product (Smith 2006:159). Moreover, the web texts in question were chosen because they illustrate how BMW choose to communicate with their Danish, British and American audiences, respectively, through a combination of semiotic resources.

1.3. Theory and method

As already stated, this thesis is divided into three parts, namely a theoretical part (part I), an empirical part (part II), and a concluding part III.

In order to answer the thesis statement presented above, relevant theories from the below theoretical areas are presented in part I, and some of them are subsequently applied in the analysis in part II:

- Culture
- Communication
- Semiotics
- Rhetoric
- Branding
- Consumer behaviour
- Translation, localisation and transcreation

Within these theoretical areas, those specific theories deemed most relevant to this thesis will be presented. On the basis of key points made in the theoretical part of the thesis, a model for analysis will be presented in chapter 9.

Even though all of the theoretical areas are found important and relevant, culture, above all others, is considered a key concept for the purposes of this thesis, as it is argued to be the underlying rationale for the very existence of transcreation as a concept. There are a number of potential approaches to investigating cultures. Given the ambitions of this thesis in identifying differences and similarities in messages tailored for three different cultures, the ‘functionalist’ approach to culture will be the primary approach chosen, since it is particularly useful for explaining cultural differences, and in turn, for explaining variation in communication and branding strategy. This approach will be elaborated further in chapter 2.
1.4. Delimitations of the thesis

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, only the elements described in section 1.2 will form part of the empirical material subjected to analysis. As is evident from appendices A-I, which illustrate the respective websites in their entire form, the web texts subjected to analysis constitute only a part of each website. No matter the nature of the surrounding elements such as information boxes, body copy, additional images, etc., and regardless of whether they would make a difference to the findings of the analysis or not, they will not be taken into account.

The theories presented in part I and applied for the analysis in part II are more complex and comprehensive than described in this thesis. However, the purpose of this thesis is not to give a detailed presentation of the various theories, meaning that the presentations of the theories included are limited to the parts that have most relevance to the thesis statement.

Even though the empirical material consists of texts taken from websites, the website as a medium will not be the focus of this thesis, which is why only a few main points are included in chapter 9, in which further introduction is given to the empirical material.

1.5. Structure

The thesis consists of 12 chapters, grouped into three parts.

Chapter 1 presents the thesis statement and the background on which it is developed, the delimitations, the selected empirical material, the method, and the structure of the thesis.

Part I is the theoretical part of this thesis which consists of chapters 1-8. This part examines the theoretical foundations for understanding the focal subjects of this thesis and subsequent analysis, and discusses the (limited) existing literature on these specific topics. The purpose of the theoretical part is to establish a model for the analysis of the empirical corpus.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the theory of culture. This is an important chapter, as it forms the cultural foundation of the analysis. After a brief definition and discussion of the concept of culture, two dominant approaches to investigating cultures are presented, namely the functionalist approach and the interpretative approach. This is an important part of this thesis, as it explains why this thesis relies on the ‘functionalist’ approach. Subsequently, theories of the Dutch scholar Geert Hofstede are presented with particular focus on his value dimensions. Marieke de Mooij’s contribution to Hofstede’s framework is included in this chapter, as she has applied Hofstede’s value dimensions to marketing and advertising.
In chapter 3, the focus shifts from culture theory to communication theory. On the basis of a brief description of communication in general, two prevailing communication paradigms will be presented. The chapter serves to establish the necessary background information for understanding the importance of transcreation introduced in chapter 8.

Text and picture are close related. Therefore, chapter 4 is dedicated to the field of semiotics. Following a definition of semiotics, and some of the most essential elements of the field, Barthes’ theory on visual semiotics will be described, as this approach is a useful tool for analysing the empirical corpus.

Chapter 5 briefly presents some of the aspects of rhetoric with specific focus on verbal and visual rhetorical strategies that are found most relevant for the analysis of the empirical material.

Chapter 6 summarises the main aspects of the brand aspects and presents relevant branding models. This is relevant for illustrating the relation between branding and the concept of transcreation.

In chapter 7, relevant aspects of consumer behaviour are presented. Marieke de Mooij has carried out extensive research on consumer behaviour across cultures, so this chapter relies on theories by her.

In chapter 8, the concept of transcreation is introduced and evaluated with respect to theories on translation and localisation.

Part II is the empirical part, which consists of chapter 9 and 10.

Chapter 9 serves as an introduction to the analysis. In this chapter, a very brief description of BMW is given, followed by a presentation of the empirical material and the considerations made in the selection process. Furthermore, the model developed for the analysis is presented. This model is based on essential parts of the theories presented in the theoretical part.

Chapter 10 is dedicated to the empirical analysis including a discussion of the findings.

Part III is the concluding part. It consists of the final chapter of this thesis, chapter 11, which is devoted to the conclusion. This chapter will synthesise the most important findings made throughout the thesis, and clarify the answers to the questions posed in the thesis statement as a basis for future research.
PART I

2. CULTURE

This chapter sets out to uncover some main aspects of the complex phenomenon of culture, starting with work to define the concept of ‘culture’. Next, two prominent approaches to studying culture is presented and discussed, followed by a rationale for why this thesis relies on the functionalist approach rather than the interpretive approach. Subsequently, the works of Hofstede is presented. Particular focus is put on his value dimensions, as this framework offers a practical set of tools for identifying cultural characteristics in the visual and verbal elements of the empirical corpus. Moreover, De Mooij’s contribution to this framework will be included, as they provide relevant insights into how they can be applied to the fields of marketing and advertising.

2.1. Defining culture

The concept of culture is complex. It is rooted in different traditions and is therefore approached quite differently by different theorists. As a consequence, a myriad of definitions of culture are available. As early as 1952, the American anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn collected all definitions of culture available at the time, and produced no less than 164 definitions, many of which varied considerably in content. Since then, countless of new definitions have emerged. According to Askehave et al., most definitions tend to agree on the following traits, namely that culture is:

- ‘A system of shared human behaviour, ideas, values and rules of living
- The result of a learning process
- Created in social contexts
- Expressed in symbolic form
- Taken-for-granted and assumed to be ‘natural’ by the culture itself.’

Askehave et al. (2006:8)

According to De Mooij, ‘culture is the glue that binds groups together’. With this figurative definition of the phenomenon, she suggests that people would find it difficult living together without cultural patterns and organised systems of significant symbols (2004:181).

In contrast, Kates and Goh (2003:65) argue that ‘contemporary culture is no longer a monolithic, shared way of life among a majority of people (if it ever was). A more advanced view of culture is that it is a
complex mélange of symbols, diverse practices, and hybrids.’ These two views can be argued to represent the essence of two common approaches for investigating cultures, namely the functionalist approach and the interpretive approach. These two approaches will briefly be presented in the following paragraphs.

2.2. Approaches to investigating cultures

Cultural studies are generally found to be highly relevant to the business community, but there are various opinions on how to approach the phenomenon. Two dominant approaches are the functionalist and the interpretive approaches.

2.2.1. The functionalist approach

In line with De Mooij’s statement presented above, in which she suggests that culture is the common denominator for the individual members of a group, the functionalist school of thought sees culture from a very practical and functional point of view, suggesting that there is a causal relationship between country of origin and distinctive behavioural features. Research is, in other words, focused on how people from a certain national culture are most likely to behave. Consequently, functionalist theory is predictive, as it points to national patterns of thinking and behaving, and thereby seeks to establish a framework of what to expect in various intercultural encounters as regards, for example values, norms and behaviour (Askehave et al. 2006:16). This approach to culture is argued by Askehave et al. (2006:9) to be well established in the business world because it presents a highly operational view on culture and intercultural communication. With a focus on contrasts, rather than nuances, dominant behavioural trends and cultural characteristics of various cultures are mapped based on empirical dimensions such as directness versus indirectness, attitudes towards power and authority, and the needs for structures and procedures in working life (Askehave 2006:10).

2.2.2. The interpretative approach

In contrast to the functionalist focus on predicting and assigning general patterns of behaviour to certain nationalities, the interpretive approach to culture emphasises the importance of interpretation and context. From this approach, culture is seen as ‘a meaning system which people produce and use to make sense of the world around them’ (Askehave et al. 2006:17). Patterns of behaviour are thus individually interpreted and shaped by the members of a given culture. This makes culture a dynamic, changeable, social construction which can be seen as a meaning system used by its members to interpret the world around them (Askehave et al. 2006:10). Complexity and changeability are consequently seen as two inherent traits of culture, which is in line with Kates and Goh’s statement that culture is ‘...a complex mélange of symbols, diverse practices, and hybrids’ presented in section 3.1.
According to the interpretivists, understanding – which is seen as the produce of experience obtained by entering into dialogue with other cultures – is essential for intercultural communication to be successful. In other words, attempts should thus be made to understand the other on his or her own terms (Askehave et al. 2006:18). In this regard, it is interesting to note that the interpretive school of thought sees cultural differences as sources of valuable input to communication, whereas the functionalist school of thought regards differences as obstacles to effective communication.

2.2.3. The approach to culture applied in this thesis

The functionalist approach employs an etic perspective to cultural studies, which means that a culture is examined on the basis of predefined concepts by comparing and contrasting your own culture with the culture which is to be investigated. According to Askehave et al (2006:22), this approach is often accused of being ethnocentric in its approach to culture, based on the argument that its point of departure often refers to Western cultural contexts. In contrast, the interpretive approach employs an emic perspective, meaning that focus is on avoiding predefined concepts and instead turning to members of the culture in question in the search for concepts which make sense to insiders. In other words, the purpose is to understand individuals’ values, ideas and beliefs, and to let cultural patterns emerge during this process. This perspective consequently gives access to an in-depth cultural knowledge, but it is also a time-consuming and somewhat intangible approach.

An interpretative approach to culture will most likely provide valuable and useful cultural insights. In order to provide representative and valid results by applying this approach, a comprehensive data corpus is required though, as the method relies on individual’s interpretation of meaning systems (Askehave et al. 2006:21-2).

Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore the nature of the differences and similarities of the empirical corpus, the functionalist approach to culture is relied upon throughout the rest of this thesis. In doing so, an etic perspective will be adopted, as comparing and contrasting according to a set of predefined concepts is found to be the most relevant method to fulfil the purposes of this thesis due to its limited scope. The functionalist approach offers a structured framework and a set of operative tools that are easily applicable to cross-cultural communication. This framework will be presented in section 2.4.

2.2.4. Criticism of the functionalist approach

One of the shortcomings of the functionalist approach is its tendency to rely on standardisation and categorization (Askehave et al. 2006:17). Furthermore, the fact that functionalist theory takes its point of
departure in the construct of national culture and national identity has been widely criticised, as it is argued that similarities or differences in people are based on more than simply the country of origin. Culture is often considered to be much more than a question of nationality, as people belong to a myriad of small cultures or communities, and their behaviour and preferences are shaped on the basis of this composite of social contexts. In other words, other identity-creating factors such as age, gender, religion, education, occupations etc. are argued to be subordinated the national identity when cultures are explored and compared from the functionalist approach (Askehave et al. 2006:15-9).

Another main point of criticism raised against the functionalist approach is that it relies on stereotypes, i.e. preconceived ideas about other cultures or groups, which consequently results in a limited and ethnocentric understanding of culture. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the concept of ethnocentrism when using the functionalist approach to study and compare cultures. Ethnocentrism means ‘to place your own people in the centre and to assume that your own race, culture, society, etc. are superior to all others’ (Askehave et al. 2006:16). This basically means that people tend to perceive their own customs as universally valid, see what takes place in their own culture as natural and correct, while seeing what takes place in other cultures as unnatural and incorrect, just to mention a few examples (Askehave et al. 2006:16).

2.3. Culture according to Hofstede

One of the influential representatives of the functionalist school of thought is the Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede. As stated in the introduction, his theoretical framework will be heavily relied on in this thesis and applied in the analysis in part II, as it offers a practical set of tools for uncovering the cultural characteristics embedded in the empirical material.

2.3.1. Culture as collective mental programming

Geert Hofstede sees culture as ‘the collective mental programming of people or groups’ (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:4). According to Hofstede, programming a computer can be compared to how culture programs the mind. The mental programming, also referred to as the ‘software of the mind’, consists of patterns of an individual's thinking, feeling and acting; i.e. patterns functioning as mental programs which control the individual's mind (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:2-3). Hofstede further argues that culture is always a collective phenomenon, as it is shared with other members of the same social environment. The programming takes place in the individual’s process of socialising and collecting life experience, and he thereby argues that culture is learned rather than inherited (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:3-4). According to
Hofstede, collective mental programming is only one of three existing levels, as he distinguishes between the following three levels of mental programming:

1) *The universal level*

Human nature represents the universal level of mental programming, as this is what all people have in common. Mental programmes at this level are genetically inherited.

2) *The individual level*

An individual’s personality represents the individual level of mental programming as it is a unique set of mental programmes that the individual does not have to share with anyone. At this level mental programmes are both inherited and learned.

3) *The collective level*

As stated above, culture is a collective mental programme. It is shared with some people, but not all. In other words, culture is common to people belonging to a certain group, but distinct from people belonging to other groups. Culture is what the individual members of a group have in common, and most, if not all, our mental programmes are learned at this level (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:2-5; De Mooij 1998:43).

The collective level is especially relevant to this thesis, as the common cultural specificities of a group as well as all manifestations of culture are ideally reflected in cross-cultural communication. Cultural differences can be manifested in several ways, as presented below.
2.3.2. Hofstede’s manifestations of culture

According to Hofstede, four components constitute the manifestations of cultural differences, namely *symbols, rituals, heroes,* and *values*. These manifestations are depicted like the layers of an onion as shown in figure 1 below, which serves to illustrate that culture has to be ‘unpeeled layer by layer’ in order for it to be understood. As is also illustrated, values are the deepest manifestations whereas symbols are the most superficial (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:7).

**Figure 1: Culture as an onion**

![Figure 1: Culture as an onion](source: De Mooij 2010:53, based on Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:7.)

*Symbols*, the outer layer, can be words, gestures, pictures, or objects with a certain meaning which is only recognised by the members of the culture in question. According to Hofstede, such symbols easily come and easily go, which explains why this manifestation is placed in the outer onion layer (Hofstede 1994:7). *Heroes* are described as persons, alive or dead, real or imaginary, who possess characteristics that are highly esteemed in a culture and who therefore are seen as models of behaviour (Hofstede 1994:8). *Rituals* are collective activities which are considered as socially essential, which is why they are carried out for their own sake. Examples of such activities are ways of greeting, as well as social and religious ceremonies (Hofstede 1994:8).

Symbols, heroes and rituals are collectively referred to as *practices*. All of these three cultural components are visible, also to an outsider. However, their cultural meanings depend on how these practices are interpreted by the members of the culture they form part of (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 6-8; De Mooij 1998: 44-47).

*Values*, which are the core of culture, are described by Hofstede as ‘tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others’. Values are learned early in our lives, and people are not consciously aware of the
values they hold. This makes it difficult for an outsider to observe and discuss them (Hofstede 1994:8; De Mooij 1998:47). Values vary across cultures, and it can be argued that values are what make it possible to distinguish one culture from another. However, one of the challenges in relation to the manifestation of cultural values is that they do not cross borders as easily as practices (De Mooij 1998:47). In the context of marketing communication, it is therefore important that a brand and its brand communication reflect the values of its local markets in order to build and maintain a strong relationship between the brand and its consumers (De Mooij 2010:45).

2.4. Hofstede’s dimensional model of national culture

Having looked into Hofstede’s understanding of culture, how culture is manifested, and the importance of the value concept, focus will now be put on Hofstede’s dimensional model of national culture which is based on the value concept.

2.4.1. The background for the framework

Hofstede’s dimensional model of national culture was based on a comprehensive study of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. A large data base of employee values scores was collected by IBM from the late 1960s and to the early 1970s covering more than 70 countries, from which Hofstede was able to distinguish countries from each other based on values that could be grouped statistically into four clusters, i.e. Power Distance (PDI), Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV), Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS), and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), which are also known as the Hofstede dimensions of national culture. A fifth dimension, Long-Term Orientation (LTO), was added in 1991 based on research by Michael Bond (The Hofstede Centre 2013a). Since the dimensional model of national culture was developed, it has been used to explain differences in work-related values, but also increasingly for comparative cross-cultural studies and for explaining differences in consumer behaviour across cultures. De Mooij, who has carried out extensive research by applying Hofstede’s framework to the field of marketing and advertising (De Mooij 2010:75), argues that:

‘Cross cultural differences of the various aspects that drive consumer behaviour and that are used in advertising – needs, motives and emotions – can be explained by these cultural dimensions. Language is a means to express these aspects, but language as such is also defined by culture’ (De Mooij 2004:184).
This makes Hofstede’s framework particularly relevant to marketing and advertising and explains why it has been used extensively to investigate marketing issues. As mentioned in the introduction, the framework is found particularly relevant for the purposes of this thesis, as it will enable me to identify cultural differences that may explain why the Danish, English and American versions of the empirical material are different both in terms of the verbal and visual message.

2.4.2. The five dimensions of national culture
In the following section, each of Hofstede’s dimensions will be evaluated with respect to the manifestations of the dimensions that are most relevant to branding and advertising. Each description will include examples of how the dimension in question can be reflected in branding and advertising by means of appeals. In this context, an ‘appeal’ is understood as the values and motives that define the central message of a text, and is argued by Moriarty, Mitchell and Wells to connect ‘with some emotion that makes the product particularly attractive or interesting, such as security, esteem, fear, sex, and sensory pleasure’ (cited in De Mooij 2010:217).

Finally, the Danish, British and American country scores will be presented, accompanied by a few examples of the most significant dimensional characteristics of each culture. Hofstede distinguishes cultures according to the five value dimensions described below. It is important noting that culture only exists by comparison when taking point of departure in this framework. Therefore, each country included in his study is given a score relative to each dimension, which is measured on an index scale from 0 to 100. On the basis of these scores, the country scores are easily comparable (The Hofstede Centre 2013a).

2.4.2.1. Power distance
‘Power distance’ is defined as ‘the extent to which less powerful members of society accept that power is distributed unequally’ (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010:89). Large power distance cultures are characterised by their respect for elders and people in authority, as well as dependence relationships between young and old, parents and children, and teachers and students. Furthermore, large power-distance cultures are more prone to demonstrate their social position in society by means of status objects. According to De Mooij and Hofstede, global luxury brand articles and fashion items typically appeal to such social status needs (2010:89). Prestige is an important appeal in large power distance cultures, which may be explained by the fact that members of such cultures rely on status symbols to demonstrate success. An example provided by De Mooij of such a status symbol is golf, which she argues is regarded a status sport. Moreover,
advertisements can display power distance by the type of people shown or in the way the people interrelate. In large power distance cultures, the elder advises the younger, whereas the opposite is seen in small power distance cultures. This respect for elder in high power distance cultures can also be reflected by two generations in advertisements, e.g. by showing three generations in an ad. Another appeal is independence which reflects the desirable in small power distance cultures, whereas it reflects the desired in large power distance cultures (see section 7.4 for information about the concepts desired and desirable) (De Mooij 2010:221-3).

