Applying a Postcolonial Model to the Evolution of Translation Strategies for Russian Language Advertising Texts

Karen Smith

Abstract
This paper will offer a new approach describing the evolution of strategies employed in the translation of advertising material into Russian. Using the notion that postcolonial studies focus on the study of cultures / societies / nations / countries in terms of their power relations with other cultures / etc. (Robinson 1997: 14), I suggest that postcolonialism is a useful metaphor for understanding this evolution. Thus corporations are seen as the colonizer, Russian advertising the colonized and translation the driving force in the colonization process. The result is a four-stage model of evolution which goes some way towards explaining the history of Russian advertising translation and gives some indications of future development in the field.
Introduction

The aim of this paper is to introduce a model to describe the evolution of strategies employed in the translation of advertising texts into Russian. I draw on existing work in the area of postcolonial studies and suggest that there are many parallels between the evolution of strategies for translating adverts and the cases described in postcolonial studies. Robinson’s 1997 book, *Translation and Empire* provides the definition of postcolonialism that I will be using here:

> The study of cultures / societies / countries / nations in terms of their power relations with other cultures / etc.; how conqueror cultures have bent conquered cultures to their will; how conquered cultures have responded to, accommodated, resisted or overcome that coercion. (Robinson 1997: 14)

This definition suggests that the evolution of Russian advertising and the strategies used to translate adverts into Russian can be seen in terms of the power relations between Russia and “the West”: how the West conquered Russia with its consumerism, how it shaped Russian consumer behaviour, and how Russia and Russian advertising have responded to these changes. Although Russia was not, of course, a political colony, the experiences of colonized countries can be useful in comprehending what has happened to Russian advertising, and can go some way to explain why these things happened. Russia has experienced a cultural colonization, not by guns or God, so to speak, but by goods and products.

Postcolonialism and the Evolution of Russian Advertising

Postcolonial discourse offers a useful metaphor for understanding the evolution of contemporary Russian advertising. In order to apply this model, it is necessary to start from the working premises that:

- The corporation is the colonizer
- Russian advertising is the colonized
Translation is a driving force in colonization
There are four stages of colonization

The Corporation is the Colonizer

Just as the economically strong Europeans colonized less-developed territories such as India, America, Africa etc., so the modern day corporation is also a colonizer.¹ This is not a new or original idea; as Childs and Williams (1997: 218) note, traditional ‘colonialism was itself a globalizing project, a will-to-power of nation states whose imperial drive has since been taken over by multinational corporations.’ The corporations carry out their colonization through the channel of mass media advertising; and as early as 1978, Hoggart was asking whether the mass media were a new form of colonialism. The West, and primarily the USA, he argued, produced most of the films seen throughout the world, it controlled the publishing flows, the news media came predominantly from American or British agencies, and most American television was seen throughout the world (Hoggart 1978: 1). Korten (1999 (1995): 181) suggests that corporate colonialism is based on the pursuit of elite interest, and that this is aligned with the corporate interest of advancing deregulation and economic globalisation. As a result, corporations are extremely influential, with ‘turnovers equivalent to the GNP [Gross National Product²] of small countries and considerably more international power’ (Childs and Williams 1997: 218).

Corporations are always on the lookout for new markets and new countries to colonize. Their primary aim is to make money, yet they enter their new markets believing that their way is the best and it is their duty to educate the colonized.

Russian Advertising as the Colonized

In the same way that the sixteenth-century-Europeans set off to colonize the New World, today’s corporate colonizers found the Russia of the 1990s virgin territory. Under communism, Russia had had a relatively closed, centrally planned
economy, and entrance into its markets was restricted. With the opening of the Russian market to international investors, corporations found a country that was ready and willing to be colonized. The corporations wasted no time in invading Russia, and introducing their products through mass-media advertising. Far from this being a hostile invasion, resisted by the Russians, Russia was a receptive and co-operative market, buying the advertised products and absorbing the new advertising techniques. Later this knowledge would be re-formulated, encompassing past experience to create modern Russian advertising.

