

Linguistic Aspects of Translation, Localization, and Transcreation in Advertising Slogans from Slovene into Serbian: A Case Study with MA Translation Students

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V prispevku obravnavamo pomen in značilnosti lokalizacije in transkreativnosti pri prevajanju oglaševalskih sloganov iz slovenščine v srbsščino na primeru prevodnih rešitev študentov prevajalstva Filozofske fakultete v Novem Sadu. Na podlagi analize prevodov ugotavljamo, da študenti izkazujejo ustrezne jezikovne kompetence, vendar ne razlikujejo med strategijami prevajanja, lokalizacije in transkreativnosti. Študija primera razkriva potrebo po večjem pedagoškem poudarku na pragmatičnih in semiotičnih funkcijah oglaševalskega jezika ter pomenu kulturne posebnosti in ustvarjalnosti pri prevodu oglaševalskih sloganov. Rezultati raziskave kažejo potrebo po translatološki in strokovni razpravi o mejah in stičiščih prevajanja, lokalizacije in transkreativnosti v globalni, večjezični in tržno usmerjeni družbi.

The paper discusses significance and characteristics of localization and transcreation in the translation of advertising slogans from Slovenian into Serbian by analyzing translation solutions of translation students at the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. Based on the analysis of the translations, we discovered that the students demonstrate appropriate linguistic competences, but do not distinguish between translation, localization and transcreation strategies. The case study reveals the need for a more extensive pedagogical focus on pragmatic and semiotic functions of advertising language and the importance of cultural specificity and creativity in the translation of advertising slogans. The research results indicate the need for a translational and professional discussion about the limits and intersections of translation, localization and transcreation in a global, multilingual and market-oriented society.

Ključne besede: prevajanje, transkreativnost, oglaševalski slogani, slovenščina, srbsščina

Keywords: translation, transcreation, advertising slogans, Slovene, Serbian

1 Introduction

Language plays a pivotal role in advertising and marketing campaigns, as it functions not only as a medium of communication but also as a strategic tool for persuading potential customers to buy a product or service and to create brand identity. Effective use of language helps to shape consumer perceptions, build brand image, and influence purchasing decisions. According to Cook (2001), advertising relies heavily on linguistic creativity to attract attention, evoke emotional responses, and construct appealing narratives around products or services. The lexical choices, rhetorical devices, and syntactic structures employed in advertisements are often designed to resonate with target audiences, triggering associations that align with their values, aspirations, and cultural identities (Goddard 2002; Polajnar 2013). “A slogan is a special form of short and simplified text with a final message and a concise thought.” (Unuk 2019: 107) Language thus acts as a key instrument for encoding meaning and differentiating brands in a multilingual and competitive marketplace.

Moreover, the success of global and regional marketing campaigns often hinges on the ability to adapt language to local markets, a process that involves more than mere translation. This practice, known as transcreation, ensures that the intended impact of the original message is preserved while transforming it, or re-creating it to make it culturally and linguistically appropriate for the target audience. De Mooij (2010) states that language reflects cultural norms and values, and effective marketing communication must account for these differences to avoid misinterpretation or rejection. Research into the perception of bilinguals done by Luna and Peracchio (2001: 285) further demonstrates that consumers may have different attitudes towards the marketing messages depending on the language (or language variety), i.e. the message is more effective when presented in the native language, enhancing both comprehension and emotional engagement. Therefore, linguistic sensitivity and localization are essential components of successful international advertising strategies. As Kučiš and Kaloh Vid (2021: 54) argue, there is no uniform definition of the advertising slogan in scientific literature; whereby the main functions of both social and commercial advertising are to provide information to the target audience and prompt them to act in a way desired by the advertisers. In the case of translation and localization, these same functions need to be preserved.

A growing body of research has begun to explore the complex role of language in advertising, drawing on various linguistic frameworks. Koslow, Shamdasani, and Touchstone (1994), adopting a sociolinguistic perspective, investigated how bilingual Hispanic consumers interpret marketers’ cultural sensitivity, highlighting the influence of language choice on perceptions

of brand authenticity and cultural alignment. Complementing this line of inquiry, Schmitt, Pan, and Tavassoli (1994), as well as Schmitt and Zhang (1998), employed a psycholinguistic approach to analyse how structural differences between English and Chinese shape information processing among monolingual speakers. Their findings reveal that language not only serves as a vehicle for communication but also interacts with consumers' cognitive systems, affecting how advertising messages are encoded and recalled.