**Figure 2: Power distance index scores**

![Power distance index scores](image)

Source: Own making based on The Hofstede Centre (2013b/c/d)

Figure 2 indicates that Denmark, Great Britain and the United States are small power distance cultures as all three belong to the lower end of the power distance index. It is worth noting, though, that Denmark is at the very low end of the scale with a score of only 18 points of a possible 100. This score makes Hofstede’s claim that Danes have a very egalitarian mindset, and that they strongly believe in independency and equal rights. Consequently, Danes believe that respect has to be earned. Hofstede characterises Danish workplaces as having a very informal atmosphere, with direct and involving communication, characteristics which can be applied to other contexts beyond the professional world as well (The Hofstede Centre 2013b). Great Britain’s relatively low score of 35 may seem incongruent with the well-established and historical British class system. Hofstede highlights an inherent tension in British culture between the importance of birth rank on the one hand, and on the other, a deeply-rooted belief that where you are born should not limit your possibilities in life. A final characteristic pointed out by Hofstede is the British sense of fair play, which drives the belief that people should be treated as equals (The Hofstede Centre 2013c).
With a score of 40, the United States scores higher than Denmark and Great Britain. According to Hofstede, the relatively low score substantiates what Hofstede calls the ‘American premise of “liberty and justice for all”’. In general, focus is on equal rights in all aspects of American society and government (The Hofstede Centre 2013d).

2.4.2.2. Individualism versus collectivism

The contrast individualism/collectivism can be defined as ‘people looking after themselves and their immediate family only, versus people belonging to in-groups that look after them in exchange for loyalty’ (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010:89). Individualistic cultures are characterised by their need for privacy. Members of such cultures care, in large part, for just themselves and their immediate family, and are thus ‘I’ conscious. Self-actualization is important, and they learn to think of themselves as ‘I’ from an early age. This also means that they want to differentiate themselves from others (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005:74-5). Members of such cultures are therefore also seen as independent and autonomous (De Mooij 2004:183). Members of collectivistic cultures are ‘we’-conscious, meaning that they base their identity on the social system to which they belong. They also find it important not to lose face (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010:89).

In terms of appeals, the target audience in individualistic cultures is typically addressed in a direct and personalised way by means of personal pronouns such as ‘we’, ‘I’ and ‘you’ as well as imperatives. An example provided by De Mooij (2010:223) is Reebok’s tagline ‘You have a dream, make a wish…’ This is not the case in collectivistic cultures, in which well-known endorsers are frequently used in order for the target audience to associate with them.

In collectivistic cultures, appeals focusing on in-group benefits, harmony, and family are effective; advertising which focuses on individual benefits and preferences, personal success, and independence is better received in individualistic cultures. Furthermore, appeals in individualistic cultures can refer to the independent self with individualistic claims such as Ford Probe’s ‘Go your own way’. In contrast, examples of collectivistic claims are Japanese Chiyoda Bank’s ‘Prospering together’ (De Mooij 2010:226). Modern and international are popular appeals in collectivistic cultures, as they correspond to the need to conform. An interesting observation made by De Mooij in this regard is that approximately 70% of the world’s population is, to some extent, collectivistic. Yet, many global advertising campaigns reflect individualistic values by addressing people in a direct way, showing people alone and referring to individualistic claims. This leads her to conclude that much global advertising is at its most effective for only a small part of the target audience (De Mooij 2010:223-5).
Figure 3 illustrates that Denmark, Great Britain and the United States are highly individualistic countries, as they score high on this dimension. Denmark scores a bit lower than Great Britain and the United States, though, which means that these two national cultures have a slightly higher preference than Denmark for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only.

The British are described as highly individualistic and private people who encourage children from an early age to think for themselves and find their unique purpose of life and how they can uniquely contribute to society. This personal fulfilment is the road to happiness. Hofstede further notes that the affluence of Great Britain has increased throughout the last decade, which has led to the much discussed phenomenon of a rampant consumerism and a strengthening of the ‘me’ culture (The Hofstede Centre 2013c).

A key characteristic for the United States is the high degree of geographical mobility which is reflected in Americans being self-reliant and full of initiative (The Hofstede Centre 2013d).

2.4.2.3. The masculinity/femininity dimension

The masculinity/femininity dimension can be defined as follows: ‘The dominant values in a masculine society are achievement and success; the dominant values in a feminine society are caring for others and quality of life’ (Hofstede and De Mooij 2010:89).

Masculine cultures demonstrate a preference for economic success, status symbols and traditional masculine values such as ambition, will-power, strength, performance, achievement, and self-confidence. Thus, status brands or products are positively perceived. In contrast, feminine cultures see caring for others and quality of life as the dominant values, and they are generally more oriented towards common good
rather than individual self-interest. Here, small is beautiful, status is not so important, and the roles of men and women overlap (De Mooij 2010:79-80). Role differentiation is an important aspect of this dimension. In feminine societies, role differentiation is small, whereas it is large in masculine societies (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010:89).

Appeals of masculine cultures are more oriented towards tasks and success, whereas appeals of feminine cultures tend to be more oriented towards affiliation and relationships. According to De Mooij (2010:227), winning is a characteristic appeal in masculine cultures. Particularly cultures which are a combination of individualism and masculinity, such as Great Britain have a strong need to win, to be successful and show it, and exhibit a desire to dominate. Both the USA and the UK are masculine cultures. However, the fact that one has success is often stated more ‘tongue in cheek’ in the UK compared to the US, which is explained by UK’s lower score on the uncertainty avoidance index. Also dreams and great expectations are expressions of masculine cultures, as members of such cultures embrace the idea that anyone can do anything as long as they try hard. In feminine cultures, dreams are seen as delusions, and understatements are frequent, as showing off is seen as negative (2010:228).

**Figure 4: Masculinity index scores**

![Masculinity index scores](image)

*Source: Own making based on The Hofstede Centre (2013b/c/d)*

As illustrated in figure 4, Denmark scores 16 on the masculinity index, and is therefore considered a feminine society. According to Hofstede, Denmark is characterised by finding it important to keep life/work balance and make sure that everyone is included (The Hofstede Centre 2013b).
In contrast, Great Britain and the United States are masculine societies with their scores of 66 and 62, respectively. According to Hofstede, Great Britain is highly success-oriented and driven. British people are stated to have a clear performance ambition and live in order to work (The Hofstede Centre 2013c). The United States score is almost as high as the Great Britain score. Characteristic for Americans is that their behaviour in school, work and play are based on American shared values that people should ‘strive to do the best they can be’ and ‘the winner takes it all’. This explains why Americans tend to display their successes and achievements in life. Like the British, the Americans live to work (The Hofstede Centre 2013d). It is worth noting that this dimension offers the biggest difference in scores between Denmark versus Great Britain and the United States.

An interesting observation made by De Mooij in this regard is that Great Britain and the United States, cultures of high masculinity, are stated to perceive luxury brands as self-enhancing. In contrast, in Denmark, which scores low on the masculinity dimension, people wish to be unique without standing out, and therefore do not find a need to demonstrate their uniqueness with luxury brands (De Mooij 2010:107).

2.4.2.4. The uncertainty avoidance dimension

The uncertainty avoidance dimension can be described as ‘the extent to which people feel threatened by uncertainty and ambiguity and try to avoid situations in which those feelings arise’ (De Mooij 2000:90). Cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance have a need for rules, regulations and fixed procedures to structure life. Competence is perceived as a strong value, which is benefiting experts in contrast to cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance which are characterised by their belief in generalists. Further, cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance are more innovative and less bureaucratic (De Mooij 2004:184). Members of such cultures prefer a more flexible structure, and would thus feel restricted in their work performance if they were not allowed various degrees of freedom (Askehave et al. 2006:12).

Advertisements aimed at consumers in cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance tend to be very structured and detailed, and include a lot of information and imagery. This translates into a need for explanations, expert testimonials, and a demonstrated competence of the manufacturer. This also means that technical explanations can be very detailed. Fear appeals are effective in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, whereas people belonging to low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more responsive to benefits than to threats.

Moreover, emotions can be more readily shown in high uncertainty avoidance cultures, and De Mooij states that the word emotion is attractive in such cultures. A final appeal employed in advertising in strong
uncertainty avoidance cultures is relaxation, in this sense understood as the sense of relief from anxiety and tension. This can be expressed explicitly, whereas relief from tension is more implicit in cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance (De Mooij 2010:232-6).

Figure 5: Uncertainty avoidance index scores

Source: Own making based on The Hofstede Centre (2013b/c/d)

Denmark scores low on this dimension, meaning that Danes do not need a lot of structure and predictability. Hofstede argues that curiosity is encouraged from a very young age in Denmark and links the combination of Denmark being a highly individualistic and curious nation to be the driving force for Denmark’s reputation within innovation and design. He further argues that this is reflected in the society by means of humour, and heavy consumerism for new and innovative products (The Hofstede Centre 2013b). The latter characteristics are also applied to Great Britain, which Hofstede argues to be characterised as a curious nation with a high level of creativity and strong need for innovation (The Hofstede Centre 2013c).

The United States has the highest score on this dimension, and is stated to have a large degree of acceptance for new ideas, innovative products, and a willingness to try something new or different. Furthermore, Americans are described as being tolerant of ideas or opinions from anyone and allow the freedom of expression (The Hofstede Centre 2013d).
2.4.2.5. The long-term orientation versus short-term orientation dimension

Long-term versus short-term orientation is defined as ‘the extent to which a society exhibits a pragmatic future-oriented perspective rather than a conventional historic or short-term point of view’ (De Mooij 2000:79). In other words, this dimension distinguishes between long- and short-term thinking, and is particularly relevant when comparing Western short-term oriented and East Asian long-term oriented cultures (De Mooij 2010:90).

Short-term orientation is reflected in the sense of urgency and other expressions of short-term thinking and ‘living in the now’. De Mooij argues that symbols of long-term orientation are thick trees or explicit referral to future generations (2010:236).

Figure 6: Long/short-term orientation index scores

Source: Own making based on The Hofstede Centre (2013b/c/d)

All three countries are at least mildly short-term oriented. With a score of 46, Denmark is very close to the middle of the scale, though. Great Britain scores 29, and is considered to focus on short term goals and quick results (The Hofstede Centre 2013). According to Hofstede, this is also the case with the United States. Also with a score of 29, the United States is argued to be a culture focused on traditions and fulfilling social obligations. Furthermore, Hofstede describes Americans as having a need for ‘the absolute truth’ in all matters (The Hofstede Centre 2013d).
2.4.3. The applicability of Hofstede’s model of national culture

As previously argued, Hofstede’s framework provides a practical and measurable tool for uncovering the cultural differences and similarities between national cultures. It has attracted broad academic approval, and has since been used to classify and explain the influence of culture on various topics. Yet the framework also has its limitations.

As stated in section 2.3.1, Hofstede proposes that culture takes place on a collective level, which explains why his value dimensions also are depicted collectively on a national level. However, the dimensions are static and as a consequence they do not follow the dynamic development of culture. The possibility of values changing over time must therefore be considered when applying his framework, and it is reasonable to question whether the country scores are outdated, as the framework was produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, in his book *Culture’s Consequences* published in 2001, Hofstede himself substantiates the validity of his indexes by describing more than 200 comparative studies and replications that have supported them (De Mooij 2004:182).

Furthermore, the framework is based on answers from employees at IBM. It should therefore be questioned whether IBM employees can serve as representative members of any given country’s culture. Having used the matched-samples method, which in this case comprised examining populations which are homogenous in all respects except nationality (Baca et al. 1999:11-2), Hofstede argues for the reliability of his results by stating that ‘the only thing that can account for systematic and consistent differences between national groups within such a homogenous multinational population is nationality itself’ (Hofstede in Baca et al. 1999:12).
3. COMMUNICATION

This chapter will focus on the complex field of communication. The purpose of doing so is to demonstrate the relationship between communication theory and successful cross-cultural communication, thus helping to substantiate the importance of and rationale for transcreation as a discipline. On the basis of a brief description of communication in general, I will move on to presenting two prevailing schools of thought within communication studies, namely the process school and the semiotic school of thought. Semiotics is an important part of this thesis. This school of thought is therefore only described briefly in this chapter, as it is explained in more detail in chapter 4.

3.1. Defining communication

Communication is the basis of all human contact, and therefore affects everyone. Communication is talking to one another, body language, or making a facial expression; it is television, radio, print media, or a hair style – the list is endless (Fiske 1995:1; Samovar and Porter 2003:15). The diverse and multi-faceted nature of communication makes it a very complex topic. According to Ruben and Stewart, communication ‘human communication is the process through which individuals – in relationships, groups, organisations, and societies – respond to and create messages to adapt to the environment and one another’ (cited in Samovar and Porter 2003:15).

According to Fiske, there are two dominant approaches to communication studies, which he refers to as the process school and the semiotic school (1995:2).

3.2. The process school

The process school, referred to as the transmission paradigm by some scholars (Askehave 2006:34), sees communication as the transmission of messages from sender to receiver. This school is concerned with how senders and receivers encode and decode, and with how transmitters use the channels and media of communication. There are elements of control and efficiency in the model, as the sender transmits a message with the purpose to influence the receiver. Communication is thus seen as a linear and sequential one-way process by which the sender affects the behaviour or state of mind of the receiver. The receiver is passive, which makes this form of communication one-way. This also makes the effect of the communicative act on the receiver vital. If the effect is different from or smaller than the effect intended, there has been a communication failure. To find out what has caused the communication failure, it is necessary to explore the stages in the communication process to find out where the failure occurred (Fiske 1995:2).
One of the classical representatives of this paradigm is Lasswell, who argued that an act of communication can be described by answering the line of questions presented in figure 7 below, which later has come to be known as the Lasswell formula.

**Figure 7: Laswell’s communication model**


*Source: Own making based on Frandsen et al. 1997:34.*

In this model it is clearly shown that communication is seen as a process that goes through several stages. Moreover, the focus on the effect of the communicated message is clear as this is visualised as one individual step in the communication process.

### 3.3. The semiotic school

The semiotic school sees communication as the production and exchange of meanings (Fiske 1995:2). The semiotic school, also referred to as the interaction paradigm (Askehave 2006:34), considers communication to be the study of text and culture. Focus is on how texts interact with people in order to produce meanings and on the role of texts in our culture (Fiske 1995:2). The semiotic school therefore sees communication as a dynamic interaction process in which both the sender and receiver are active participants (Frandsen et al. 1997:36).

According to Fiske, ‘the message is a construction of signs which, through interacting with the receivers, produce meanings’ (1995:3). This places focus on the text and on how it is read. In this regard, Fiske defines ‘reading’ as ‘the process of discovering meanings that occurs when the reader interacts or negotiates with the text’ (Fiske 1995:3).

The reader is thus no longer passive, as s/he interprets the message, and the codes and signs of which it is formed, by means of social or cultural experiences when interacting with the text to produce meaning. Hence the same text may be interpreted differently from the meaning intended by the sender. However, misunderstandings are not considered to be communication failure, but rather a result of cultural differences between sender and receiver. As a consequence, factors such as context, culture and code influence the communication process in this school (Fiske 1995:2-4). The process of messages or texts
interacting with the sender and the receiver involved in the communication process in order to produce meanings is illustrated by Fiske’s triangle (figure 8 below), in which the arrows represent the constant interaction involved in the communication process.

**Figure 8: Fiske’s interaction communication model**

![Fiske's triangle](image)

*Source: Fiske 1995:4*

As implied by the name, the semiotic school uses semiotics as the main method for studying communication. As this approach is relied upon in the analysis, the following chapter is therefore dedicated to the field of semiotics.

### 3.4. Intercultural communication

Having briefly examined two of the most prevalent communication paradigm, focus can now be put on the challenges of intercultural communication. According to Samovar and Porter, intercultural communication takes place *‘when a member of one culture produces a message for consumption by a member of another culture. More precisely, intercultural communication involves interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event’* (Samovar and Porter 2003:15). This description captures some of the points made about cultural differences in chapter 2. On the basis of the theory on culture in that chapter, it can be concluded that the sender of any communication cannot expect the receiver to simply decode the message as it was encoded by the sender, as proposed
within the transmission paradigm. As argued within the interaction paradigm, the reader interprets the message by means of his/her social or cultural experience. This view on communication therefore embraces the importance of culture and context, and reckons that the sender of any communication needs to take the cultural context in question into consideration if communication is to be successful.

4. SEMIOTICS

The purpose of this chapter is to give an introduction to semiotics, a field which has been widely applied to the field of marketing and marketing communication since the 1980s (Frandsen et al. 1997:41). Focus will be on the more modern branch of semiotics, ‘visual semiotics’, as developed by Barthes, since both pictures and texts can be analysed from a semiotic approach. Classical theories of semiotics developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierces will not be included in this chapter. After a short introduction to semiotics in general, focus will be put on Barthe’s theories which will be applied in the analysis of the empirical material in part II.

4.1. Defining semiotics

Fiske defines semiotics as ‘the study of signs and the way they work’ (Fiske 1995:40). Semiotics has three main areas of study, namely the sign itself, the codes or systems into which signs are organised, and the culture within which these codes and signs operates (Fiske 1995:40).

Even though there are different approaches to semiotic analysis depending on the school of thought in question, Fiske argues that three elements must be involved in any study of meaning, namely:

- The sign, which is something physical, perceivable by our senses
- That to which the sign refers, which is something different from the sign itself
- The users of the sign, seeing that a sign only becomes a sign when users invest meaning in it (1990:41).

It is important noting that semiotics looks at any system of signs, whether they are verbal, visual, or a combination of both. Thus, a sign can be a word, image, sound, gesture, object, etc.

The interpretation, or ‘reading’ in the terminology of Fiske, cf. section 3.3, is dependent on the cultural experience of the reader, as the reader denotes the codes and signs that make up the text in light of his or her experience, attitude, and emotions when interacting with the text to produce meaning. The more the sender and receiver of a text share the same codes, the more will they use the same sign systems and the
closer will the meaning intended by the receiver be to the meaning interpreted by the receiver (Fiske 1995:40). Communication between the two parties will therefore be the more effective.