**Translation as a Driving Force in Colonization**

In any form of colonization, translation plays a facilitating role as it enables the colonizer and the colonized to communicate. In the context of Russian advertising, the translation of the first adverts into Russian set a benchmark for aspiring Russian copywriters and the translated textbooks educated them in the art of advertising. It could plausibly be argued that the whole contemporary advertising genre in Russia began as a translation of the genre produced in the West. Translation is also used as a means of education, thus ensuring that Western practices maintain their supremacy. In Lambert’s terms (quoted in Robinson 1997: 37), the exporting (active) systems, here read the West, are in a power position in relation to the importing (passive) systems, here read Russia. This is because the importing systems require a level of flexibility to adapt themselves to the idioms and rules of the exporting systems. It is difficult to say how Russian language advertising would look today had there not been this translational input, but it would surely have looked very different.

**Four Stages of Colonization**

The Indian scholar Niranjani has a vision of retranslation which would go some way to remove what she sees as the evil traces of the colonizer in India. This vision is founded on the belief that the Indians would have to recover the pure essence of Indian-ness which existed before the East India Company arrived if the Indian continent was to develop and become unified (Niranjana 1992). This
vision is based on the four states of colonization which have been summarised by Robinson (1997: 89 – 90) in the following way:

- Precolonial state (distant past): pure, good, uncorrupted
- Colonial state (recent past): impure, evil, corrupting
- Postcolonial state (present): good and evil mixed, hybridized
- Decolonized state (future): pure, good, cleansed of colonial evils

In order to trace the evolution of Russian advertising and the current state of research relating to it, I will employ the four notions given above, but with some changes of focus. I will use the term stages rather than states, so as to remove any potential confusion with the political meaning of state. These stages will be the different periods of development that have been seen in Russian advertising. Secondly, I will not assume that the precolonial stage is inherently pure, good or uncorrupted. It will merely define the period prior to the colonial stage, and show how advertising during that period was different to what came later. Finally, I will not attempt to argue that in the decolonized stage Russian advertising will be cleansed of all traces of the colonizer, for I believe that Russian advertising will always bear the marks of the West, although the extent to which these marks are visible may change with time.

The Precolonial Stage
The ‘precolonial’ stage refers to that time prior to ‘colonisation’ and, according to my model, can be roughly split into two periods. The first covers advertising prior to the Russian revolution in 1917 and the second, Soviet advertising, from 1917 to 1991.

Early Russian Advertising
The first Russian advertising can be traced to the tenth and eleventh centuries when nomadic tribes visited different settlements in order to sell their goods
(Pankratov, Baženov, Seregina et. al 2000: 27). These adverts were simply spoken declarations of the advantages of the goods that were on offer.

The first print adverts, however, appeared in the seventeenth century in the form of the *lubok* ‘popular print’ which were easy for people at all levels of society to understand (Rodinova and Levit 1997: 48). These posters had very clear text and high quality images. In 1710, the first newspaper advertisements appeared in *Vedomosti* (Vorošilov 2000: 8); and by 1840 the adverts had progressed to such a level of sophistication that they were being produced by professional artists.

The abolition of serfdom in 1861 led to the rapid development of capitalism in Russia, and adverts became a regular feature in the written press. The period from 1909 to 1913 saw Russian advertising flourish in the fields of commerce and finance (Rodinova and Levit 1997: 49). This advertising was quite advanced, displaying different modes; for example informative or fictional, and using both text and illustrations. In the period prior to the revolution, Russian advertising was the same as could be found in other European or American cities, and in 1914 its growth rate was higher than that of America’s advertising industry (Repiev 2000).

**Soviet Advertising**

One of the first acts signed by the new government after the October Revolution in 1917 was a Decree on the Introduction of a State Monopoly in Publicity (Hanson 1974: 21). This did not, however, lead to the end of commercial advertising in Russia; it merely meant that all private adverts were subject to censorship and that insertions in publications could not be bought by advertisers and then filled by material aping editorial copy. The result of this increased censorship was a period of stagnation in the advertising industry (Vorošilov 2000: 9).