The aim of this research was to address the issue of language used in advertising from the perspective of Translation Studies, taking into consideration two Slavic languages, Slovene and Serbian, as these two languages remain underexplored in contrastive linguistic and translation studies. Jesenšek (2009: 9) does make a detailed analysis of the difference between Slovene and other languages of former Yugoslavia, most notably the relation of Slovene to Serbo-Croatian, yet he warns that language differences need to be tackled with special care to preserve the particular features of each language as languages and cultures are being integrated in the global society (cf. Jesenšek 2020 on attempts to preserve Slovene in 21st century). Slovenia and Serbia are not only connected by the fact that their respective languages belong to the same family, but also by historical and regional ties, with bilateral cooperation between these two countries showing steady growth. According to the data published by the Serbian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "more than 4,400 companies from Serbia and Slovenia in 2019 were active in both markets, not only through trade but also through investment. Slovenia is one of the largest investors, and over 1,200 Slovenian companies with majority Slovenian capital, which employ about 25,000 workers, operate successfully in Serbia. According to Slovenian statistics, Serbia ranks first in the value of Slovenian investments abroad." (<https://msp.gov.rs/en/foreign-policy/bilateral-cooperation/slovenia>).

To help business expand and grow in both directions, translation and localization are inevitable, and even though Slovene and Serbian may be very similar, they are not the same, and all advertising and marketing messages or content on webpages need to be translated and localized. Translation and localization play a critical role in facilitating business growth by enabling companies to effectively reach and engage diverse global markets. While translation ensures the accurate conversion of content from one language to another, localization goes further by adapting the message to reflect the cultural, linguistic, and regional nuances of the target audience. This process enhances customer experience, fosters trust, and increases brand relevance in local contexts, thereby improving market penetration and customer loyalty. As Esselink (2000) notes, localization is essential for ensuring that products and communication resonate with local consumers, aligning with their expectations and cultural values. Furthermore, research by Singh and

Pereira (2005) demonstrates that culturally adapted websites and marketing materials significantly boost user satisfaction and conversion rates.

In contemporary Translation Studies, translation is defined as a transnational and transcultural communication activity. Therefore, one of the primary tasks of translators is to mediate not only between languages but also between cultures (Kučiš 2025). The increasing professional demand for such skills raises important questions about how they are taught and practiced, particularly at the level of academic training (Prodanović Stankić & Błaszowska 2025: 80). Localization and transcreation are still underresearched topics even in reference to English, the lingua franca of the global communication, let alone Slavic languages. The present study seeks to investigate how MA students of translation approach the linguistic challenges posed by transcreating advertising slogans from Slovene to Serbian. We wanted to explore whether they are able to effectively differentiate between translation, localization, and transcreation in practice, and to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in courses they are offered. Drawing on a case study in which students translated, localized, and transcreated ten advertising slogans from Slovene to Serbian, this paper examines the linguistic strategies used, the patterns that emerge, and what these reveal about the students' understanding of functional and pragmatic equivalence in advertising discourse.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- (1) How do translation students approach the task of rendering advertising slogans into their target language?
- (2) What types of linguistic and cultural strategies do they employ in translation, localization, and transcreation?
- (3) To what extent do their choices reflect awareness of intercultural pragmatics and the commercial function of slogans?

The analysis draws on theoretical models of translation typology (Vinay & Darbelnet 1958; Newmark 1988), advertising discourse (Cook 2001), and intercultural communication (Katan 2009), as well as previous research on slogan translation and adaptation (Gottlieb 2005; Schäffner 2012) and transcreation (Pedersen 2014, 2016; Błaszowska 2022). In doing so, it contributes to a growing body of literature concerned with the intersection of translation studies and marketing communication and proposes recommendations for marketing communication in Slavic languages and translation pedagogy that reflect the complex demands of real-world communication in the advertising sector.

The paper begins with the outline of the theoretical framework, including definitions and distinctions between translation, localization, and transcreation, as well as linguistic features of advertising language. We then describe the research methodology, including materials and analytical approaches

used. Further on, we present the results of the case study, illustrating key strategies used by students and the frequency of different approaches. Finally, we discuss the findings in light of the theoretical models and pedagogical implications and conclude the paper by offering some directions for future research.

2 Translation, Localization, and Transcreation: Definitions and Boundaries

While translation is traditionally defined as the process of rendering written content from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL), this definition is insufficient in contexts where cultural and commercial resonance are more important than linguistic fidelity. Kučič (2016: 105–106) highlights the bicultural dimension and points out that the translator has to assume the role of a transcultural mediator, since the process of translation does not only involve the linguistic level, but the level of the socio-cultural context as well.