4.2. Codes

The above claim makes codes and culture central elements to semiotics. As stated in section 4.1 above, codes are the systems into which signs are organised. More specifically, this means that the meaning of a sign depends on the code within which the sign is situated (Fiske 1995:40). Codes can therefore be argued to provide a framework within which signs make sense.

A traffic light turning red serves well as an illustrative example of the function of codes, as everyone knows that they must stop when the traffic light turns red. The code, i.e. the traffic light, gives meaning to the sign which is the colour red, as everyone knows how to interpret this sign due to the code in which it is embedded. Thus, codes can be argued to control the production and reception of texts.

Furthermore, codes can be described as a set of rules on how to encode and decode signs. Such rules determine which signs can be selected for inclusion in a text, as well as how they can be combined. The selection and combination of signs are thus essential when people communicate. These rules can be categorised as either paradigmatic relations or syntagmatic relations. The category ‘paradigmatic relations’ refers to the rules about which signs to select and combine. Thus, the relations between signs which can occur in the same context are essential. The category ‘syntagmatic relations’ refers to rules about how signs can be combined, meaning that focus is on ways in which elements succeed each other to combine in a chain of discourse, despite the fact that these elements have nothing in common but, rather, are brought together by rules of combination. With an endless number of codes, the selection and combination of signs are therefore essential (Frandsen et al. 1997:44-45).

However, as stated in chapter 3, communication is constituted by two actions: not only the sender’s production of a text, but also the receiver’s reception of that text. The difference between these two actions can be described more precisely by means of two code types, namely structural codes and process codes (Frandsen et al. 1997:46). Structural codes are a set of rules on how a group of elements are structured. This is the most common form of codes, and it is related to paradigmatic relations. A structural code cannot create meaning by itself, so a combination of at least two structural codes is necessary to create meaning. This combination is formed by means of a process code, which is related to syntagmatic relations. When we decode a text, we use a process code which unifies two structural codes: one that refers to the signifier and one that refers to the signified of the sign. Meaning is created when these two elements are combined. When a sender encodes a text, s/he uses structural codes first, determining which signs are selected, followed by process codes, to decide how signs are combined. When a receiver decodes
a text, the process is reversed, process codes to decode the combination of the signs, and structural codes second to decode the individual signs (Frandsen et al. 1997: 45-47).

Crucially, codes are culturally dependant, and can vary from one group of people to another. Thus some codes are shared between sender and receiver, whereas others may only apply for either the sender or the receiver alone (Frandsen et al. 1997:57). This illustrates the complexity of codes, and the importance of culture to the field of semiotics. The fact that codes and signs operate differently within cultures substantiates the importance of taking cultural differences into consideration when communicating across cultures. As stated in chapter 3, communication is only successful when the receiver decodes the message in the way that the sender intended.

On the basis of the points made in this section, it can thus be concluded that in order for cross-cultural communication to be successful, an understanding of the codes used by that culture is essential to ensure the appropriate encoding of signs, which will subsequently increase the chances of the message being decoded as intended.

4.3. Visual semiotics

Basing his work on the classic works of Saussure – who was primarily concerned with language – Roland Barthes, one of the most influential figures in early visual semiotics, broadened the field of semiotics to also include visual semiotics (Johansen 1991:145). While Saussure placed focus on words and how they relate to other signs, Barthes was more concerned with visual sign systems based on photographs and printed advertisements, and considered the relation between text and picture (Johansen 1991:144). Barthes stated that whenever an advertising campaign features both a picture and a text, it is always the picture that one sees and decodes first, as the visual element always catches the attention, regardless of the form and function of the text.

The decoding of the picture therefore plays a significant role in decoding the text. Moreover, the decoding of the text also plays a role in the decoding of the picture, which results in a form of interaction. Thus, the picture can be decoded without the text, but if the advertisement is to be decoded as intended by the sender, the text must also be considered (Johansen 1991:148). Barthes operates with three types of messages which all illustrate the relation between the linguistic message and the picture itself. This makes them relevant for advertising analysis, which is why they will be presented in section 4.5 and applied in the analysis in chapter 10. However, as Barthe’s understanding of a sign is explained through the concept of denotation and connotation, these two concepts will be presented first.
4.4. Denotation and connotation

Denotation is the literal, obvious meaning of a sign. For linguistic signs, the denotative meaning is what a dictionary entry provides when looking up the word in question. For visual signs, the denotative meaning is what is visible for the naked eye, i.e. anything that individuals will recognise as depicted in an image. The denotative meaning of a sign is agreed upon by members of the same culture (Chandler 2002:140-142; Johansen 1991:143, 150).

Connotation refers to the co-meanings ascribed to the verbal or visual signs by the interpreter. Thus, connotation refers to interpretations that are beyond the literal meaning. Connotative elements can have multiple meanings, and they also refer to the socio-cultural and individual associations of the interpreter. However, connotations are not purely individual and personal, as they are determined by the codes which are part of the culture of which the interpreter is member as mentioned in section 4.2 (Frandsen et al. 1997:47; Johansen 1991:143).

Denotative and connotative meanings are related, as connotation refers to the meanings which lie beyond denotation whilst being dependent on it. According to Barthes, it is therefore necessary to look at both the denotative and connotative messages when analysing the overall meaning of a picture (Johansen 1997:150).

4.5. Barthes’ three types of messages

Barthes refers to the first type of message as the linguistic message. This message is concerned with all verbal advertisement text. The other two messages, referred to as a non-coded iconic message and a coded iconic message, respectively, are concerned with the visual part of the ad. As illustrated below, he thus clearly distinguishes the verbal elements from the visual ones (Johansen 1991:149).

Linguistic:
- The linguistic message

Visual:
- The non-coded iconic message (the denotative, perceptive or literal message)
- The coded iconic message (the connotative, cultural or symbolic message)

(Johansen 1991:149).
4.5.1. The linguistic message

The linguistic message comprises all forms of verbal text included in e.g. an advertisement, such as headline, body copy or caption (Johansen 1991:149). As previously mentioned, the linguistic message is present in every image. In the context of ads, the image can thus not stand by itself, as it needs a linguistic message to supplement it. This is explained by the fact that people are dependent on words to grasp the right message. According to Barthes, the linguistic message can have two functions with regard to the iconic message: anchorage and relay.

4.5.1.1. Anchorage

Anchorage is the most frequent function of a linguistic message. It can take place at two levels, identification and interpretation:

Anchorage I – Identification: At this level, the linguistic message serves to identify the object or setting depicted. In other words, the linguistic more or less explicitly answers the question: what is it? Consequently, it is a denotative description of the non-coded iconic message (Johansen 1991:159).

Anchorage II – Interpretation: At this level, the verbal text helps control that the decoding made by the receiver takes the direction intended by the sender, and is thereby ensuring that certain connotations are activated. When anchorage takes place at this level, the linguistic message thus serves as a connoted description of the picture (Johansen 1991:159).

4.5.1.2. Relay

Contrary to anchorage, relay is not very frequent. In fact, this function is mostly seen in comics and cartoons, as the function of the verbal text is to ensure that the story continues. This means that the linguistic message is an important link in the narrative structure in which the content of the picture is linked with the next picture solely by means of the caption. The verbal text and the picture function on equal terms as complementary parts of a superior syntagma (Johansen 1991:159).

4.5.2. The (visual) non-coded iconic message

The non-coded iconic message is concerned with the denotative meaning of the picture. This is why Barthes refers to this message type as the denoted, literal or perceptive picture. In other words, this is the message
left in the picture when all of the connotative signs are not considered, meaning that the scenery is identified as a minimum (Johansen 1991:150).

4.5.3. The (visual) coded iconic message
The coded iconic message is concerned with the connotative meaning of the picture, which is why it is referred to as the connotative, symbolic, or cultural picture. How this message is interpreted can vary, as the co-meanings ascribed to the picture depend on the receiver’s cultural and aesthetic knowledge, not to mention context, codes and conventions (Johansen 1991:150).
5. RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

In this chapter, focus will be on verbal and visual rhetorical strategies. The purpose of the chapter is not to offer an exhaustive list of all of the rhetorical strategies available, but rather to give an introduction to some of the strategies considered most relevant for the purposes of this thesis and the empirical corpus subjected to analysis.

5.1. Defining rhetoric

Rhetoric is an ancient discipline which is more concerned with how to say things, than what to say (McQuarrie and Phillips 2007:4). This focus reflects the idea that the impact of an utterance may depend on the style selected for it. As Aristotle saw it, the goal of rhetoric is to identify the available means of persuasion in any given case. McQuarrie and Phillips apply this claim to the context of print advertising by stating that ‘we can differentiate ad layouts, identify various headline styles, distinguish multiple pictorial styles, assign body text styles to genres, and so on’ (2007:5).

5.2. Verbal rhetorical strategies

Rhetorical strategies can be verbal or visual, and are used as tools for catching the attention of the target audience. As indicated in the introduction, headlines in particular are loaded with persuasive content, as the function of the headline is to persuade readers to continue reading the remaining body copy (Smith 2006:160).

5.2.1 Product names

The choice of name for any product is important. As stated by Norlyk (2006:85), a name helps establish certain connotations and expectations. A name can for instance create certain associations in the mind of the customers that will enable them to remember the specific product. The other way around, it can be difficult for customers to remember product names that consist of numbers and acronyms, as they reveal little about the actual product and therefore make it very difficult to decode the potential significance of the letters and numbers constituting the product name. However, Norlyk suggests that product names that include acronyms and numbers signify know-how and technical competence, which may be the reason that many high-tech products are named accordingly (Norlyk 2006:87).
5.2.2. Slogans
A slogan is a short and often memorable phrase which typically consists of one or more USP (Unique Selling Point) elements. The slogan can stand alone or it can be accompanied by an image and/or a caption. It is partly used to help create an image, an identity or a position for a brand or a company, but most of all it is supposed to lead to the attention and recall of its audience. Thus, the easier and catchier the slogan is, the better (Frandsen et al. 1997:141-2).

5.2.3. Code switching
Code switching is a common rhetorical strategy, which involves switching from one language to another. Incorporating French words in a British restaurant menu is a well-established example of code switching. Using this strategy helps placing the product in an international context in the mind of the receiver, and is therefore useful if the intention is to emphasise that the product is global. However, code switching does not have to involve a shift between two languages. The strategy is also used if e.g. an ad incorporates a sociolect (Frandsen et al. 1997:144).

5.2.4. Choice of words
The concepts of denotation and connotation (see section 4.4) are highly relevant when it comes to word choice as a rhetorical strategy. For instance, advertisements for technically complex high-involvement products tend to have higher frequency of denotative words than simple low-involvement products (Frandsen et al. 1997:141).

5.2.5. Rhetorical figures
A rhetorical figure can be defined as ‘a method of expression that is an artful deviation from the literal (or expected) method of expression’. Metaphor, metonym, and irony are a few examples of rhetorical figures (DeRosia 2007:23).

The use of rhetorical figures has proved to have positive impact on the process of attracting and retaining attention of potential consumers (Smith 2006:160; DeRosia 2007:26), which explains the frequent appearance of rhetorical figures in print advertisements. There are two major groups of figures of speech, namely schemes, e.g. repetitions, rhyme etc. and tropes, e.g. puns, metaphors, paradoxes, etc. (Leigh 1994:18).
5.3. Visual rhetorical strategies

Visual elements can be very culture-specific and often have a stronger effect of recognition than words. They are therefore important communicative components. There are many visual rhetorical strategies, of which choice of typography, placement of the logo, colours and the interrelatedness of picture and text are just some examples (McQuarrie and Mick 1999:37). Only the most relevant strategies in relation to this thesis are explained in the following.

5.3.1. Typology

Typology and layout are visual rhetorical strategies. According to De Mooij, aggressive typology and layout reflects competitiveness (2010:227). In line with Hofstede’s dimensions presented in section 2.4.2, such a strategy is therefore particularly suitable for masculine cultures.

5.3.2. Colours

Colour symbolism is culturally conditioned, as the same colours do not necessarily symbolise the same in all cultures. An example can be seen in India, where white is the colour of mourning. Bridal dresses are therefore red instead of white which is traditional in the west (Creative Culture International 2013). Moreover, colours have connoted meanings attached to them. Thus, red typically connotes love, passion and sexuality in most Western cultures. Red is also used as a colour of signal, though. As a result, it is important to carefully consider the choice of colours to avoid misunderstandings (Frandsen 1997:163).

5.3.3. The relation between picture and text

Picture and text are closely related, and can be argued to support each other mutually and thereby form a unified whole together (Frandsen et al. 1997:163). Pictures are also used to involve the audience in constructing their own messages. As argued by Fuertes-Oliviera et al., the relationship of picture to text is therefore not simply one of illustration, but of persuasion (2001:1302-3). In order to discuss how picture and text interrelate, pictures and words must be considered as signs. This approach, also known as semiotics, was discussed in chapter 4.
6. BRANDING

The purpose of this chapter is to uncover some of the main aspects related to the practice of branding. This is relevant to the debate of standardisation versus adaptation briefly presented in the introduction, as there are various strategies to pursue, which can be linked to the discussion on the importance of the concept of transcreation.

6.1. Branding defined

The practice of branding has developed considerably since its rise. Originally, the purpose of branding was to signal to the consumer the origin of a given product, provide assurance about place and methods of production, and certify that the corporation behind the brand in question stood behind it (De Mooij 2010:23). Nowadays, branding is a more multifaceted discipline. As stated by De Mooij, ‘Brand strategists view the brand as a site to produce perceived uniqueness of products and services, to differentiate against the competition, and to build intangible value in the form of customer goodwill, trust, and loyalty’ (2010:23).

This definition illustrates the cornerstone of branding, as the discipline has come to encompass much more than associating tangible elements with a product or a service. As implied in the definition above, the purpose of branding is to make a product appear unique. For such purposes, emotional benefits or values are added to products to give them distinct identities. Associating a brand with meaningful and distinctive values – which, according to Clark, need to encompass meaningful competitive advantages if to be successful – can thus be regarded as an integral part of branding (Clark 2000:65; De Mooij 1998:36-38). As Clark states, ‘these values are what sustain a brand over time’ (2000:65).

De Mooij elaborates:

‘A brand is trust. A brand is not merely a product, it’s the feeling a product evokes. A brand is why people will pay more for a product. A brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational image that people associate with a company or a product’ (2010:24).

Creating emotional relationships between consumers and products is thus a main objective of branding. When people have positive associations with a brand, their product selection process becomes easier and they are more likely to feel satisfied from the product. Such emotional relationships are a large part of a brand’s power. It can therefore be argued that the concept of “brands” is intangible, as on the one hand they can be seen as constructs that are created to label items, and on the other hand as ‘ideas that exist in consumers’ imagination’ (De Mooij 2010:24).
6.2. The brand association network

One way of making the concept of brands more tangible is viewing the brand as an association network in the mind of the consumer. In such context, associations – whether positive or negative – can be anything from the brand name, visual images, user associations, product attributes, benefits, and values, as well as places and occasions of usage (De Mooij 2010:24). As stated by De Mooij, the essence of a brand is the strength of associations between these brand elements. Consumers’ purchasing decision processes are strongly influenced by the associations or meanings that they attach to a product. Therefore, the aim of marketing communication is to attach meanings to brands which are subsequently interpreted according to the motivations and aspirations of the target audience (De Mooij 2010:38).

Viewing brands from this point of view makes it possible to understand the variety of consumer perceptions linked with a brand in different cultures (De Mooij 2010:24), which consequently makes it possible to tailor the brand values communicated in each culture accordingly, so that the values communicated are congruent with the values dominant in the target cultures.

6.3. The brand personality model

The brand personality model offers another approach to branding, as this model defines the brand as a human personality. More specifically, a brand is attributed human personality traits as a way to differentiate the brand from competing brands. According to De Mooij, such personal brand characteristics are created by transferring personality features of the typical brand consumer to the brand itself (2010:25).

Brand personality is a central part of brand identity, which can be defined as the expression of the brand including the brand name, its visual appearance, as well as the brand’s uniqueness, meaning, values, and market position. While the brand identity is the result of how the marketers encode the brand signals, the brand image is the result of how the consumers decode the brand signals. For users of the product, brand image is based on practical experience of the product and how well it meets expectations. For non-users it is based almost entirely on impressions, attitudes, and beliefs (De Mooij 2010:24-26). Due to cultural differences, the meanings that consumers in different markets assign to a brand may differ. Consequently, a brand’s personality is not necessarily perceived as the marketer had intended.

6.4. The brand hierarchy model

In order for brand communication to be effective, it is therefore necessary to understand how the target audience relate to the product in question, what value they assign to it, and what meaning it as in their lives (Tiefenbacher-Hudson 2006:1). It is therefore relevant to examine how and at what level of the brand hierarchy a product relates to its consumers.
As is illustrated in figure 9 below, the higher up in the hierarchy the connection is taking place, the more emotional the connection between the target audience and the product will be, and vice versa: the lower down in the hierarchy, the more functional the connection will be. Thus, the brand hierarchy is useful for illustrating the difference between product types and the attributes applied to them. In the words of Tiefenbacher-Hudson, ‘the more a product assumes value beyond its functional attributes, the more it becomes a brand that evokes loyalty’ (2006:2).

Figure 9: Brand hierarchy

On the basis of this model, it can be argued that the more emotional the connection between the target audience and the product will be, the higher is the need to take culture-specific values of the target audience in question into consideration if communication is to be effective.
6.5. When brands cross cultures

As explained in chapter 2, values differ from culture to culture. On this basis, De Mooij argues that ‘the more focus on emotional benefits, values, or myths, the greater need to localize, to be culture-specific’ (2010: 23).

More specifically, the values selected to differentiate a brand should relate to the cultural mindset of the target audience (De Mooij 1998:38). As stated by Trompenaars and Woolliams, the key to moving brands across cultures is to reconcile the original attributes of the brand with new associations that are relevant to the value orientation of the new target culture (2004:174). If a link is developed between the brand values and the consumers’ own values over time, a vital relationship is likely to be established. On this basis, Clark (2000:66) suggests that global marketing is all about creating relationships worldwide. Based on the claim that every relationship is individual, he discards the idea that brands can be global. De Mooij defines a global brand as ‘one that is available in most countries in the world and shares the same strategic principles, positioning, and marketing in every market throughout the world, although the marketing mix can vary [...]’ (2010:29). In relation to the discussion of the global brand, McDonald’s and Coca-Cola are often referred to as examples of brands that fit this definition well, even though they are increasingly localising their marketing efforts (De Mooij 2010:23). As stated by Clark, ‘to market a product or service successfully to consumers in any single market, a manufacturer must invest the time, money, and sensitivity to discover, understand, and relate to those consumers’ needs, attitudes, values, emotions, and behaviour’ (2000:70).

In line with this, De Mooij presents the ‘Global concept, local adaptation’ branding strategy, which she describes as the strategy employed by McDonalds, as they have developed one concept for the world that can carry local products with local values (2010:34). When employing this strategy, an adaptation strategy is thus chosen, which makes it possible to communicate with local audiences according to their cultural specifics, cf. the introduction in chapter 1.
7. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

As a pivotal element of marketing communication is influencing consumers by appealing to their fundamental needs, desires and motives, this chapter introduces relevant concepts from the field of consumer behaviour theory. As such, it is important to know and understand differences in consumer behaviour across cultures in order for communication to be effective (De Mooij 2010:93). The chapter will include relevant aspects on self-concept, identity, and image, factors which belong to the category ‘consumer attributes’ within consumer behaviour theory, as well as needs and buying motives, which are part of the domain of social processes within consumer behaviour theory (De Mooij 2010:104). When relevant, focus will be on consumer behaviour in relation to the product category of automotive which will make the aspects covered in the following sections directly applicable to the analysis.

7.1. Defining consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be defined as ‘the study of the process involved when people select, purchase, use, or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires’ (De Mooij 2010:93). De Mooij continues to state that consumer behaviour is thus seen as a process that includes the issues that influence the consumer before, during, and after a purchase – a process in which various components are involved, and in which the factors involved are affected by cultural values. As pointed out by De Mooij, ‘people in different cultures can do the same thing for different reasons or motives, and people in different countries may do different things for the same reasons’ (De Mooij 2004:191).

7.2. Consumer attributes

According to De Mooij, one aspect of Western consumer behaviour theory is the distinction between the actual self and the ideal self.

De Mooij defines further ‘self-concept’ as the image that people carry in their mind of the type of person they are and who they desire to be (De Mooij 2010:94). As further argued by De Mooij, ‘people will buy products that are compatible with their self-concept, or rather that enhance their “ideal self” image’. Self-esteem, self-respect, and self-actualisation are frequently-mentioned drivers related to the ideal self (De Mooij 2010:94). Furthermore, culture is argued to play an important role in the construal of self as well as in the perception of what images are ideal (De Mooij 2010:6).

On the basis of this, it is relevant to touch upon the concepts of identity and image.
Whereas identity is defined by De Mooij as ‘the idea one has about oneself, one’s characteristic properties one’s own body, and the values one considers important’, image is described as ‘how others see and judge a person’ De Mooij (2010:98). The concepts of identity and image can be related to that of the ideal self mentioned above. According to Western consumer behaviour theory, individuals are either, to a greater or lesser extent, satisfied with the personality traits that form part of their real identity, or they can have a desire to change the personality traits as a function of an image they would like to have. The latter is termed the ideal self. If there is a gap between these two aspects of identity, efforts are usually made to reduce it. According to De Mooij (2010:99), material possessions can go some way to reducing this gap for members of individualistic cultures. In other words, brands can contribute to an ideal and unique identity for members of individualistic cultures. In contrast, brands serve the need for social status by demonstrating one’s position in society in collectivistic cultures (De Mooij 2010:99).

7.3. Social processes

Social processes are concerned with motivation, needs, drives, emotion, and group processes. In this thesis, only the elements needs and buying motives will be included.

7.3.1 Needs

Consumption is driven by functional or social needs. De Mooij exemplifies this by stating that clothes satisfy a functional need, whereas fashion satisfies a social need (2010:104). This can also be applied to the product category of automotive. Having a car can fulfil a functional need, whereas the type of car can satisfy a social need. In this regard, De Mooij further points out that, for cars, needs may vary between factors such as safety, status, design, and environmental impact. Such varying needs are the result of different cultural values (De Mooij 2010:105).

7.3.2. Buying motives

When positioning brands in different markets, it is important to understand what motivates people, as motives are triggered by factors such as brand loyalty, brand preference, brand image and the importance of luxury brands (De Mooij 2010:107). Some motives are category-bound. Purity for food and drink is an example of such motive, yet the degree of importance can vary across cultures. For other product categories, buying motives can vary across cultures. The category of automobiles is an example of this, as motives for buying a car vary strongly across cultures. As De Mooij states, ‘for a car, latest technology may
be viewed as a universal motive, but the associations linked to technology may be different across individuals and cultures. Latest technology may be associated with sporty in one culture, with fuel economy in another culture, and with prestige in again another culture’ (2011:161).

In some cultures, safety may be of highest priority, whereas other cultures may value the power of a car as a status symbol above other factors.

Results from several surveys conducted by the European Media and Marketing Surveys EMS in 2007 based on questions such as ‘Which of the following values are the most important in choosing your main car?’ have revealed that the following eight motives are prevailing among consumers in Europe:

- Safety
- Design
- Joy to drive
- Car interior
- Environment friendly
- Engine performance
- Price
- Technology

According to De Mooij, the motives vary by culture and can be related to Hofstede’s dimensions (2011:169).

De Mooij proposes that the buying motive joy to drive is closely related to individualistic cultures, as pleasure-seeking is a typical individualistic motive. Safety is a universal attribute, as everyone wants a safe car. However, safety as a motive is argued by De Mooij to be culture-bound to at least some extent, as surveys have shown a correlation between safety and low individualism. This can be explained by a wish to favour the safety of one’s loved ones over one’s own safety. Seeing design as a motive can be argued to stem from a need to show status, but it can also be an expression of individuality. The motive to buy an environment friendly car is linked to Hofstede’s power distance dimension, as countries scoring low on this dimension appear to be valuing environmental friendliness. The car-buying motives engine performance and price are important to people in short-term oriented cultures, and people belonging to high uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to see technology as an important buying motive (De Mooij 2011:169-171).
7.4. The desirable and the desired

National cultural values (see chapter 2) influence consumer behaviour, and are thus an important aspect of communicating with local audiences. In this regard, it is important to note that there are two opposing aspects to values, namely the desirable and the desired.

The desirable is how people think the world ought to be. In other words, it refers to the general norms of a society, and can be described in absolute terms of right or wrong, what is approved or disapproved, what one ought to do and what one should agree with. It can be argued to refer to people in general within a given culture.

In contrast, the desired is what individuals want and consider important for themselves; it relates to choice and what is important and preferred. Instead of referring to people in general, it refers to ‘me’ and ‘you’ (De Mooij 2010:47-8). An interesting note in this regard is that advertising tends to appeal to the desired, as the desirable is often too far from reality (De Mooij and Hofstede 2010:87).
8. TRANSLATION, LOCALISATION AND TRANSCREATION

This chapter will turn to focus on transcreation. According to Ray and Kelly, ‘how you define translation determines how you view transcreation’ (2010:i). Therefore, I will first include a discussion of the fields of translation and a few of its most common and widely discussed theories. The field of localisation can easily be wrongly taken to be identical to the concept of transcreation, which is why theory on localisation will subsequently be examined, in order to make the distinction between localisation and transcreation clear. These two parts will serve as the basis for the final section of this chapter, which will explore the concept of transcreation itself.

8.1. Translation

8.1.1. When translation is no longer translation

The field of translation has come to encompass many different kinds of translation or translation-like activities. This is a result of the increasing cultural traffic which is generated by globalisation and intercultural communication (Di Giovanni 2008:26).

The scope of translation studies has expanded over time. The boundaries of translation theory have expanded beyond the linguistic, particularly from the 1990s and onwards, as a result of the strong link that has emerged between translation studies and cultural studies, meaning that translation is no longer seen simply as an activity of linguistic transfer between two languages but rather as ‘a more complex process of negotiation between two cultures’ as stated by Munday (2009b:179). This development is also referred to as ‘the cultural turn in Translation Studies’ by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, who argue that ‘neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational ‘unit’ of translation’ (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990:8 cited in Munday 2009b:179). In other words, the boundaries have been blurred between what was traditionally labelled ‘translation proper’ and more complex practices of which linguistic transfer is only one, and in many cases secondary, stage in a wider process (Di Giovanni 2008:28). As a result of this development, it has become difficult to define the scope of translation.

8.1.2. Defining translation

According to Korning Zethsen (2007:283), most translation scholars seem to rely on Roman Jacobson’s classical definition of translation in their own attempts to define what constitutes the concept. Seeing translation as a component in all language transactions, Jacobson divides these transactions into three kinds of translation in his much-discussed essay ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ from 1959, namely:

- Intralingual translation or rewording which is described as an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs belonging to the same language
Interlingual translation or translation proper which is the interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs belonging to a different language

Intersemiotic translation or transmutation which is the interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems

(Jacobson in Karning Zethsen 2007:283).

All three kinds of translation focus on the transfer of verbal signs. Even though many scholars offer definitions of translation that are much less inclusive than Jacobson’s, most of them acknowledge all three of his distinctions. However, interlingual translation between two verbal languages is generally seen as the classic, prototypical kind of translation, which was also the mode of translation which Jacobson himself regarded as ‘translation proper’ (Munday 2009:6).

As argued by Jeremy Munday, the focus of translation on the ‘conventional, progressively outdated, written text’ (2004:216) that has been common up until now, should now be seen in a broader perspective. More specifically, it should incorporate the multimodal features of texts. In line with this, Gunther Kress (2010:11) argues that while translation traditionally has been focused on linguistic transfer, we should be ‘looking at the field of meaning as a whole and see how meaning is handled modally across the range of modes in different societies. In this context, Kress describes a ‘mode’ as ‘a socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for making meaning’ (2010:79). Thus, language is no longer seen as dominant, but as merely one mode among other potential meaning-creating modes.

Bassnett can be argued to embrace this view, as she defines translation as ‘a communicative activity that involves the transfer of information across linguistic boundaries’ (Bassnett 2011:95) if ‘transfer of information’ is understood in its broadest sense, i.e. as a term that captures any mode of communication.

An even broader description of translation is offered by Korning Zethsen, who addresses the negligence of intralingual translation in translation studies in her article ‘Beyond Translation Proper’ (2007). According to her, translation is characterised by the following:

- ‘A source text exists or has existed at some point in time
- A transfer has taken place and the target text has been derived from the source text (resulting in a new product in another language, genre or medium), i.e. some kind of relevant similarity exists between the source and the target texts.
- This relationship can take many forms and by no means rests on the concept of equivalence, but rather on the skopos of the target text’ (Korning Zethsen 2007: 299).
This definition does not see translation as a process limited to linguistic transfer either, but can be argued to embrace any communicative mode. Furthermore, this definition favours equivalence to the skopos of the target text, two important concepts to the field of translation which will be discussed in the following.

8.1.3. Equivalence
According to Bassnett, the basic assumptions about translation tend to be based on the notion that anything written in one language (source language) can be transferred into another language (target language) (2011:95). This reflects the focus on equivalence in translation studies which has been prevailing for many years.

The difficulty of achieving total equivalence between languages and ensuring that what has meaning in one context will have the same meaning in another have long been acknowledged by translation scholars (Bassnett 2011:95). Therefore, the problem of how to adequately define the notion of equivalence in translation has been widely addressed in the latter half of the twentieth century. Since the earliest attempts to formulate translation theories, distinctions have been made between word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation. According to Bassnett, though, there has been a gradual shift from seeing equivalence in terms of ‘sameness between languages’ (word-for-word translation) and towards exploring ideas of equivalent effect (sense-for-sense translation) (2011:95).

In relation to the discussion of what constitutes equivalence, Bassnett emphasises the importance of context. As she argues, translators do not only engage with words, but also with the context they appear in. This makes contextual understanding crucial (2011). As stated by Nida, ‘the context actually provides more distinction of meaning than the term being analyzed’ (2002:29 cited in Munday 2009:75). In line with Kornning Zethsen’s definition of translation, it can thus be argued that a target text equivalent to the source text is not always the ideal outcome, which leads us to the complex question of faithfulness.

8.1.4. Faithfulness
The concept of faithfulness and, more specifically, the question of what constitutes faithfulness to a source, has been a central discussion on where to set the boundaries between translation and more complex processes such as transcreation. One of the central questions in this debate is the extent to which a translator can diverge from the source text while still claiming to be producing a translation (Bassnett 2011:96). As stated by Munday:
the anthropophagic, transcreative use of the original in order to ‘nourish’ new work in the target language breaks the notion of faithfulness to the original text as a necessary criterion for translation’ (Munday 2009:8).

According to this claim, faithfulness to the source text is no longer a criterion for a translation process to take place. This is in line with Korning Zethsen’s definition, which says that a translation process has taken places as long as some kind of relevant similarity exists between the source and the target text.

8.1.5. Skopos theory
Skopos theory was introduced by Reiss and Vermeer in the 1980s, and moved focus in translation studies from equivalence-based theory to skopos (purpose). The cornerstone of the skopos theory is that the purpose of a translated text should determine how it is translated. In other words, the intended function of the translation will be decisive for the choices made by the translator in the translation process as well as for the outcome, as the task of the translator is to read, decode and then reconstruct a text for the target audience in question while bearing in mind differences of linguistic structure, style and vocabulary, context, culture and audience expectation. This means that a translated text can be very effective and fulfil its purpose whilst deviating enormously from the source text (Bassnett 2011:105; Munday 2009:10).

It is worth noting that Skopos theory by no means abolishes the notion of equivalence. Rather, it makes equivalence to be sought in cases where ‘functional consistency’ is required between the between the source and target texts (Windle and Pym 2011:17).

8.1.6. Adaptation
In relation to Skopos theory, the notion of adaptation is relevant. There are several opinions as to what adaptation encompasses.

Adaptation can be referred to as one of Vinay and Darbelnet’s seven translation procedures: a type of oblique translation which aims at ‘situational equivalence’. An example of such situational equivalence is the English cricket being equivalent to the French Tour de France as both sports can be argued to perform similar functions in their respective cultures (Munday 2009:166).

However, it has also been defined as:

‘a set of translative operations which result in a text that is not accepted as a translation but is nevertheless recognized as representing a source text of about the same length’ (Bastin 1998 cited in Munday 2009:7).
In this definition, translation seems to be understood in a very narrow sense. However, *adaptation* can also refer to a target text which draws on a source text while having been extensively modified for a new cultural context. As stated by Munday, ‘irrespective of whether adaptation is considered a form of translation, it demands different criteria for the assessment of its equivalence with the source’ (Munday 2009:166).

Having presented some of the main concerns that is found relevant for determining the theoretical placement of transcreation in relation to translation, focus will now be on the concept of localisation, and subsequently on transcreation, where the above points will be referred to.

### 8.2. Localisation

#### 8.2.1. Defining localisation

According to Declercq (2011:263), localisation is placed alongside globalisation, internationalisation and translation within the language industry. The interrelation of these fields is substantiated by the acronym ‘GILT’, which refers to processes of *Globalisation, Internationalisation, Localisation* and *Translation*, respectively. Because of this interrelation, it is therefore relevant to briefly examine the different concepts in order to gain an understanding of how localisation fit in. According to Pym,

‘Globalization addresses the business issues associated with taking a product global. In the globalization of high-tech products this involves integrating localization throughout a company, after proper internationalization and product design, as well as marketing, sales, and support in the world market’ (Pym 2006).

On the basis of this, he argues that globalisation at the level of the individual company is one general process of which *internationalisation* and *localisation* is part. Internationalisation can be defined as:

‘the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. Internationalization takes place at the level of program design and document development’ (LISA cited in Esselink 2000:2).

Pym argues that internationalisation is the key to localisation, meaning that making a product general is, in some way, the first step in order to globalise, whereas the second step is to ‘localise’ the product to specific markets (Pym 2006).

The final two processes, localisation and translation, are the ones which are often confused with each other, even though they should not be so, as they are two individual processes. As stated by Munday, localisation is different from, but may encompass, translation (2009:205).
An example of an unclear distinction between the two is offered by Hartley who defines localisation as ‘a “special kind of translation” that takes into account the culture of the location or region where the translated text is expected to be used’ (2009:107). He does believe, though, that this is a commonly accepted definition of translation itself in translation studies, and argues further that this is why he only uses the term localisation with respect to software (Hartley 2009:107).

Another definition offered by the former Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) says that localisation is:

‘taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold’ (LISA cited in Esselink 2000:3).

This definition is similar, but it refers to a ‘product’ rather than a ‘text’ undergoing a localisation process.

According to Pym, the term localisation is characterised by being used in fields such as software, product documentation, and web technology (2006). In other words, the process of localisation can be argued to rely heavily on computing power and technical skills. In line with this, Declercq states that localisation finds itself within a formal framework which he describes as a ‘continuum of complex file formats’ (2011:265).

This corresponds to Maroto and Bortoli’s definition of localisation as:

‘the process of adapting technical media products into a form where they are linguistically, functionally and culturally acceptable in countries outside the original target market.’ (Maroto and Bortoli 2001a:4).

On the basis of the claims put forward, this is the definition that will be relied on in this thesis. The fact that making a product functionally and culturally relevant is most likely what causes the confusion between localisation and translation activities, as this can be argued to be the very definition of translation in its broad sense, cf. Hartley’s statement presented above. However, as previously indicated, translation is only one part out of a wider localisation process which can also entail software engineering, testing, and much more (Declercq 2011:264).
8.3. Transcreation

Having uncovered relevant aspects of translation and localisation, focus will now shift to transcreation itself. After an introductory overview of the origin of transcreation, I will look into various definitions of transcreation. Moreover, I will explore the most relevant aspects of the concept and the processes involved. On this basis, I will discuss the theoretical placement of transcreation in relation to translation and localisation.

8.3.1. The origin of transcreation

In recent years, the term *transcreation* seems to have been chiefly used in global marketing and advertising to refer to the process of adapting marketing and advertising messages to specific audiences, but only little theory on the subject exists.

According to Di Giovanni, who seeks to uncover the origin of transcreation and its underlying practices in the article ‘Translations, Transcreations and Transrepresentations of India in the Italian Media,’ *transcreation* is an ancient term that harks back to the time of the first translations of sacred texts in India. More specifically, the term roots from the very old practice of creating fluent and, most importantly, understandable versions of spiritual texts composed in Sanskrit, a classic Indian language (Gopinathan 2006:1). The purpose of rendering the meaning of the old sacred texts into new versions was to make the ‘old verdict truths’ accessible to Indian laymen (Di Giovanni 2008:33).