Translators working with advertising texts are often required to move beyond literal transfer of meaning and instead engage in localization, i.e. adapting messages to specific linguistic and cultural contexts, or transcreation, a more transformative process of rewriting aimed at preserving the persuasive function and emotional impact of the original (Pedersen 2014; Bernal Merino 2006). These practices require a combination of linguistic skill, cultural insight, and creative writing ability, positioning the translator as a co-creator rather than a mere language professional (Katan 2009). Translation in its classical sense is focused on semantic and syntactic equivalence, typically aiming for a faithful rendering of the source text. Localization, in contrast, refers to adapting a product or message to the norms, expectations, and cultural references of a specific locale or target market (Pedersen 2014). It involves not only linguistic but also extralinguistic adaptations, such as currency formats, idioms, humour, and visual elements.

On the other hand, transcreation, a relatively recent development in language services, has been a topic of discussion among both Language Service Providers (LSPs) and scholars. Initially, LSPs and practitioners (Schriver 2011; Sattler-Hovdar 2016; Benetello 2018) were the first to articulate the concept of transcreation, with scholars later contributing to the discourse (Ray & Kelly 2010; Schäffner 2012; Gaballo 2012; Rike 2013; Munday, Gambier 2014; Katan 2014, 2016; Pedersen 2014, 2016; Błaszowska 2022, Błaszowska & Prodanović Stankić 2025). Transcreation is often defined as a process of creative rewriting where the goal is not to reproduce the source message literally, but to replicate its effect, primarily emotional, cultural, or commercial to appeal to the new audience. Bernal Merino (2006) emphasizes

that transcreation is “not about translating words, but about translating emotions, reactions, and brand identity.” According to Diaz-Millon and Olvera Lobo (2021) “transcreation is a type of translation characterized by the intra-/interlingual adaptation or reinterpretation of a message intended to suit a target audience, while conveying the same message, style, tone, images and emotions from the target language, paying special attention to the cultural characteristics of the target audience.” This aligns with the view of transcreation as the most culturally embedded and interpretative form of marketing communication transfer. After all, “./ dominant strategies of translating cultural references are neither fixed nor permanent. The strategies and decision-making implied when dealing with ideological backgrounds are dynamic and may change depending on the background knowledge and age of a translator.” (Kučiš & Kaloh Vid 2021: 31).

In the marketing domain, where messages are designed to persuade, entertain, and provoke emotional responses, translators alongside translation often employ more adaptive strategies such as localization and transcreation. The boundaries between these three processes are not always clear-cut. As Schäffner (2012) argues, translation, localization, and transcreation may exist on a continuum, with increasing degrees of adaptation and creative intervention. In practice, agencies and clients often blur these lines, so clearly defining project goals and expectations highlighting is essential. For example, a client may ask for a “translation” of a campaign tagline, but the task may actually require transcreation to work effectively in a new market. Hence, proper briefing, target audience research, and feedback loops are key to delivering the right language service. For example, some service providers offer at their webpages¹ some guidelines, which may help prospective clients differentiate between these different services and choose the one most appropriate for their specific needs:

- (a) Clarify goals: Is the message supposed to inform (translation), connect (localize), or engage emotionally (transcreation)?
- (b) What is the level of adherence to the source text? Strict (translation); moderate (localization); lowest (transcreation);
- (c) What is the level of engagement? Strict (translation); moderate (localization); lowest (transcreation);
- (d) What is it best for? Texts, emails, chat apps, forums, help documents, scientific and technical content (translation); website content, emails, trainings, product information, blogs, customer stories (localization); slogans and taglines, campaigns, brochures, headlines, emotional and artistic content (transcreation).

¹ <https://www.lionbridge.com/blog/translation-localization/transcreation-services-why-and-when-you-need-them/>

In essence, these guidelines provide an insight into the brief, which is something the process of transcreation starts with. The language professional should gather relevant information and then provide several versions of translations and their back translations for the client, which is not the case with the process of translation proper, as Risku et al. (2017: 58) highlight. In this study, these distinctions are used as analytical categories to assess the students' work and identify which linguistic and strategic choices align with each approach.