According to Di Giovanni, the changes made went well beyond the concept of translation proper as it was, and is still, perceived in translation studies (Di Giovanni 2008:33). An interesting point in this regard is made by Gopinathan, who argues that translation and creative writing were never considered two separate processes in ancient India. In fact, he describes the process of transcreation as ‘the general mode of translation in modern Indian languages from the olden days’ (Gopinathan 2006 in Di Giovanni 2008:31).

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the ancient term transcreation was revived by several Indian writers, from whom Di Giovanni highlights the poet and translator P. Lal, who used the process of transcreation, which he defined as ‘readable, not strictly faithful translation’ when he translated texts.

More recently, Indian scholars have employed the term *transcreation* to put new perspectives on translation studies. Sujit Mukherjee, one of these scholars, for instance associated transcreation with the idea of translation as ‘new writing’ (Di Giovanni 2008:31).

Even though the practice of transcreation seems to originate from India, the phenomenon has also received attention in other parts of the world, among others by the Brazilian writer and translator Haroldo de Campo, who is known for his revolutionary approach to translation, a process which he saw as ‘an act of appropriation, recreation and even as transfusion of blood.’ Advocating a renewal of the word ‘translation’,
which he argued did no longer suffice to describe the complex practice of interpretation between two cultures, he used the term *transcreation*, among others, to renew the concept of translation (Di Giovanni 2008:34).

As argued by Di Giovanni, De Campo’s definition of transcreation as a ‘*transformative recreation of inherited traditions,*’ which refers to processes of transfer that involve the creation of new texts and new realities, can be conciliated with the original meaning of the term held in India. De Campo’s view on transcreation is further explained by Vieira, who argues that De Campo saw transcreation as:

‘*a radical translating operation...[which] does not try to reproduce the form of the original understood as sound pattern, but seeks to appropriate from the best poetry contemporary to the translation and use the extant local tradition*’ (Vieira 1999 in Di Giovanni 2008:32).

In other words, transcreation is implicitly argued to demystify the ideology of fidelity, abolish the superiority of the source and give value to the translated text and the receiving culture.

### 8.3.2. Transcreation in marketing and advertising

Nowadays, the term *transcreation* seems to be chiefly used to refer to the process of producing inter-cultural marketing material that is adapted to specific markets and audiences by ensuring that the message is meaningful and reflects local cultural values, wherever this is required. Transcreation in this context can be argued to have the same purpose and function as the process of transcreation dating back to ancient times in India, namely to bring a certain message close to the hearts and minds of its target audience by appealing to culture-specific values.

As more companies have realised that messages tailored for specific target audiences are likely to substantially increase return on investments cf. the brief overview of the debate on advertising standardisation versus adaptation in the introduction, language service providers have experienced a remarkable rise in demand for transcreation services. This was revealed in a survey from 2010 conducted by the market research firm Common Sense Advisory, which further showed that more than 30% of the total 380 language service industry respondents expected an increase by more than 10% during 2010 (Common Sense Advisory 2011a).

Even though most language service providers have offered the service for years, it often went by a different name; the label *transcreation* still seems to be fairly new within the industry.
As established in chapter 6.1, the intent with marketing and advertising messages is to influence the perception of a brand positively, and on the basis of this establish a rational and emotional connection with the target audience. Nonetheless, research has proven that how potential consumers relate to a given product, and what values they assign to it, differ among various target cultures (Tiefenbacher-Hudson 2006:1). This, as well as our increasingly globalised world, makes it more relevant than ever to adapt brand communication accordingly, which is why proponents of transcreation argue for the relevance of the concept. As is for instance argued by Bortoli and Maroto, it is no longer sufficient – if it ever was – to merely translate a marketing campaign to other markets (2004). As they argue, it is necessary to create content that is tailored to each of the relevant markets while trying to keep a level of brand consistency across markets that generate brand value (Bortoli and Maroto 2004). This process of transcreation is argued to differ from translation by aiming to evoke the same emotions and carry the same implications in the target culture as it does in the source culture. This is argued to be done by ensuring that style, tone, idioms, analogies and other elements that make up a text are tailored for the target audience (Humphrey et al. 2011:4). However, it is not only the verbal text – such as copy in print ads and voice-over and/or dialogue in film ads – that should be subjected to transcreation: the accompanying visuals must also be meaningful to the end user in the target audience (Munday 2009:167). Thus, the transcreation process can involve adapting and recreating both words and images.

According to Ray and Kelly, the term transcreation is the amalgamation of the terms translation and creation. They further argue that the process of transcreation most often includes ‘a hybrid of new content, adapted content and imagery, and straightforward translation’ (2010: 1-3).

Moreover, it is argued that there are various degrees of transcreation, as the process can involve anything from adapting a direct translation to completely rewriting content in the target language to reflect the meaning or intent of the original (Ray and Kelly 2010:2; Kates and Goh 2003:61).

As the transcreation process considers differences in context between the source and target text (Humphrey et al. 2011:9), it must be assumed that the degree of transcreation depends on the degree of contextual differences.

Another characteristic of transcreation often referred to in relation to the concept is that it helps to avoid pitfalls in cross-cultural communication. McDonald’s adaptation of its tagline ‘I’m lovin’ it’ for the Chinese market serves as a good example of how such pitfall was avoided. Instead of opting for a literal translation, the English back-translation of the Mandarin version of the tagline was ‘I just like (it)’ as the word ‘love’ is taken very seriously in China and is rarely said aloud (Humphrey et al. 2011:10).

This brings us to the concept of back-translations, which can be argued to be a vital part of the transcreation process. Due to the high level of creativity often involved in the transcreation process, back-
translations and explanatory comments, which serve as a form of verification of the semantic meaning of the target text, can be relied upon (Smith 2006:161).
This procedure is illustrated in the following example, which is based on an example provided by Wordbank for an anti-ageing treatment campaign. As described by Wordbank, ‘this campaign was aimed at women over the age of 25, appearance conscious, luxury oriented, users of prestige cosmetics, across Western Europe and Asia Pacific, where the markets were all estimated to be growing in excess of 10% per year.’ (Wordbank 2013).

Figure 11: Transcreation example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Back-translation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Darling, I said I’m seeing a plastic surgeon, not hiring one.’</td>
<td>‘老公,我只是在做美容,没打算开美容院啊。’</td>
<td>‘Hubby, I said I was having a facial, not planning to own a beauty salon.’</td>
<td>It is not yet common to consult a plastic surgeon in China. For this reason we changed “seeing a plastic surgeon” to “having a facial”, which is much more popular with the target audience in China. “Darling” or “honey” are rarely used in everyday language so we have instead used the much more familiar “hubby”. The adaptation is based on the original message which suggests that having a more youthful appearance doesn’t have to mean expensive cosmetic surgery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wordbank 2013
Having examined the origin of transcreation as well as some of the characteristics of the practice as it is known nowadays, the following section will be dedicated to discussing how various language service suppliers define the phenomenon. On the basis of these as well as the points made thus far, the concept of transcreation will be discussed in relation to the concepts of translation and localisation, presented in sections 8.1 and 8.2.

8.3.3. Language service suppliers' definitions of transcreation

In order to understand how the term transcreation relates to translation and localisation, I find it relevant to explore how the concept is vocalised in the language industry.

World Writers (2013) present their transcreation service by claiming that:

‘In transcreation, we don’t only translate words, we translate the concept. We maintain the global brand messaging while ensuring that it truly speaks to the local audience in terms of both language and culture. We help our clients find the perfect balance between a strong international brand identity and connecting with the people who matter locally. We act as your brand guardians, wherever the touch points are in the world.’

Thus, focus is on the transfer of concepts rather than words. This can be related to the idea of equivalent effect which is opposed to word-for-word equivalence, cf. section 8.1.2. Moreover, the importance of keeping a consistent brand message while resonating with the local markets in question is implicitly emphasised.

Textappeal (2013) state that:

‘Whether it’s one ad or an entire campaign, Textappeal helps brands transcend the barrier of culture and language to make your message hit home. Transcreation preserves nuance, impact, motivation and tone of voice of your brand communication while translation merely achieves accuracy’.

In this example, a very narrow view of translation is adopted, as the purpose of translation is limited to that of achieving accuracy. This can be related to the concept of faithfulness; cf. section 8.1.3. This view of translation thus disregards more inclusive approaches to translation, such as Skopos theory and adaptation, described in sections 8.1.4 and 8.1.5.
According to Lionbridge (2013):

‘Successfully delivering your message on a global scale requires much more than mere translation. To ensure your message resonates with your target audience - while staying true to your brand - you need to look well past changing the words of your campaign into different languages. You need to re-create, or ‘transcreate,’ the campaign’s creative content to reflect the nuances and subtleties of the language and culture of your target audience.’

Also in this example is translation seen as an activity limited to linguistic transfer, and focus is on transcreation as a creative process.

And finally, SDL (2013) argue that:

‘...to address the challenges that marketers face when localizing their content for a global audience, companies must implement a solution that reaches beyond simply translating content. The solution is transcreation. Marketing content needs to appeal to people’s senses rather than their rational intellect which is highly subjective. The transcreation approach is therefore a creative, subjective, emotive process, where parts of the messaging are translated but other parts are adapted for the target market’.

In this example, translation and adaptation are described as two different processes which can both be part of the transcreation process. This is in line with the claim made in section 8.3.2, which says that there are different levels of transcreation. However, it also reinforces the implied message that translation is understood as an equivalence-focused linguistic transfer.

To sum up, it can be argued that the definitions above vocalise how language service providers, who are making a living from offering this service, attempt to highlight the advantages of transcreation over translation. It is interesting to note how all of the above descriptions depict the discipline of translation as ‘translation proper’, and are thereby disregarding the widening scope of translation over time.

8.3.4. Transcreation: A mode of translation or a discipline in its own right?

As stated in section 8.2, it may seem as if the concepts of localisation and transcreation can easily be confused. However, after having had a closer look on transcreation, it can be established that localisation differs from transcreation by referring to a wider process of adapting technical media products, often web-based. Besides linguistic transfer, localisation thus also involves more technical adaptations, meaning that the two processes require different skills.
Based on the points made in this chapter, it is clear that the field of translation has widened in scope over the years. Thus, there is a big difference between word-for-word equivalence-based translation, and translation seen from a Skopos-theoretical perspective, from which the source text is seen as an offer of information rather than a source to which the translator must show a certain level of faithfulness. As implied from the various definitions of transcreation above, the transcreator does not need to focus on the source text, but rather on discerning the emotional response by the target audience of the source text and working to elicit the same response from the target audience in the target market.

As was stated in the introduction to this chapter, how you define translation determines how you see transcreation. If defining translation as ‘translation proper’ in its original sense with equivalence and faithfulness to the source text considered essential, the scope of translation would evidently not be broad enough to encompass transcreation. If taking point of departure in the definition of translation offered by Korning Zethsen, section 8.1.2, the situation is another. According to this definition, the existence of some kind of similarity between the source and the target text is sufficient. Furthermore, the Skopos of the target text is found more important than equivalence. From this point of view, it can thus be argued that the concept of translation is broad enough to encompass the concept of transcreation even though transcreation can involve the creation of new content.

Drawing on principles from the Skopos theory and the practice of adaptation, the importance of the purpose of the target text is in focus within transcreation. In relation to the theories presented in part I of this thesis, it can be argued that extensive research may lay the ground for a successful transcreation outcome, as not only differences in terms of style, tone, idioms, analogies and other elements must be considered. It can be argued that cultural value differences and differences in buying behaviour should also be considered in a transcreation process in order for the target text to resonate well with the target audience. The importance of this, and the degree to which these elements should be considered, can be argued to depend on where the connection between the product and the target audience in question is placed in the brand hierarchy presented in section 6.4.

However, it can be argued that a slight tweak of the Skopos theory is relevant to understand the process of transcreation, as brand and product knowledge is essential. It can be concluded that an ideal process of transcreation involves considering the brand or product in question as well as the underlying motives for the target locale in question to buy or trust the product or brand on equal footing to the function of the text.

On the basis of these considerations, it must be assumed that the transcreation process is more time-consuming than a translation requiring less background knowledge and research, and a less creative
approach. Moreover, the fact that transcreation normally involves making back-translations and providing rationales for the choices made makes the process more time-consuming. These factors may explain why language service providers offering the service of transcreation describe translation and transcreation as two separate processes. These considerations are most likely also influencing the rates, thereby making transcreation more costly than translation.

On the basis of the points made in this chapter, the conclusion made to purpose one in this thesis is that the concept of transcreation can be encompassed by the scope of translation when seen from a broad, Skopos-oriented perspective involving the adaptation strategy. However, a widened scope of the Skopos theory is suggested in order to encompass the strategies and practices involved in a transcreation process, as it is also concluded that transcreation does involve strategies which justify its label *transcreation*. Hence, transcreation should not be seen as a process identical to e.g. adaptation nor localisation, as stated above, but as a mode of translation in its widest scope.
PART II

In the previous chapters, theories relevant to the field of transcreation have been presented. Part II of this thesis is dedicated to the cross-cultural comparative content analysis of three selected car model presentations from BMW’s Danish, British and American websites, respectively. In the following chapter, the empirical corpus is introduced, accompanied by the rationale for my choice of corpus. Moreover, the model for analysis which is applied in the analysis of the empirical material is presented. Finally, chapter 10 is dedicated to the analysis of the empirical material.

9. INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

9.1. Empirical material

As stated in the introduction, the empirical material subjected to analysis in this thesis consists of web texts from the global automotive manufacturer BMW’s Danish, British, and American websites. More specifically, the main promotional image and accompanying headline for three selected BMW car models featured in the showroom on the respective websites will be analysed. As they are from BMW’s websites, the presentations of the three car models do not fulfil the criteria for being characterised as advertisements, as it cannot be regarded communication that is paid for.

My reasons for selecting empirical corpus featured on BMW’s websites are twofold. First of all, a website can function as a company’s premier marketing tool, as visitors create awareness, impressions and attitudes about both the website and the associated organisation (Maroto and Bortoli 2001a:3). This has been recognised in the business sphere, and luxury car manufacturers in particular have understood the importance of having visual and interactive websites that are designed to make their visitors stay and have a look around (Young 2012). It can thus be assumed that BMW, as a global high-end automotive manufacturer, have made efforts to tailor their various websites to their respective audiences. Based on this assumption, I find it relevant to look into how BMW tackles the challenge of the increasing importance of online marketing.

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In order to be defined as an advertisement, a text must be:

a) paid for
b) delivered to an audience via mass media
c) be attempting to persuade (Ortiz-Sotomayor 2005:10).
Second, the decision-making process for buying a car is in most cases highly rational, as a car is characterised as a high-involvement product, which means that consumers are assumed to be active in the process of gathering information and making a purchase decision (De Mooij 2010:180). According to research carried out by Irene Pollach on the readership of corporate websites, gathering product information is one of the primary reasons why people visit corporate websites (Pollach 2011:41). On these bases, I assume that most potential BMW car buyers visit their local BMW website in question before purchasing a car, which is yet another reason why the content on the respective websites should not only talk to the heads of its visitors, but also their hearts. Finally, the increasing importance of online marketing communication is a final justification for choosing online marketing communication material over print advertisements.

One of my reasons for choosing to focus my analysis on the transcreation of communication about cars is that this specific category is characterised as a high-involvement product. Cars – and luxury cars in particular – are expensive. The importance of well-tailored communication that considers cultural differences for such high-involvement product can thus assumed to be even higher than for low-involvement products such as detergents, cf. the brand hierarchy model in section 6.4.

I have chosen to focus exclusively on the global luxury automotive manufacturer BMW only, as I quickly got the impression that BMW is one of the pioneers in tailoring their marketing communication according to the cultural specifics of the markets in which they operate. I therefore found this company a good choice for exploring the concept of transcreation.

As not all car models are sold in Denmark, Great Britain and North America, consistency was the main criteria in my selection process of which car models to include in the empirical corpus. For the results of the analyses to be comparable, and for me to be able to conclude on the problem statement of this thesis, such consistency is crucial.

Common for the BMW websites is that a presentation of each car model can be found via the top menu bar of the respective homepage. In my selection process, I visited the website of each car model in each car model series in order to identify the car models available in Denmark, Great Britain and North America. Having identified the car models sold in all three regions resulted in a reduced number of BMW car model sites, of which each one of them is assumed to be aiming at presenting the BMW car model in question as favourably as possible for the target culture in question. This left me with three different BMW car models which are featured differently on the respective websites in terms of the verbal and/or visual expression.
Each website features a visual presentation of each car accompanied by a headline. Only these two particular elements will be subjected to analysis. Thus, additional copy in the form of information boxes with bullet point facts (the latter which in some of the examples overlap the image) will not be analysed. My reason for choosing to include only the visual representation and the accompanying headline to each of the car models included in this thesis is partly the limited scope of this thesis, which calls for a limited scope of the empirical corpus. Another decisive factor is that headlines are argued to be the most important elements of advertisements, as the purpose of headlines is to present key selling points in a manner that attracts attention and stimulates the target audience to give serious consideration to the product or service advertised (Leigh 1994:17). Even though it was previously established that the empirical corpus cannot be characterised as advertisements, one of the reasons being that is it not paid for, I will assume that the purpose of the image and the accompanying text is the same as for an advertisement, though, i.e. to ignite interest and make the website visitor continue his/her reading and navigation on the website. For this reason, I regard the importance of the verbal expression of the BMW headlines to be just as high as headlines are in advertisements.

9.2. Introduction to BMW

BMW is one out of three brands owned by the German BMW Group. Besides from the BMW brand, the BMW Group also owns the brands MINI and Rolls-Royce Motor Cars. With these brands, the BMW Group caters for the premium sector of the international automobile market (BMW 2013a). BMW is one of the biggest global automotive brands. According to Interbrand (2013), BMW is ranked the third biggest automotive brand worldwide in 2013, only topped by Mercedes-Benz and Toyota.
9.3. Introduction to the analysis

In the following, the model for analysing the selected empirical corpus is presented. The model is based on the most essential elements of the theoretical part. As is described in the previous section, the empirical material consists of presentations of identical BMW car models featured on BMW’s Danish, British and American websites, respectively. Thus, the corpus consists of three images with accompanying headline for each car model included. The first four steps presented in the following model will be applied in the analysis of both the Danish, British and American versions of each car model presented. On the basis of the findings, the results from the three advertisements of each car model will be subjected to comparative analysis in order to discuss the transfer process having taken place.

9.3.1. Model for analysis

1. Visual expression

The first step will be to present the visual signs of each car presentation according to Barthe’s two levels of meanings described in section 4.5. Thus, the non-coded iconic message, i.e. the denotative level, will be described in the image subjected to analysis. This description will be followed by an interpretation of the coded iconic message, i.e. the connotative level, based on the description of the denotative level. In the description of these levels, also the rhetorical strategies applied will be identified when relevant, and especially the choice of colours will be taken into account.