2.1 Linguistic features of advertising slogans

Advertising slogans are a distinct genre within marketing communication. Their brevity, rhythmic structure, alliteration, ambiguity, and often culturally loaded references make them difficult to translate using standard methods. Cook (2001) characterizes advertising as a form of discourse that blends informative and persuasive elements, relying heavily on connotation, intertextuality, and affective appeal. Slogans typically function on two levels: they communicate brand identity and elicit an emotional response. As such, they are deeply contextual, relying on shared knowledge, cultural values, and even humour or wordplay. Valdés (2008) highlights the role of metaphors and other stylistically marked and expressive forms of language, making slogans particularly challenging to decode and recode across languages. From a linguistic standpoint, slogans often use:

- (a) Imperative constructions (e.g., “Think different.” *Apple*)
- (b) Rhythm and rhyme to enhance recall (e.g., “Maybe she’s born with it. Maybe its Maybelline” *Maybelline cosmetics*.)
- (c) Puns or wordplay (e.g., “Nothing runs like a Deere.” *John Deere*)
- (d) Cultural idioms or references that may not be universally understood (e.g., “Have a break, have a Kit Kat.” *Nestlé*)

This list of possible linguistic devices that can be used to create catchy and memorable slogans is by no means complete and in fact, any twist in the expected way of saying something that can make the target recipients associate the slogan with the product, and create positive engaging associations may serve the purpose (Puntoni, Schroeder & Ritson 2006; Hornikx & O’Keefe 2009; Korošec 2005). What might become problematic is referring to culturally shared knowledge or practices, as these might not be shared by the global audience.

The same applies to using English as a global lingua franca in advertising slogans created in languages other than English. English is often used to enhance the perceived modernity, prestige, and global appeal of a brand,

as it carries connotations of innovation, cosmopolitanism, and youthfulness. Its strategic incorporation into otherwise non-English slogans can attract consumer attention, signal product quality, and evoke aspirational lifestyles. However, this linguistic choice may also result in reduced comprehensibility or emotional resonance among certain target audiences, potentially weakening the slogan's local relevance. Consequently, the use of English in such contexts must balance global positioning with cultural sensitivity to effectively communicate brand identity.

In the data collected in Slovene, there were two slogans that were in English, used to promote Slovenian companies (“Life Simplified” *Gorenje*, and “ALPINA. made to inspire”, *Alpina*). In other cases, the slogans to some extent reflected the idiomatic features of the Slovene language (as discussed in Lipavac Oštir et al. 2014). In translation education and training, it is suggested that the function of a given form is the starting point in the analysis and the process of translation. Hence, when translating or localizing advertising slogans that already incorporate English into a third language, it is crucial to assess both the function and perceived value of the English elements in the original context. Translators must consider whether the English words contribute primarily to meaning, style, or symbolic associations such as modernity or internationalism. If the English component holds strong symbolic or branding value, it may be retained to preserve the slogan's global appeal. Alternatively, if comprehension and emotional connection are key in the target market, a culturally adapted version using the local language or a different stylistic device may be more effective. Ultimately, the decision should be guided by the intended audience, the brand's positioning strategy, and the communicative purpose of the slogan within its new cultural and linguistic environment.

2.2 Translation Strategies for Translating Slogans

The initial framework typically applied to the translation of advertising slogans and other forms is the functionalist approach, rooted in German translation studies of the late 20th century. This approach emphasizes the “purpose” (or *Skopos*) of a translation as the primary factor guiding the translator's decisions (cf. Nord 1997; Reiss and Vermeer 2013; Kučič 2025). Rather than focusing solely on equivalence to the source text, it prioritizes the communicative function the translated text is meant to fulfil in the target culture and context. Since different types of texts (e.g., informative, expressive, operative) require different translation strategies, and that the translator's role is to ensure that the target text achieves its intended effect. The functionalist approach thus offers a pragmatic and goal-oriented

framework that aligns translation closely with real-world communicative demands. In practice, this allows for greater flexibility, including adaptation, rephrasing, or even significant restructuring, especially in fields like advertising, legal, or technical translation.

However, once the purpose of the text is determined on the micro-level, the translator may decide to use a technique and procedure that fits the given context. For example, several models of translation techniques and procedures provide useful tools for rendering texts into the target language (TL). Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) comparative stylistics model identifies two broad categories: direct translation (e.g., borrowing, calque, literal translation) and oblique translation (e.g., transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation). The last two, equivalence and adaptation, are particularly relevant in advertising, where literal fidelity must often be sacrificed to achieve functional equivalence. Newmark (1988) introduces a distinction between semantic translation, which stays close to the source language (SL) form and meaning, and communicative translation, which prioritizes the TL reader's understanding and effect. In the context of slogans, communicative translation is often the more effective approach. Delabastita (1996), focusing on the translation of wordplay, emphasizes the importance of creative problem-solving, particularly when working with puns, metaphors, or rhymes. His work underscores the need for pragmatic and functional shifts that preserve the rhetorical or emotional impact of the original. Katan's (2009) model of cultural frames situates translation within a broader system of intercultural communication, highlighting that translators do not merely substitute words, but act as mediators of meaning shaped by divergent cultural assumptions and expectations. Taken together, these models provide a useful foundation for examining the student case study. They enable an assessment not only of linguistic choices but also of the degree of cultural adaptation and creative transformation present in the translations.