2. Verbal expression

The next step in the analysis will be to look at the verbal signs that make up the linguistic message. The purpose of doing so is twofold. One purpose is to identify the denotative and connotative meanings of the verbal expression. When relevant, the verbal rhetorical strategy (or strategies) applied will be identified. The second purpose is to state the function of the linguistic message cf. Barthe’s two types of linguistic message functions described in section 4.5.1.

3. Car-buying motive

On the basis of the findings from the first two steps of analysis, the third step will be to identify the car-buying motive appealed to in each version. For this purpose, the car-buying motives identified by De Mooij presented in section 7.3.2 will be serving as the point of departure.
4. Cultural characteristics

The final step will be to identify and discuss the cultural elements embedded in the advertisements. This will be done according to Hofstede’s dimensional model of national culture presented in section 2.4. The cultural signs identified will be presented according to Hofstede’s five dimensions. However, if no clear signs are identified to one or more of his dimensions, they will not be commented on, as the purpose is to identify only relevant and clear cultural signs which can be related to Hofstede’s five dimensions.

5. Discussion of the degree of visual and verbal transfer

On the basis of the analysis of the Danish, British and American advertisements respectively, the findings will be compared and discussed. This will be done by comparing the overall verbal and visual meanings of the three presentations of each car model, the embedded car-buying motive, and the culture-specific elements embedded in them. On the basis of this, a sub-conclusion on the transfer that has taken place will be made for each of the three analyses.

Each of these steps is illustrated in the model for analysis presented in figure 12 below:

Figure 12: Model for analysis

Source: Own making

It is important to be aware of the fact that the overall meaning of the communication subjected to analysis occurs when the receiver interacts with it to produce meaning, cf. section 3.3. Emphasis should therefore be given to the fact that the connotations in the analyses are based on my individual interpretations. As stated in section 4.4, the interpreter construes connotations on the basis of his/her socio-cultural background. Thus, the verbal and visual signs embedded in the images and accompanying copy headlines
may be interpreted differently by others: maybe signs that I have not seen will be noticed by another audience.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the length of each analysis may vary, as some of the images are completely or nearly identical. In such cases, the visual expression will only be analysed once. Moreover, not all of the 9 analyses reveal clear cultural signs corresponding to each of Hofstede’s five dimensions, which may also influence the length of the analyses.
10. ANALYSIS

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the empirical material. To avoid unnecessary repetitions, it is worth noting that a few elements are commented on in the comparison and discussion section instead of in the individual analyses. Moreover, only the cultural elements found most relevant will be commented on.

10.1. Analysis 1 - BMW M6 Coupé

10.1.1. Danish version

10.1.1.1. Visual expression

The denotative level

The image depicts a red BMW M6 Coupé in motion on a road surrounded by wide open and beautiful natural scenery. The background features roadside, water – seemingly in the form of an inlet or inland sea – a bridge and a white sky. A hint of sunlight comes in from the right side of the picture, casting its rays on the car. There is only one person in the car, a male driver.

The red car is a stark contrast to the rest of the scenery. Besides from the army-green roadside, and the yellow and white road stripes, the landscape is predominantly grey-scale coloured with the road and the bridge in different grey nuances, the grey water with a hint of blue and the white sky with a hint of grey.

The headline is placed in the top of the image, and is partly written in black capital letters. However, the name of the car model is written in smaller sized letters below the headline, and ‘Coupé’ is written in lower case letters.
The connotative level

The open-spaced and beautiful scenery along with the fact that the car is the only one in the image signals space and room for having the arms wide open which can be argued to connote luxury in individualistic cultures. Also the element of water in the background can be argued to connote luxury, as a view of water is typically highly esteemed. The fact that there is no one in the car apart from the driver connotes independence.

Red is the colour of blood, and is not only associated with passion, desire and love, but also with strength and power. Red is therefore an emotionally intense colour (QSX Software Group 2013). According to Maroto and Bortoli, the colour red is especially associated with strength in Scandinavian countries (2001:20). It can therefore be suggested that the colour red is chosen for this car to connote strength, which is an attribute that can easily be applied to the car owner as well, cf. section 7.2.1., in which it was stated that people buy products that are either compatible with or enhance their ‘ideal self’ image. The red colour makes the BMW stand out to the grey-scale coloured landscape. This along with the rays of sunlight cast on the car connotes that the car is something special. The choice of colour can therefore be explained by the fact that the colour red makes the car connote strength, attract attention and stand out.

10.1.1.2. Verbal expression

The verbal expression consists of the Danish headline ‘EKSTRAVAGANT LUKSUS’ (back-translation: ‘EXTRAVAGANT LUXURY’) followed by the car model name ‘BMW M6 Coupé’.

The adjective ekstravagant denotes that something is out of the ordinary or exceeds ‘normal’ in e.g. degree, extent or size. The noun luxury denotes ‘something which conduces to enjoyment or comfort in addition to what are the necessaries of life’, meaning that it refers to something desirable, but not indispensable (Oxford Dictionary of English 2013²). The headline therefore denotes enjoyment or comfort that is out of the ordinary, a statement which obviously arouses positive connotations. The denotative meanings of the noun lukus and its modifying adjective ekstravagant can be argued to reinforce each other by means of the repeated positive connotations. Taking point of departure in the denotative meaning of the headline, it can be assumed that the BMW M6 Coupé is intended to make the BMW M6 Coupé connote a new, higher level of luxury. Hence, the function of the verbal message is to control the receiver’s interpretation of the picture in the direction intended by the sender in order to ensure that certain connotations are activated. Consequently, there is a relationship of anchorage by means of interpretation between the verbal and visual expressions in the terminology of Barthes, cf. section 4.5.1.

² Please note that all denotative meanings presented in the analysis are definitions from Oxford Dictionary of English. Throughout the rest of the thesis, this reference will be referred to as ‘(Oxford)’.
Furthermore, the labels *extravagancy* and *luxury* that are applied to the BMW car model can be translated into what De Mooij refers to as the *desired*, i.e. what we want and consider important to ourselves (De Mooij 2010:47), cf. section 7.4. As also mentioned in section 10.1.1.1 above, this can be related to the idea of self-concept described in section X, because self-esteem, self-respect, and self-actualisation can be directly related to how people perceive extravagancy and luxury. In other words, the *‘extravagant luxury’* implied to be an attribute of this car is likely to be compatible with the self-concept of potential buyers, or rather their ideal self image, cf. section 7.2.1. Consequently, the verbal expression can be argued to appeal to how the car driver wants to see him/her self.

**10.1.1.3. Car-buying motive**

When relating the denotative and connotative meanings identified above to De Mooij’s car-buying motives, it is clear that the luxury element is dominant, as both the verbal and visual expression implies the luxury and extravagancy of driving a BMW M6 Coupé. The underlying car-buying motive identified is thus *joy to drive*. However, also the car-buying motives *design* and *car interior* can be argued to be appealed to, as they both can be seen as motives appealed to by means of the implicit reference to luxury, comfort and that the car is something out of the ordinary.

**10.1.1.4. Cultural elements**

With a score of 18 on the power distance index, Denmark is classified as a small power distance culture. According to De Mooij, independence is highly valued and is an appeal which reflects the desirable in such cultures (2010:75,222), i.e. what people in general think ought to be desired cf. section 7.4. This corresponds to the connotations to independence brought forth by the fact that there is only one person in the car.

As stated in section 3.4.2.2, Denmark scores 74 on Hofstede’s individualism dimension and is thus characterised as a highly individualistic society. As an individualistic culture, self-actualisation is important. This cultural element can be argued to be clearly manifested in the verbal expression, as extravagancy and luxury can be argued to be drivers for self-actualisation.

Moreover, signals of individualism can be argued to be embedded in the visual expression by means of the open space identified above, as well as by the facts that there are no other cars on the road and that there is only one person in the car.
The verbal expression ‘EKSTRAVAGANT LUKSUS’ implies that the BMW M6 Coupé can be regarded a status symbol, as a car which is associated with extravagancy and luxury can be argued to demonstrate success and prestige. Such a message appeals to large power distance cultures, as one’s social status must be clear within these cultures for people to be able to show proper respect (De Mooij 2010:75). This element conflicts with Hofstede’s classification of Denmark being a small power distance culture, though.

With a score of 14 on the masculinity index, Hofstede classifies Denmark as a very feminine culture, meaning that quality of life is argued by Hofstede to be more important to Danes than winning (De Mooij 2010:80). This is reflected by both the verbal and visual expression, as they connote a high quality of life in terms of comfort based on the above interpretations. This is further reinforced by the underlying car-buying motive joy to drive, as the underlying message in the verbal and visual expressions are luxury, comfort and joy. However, as also mentioned above, there is also a high degree of status and self-actualisation in these elements, which can be argued not to conform to ‘quality of life’ in the sense of ‘togetherness’ and ‘coziness’ which are typical of feminine cultures. Whether feminine signals are embedded or not, thus depends on how one see’s ‘quality of life’ from the perspective of this dimension.

A desire to not stand out is also characteristic to feminine cultures. On the one hand, this contradicts with the verbal expression, as a car that signals extravagant luxury can easily stand out. On the other hand, the extravagant luxury can also refer to the car-buying motive joy to drive only, thereby reinforcing the comfort and enjoyment attributes of this car, rather than it being a status symbol.

Denmark is a short-term orientation culture, though close to the middle of the index with a score of 46. This can be reflected in the implicit referral by means of the verbal expression to living life in the now, which is characteristic for long-term orientation cultures.
10.1.2. British version

![Image of a red car in a street during what must be assumed to be evening or night time, as it is dark outside. The car appears to be in motion, as it looks as if the wheels are spinning. It is dark inside the car, but a male driver can be identified. There is light in the building in the background, and rays of light from inside the building are cast on the car and on the road. The combination of the rays of lights from the building and the darkness makes the street look as if it has been raining. In the lower right corner of the picture the reflection from the car is depicted in the asphalt with blue and red colours. Besides the colour red which makes the car stand out, the black and white scale colours from the street and the background building are dominant.](image-url)

(BMW Great Britain 2013a, see appendix b)

10.1.2.1. Visual expression

**Denotative level**

The image depicts a red car in a street during what must be assumed to be evening or night time, as it is dark outside. The car appears to be in motion, as it looks as if the wheels are spinning. It is dark inside the car, but a male driver can be identified. There is light in the building in the background, and rays of light from inside the building are cast on the car and on the road. The combination of the rays of lights from the building and the darkness makes the street look as if it has been raining. In the lower right corner of the picture the reflection from the car is depicted in the asphalt with blue and red colours. Besides the colour red which makes the car stand out, the black and white scale colours from the street and the background building are dominant.

The headline is featured in the upper left side of the image and is written in white capital letters. Below the headline, the name of the car model is written in smaller sized letters, and the last part of the model name is in lower case letters.

**Connotative level**

As was also the case in the Danish version, the red car is a stark contrast to the rest of the dark-coloured scenery. Due to the common connotations of the colour red as described in section 10.1.1.1 above, this makes the car stand out. According to Maroto and Bortoli, the colour red moreover connotes power, authority, visibility and temper in the United Kingdom (2001:18). These associations can be argued to be reinforced by the stark contrast of the red car to the dark street. Also, these associations can be argued to be attributes which can be applied the car owner, cf. section 7.2.1. The empty street and the darkness imply that it is late hours. Furthermore, the building in the background connotes city life, as most of the building is made of glass which is often seen in buildings located in cities and industrial areas. In addition, there is light in the building which signals that the car is depicted in a city that never sleeps.
10.1.2.2. Verbal expression
The verbal expression consists of the English headline ‘THE SOUL OF PERFORMANCE’ followed by ‘The BMW M6 Coupe’. The noun soul denotes ‘the condition or attribute of life in humans or animals’ (Oxford), whereas performance denotes ‘the capabilities, productivity, or success of a machine, product, or person when measured against a standard’ (Oxford). Thus, the noun performance, an inanimate abstraction, is ascribed a soul, i.e. an attribute of humans and animals, in this verbal expression. This makes the verbal expression an instance of Leigh’s rhetorical strategy ‘personification’ which he defines as the strategy applied when ‘ascribing inanimate objects or abstractions with human qualities or abilities’ (1994:19). On the basis of this, it can be argued that the verbal expression is intended to connote that the BMW M6 Coupé is a car with supernatural-like abilities in terms of performance.

The function of the headline is anchorage by means of identification, as it helps the receiver to relate the attribute of performance presented in the headline to the car. The fact that it is dark and that it looks as if it has been raining can be interpreted as if the car is intended to connote that it is performing at any time and in any weather. Another important aspect in terms of the abstract notion performance is that it can be applied to the self-concept of potential buyers as well. As argued by De Mooij, abstract brand labels can be translated to how the buyer sees him/herself or wants to see himself. Therefore, this verbal expression is likely to be appealing to persons who like to see themselves as ‘performers’ – at any time and in any weather.

10.1.2.3. Car-buying motive
Performance is the core car attribute featured in this version which can be related to De Mooij’s car-buying motives engine performance and technology. These car-buying motives are explicitly appealed to in the verbal expression, and implicitly appealed to in the verbal expression by means of the connotations described above.

10.1.2.4. Cultural elements
The verbal message ‘THE SOUL OF PERFORMANCE’ can be argued to imply a high power distance between this car and others, due to the implication that the performance of this car makes it one of a kind, i.e. a better ‘performer’ than others. With a score of 35, Great Britain is still characterised as a small power distance culture, though, which makes this observation contrast to Hofstede’s classification.

With a score of 89, Great Britain is a highly individualistic culture. This can be argued to be reflected in the visual message by means of the car being the only one on the road in the evening or night time and the fact
that there is only one person in the car. Furthermore, the verbal message ‘THE SOUL OF PERFORMANCE’ can be argued to signal individualism as well, particularly triggered by the word soul which implies that this car is one of a kind. This emphasis on the uniqueness of the car can be argued to be a clear sign of individualism.

In contrast to Denmark, Great Britain is a masculine culture, meaning that British people are highly driven by competition, achievement, success and a desire to be the best. These characteristics align with what is communicated in this version. The core theme of the visual and verbal expression is performance, which is a prototypical masculine attribute. In the verbal expression, performance as a theme is literally expressed with the headline ‘THE SOUL OF PERFORMANCE’. As argued in section 10.1.2.1, the visual expression reflects performance in terms of the car ‘performing’ at all times and in any weather.

Great Britain scores 35 on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. This fairly low score can be reflected in the verbal expression, which can be argued to implicitly communicate the result of the BMW’s technical know-how and competence. Such emphasis is common in low uncertainty cultures. In contrast, a focus on how a product works, technical details, and demonstrating the competence of the manufacturer, is important in high-uncertainty cultures (De Mooij 2010:233-4).
10.1.3. American version

THE BMW M6 COUPE.
ELEGANCE IN ITS MOST DYNAMIC FORM.

(BMW North America 2013a, see appendix c)

10.1.3.1. Visual expression

_Denotative level_

The visual expression of the American version is nearly identical to the British version. The same image is used, but small variations can be identified. As in the British version, the image depicts a red car in motion on a road with a lit building in the background. Besides the headline formatting, the only differences are the colours which are still grey-scale, but somewhat lighter in this version than in the British one, and the fact that this car has no license plate. Moreover, the reflections of the car in the asphalt are more evident in this version, and a final difference is that there are rather evident rays in the asphalt which reinforces the impression that the car is driving with high speed. In contrast to the Danish and English version, the verbal expression is placed below the image. The entire verbal expression is written in black capital letters which means that the name of the car model attracts just as much attention as the headline. Worth noting is also the fact that the car model is the first line, whereas the verbal expression ‘ELEGANCE IN ITS MOST DYNAMIC FORM’ is the second line below.

_Connotative level_

Due to the similarity between this and the British version, most of the visual connotations can be argued to be the same. According to Maroto and Bortoli, excitement and passion are only some examples of what the
colour red symbolises in the United States (2001:15). Apart from that, the only difference is the rays in the asphalt which connotes that the car is driving fast, as well as the missing license plate, which can be argued to symbolise individualism, based on the interpretation that the car driver is thus not registered anywhere. Even though the colours are a bit lighter in this version, they still connote evening or night time.

10.1.3.2. Verbal expression
The verbal message consists of the lines ‘THE BMW M6 COUPE. ELEGANCE IN ITS MOST DYNAMIC FORM’.

The denotative meaning of the noun *elegance* is ‘refined grace of form and movement’ (Oxford Dictionary), and the denotative meaning of the adjective *dynamic* is ‘of or pertaining to force producing motion: often opposed to static’ (Oxford). Consequently, the denotative meaning is that the BMW M6 Coupé is elegant in both form and movement, yet in the most dynamic form possible.

On the basis of the denotative meaning of the verbal expression, it can be argued that the text is intended to connote that the BMW M6 Coupé has elegant looks in combination with the attribute of being dynamic, which also makes the function of this headline anchorage by means of identification, as the headline serves to create the intended associations of the BMW M6 Coupé being elegant and dynamic.

Also in this version the attribute of elegance and dynamism can be translated into attributes that potential car buyers want to apply themselves, cf. section 7.2.1.

10.1.3.3. Car-buying motive
This example can be argued to appeal to De Mooij’s car-buying motives of *design* and *engine performance* because of the highlighted attribute of elegance and the indication that the car is not only performing in terms of looks by means of the word *elegance*, but also in terms of performance by means of the word *dynamic*.

10.1.3.4. Cultural elements
With a score of 40, the United States is the largest power distance culture of the countries included in this thesis. However, the United States still classifies as a small power distance culture. As stated in section 3.4.2.1, appearance is very important to large power distance cultures. The verbal expression ‘ELEGANCE IN ITS MOST DYNAMIC FORM’ can be argued to reflect this fact, even though it does not conform to the United States being a small power distance culture.
Just like Denmark and Great Britain, the United States is a highly individualistic culture. With a score of 91, the United States is in fact one of the highest scoring cultures on Hofstede’s individualism dimension. In terms of the visual expression, the same individualistic signals as the ones in the British version are identified, i.e. that the car is the only one on the road and there is only one person in it, a male driver. Another strong signal of individualism is the missing license plate, which means that the car is not registered and consequently cannot be tracked.

The fact that the United States is a masculine culture is not explicitly communicated in the verbal message ‘THE BMW M6 COUPE. ELEGANCE IN ITS MOST DYNAMIC FORM’. Nevertheless, dynamism and its modifying most can be paralleled to the masculine attribute of wanting to demonstrate your success. In this sense, the verbal expression can be argued to reflect elements of masculinity by implying that success is demonstrated by means of elegance.