3 Methodology and data collection

The study employs a qualitative case study approach to investigate how MA translation students approach the translation, localization, and transcreation of advertising slogans within a pedagogical context. The participants in this study were six MA students enrolled in the MA program Conference, Audio-visual and Specialized Translation at the University of Novi Sad. All students were native speakers of Serbian and had a working knowledge of English, German, and some basic knowledge of Slovene, as they all participated in the Summer Academy "Translation and Transcreation in the Digital Age" organized at the University of Maribor by the Faculty of Arts, University of

Maribor; the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Zagreb; and DG TRAD of the European Parliament and the CEEPUS network *Transkulturelle Kommunikation und Translation*. During the academy the students received initial training in transcreation in September 2024, which was later expanded in regular classes. They worked in pairs, collaborating mostly online during the winter semester of 2024/2025. The students had already completed and successfully passed courses in translation theories and models, including units on specialized translation of advertising discourse and localization. This ensured a baseline understanding of key concepts and terminology prior to engaging with the practical task.

3.1 Data

A corpus of 10 Slovene advertising slogans was carefully created for the purpose of the study. The slogans were taken from current widely used regional advertising campaigns, particularly those disseminated via social media platforms, and digital advertising. Selection criteria included: frequency and recognizability in the target culture, linguistic diversity (use of idioms, metaphors, puns, imperative forms, ambiguity), cross-cultural relevance, allowing for varied localization and transcreation approaches. The selected slogans are not only familiar to the average consumer in the target culture, but also actively used in local media, ensuring relevance and cultural embeddedness.

- (1) Zlatarna Celje. Z ljubeznijo do nakita že od leta 1844.
- (2) Lesnina. Dobrodošli doma.
- (3) Gorenje. LifeSimplified
- (4) Krka. Živeti zdravo življenje.
- (5) FRUCTAL. V sodelovanju z naravo.
- (6) Frutek. Da bi iz majhnega zraslo veliko!
- (7) ALPINA. made to inspire.
- (8) AFRODITA COSMETICS. Lepa v svoji koži že 50 let.
- (9) Mercator. Najboljši sosed.
- (10) Argeta. Dobra stran kruha – Argeta.

3.2 Procedure

The task was designed as a collaborative online project, simulating a professional virtual work environment. Students were divided into virtual teams, each working autonomously, using digital collaboration tools (e.g., Google Docs, online forums, or Google Classroom). The assignment was conducted

over a one-week period in May 2025. Each group was instructed to produce three versions of each slogan:

- (1) A literal/faithful translation into the target language
- (2) A localized version, adapted for linguistic and cultural compatibility with the local audience
- (3) A transcreated version, aiming to replicate the original slogan's emotional impact, persuasive power, and branding function, even if this required deviating from the original structure and wording.

Since the Slovene companies that promote and use these slogans operate successfully in the Serbian market, students could use the existing campaigns in Serbian and comment on the quality of these solutions in the target language and culture.

Prior to the practical task, all students participated in courses and seminar sessions that introduced and explained the distinctions between translation, localization, and transcreation. These sessions included analysis of real-world examples, discussion of theoretical frameworks, and group activities. The aim was to ground the exercise in theoretical knowledge and foster critical reflection. Groups were encouraged to document their translation choices and reasoning through short written commentaries or annotations accompanying each version. This meta-commentary provided valuable insight into the cognitive and strategic processes guiding their decisions.

The corpus of student-produced slogan versions, along with their commentary, was digitally collected and anonymized for analysis. The resulting dataset comprised 30 slogan renditions per group (10 slogans x 3 versions), along with reflective notes where applicable. Each slogan version was coded for translation strategy used (e.g., literal translation, adaptation, transcreation), linguistic features preserved or altered (e.g., rhythm, metaphor, imperative mood), cultural appropriateness and contextual relevance, and evidence of collaborative decision-making, based on commentary and variation within groups.

Where possible, versions were compared within and across teams to identify recurring patterns, divergent strategies, and notable outliers. Particular attention was given to how students navigated cultural references, emotional tone, and branding intent, and to whether they aligned their strategies with their stated objectives.

4 Results and discussion

The data collected from the case study involving MA translation students reveals significant insights into the interplay of linguistic creativity, cultural

sensitivity, and strategic decision-making in translating, localizing, and transcreating advertising slogans. Also, it shows how emerging translators navigate the demands of marketing and advertising language. Through collaborative work in virtual teams, students tackled ten Slovene advertising slogans, providing three types of output: literal (translated), culturally adjusted (localized), and creatively reimagined (transcreated). Their suggested solutions reflect a spectrum of strategies and decisions, shaped by linguistic proximity, cultural familiarity, and varying levels of functional awareness.

The literal translations provided by the students demonstrate their tendency to adhere to lexical equivalence between Slovene and Serbian, two closely related South-Slavic languages. In most cases, the literal versions were semantically accurate and grammatically correct. For example, in the example no. 1 given below in Table 1, “Z ljubeznijo do nakita že od leta 1844” was rendered as “Sa ljubavlju prema nakitu još od 1844.”, preserving both the sentiment and chronology of the original.

However, this ease of transfer also appeared to encourage a complacency of equivalence, whereby students did not interrogate the slogan’s deeper functional role within its marketing context. This was evident in slogans like no. 5 given in Table 1, “V sodelovanju z naravo”, rendered as “U saradnji sa prirodom”, which, while accurate, failed to account for the evocative and eco-conscious branding that might call for a more emotionally charged or audience-specific rendering in the target market. The literal translations, while useful as a baseline, often lacked rhetorical force, memorability, or rhythmic appeal, highlighting the limits of surface-level fidelity in the translation of advertising discourse.

The localised versions reveal a growing awareness among students of the need to adapt slogans functionally, making them more resonant for Serbian consumers. In many cases, lexical choices were only subtly altered to reflect the collocational idiomatic usage, as in the transformation of e.g. no. 9, “Najboljši sosed” (Mercator) into “Najbolji komšija” in the literal translation, whereas in the localized version students opted for changing the adjective + noun phrase into a noun + relative clause. Using this transformation, they positioned the key noun in the initial position, highlighting its associated meanings. This would be a culturally attuned version that retains both the literal meaning and the affective familiarity of the brand’s positioning as a neighbourhood store.

Another illustrative case is *Frutek*’s slogan “Da bi iz majhnega zraslo veliko!”, translated as “Da iz malog poraste veliko!” - a near-equivalent that adopts natural Serbian phraseology while keeping the original metaphorical structure. Interestingly, the localized versions also showed the beginnings of stylistic recalibration, with students adjusting register, tone, or rhythm to better suit Serbian audiences. This was especially apparent in cases where

the original used informal or emotive language, and the students mirrored this tone rather than defaulting to formal equivalence. Nevertheless, some localized outputs remained too close to the source, indicating that students may not yet fully distinguish between translation and localization as distinct modes of text production, each with its own degree of adaptation.

Table 1: Slogans in Slovene rendered in Serbian by the participants in the study

No.	Slovene Slogan	Literal (Serbian)	Localized (Serbian)	Transcreated (Serbian)
1	Zlatarna Celje. Z ljubeznijo do nakita že od leta 1844.	Zlatarna Celje. S ljubavlju prema nakitu od 1844.	Zlatara Celje. Ljubav prema nakitu traje od 1844.	Zatara Celje. Nakit sa pričom koja traje.
2	Lesnina. Dobrodošli doma.	Lesnina. Dobrodošli kući.	Lesnina. Ovde ste kod kuće.	Lesnina. Ovo je tvoj dom
3	Gorenje. Life Simplified.	Gorenje. Život pojednostavljen.	Gorenje. Jednostavniji život.	Gorenje. Jednostavno tvoj ritam.
4	Krka. Živeti zdravo življenje.	Krka. Živeti zdrav život.	Krka. Za život u zdravlju.	Krka. Zdravlje koje traje.
5	FRUCTAL. V sodelovanju z naravo.	Fructal. U saradnji s prirodom.	Fructal. Snaga prirode u svakom gutljaju.	Fructal. Kada priroda pravi razliku.
6	Frutek. Da bi iz majhnega zraslo veliko!	Frutek. Da iz malog izraste veliko!	Frutek. Za velike korake malih.	Frutek. Raste uz ljubav.
7	ALPINA. Made to inspire.	ALPINA. Napravljena da inspiriše.	ALPINA. Kreirana za nadahnuće.	ALPINA. Pokreni inspiraciju.
8	AFRODITA COSMETICS. Lepa v svoji koži že 50 let.	Afrodita Cosmetics. Lep(a) u svojoj koži već 50 godina.	Afrodita Cosmetics. Sjaj u tvojoj koži već 50 godina.	Afrodita. Tvoja lepota. Tvoja priča.
9	Mercator. Najboljši sosed.	Mercator. Najbolji komšija.	Mercator. Komšija kojem veruješ.	Mercator. Zajedno kroz život.
10	Argeta. Dobra stran kruha – Argeta.	Argeta. Dobra strana hleba – Argeta.	Argeta. Najbolje što hleb može da ponudi.	Argeta. Savršen zalogaj za svaki dan.