**10.1.4. Comparison and discussion**

Based on the above findings, it is clear that the Danish, British and American website presentations of the BMW M6 Coupé differ from each other on various parameters, even though there are similarities as well. For the sake of clarity and comparison, the most significant findings from section 10.1.1, 10.1.2, and 10.1.3 are compared below and subsequently discussed.

**Figure 13: Comparison of findings – BMW M6 Coupé**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Danish version</th>
<th>British version</th>
<th>American version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual expression</strong></td>
<td>Different from UK and US</td>
<td>Almost identical to US</td>
<td>Almost identical to UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car-buying motive</strong></td>
<td>• Joy to drive</td>
<td>• Engine performance</td>
<td>• Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design</td>
<td>• Technology</td>
<td>• Engine performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Car interior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Visual equivalence

The image in the Danish version is different from the British and American images, which are almost identical. The visual expression and its connotations in the Danish version are thus very different from the two other versions.

The format and placement of the Danish and British verbal expression are identical besides from the colour of the letters. Both of them are placed in the top of the image, partly written in capital letters and with the car model name written in smaller-sized letters below the headline. In contrast, the verbal expression in the American version is placed below the image, equal focus is on the car model name and the rest of the text as it is all capitalised, and the car model name is introduced first. These differences can be argued to give the American version a slightly more aggressive look in terms of typology, which according to De Mooij signals competitiveness, cf. section 5.3.1. This can be related to masculine cultures, and thus corresponds with difference the United States being a fairly masculine culture, even though Great Britain scores a bit higher on this dimension.

Verbal equivalence

All three headlines are different from each other, and bear no form for equivalence.

The name of the car model is the same in the Danish, British and American versions. As ‘Coupé’, which denotes the type of car in question, derives from the French language, there is a shift of code in all three versions, cf. section 5.2.3. With the combination of a letter and a number, M6 connotes car industry know-how, experience and competence, cf. section 5.2.1.

Car-buying motive equivalence

The car-buying motives appealed to vary, even though both the Danish and American versions feature the motive of design, and the British and the American versions both feature the motive of engine performance.

Cultural elements

In terms of cultural characteristics, the Danish version shows clear signs of low power distance due to the embedded independence signal, whereas the two other versions show signs of high power distance, even though they are also classified as low power distance cultures.

The signal of independence is directly linked to the individualism dimension, a sign of which is further embedded in the Danish version by means of the open landscape. Common to these two dimensions is that Denmark has the lowest score, whereas the United States has the highest.
Whether the Danish version reflects masculinity or not depends on the interpretation of ‘quality of life’, as it can be interpreted in two ways. Considering the product and brand in question, it can be argued that ‘quality of life’ in this context can be interpreted as a masculine reflection, as luxury and extravagancy are in focus. The British and American versions demonstrate clear examples of masculine signals in the verbal expression. Only clear signs of uncertainty avoidance are reflected in the British version, whereas only clear signs of the long-term distance dimension are seen in the Danish version.

10.1.5. Sub-conclusion
On the basis of the findings above, it can be concluded that the three versions are very different in the verbal expression, whereas only the Danish version differs from the others in terms of the visual expression. As also the car-buying motives embedded differ, it is clear that different strategies have been employed by BMW in the execution of these messages.
10.2. Analysis 2 - BMW M6 Gran Coupé

10.2.1. Danish version

10.2.1.1. Visual expression

Denotative level

The image depicts a silver-grey BMW M6 Gran Coupé in motion on a mountain road. It is the only car on the road. The upper left corner of the image reveals water and a blue sky, whereas the rest of the picture consists of roadside, the mountain road itself, and the mountain roadside with a few trees. The roadside on the left of the car and the mountain roadside on the right of the car are very blurred which makes it look like the car is passing by at speed. The car stands in stark contrast to this with its sharp contours, silver-grey colour and light reflections that are giving it an almost glowing effect. Apart from the silver-grey car, the image is kept in natural colours, such as grey, brown, blue and white scale colours.

The headline is placed in the top of the image, and is written in white capital letters. Below the headline, the name of the car model is written in smaller sized letters, where the last part of the model name is in lower case letters.

Connotative level

From a colour psychology perspective, grey is seen as the colour of compromise, as it is neither black nor white (Smith 2013). Interesting enough, this is a direct contrast to the denotative meaning of the verbal expression, which will be described below. The scenery brings forth associations to being abroad, as the scenery depicted in this picture is not characteristic to a typical Danish landscape. The nature scenery creates an unpolished and raw setting, which can be argued to bring forth associations to freedom and
open space. The fact that the foreground pillars are blurred implies that the car is passing them very fast, which can be argued to connote high engine performance. Moreover, the very sharp conjures of the car emphasises the attribute of design, another reference to the verbal expression, namely that this car offers design, engine performance, and so forth.

10.2.1.2. Verbal expression
The verbal message consists of the Danish word ‘KOMPROMISLØS’ (back-translation: ‘UNCOMPROMISING’). This adjective denotes ‘showing an unwillingness to make concessions to others, especially by changing one’s ways or opinions’ (Oxford). This denotative meaning is obviously an attribute that can be applied to the car, meaning that the function of the headline is anchorage by means of interpretation, as the headline serves to create certain associations via the interplay between the visual and verbal expression. By means of this interplay, the verbal message connotes that no compromises are made, thereby implying that this car offers anything that one can desire. Another important notion in this regard is that the attribute of being uncompromising is most likely also intended to be an attribute that can be transferred to the self-concept of the driver of the car, cf. chapter 7.2.1 about the correlation between consumer behaviour and self-esteem, self-respect and self-actualisation.

10.2.1.3. Car-buying motive
Due to the explicit claim that no compromises are made with this car, it can be argued that no specific car-buying motive is appealed to in this example if considering the verbal expression only. Nonetheless, as argued above, the visual expression can be argued to imply that one of the main features of this car is engine performance. The fact that the design of a car can be argued to be a significant part may be used as a rationale for arguing that this is also one of the attributes that the car is implied to have, as no compromises are made when driving this car. It is therefore argued that design is a further car-buying motive which is appealed to.

10.2.1.4. Cultural elements
Even though Denmark is a small power distance culture, the verbal message kompromisløs can be argued to bring forth certain associations of empowerment in the sense that being unwilling to compromise means that one is in a position or state of mind that allows or enable him/her to not making any compromises. This is interpreted as a sign of high power distance, and is therefore contradictory to Hofstede’s classification of Denmark.

It can be argued that signs of individualism are embedded in the visual message by means of the open space and the fact that the car is the only one on the road. The verbal message ‘Uncompromising’ can
furthermore be argued to be an individualistic claim if applying the attribute to the car driver, as it connotes that the car driver is individualistic enough to demand certain standards or attributes rather than just ‘settling’.

Masculine signals can be argued to be embedded in both the visual and verbal expression. In the visual expression, the combination of colours and the raw and unpolished natural scenery give a masculine expression. Furthermore, *uncompromising* can be argued to be a stereotyped masculine attribute, whereas feminine attributes are associated with softer attributes such as togetherness and coziness.
10.2.2. British version

![Image of a car with the text "POWER MEETS BEAUTY. The BMW M6 Gran Coupé."

(BMW Great Britain 2010b, see appendix e)

10.2.2.1. Visual expression

Denotative level

The image used in this version is nearly identical to the one used in the Danish version. However, an information box covers the left part of the Danish image, which is not the case in the English version. In this version, more roadside is therefore revealed of which the main part is still blurred. As this is the only difference, the image will not be described further in this section.

In addition, the headline format is similar to the one in the Danish version, as it is placed in the upper left corner of the image, and is written in white capital letters. Below the headline, the name of the car model is written in smaller-sized letters, where the last part of the car model name is in lower case letters.

Connotative level

According to Maroto and Barolo, the colour grey is associated with elegance, tradition, sophistication, and strength in Great Britain (2001:19). Apart from this fact, the connotations brought forth from this image are the same as the ones interpreted in the Danish version in section 10.2.1.1 above, these will not be repeated here.

10.2.2.2. Verbal expression

The verbal expression consists of the English headline ‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY’ followed by the car model name ‘The BMW M6 Gran Coupé’. Power denotes ‘the physical strength and force exerted by something or someone’ (Oxford), whereas beauty denotes ‘a combination of qualities, such as shape, colour or form, that pleases the aesthetic senses, especially the sight’ (Oxford). The verb meet denotes that the two attributes power and beauty can be applied to the same referent. As power tends to be seen as a stereotyped
masculine attribute, whereas beauty tends to be regarded a feminine attribute, the nature of these attributes seems contradictory. Nonetheless, it is implied in the headline that this car offers both.

10.2.2.3. Car-buying motive
The car-buying motives appealed to in this version are design and engine performance due to the attributes of beauty and power, respectively, to which they can be related.

10.2.2.4. Cultural elements
The verbal message ‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY’ can be argued to be seen as a sign of high power distance because of the word power, which is interpreted as a word which typically appeals to high power distance cultures. This claim is substantiated by beauty, as appearance is very important to large power distance cultures, cf. section 3.4.2.1.

The visual expression is identical to the Danish version, and as both cultures are highly individualistic, the signals of individualism are the same in this version. No clear signs of individualism are found in the verbal message.

The verbal expression ‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY’ can be argued to reflect the fact that this is a high-performance car, both visually and engine-wise. Power must be argued to be a masculine attribute, and the fact that this car is stated to have both power and beauty is most likely intended to imply that it is a great car to demonstrate your success, which is important to masculine cultures like Great Britain.
10.2.3. American version

THE ALL-NEW BMW M6 GRAN COUPE.
POWER MEETS BEAUTY.

(BMW North America 2013b, see appendix f)

10.2.3.1. The visual expression

Denotative level
The image shows a silver-grey car placed in a landscape of concrete blocks. The car is depicted from the side, and is surrounded by blocks with smoke rising. In spite of a very dark and cloudy background sky, some sun is coming in from the upper right side which leaves reflections of light on the car. However, the image consists of mainly greyscale colours.

The verbal message consists of two lines featured below the image. In contrast to the Danish and English version, the name of the car model is the first line with the second line below. Both lines are written in black capital letters, meaning that the name of the car model attracts just as much attention as the second line.

Connotative level
According to Maroto and Bortoli (2001:16), the colour grey tends to be associated with humility, grief, depression, strength and wisdom. Of these associations, particularly strength and depression can be related to the image, the concrete being associated with hopelessness in this context, and the car being associated with strength, though surrounded by the concrete.
10.2.3.2. Verbal expression

The verbal message consists of the following two lines: ‘THE ALL-NEW BMW M6 GRAN COUPE. POWER MEETS BEAUTY.’ It is thus very similar to the British headline, the only difference being the first part, ‘THE ALL-NEW BMW M6 GRAN COUPE’. The function of this headline can thus be argued to be anchorage by means of interpretation, as the verbal expression reflects the elements connoted from the visual expression, meaning that the image reinforces the verbal expression.

10.2.3.3. Car-buying motive

The car-buying motive appealed to is the same as the one used in the British version, i.e. design and engine performance due to the attribute of beauty and power, respectively.

10.2.3.4. Cultural elements

As was also the case in the British version, the verbal expression ‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY’ is interpreted as a high power distance reflection for the same reasons as described in section 10.2.2.4 above. In this version, it is interesting to note that the visual message gives the overall meaning a more raw and powerful expression, which can be argued to be a reflection of the fact that the United States scores higher than Great Britain on the power dimension scale.

Just like the British version, the verbal expression ‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY’ can be argued to reflect that this is a high performance car both visually and engine-wise. Power must be argued to be a masculine attribute, and that this car is stated to have both power and beauty is most likely intended to imply that it is a great car to demonstrate your success, which is important to masculine cultures.

Moreover, signs of the United States being a masculine society can be argued to be embedded in the visual expression. As argued in section 10.2.3.1., the colours, the surroundings, the smoking concrete blocks etc. are signals of power, which in this context can be intended to reflect the masculinity values ingrained in American culture.
10.2.4. Comparison and discussion

From the above findings, it can be concluded that the Danish, British and American website presentations of the BMW M6 Gran Coupé differ from each other on some parameters, even though there are similarities as well. The most significant findings from section 10.2.1, 10.2.2, and 10.2.3 are presented below and subsequently discussed.

Figure 14: Comparison of findings - BMW M6 Gran Coupé

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Danish version</th>
<th>British version</th>
<th>American version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual signs</strong></td>
<td>Identical to the UK</td>
<td>Identical to the DK</td>
<td>Different from the DK and UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>version</td>
<td>version</td>
<td>versions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal signs</strong></td>
<td>‘KOMPROMISLØS. BMW M6 Gran Coupé.’</td>
<td>‘POWER MEETS BEAUTY. The BMW M6 Gran Coupé.’</td>
<td>‘THE ALL-NEW BMW M6 GRAN COUPE. POWER MEETS BEAUTY.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Back-translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[Uncompromising]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car-buying motive</strong></td>
<td>• Engine performance</td>
<td>• Engine performance</td>
<td>• Engine performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Design</td>
<td>• Design</td>
<td>• Design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Visual equivalence**

The image used for the Danish and British version is identical, whereas a different image with a very different expression is used for the American version. In the Danish and the British version, the headline is in white capitalised letters placed in the upper right corner, whereas only the first letter of every word in the smaller-sized product name placed directly below the headline is capitalised. In contrast, the headline is placed below the image in the American version. Here, the car model name becomes an equally important part of the verbal expression, as it has the same size and layout as the rest of the verbal expression.

**Verbal equivalence**

The Danish headline is different from the British and American headlines, which are nearly identical. The only difference between the latter two is the placement of the car model name, and the addition of ‘all-new’ to the American version. Despite the Danish headline differing from the other two headlines, the connoted meaning can be interpreted to be the same as in the British and American ones. More specifically, the adjective ‘UNCOMPROMISING’ can be argued to connote that this car is a product of both power and beauty. Consequently, a high degree of functional equivalence can be argued for between the three verbal expressions.
The name of the car model is the same in all three versions. As Gran denotes something big, which in this case is most likely to refer to a big motor, and Coupé refers to the type of car in question, as also explained in section 1.3.1.2 above, this is also a case of code switching in all three versions.

*Car-buying motive equivalence*

The car-buying motives identified in the Danish version were a bit vague, as the verbal expression was argued to be able to encompass most car-buying motives. However, relying on the function of the headline in relation to the visual expression, it was argued that engine performance and design could be argued to be car-buying motives appealed to. These two motives have also been identified in the British and American version by means of the verbal expression, however more clearly than in the Danish.

*Cultural characteristics*

On the basis of the findings above, it can be argued that all three versions embed signals of high power distance, even though they are not classified as such cultures.

Both the Danish and the British version demonstrate signs of individualism by means of the visual expression, whereas it can be argued that no clear signs of individualism are shown in the American version.

Masculinity signals have been identified in all three versions, even though Hofstede classifies Denmark as a feminine culture. As the United States has the highest score on the masculinity dimension, it is worth noting that masculinity signals are particularly dominant in the American version.

**10.2.5. Sub-conclusion**

On the basis of the findings above, it can be concluded that there is a high degree of overall equivalence in the three versions. The American image is different from the two others, but the meaning reflected in the Danish verbal expression is argued to be similar to the British and American verbal expressions. Moreover, the car-buying motives identified are identical, as are also the tendencies as towards the cultural elements identified in the three versions, even though they are executed differently.
10.3. Analysis 3 - BMW Active Hybrid 3

10.3.1. Danish version

![BMW Active Hybrid 3](BMW Denmark 2013c, see appendix g)

10.3.1.1. Visual expression

**Denotative level**

The image depicts a BMW Active Hybrid 3 driving on a road which is surrounded by green roadside. The car is driven by a young-looking male. The car has just passed a tree standing in the roadside. Most of the roadside is blurred which makes it look like the car is driving fast. There are three blue stripes on the road paralleled with the driving car, and the car is covering parts of two of them. A cluster of white buildings, some of them tall, is seen in the background, which makes it look like the car is close to a city.

The colour of the BMW Active Hybrid 3 is light blue. Other than the three stripes on the road and the car, the dominant colours in the picture are natural colours such as green, brown, grey and white. The sky is white, and rays of sunlight are coming in from the upper left corner.

The verbal expression is placed in the upper right corner. The entire text is in black, capitalised letters, however the car model name placed directly below the tagline is smaller and thereby less dominant.

**Connotative level**

Blue is the colour of the sky and the sea, and therefore it is often associated with depth and stability. Blue is also argued to be considered beneficial to the mind and the body, and is associated with cleanliness as well as consciousness and intellect. Furthermore, light blue in particular is associated with health, healing, understanding and the like, in contrast to dark blue which is associated with power and seriousness (QSX Software Group 2013). On the basis of these associations, it can be argued that the light blue colour of the
car has been chosen to connote cleanliness, which in this context can be argued to refer to a ‘clean’
environment, i.e. less polluted. The three blue stripes on the road can be argued to substantiate that the
colour blue is chosen to connote environmental friendliness, as the three stripes are paralleled with the car.
Due to this link between the car and their blue colour, it can be argued that they are depicted to bring forth
associations of environmental friendliness to driving this car.
The trees in the image connote nature and life, which is argued to be a reference to the environmental
friendliness of the car, as trees renew our air supply by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.
The tall buildings depicted in the background connote city life, which can be argued to be attractive to
many – especially young – people. This corresponds with the young-looking male driver of the car. The fact
that the car is driving away from the city can be interpreted as if the driver of this car is taking distance
from city life and the pollution which it involves. Another interpretation is that the fact city depicted in the
background serves to illustrate that with a car like the BMW Active Hybrid 3, you can have city life and a
nice car while still being environmental responsible.

**10.3.1.2. Verbal expression**
The noun *tradition* is defined as ‘the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation’, and
thus denotes *ritual, routine, habit* and similar (Oxford).
The abstract noun *dynamic* denotes ‘a process or system characterised by constant change, activity, or
progress’ (Oxford). The verbal expression here thus denotes the message ‘making progress a routine/habit’.
The function of the verbal expression is anchorage by means of interpretation as it helps control the
receiver’s interpretation process in the direction intended by the sender. In this example, the function of
the headline can be argued to bring forth associations to the overall BMW brand and the BMW Active
Hybrid series in general, rather than this particular model, as the word *tradition* in the verbal expression
‘TRADITION FOR DYNAMIK’ implies that the headline is also intended to refer to the brand in general.
In terms of the connotative meaning of the verbal expression it can further be argued that the verbal
expression is meant to refer to BMW as having always been a technological frontrunner, thereby implying
that this model – yet again – represents new, advanced and environmentally friendly BMW technology.