The transcreation task elicited the widest variation in student output, underscoring both the challenges and potential of this high-level translation

skill. Successful transcreations tended to recast the slogan in a way that preserved brand essence while employing original language choices that felt idiomatic, catchy, and persuasive. For instance, “Made to inspire” (Alpina) was rendered as “Za korake koji inspirišu”, a poetic phrase that ties the product (shoes) to an aspirational narrative. Similarly, Krka’s “Živeti zdravo življenje” was creatively reimagined as “Tvoje zdravlje. Tvoj život.”, reflecting both conciseness and direct address that aligns well with health-sector messaging in Serbian contexts.

Other examples, however, revealed uncertainty in navigating the balance between creativity and fidelity. Some slogans diverged so much from the original that the brand identity risked dilution, while others erred on the side of caution, resulting in slogans that were grammatically altered but stylistically flat. Such is the example of “Argeta. Dobra stran kruha – Argeta.”, which was literally translated as “Argeta. Dobra strana hleba - Argeta.”, but further modifications and adaptations led students to “Argeta. Savršen zalogaj za svaki dan”. This last one diverges from the original, departs from the bread metaphor entirely, opting for a slogan that for the students seemed to be more resonant with Serbian branding styles, where taste is the central value. Transcreation was also the domain where students exercised intertextuality and cultural associations.

The above results are consistent with the observations of Pedersen (2014), who notes that transcreation is essential in preserving the “experiential equivalent” of a message, especially in marketing. Students’ creative outputs confirm that effective transcreation requires not only linguistic skills but also cultural sensitivity, market knowledge, and semiotic awareness.

Students also demonstrated varying degrees of comfort with inventing new metaphors, reconfiguring sentence structure, and rethinking communicative goals. Where successful, this produced slogans that could stand on their own in the Serbian market. Where less successful, it revealed the need for more training in strategic creativity, especially in areas like emotional appeal, cultural resonance, and rhythm.

Across the three modalities, several general tendencies can be outlined. Literal translations were accurate, but often lacked branding impact, suggesting that students need to be encouraged to look beyond lexical equivalence. Localized versions generally succeeded in improving cultural and linguistic naturalness but sometimes hovered too close to the source to be fully persuasive. Transcreations displayed the most promise in terms of innovation and adaptation, though students were uneven in their ability to retain brand intent while generating original language. Of course, it must be mentioned that they did not have any information from the brief or specific guidelines given by the company, only information they could find on the internet doing their own research and attempting at backtracking the

company's advertising strategy. These tendencies reinforce the importance of integrating translation, localization, and transcreation as distinct yet inter-related skills in translator training programs, and in addition to that, incorporating multimodality literacy into course design (cf. Prodanović Stankić & Jakovljević 2022). Moreover, they demonstrate the need for systematic pedagogical approaches that combine theory and practice to equip future translators with the necessary tools for navigating multilingual marketing and advertising environments.

Furthermore, this progression, from literal to localized to transcreated, mirrors the developmental trajectory of translation competence described in models such as Nord's (1997) functionalist approach and the EMT (European Master's in Translation) framework or Prodanović Stankić & Błaszowska (2025) suggestions to integrate new directions into translation education and training. It supports the argument that transcreation is not merely an advanced form of translation, but a distinct practice that requires its own competence set, including creative writing, market knowledge, and audience awareness (Błaszowska & Prodanović Stankić 2025).

It is worth noting that the students carried out these tasks in virtual teams, after receiving theoretical instruction on translation, localization, and transcreation. The collaborative format appeared to foster creativity, particularly in the transcreation phase. Group work enabled negotiation of meanings, peer feedback, and joint decision-making, which are all essential competencies in real-world localization and advertising teams (Risku 2016). Furthermore, the virtual setting mirrored authentic working environments in contemporary translation industries. Students reported that collaborative brainstorming sessions were instrumental in producing culturally appropriate and emotionally appealing transcreations. This pedagogical strategy supports Kiraly's (2000) constructivist approach to translator education, where authentic tasks, teamwork, and reflection are central to developing translators' competences.

Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the results of this study indicate that translation, localization, and transcreation are not to be viewed as isolated modes but as a dynamic continuum. Developing the ability to switch between these strategies based on textual function and audience is key to high-quality advertising translation.