**10.3.1.3. Car-buying motive**
The dominant car-buying motives embedded in this version can be argued to be *technology* and
*environment friendly*. The car model name – BMW Active Hybrid 3 – connotes environmental friendliness
and technology due to the car model name *Active Hybrid*, and as previously explained, the word *dynamic* in
the verbal expression denotes progress, which in this case can be interpreted as technological progress.
Moreover, the car-buying motive *environment friendly* is appealed to in the visual expression by means of the car driving away from the city in the background, the blue stripes on the road, and the blue car.

**10.3.1.4. Cultural elements**

As Denmark is a small power distance culture, independence is found to be important to Danes. This element can be argued to be reflected in the visual message by means of the car driving away from the city in the background.

The fact that Denmark is classified as a feminine culture is reflected in the verbal message ‘TRADITION FOR DYNAMIC’. More specifically, the word *tradition* can be argued to signal feminine values as it can be associated with affiliation and relationships, which are typically highly favoured feminine values.

With a score of 23, Denmark scores low on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. According to De Mooij, people in low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance cultures are more active in terms of environmental behaviour (2010:165).

With a score of 46, Denmark is a short-term orientation culture, though being close to the middle. According to De Mooij, long-term cultures show great respect for traditions (2010:85), a concept which is explicitly referred to in the verbal expression.
10.3.2. British version

![Image of BMW car with text: PASSION WINS. The BMW ActiveHybrid 3.](image)

(BMW Great Britain 2010c, see appendix h)

10.3.2.1. Visual expression

**Denotative level**

The visual in this version is almost identical to the one used in the Danish version. The only difference is that more trees are visible in this version, and fewer buildings are depicted in the background, which is because this image has a slightly different angle than the Danish one. The elements described in the Danish version, section 10.3.1.1 is therefore considered relevant in this version as well, and will therefore not be repeated.

The verbal expression is in black capitalised letters placed in the upper left corner. In contrast to the Danish version, though, only the first letter in every word of the smaller-sized car model name is capitalised.

**Connotative level**

As was argued in the analysis of the Danish version, trees connote nature, life and environmental friendliness. The fact that more trees are shown in this image reinforces these associations in this version. The fact that fewer buildings are featured also contributes to the more natural look of the picture with the element of city life being slightly less dominant.

10.3.2.2. Verbal expression

*Passion* denotes ‘an intense desire or enthusiasm for something’ (Oxford), whereas *winning* denotes being ‘successful or victorious (in a contest or conflict)’ (Oxford). Based on this, it can be inferred that the verbal message serves to imply that BMW want be successful in developing the best environmental friendly cars. However, this ‘passion for winning’ is also directly applicable to the target audience, cf. section 7.2.1, as such passion for winning is directly applicable to persons. As was also the case in the Danish version, the function of the headline is anchorage by means of interpretation, as the headline helps controlling that the
decoding made by the receiver takes the direction intended by the sender. Consequently, the headline links the verbal expression, i.e. the passion for winning in terms of producing the best environmental friendly cars, to the car, and the BMW brand. In this process, it can be argued that the car model name plays a crucial role, as this is the only explicit reference to the environmental friendliness of the car.

10.3.2.3. Car-buying motive

The car-buying motives embedded in this version can be argued to be technology, environmental friendly, and joy to drive. As was also the case in the Danish version, the car model name connotes technological know-how and environmental friendliness. Moreover, the word Passion from the verbal expression can be related to the buying motive joy to drive, as ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘feeling a joy’ of driving in this specific context can be argued to be equivalents to this.

10.3.2.4. Cultural elements

Great Britain is a small power distance culture, which also in this version corresponds with the sign of independence triggered by the car driving away from the city depicted in the background.

The fact that Great Britain is an individualistic culture is reflected in the verbal message, as ‘Passion wins’ is understood as the individualism dimension can be argued to be reflected by the word passion, if it is understood as an attribute to the car and its owner. More specifically, this will reflect the car and its owner as a winner.

According to Hofstede, being a winner is very positive in masculine cultures. On this basis it can be argued that the fact that Great Britain is a fairly masculine society is reflected by the verbal expression ‘PASSION WINS’.

As stated in the Danish version, Great Britain being classified as a small power distance and low uncertainty culture correlates with De Mooij’s claim that members of such cultures tend to generally care about the environment, which is why appeals to environmental friendliness are embedded in the verbal expression.
10.3.3. American version

THE BMW ACTIVEHYBRID 3. THE EFFICIENT EVOLUTION OF AN ICON.

(BMW North America 2013c, see appendix i)

10.3.3.1. Visual expression

*Denotative level*

This version is very similar to the Danish and British versions, but is also the image that presents the biggest differences from the other two. More specifically, this image depicts no trees at all, but instead it reveals more buildings in the background. Another difference is that the car has no license plate. These differences give the image a more simple expression.

The verbal expression is placed directly below the image. The text is in black, capitalised letters, and the entire text is the same size, meaning that the name of the car model attracts equal attention to the headline. Worth noting is the fact that the car model name is in the first line, whereas the headline is placed below.

*Connotative level*

As no trees are depicted in this image, this image does not connote environmental friendliness to the same extent as the other two versions. Moreover, the fact that there is more city depicted in the background, gives the image an urban expression. Thus, the blue colour of the car and the blue stripes on the road are the only visual elements that can be associated with environmental friendliness as per the arguments presented in section 10.3.1.1. The fact that the car has no license plate connotes freedom and individualism, as this means that the car cannot be tracked.
10.3.3.2. Verbal expression

In the verbal expression ‘THE BMW ACTIVEHYBRID 3. THE EFFICIENT EVOLUTION OF AN ICON’, efficient denotes ‘achieving maximum productivity with minimum wasted effort or expense’ (Oxford), whereas evolution denotes ‘the gradual development of something’ (Oxford). Finally, icon denotes ‘a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration’ (Oxford). On the basis of this, the verbal expression denotes that BMW has developed a hybrid car that is ‘one of a kind’. The function of the headline is anchorage by means of interpretation, as the headline helps the receiver relate the meaning of the verbal message to the visual. Due to this function, it becomes clear that the car is meant to be associated with efficient from the headline, which thus is intended to associate the car with environmental friendliness. This link between the two elements is reinforced by the car model name ‘ACTIVEHYBRID.’

10.3.3.3. Car-buying motive

This version can be argued to appeal to the car-buying motives technology and environmentally friendly, mainly due to the elements from the verbal expression. The motive environmentally friendly is appealed to by means of the elements highlighted in section 10.3.3.2 above, whereas technology is appealed to by the element ‘EVOLUTION OF AN ICON’ in which it is employed that complex technology lies behind the development of this car.

10.3.3.4. Cultural elements

As the visual message is almost identical to the one in the Danish and British version, the fact that the car is driving away from the city in the background can be argued to reflect that the United States is classified as a small power distance culture that favours independency.

Moreover, signs of individualism are embedded in the image by means of the young driver being alone in the car, and the fact that no other cars or people are shown.

Signs of the United States being classified as a masculine culture can be argued to be embedded in the verbal expression, especially triggered by the word icon, as having the status of an icon can be considered something to strive for in an achievement-oriented culture like the United States.

As was stated above, the visual expression of this version does not contain the same signs of environmental friendliness as the other two versions. In this regard, it is interesting noting that Marieke De Mooij has observed that people having bought environmentally friendly products relate to low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance (2011:166), as the United States has a higher score than Denmark and Great Britain on the uncertainty avoidance index.
10.3.4. Comparison and discussion

Based on the above findings, it is clear that the Danish, British and American website presentations of the BMW M6 Active Hybrid 3 differ from each other on various parameters, even though there are similarities as well. For the sake of clarity and comparison, the most significant findings from section 10.3.1, 10.3.2, and 10.3.3 are presented below and subsequently discussed.

Figure 15: Comparison of findings - BMW Active Hybrid 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Danish version</th>
<th>British version</th>
<th>American version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visual signs</strong></td>
<td>Small variations from UK and US</td>
<td>Small variations from DK and US</td>
<td>Small variations from DK and UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal signs</strong></td>
<td>‘TRADITION FOR DYNAMIK. BMW ACTIVEHYBRID 3.’ [Back-translation: Tradition for dynamism].</td>
<td>‘PASSION WINS. The BMW ActiveHybrid 3.’</td>
<td>‘THE BMW ACTIVEHYBRID 3. THE EFFICIENT EVOLUTION OF AN ICON.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Car-buying motive</strong></td>
<td>• Technology • Environment friendly</td>
<td>• Technology • Environment friendly • Joy to drive</td>
<td>• Technology • Environment friendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visual equivalence

The same image is used on all three websites. There are small differences which, nonetheless, can be argued to be significant in terms of what the visual signs connote.

In the Danish version, the verbal expression is placed in the upper right corner. The entire text is in black, capitalised letters, but the car model name placed directly below the tagline is smaller and thereby less dominant. The verbal expression in the British version is almost identical, as the only difference is that only the first letter in every word of the smaller-sized car model name is capitalised. In the American version, the verbal expression is placed directly below the image. The text is in black, capitalised letters, and the entire text is the same size.

Verbal equivalence

All three verbal expressions are very different from each other. Whereas the Danish headline draws on tradition for dynamism, the British version focuses on passion and winning, and finally the American
version focuses on the status of the car as an icon. Despite the different denotative and connotative meanings, the same car-buying motives are argued to be embedded in the three versions.

*Car-buying motive equivalence*

In all three versions, *technology* and *environment friendly* are argued to be the two prevailing car-buying motives. The motive *environment friendly* is mainly connoted by means of the images in all three versions, as the colour blue is prevailing in all three versions. Moreover, it is connoted by the car model name, as hybrid cars do not pollute as much as normal cars. With this type of car being highly technological as well, the name also connotes the motive *technology*. The only car-buying motive identified besides from these, is the *Joy to drive* motive which is identified in the British version, particularly triggered by the verbal expression element *passion*.

*Cultural elements*

In all three versions, the car driving away from the city in the background has been identified as a sign of short power distance and high individualism which conform with Hofstede’s classification of Denmark, Great Britain and the United States. As stated in section X, one of the significant differences between the three cultures in terms of Hofstede’s value dimensions is that Denmark scores low on the masculinity index and is thus regarded a feminine culture, compared to Great Britain and the United States which are both masculine cultures. One of the interesting aspects of this empirical study was whether this difference is reflected, and in the analysis of the BMW Active Hybrid 3, the conclusion is that this difference is reflected by means of the verbal expression, more specifically triggered by *tradition* as argued above. In contrast, the verbal expressions for the British and American versions are very characteristic for masculine cultures, as they rely on passion and winning as well as efficiency and iconic status, respectively.

10.3.5. *Sub-conclusion*

Based on the results above, it can be argued that BMW have intended to tailor the expression of both the verbal and the visual elements to their specific audiences. Though executed very differently, the underlying message in each of the three verbal expressions is that the BMW Active Hybrid 3 is the result of BMW’s experience, passion, know-how and ambitions. Also the visual expressions communicate similar messages, as they are almost identical. On the basis of the few differences identified in the American image, it can be assumed that the cultural differences between this culture and the other two in terms of attitude to environmental issues have been considered, as the more urban look of this image corresponds with this
culture having the highest score on the uncertainty avoidance index, which according to Hofstede and De Mooij correlates with the general concern of the environment.

In other words, the core meaning of what the verbal and the visual elements communicate is more or less the same, whilst being executed differently to tailor the cultural specifics of each market.
PART III

11. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to examine where the phenomenon of transcreation can be placed theoretically and in which ways it can be distinguished from translation and localisation both theoretically and empirically.

For this purpose, relevant concepts and developments within the field of translation have been presented and discussed. The concept of localisation has also been discussed, in order to clarify how transcreation differ from this process. On the basis of this, I have discussed and suggested where the concept of transcreation fit in theoretically.

On the basis of the points made in chapter 8, it was argued that the concept of transcreation can be classified as a mode of translation that relies on the adaptation strategy and Skopos theory. Moreover, a modification of the Skopos theory was proposed: specifically, it was proposed that a transcreation process is facilitated by a good understanding of the purpose of the target text, but also of the product or brand in question, and the behaviour of consumers in the relevant market, since the nature of the product or brand and the perception of it within the target culture can be influential to the degree of transcreation chosen. More specifically, these elements may be decisive for determining which elements to adapt, and which elements of new content to add.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that there are substantial differences between transcreation and localisation despite the immediate resemblance between the two terms. On the basis of the arguments laid forth in chapter 8, it can be concluded that while localisation is the process of adapting a product, e.g. a website, to a target locale, which can take place at several levels, transcreation is the process of adapting a text and/or an image – often with an appellative language function – to a target locale.

Moreover, empirical material selected from the global luxurious automotive manufacturer BMW’s Danish, British and American websites has been subjected to analysis in order to uncover how they have used the phenomenon of transcreation to communicate with their local audiences. Denmark, Great Britain and the United States were chosen because I found it interesting to include two European countries (Denmark and Great Britain), which can be expected to be fairly similar, as well as a non-European market. A very interesting aspect following from the choice of these three countries is the fact that both Great Britain and the United States are English-speaking. Uncovering the differences in particularly the verbal messages for
two countries that speak the same language was found to be particularly relevant for substantiating the importance of cultural differences to a process of transcreation.

Barthes’ three types of messages have been a practical tool in the analysis, as the verbal and linguistic expressions as well as the denotative and connotative levels have been useful tools in the clarification of the overall communicated message of the car model presentations.

A good understanding of consumer behaviour has been argued to be the key to any successful transcreation process. Therefore, the chapter on consumer behaviour, with particular focus on car-buying motives, was included to illustrate the relevance of understanding the differences in consumer’s needs, motives and desires – as these factors are culture-bound – and also how these differences should ideally influence any transcreation process.

As culture is central to this thesis, Geert Hofstede’s framework of national value dimensions was relied on in the analysis, meaning that this thesis has relied on a functional approach to culture. This framework was later valuable for uncovering the cultural characteristics in the verbal and visual elements of the web texts. When studying cultures, it is important to understand that clichés and stereotypes are unavoidable. The general concepts of culture and national culture have many levels of layers, which makes it necessary to make some generalisations.

Surmising that the findings from the analysis of the empirical corpus, in terms of embedded cultural signals, are the result of my individual interpretations, it was argued that several cultural signals can be identified in the empirical material when taking point of departure in Hofstede’s framework of value dimensions. However, the cultural elements embedded in the Danish, British and American examples both corroborate and contradict Hofstede’s classification of the three countries in question. Although Hofstede classifies Denmark, Great Britain and the United States as fairly similar cultures on the basis of their respective dimension scores, there are also differences. All three cultures are classified as small power distance cultures, individualistic cultures, and weak uncertainty cultures. However, Denmark is classified as a feminine culture, whereas Great Britain and the United States are masculine cultures. Consequently, the three countries only differ significantly on the masculine dimension.

Based on the differences identified and described in the analyses of the three online car presentations, it can be argued that BMW have made significant adaptations to the three car presentations in order to tailor them to the respective audience by using the right cultural nuances. As evident from the sub-conclusions made in chapter 10, the differences in the verbal expressions can be argued to be most significant, as only one of the car presentations, namely the BMW M6 Gran Coupé, has been argued to communicate the same
core message on all three websites. It was found that the differences in terms of the visual message are not as significant as the verbal. In analysis 1, the image in the Danish version is different from the one in the British and American. In analysis 2, the American image is different from the one used in the Danish and British, and in analysis 3, the same image is used, albeit with slight modifications.

This implies that the strategy chosen by BMW may have been to structure the verbal expression on the relevant car-buying motive in question and then tweak the message according to the cultural nuances of each culture. Assuming that the verbal and visual expressions have been developed accordingly, the nature of the differences identified therefore suggests that transcreation can theoretically be placed within the scope of translation, as the process relies heavily on the cornerstone of Skopos theory and the process of adaptation, which can be argued to have become more and more reckoned in translation in theory as well as in practice.

It is important to state that the cultural elements identified in the analysis of the web texts are my subjective interpretation only, meaning that different results may be found if analysed by someone else. Also, it is important to understand the limitations of the results due to the limited scope of data. In order to provide representative results for each culture, a larger scope of empirical data subjected to analysis is required.

However, the findings presented in this thesis are useful for making some indications towards the practice of translation as opposed to transcreation in the automotive product category. Drawing on De Mooij’s claim that standardised communication efforts for a few product categories, for instance perfume, appear to be successful (De Mooij 2010:16), it can be concluded that this is not likely to be the case for automotive when looking at BMW, as the verbal expressions of the empirical material can all be argued to be very emotional, relying on connotative terminology. This can be seen as an attempt to emphasise the different attributes of the BMW brand in their different markets while staying true to the core brand values. This can be argued to substantiate the claim made in chapter 8, that the degree of transcreation and strategy chosen can be determined according to the emotional connection between the consumers and the brand.
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13. LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Culture as an onion .............................................................................................................................................. p. 12
Figure 2: Power distance index scores ......................................................................................................................... p. 15
Figure 3: Individualism index scores ............................................................................................................................... p. 17
Figure 4: Masculinity index scores ................................................................................................................................. p. 18
Figure 5: Uncertainty avoidance index scores ................................................................................................................ p. 20
Figure 6: Long/short-term orientation index scores ....................................................................................................... p. 21
Figure 7: Laswell’s communication model ..................................................................................................................... p. 24
Figure 8: Fiske’s interaction communication model ....................................................................................................... p. 25
Figure 9: Brand hierarchy model ....................................................................................................................................... p. 37
Figure 10: Transcreation example ..................................................................................................................................... p. 52
Figure 11: Model for analysis ............................................................................................................................................. p. 61
Figure 12: Comparison of findings - BMW M6 Coupé ................................................................................................. p. 72
Figure 13: Comparison of findings - BMW M6 Gran Coupé .......................................................................................... p. 82
Figure 14: Comparison of findings - BMW Active Hybrid 3 ......................................................................................... p. 91
14. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A: Danish BMW M6 Coupé website
Appendix B: British BMW M6 Coupé website
Appendix C: American BMW M6 Coupé website
Appendix D: Danish BMW M6 Gran Coupé website
Appendix E: British BMW M6 Gran Coupé website
Appendix F: American BMW M6 Gran Coupé website
Appendix G: Danish BMW Active Hybrid 3 website
Appendix H: British BMW Active Hybrid 3 website
Appendix I: American BMW Active Hybrid 3 website