5 Concluding remarks

This study has explored the nuanced linguistic challenges and strategies involved in the translation, localization, and transcreation of advertising slogans, focusing on outputs produced by MA translation students working collaboratively in virtual teams. By analyzing ten widely recognized

Slovene advertising slogans and their Serbian equivalents across three types of transformation: translation, localization, and transcreation, we have identified some tendencies in how each approach reshapes the source message to serve specific communicative and cultural functions.

A key finding is the gradation of creative freedom: while translations typically adhere closely to lexical and syntactic structures of the original slogan, localization allows for moderate cultural and idiomatic adaptation, and transcreation often involves a complete reimagining of the slogan to capture emotional resonance, brand voice, or audience relevance in the target culture. Students demonstrated a growing awareness of these distinctions, particularly in how they dealt with metaphor, brand positioning, and emotional appeal in the transcreated versions. Notably, their ability to justify lexical shifts and cultural references improved when they worked in collaborative environments, allowing for peer negotiation and mutual reinforcement of conceptual strategies.

Students were given theoretical input on translation strategies prior to the task, which appears to have influenced their decision-making. Their collaborative online work fostered deeper engagement with pragmatic and cultural aspects of the slogans. Many student teams approached transcreation with branding logic in mind, in other words, seeking to evoke emotion, emphasize benefits, and adapt rhythm or rhyme. Some teams chose to maintain the brand voice across versions, while others adapted it for each version to match target market expectations.

The results suggest that even novice translators can effectively engage in transcreation when adequately prepared through theoretical input and practical, collaborative exercises. However, several challenges persist. Students sometimes struggled with slogans that rely on culturally specific humour, idiomatic expressions, or wordplay, underscoring the need for advanced intercultural competence, not just linguistic proficiency.

In conclusion, the ability to move between translation, localization, and transcreation is becoming increasingly important in a globalized communication landscape. The present study offers a preliminary look at how these competencies can be cultivated in novice translators through carefully designed, context-rich learning environments. Further research could expand the scope of slogans, include other language pairs, or investigate reception effects of various slogan versions among target audiences.

Data Availability Statement

The article is based on research data from existing and publicly available sources (textual sources, databases) listed in the *References* section.

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JEZIKOVNI VIDIKI PREVAVANJA, LOKALIZACIJE IN TRANSKREACIJE OGLAŠEVALSKIH SLOGANOV IZ SLOVENŠČINE V SRBŠČINO: ŠTUDIJA PRIMERA Z MAGISTRSKIMI ŠTUDENTI PREVAVALSTVA

Prevajanje oglaševalskih sloganov za prevavalce predstavlja jezikovni, medkulturni in marketinški izziv, ki presega prevajalsko in jezikovno ekvivalenco, saj so tovrstna sporočila prežeta s kulturnimi posebnostmi, idiomatskimi izrazi, besednimi igrami in retoričnimi figurami z namenom, da prepričajo in vplivajo na potencialnega potrošnika. Prispevek raziskuje jezikovne in prevodne strategije, ki jih uporabljajo bodoči prevavalci in študenti magistrskega študijskega programa prevajalstva na Filozofski fakulteti v Novem Sadu pri lokalizaciji in transkreaciji izbranih slovenskih sloganov. V srbsko so prevedli deset izbranih slovenskih sloganov znanih blagovnih znamk in sporočilo priredili s pomočjo lokalizacije in transkreacije z namenom, da pri srbski ciljni publiku in potrošnikih vzbudijo enak ali vsaj podoben čustveni odziv kot v slovenskem izvorniku. Rezultate študentskih prevodov sva analizirali s pomočjo kvalitativne vsebinske metode, ki temelji na obstoječih tipologijah prevajanja (Vinay in Darbelnet 1958; Newmark 1988; Katan 2009) in pristopih oglaševalskega diskurza (Cook 2001; Gottlie, 2005). Ugotovitve kažejo, da študenti izkazujejo ustrezne jezikovne kompetence, vendar ne razlikujejo med strategijami prevajanja, lokalizacije in transkreacije. Študija primera razkriva potrebo po večjem pedagoškem poudarku na pragmatičnih in semiotičnih funkcijah oglaševalskega jezika ter pomenu kulturne posebnosti in ustvarjalnosti pri prevodu tržnih in marketinških sloganov. Rezultati raziskave kažejo potrebo po translatološki in strokovni razpravi o mejah in stičiščih prevajanja, lokalizacije in transkreacije v večkulturni družbi ter večdimenzionalni komunikaciji.