Advertising was allowed a little respite between 1921 and 1928, during the period known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). NEP began primarily as an
agricultural measure acting as an incentive for peasants to produce more food for the towns; however, it expanded to allow for commodity exchange between town and country and finally as an encouragement for industrial production (Kochan and Abraham 1990: 338). This change of focus (seen by some as being at odds with previous ideology) led to a more prominent role for the market in the state’s economic sector (Nove 1992: 78). There was a rich private enterprise sector in the Soviet Union, fronted by entrepreneurs who played an important role as wholesalers and in 1922 to 1923 controlled seventy-five percent of the retail trade (Kochan and Abraham 1990: 339). This commercial activity continued to use commercial advertising. This advertising contributed to the finances of the Soviet press, with two-thirds of the Soviet government’s daily newspaper, Izvestija’s, revenue coming from advertisements (Hanson 1974: 22). Not everyone was in favour of the private enterprise Nepmen and their adverts. Members of the Agitreklama ‘agitation advertising’ association distanced themselves from the entrepreneurial activities of the Nepmen. Agitreklama produced the Soviet Advertising Posters for state enterprises. These posters were designed by talented poets and artists such as Majakovskij and highlighted the uses of products, or encouraged people to buy from the state shops, as in the following example (Pankratov, Baženov, Seregina et. al 2000: 31):

Graždane beregite interesy svoi: tol’ko v Čaeupravlenii pokupajte čai
[Citizens Look after your own interests: Only in Tea Administration buy tea]

Agitreklama changed the style of advertising in the Soviet Union by using poetry combined with original forms of montage. Members of the Agitreklama, however, were actively against NEP private enterprise, and saw their role not as sellers of goods, but spreaders of information and educators of the masses (Ljaxov 1972: 7).

Changes to the economic system, implemented by Stalin, meant that advertising decreased significantly from the late 1920s until the 1960s, and any organisation offering reklama ‘advertising’ in its services would, in reality, supervise shop window displays (Hanson 1974: 21). Xruščev’s ‘secret speech’ in
February 1956 saw an end to the most severe period of Soviet history. The advertising industry began to grow in the 1960s and 1970s, seeing the creation of large agencies such as Sojuztorgreklama, Glavokooptorgreklama and Rostorgreklama and publishing of a number of magazines giving advice on advertising, such as Reklama, Kommerčeskij vestnik, Moskovskaja reklama and Novye tovary (Vorošilov 2000: 9). The adverts at this time followed the official advertising principles, for example, their aim was to educate people’s tastes, provide information to consumers and improve distribution services. Advertising was guided by ideology, and was therefore to be truthful, concrete, effective in selling goods and in conformity with the Soviet plans.

Soviet adverts were used to promote dostatočne ‘sufficient’ goods; that is goods for which there was a ready supply (through, for example, overproduction). Advertising was not used to advertise anything that was already in demand, as this was seen as a waste of resources. Thus a new product would be developed and sold to distributors without advance advertising. Retailers would find themselves with excess stock and would then carry out advertising at their own expense. The retailer, not the manufacturer, was therefore in control of advertising. When knitting machines were first introduced into the Soviet Union, for example, they were heavily promoted by retailers, in order to educate the population about their use and benefits. Advertisements for ‘sufficient’ goods would also help to absorb the excess demand for those goods that were deficitne ‘scarce’. For example, pacific fish was advertised as the increase in the Soviet fishing fleet meant that there was a large supply of fish in contrast with the poor levels of meat production in the 1960s. Germogenova (1994: 13) cites the slogan Eš’te rybu xek ‘Eat hake fish’, used when there was plenty of hake in many shops. Advertising was also influenced by social considerations; for example, milk was advertised because of its nutritional value (Hanson 1974: 51).

According to Gricenko-Wells (1997: 112) there was more emphasis on promoting import / export goods than on the domestic production and distribution of goods. There was one advertising agency, Vneštoreklama, which specialised in producing advertising material in foreign languages for trade fairs. Alexandr
Rep’ev, owner of the Moscow advertising agency Mekka, remembers the beginning of his career in 1966:

when I began freelancing there [at Vneštoreklama] as English-language copywriter, there was no literature on advertising, no courses, no contacts with Western advertising industries, no nothing (Repiev 2000)

Adverts could be found in some publications, but not all. Večernjaja Moskva, for example, ran a weekly advertising supplement and television adverts were bunched together for short bursts on secondary channels (Smith 1976: 429). Soviet adverts were inoffensive and unmemorable, informative and imperative rather than imaginative. Like their Western counterparts, Soviet adverts were also exaggerated, vague and used technological imperatives or borrowed phrases from other genres. However, in contrast with Western adverts, they did not use celebrities such as film stars to promote products, nor did they try to enter the subconscious of the consumer.  

The amount of expenditure on advertising in the Soviet Union was extremely low. In 1980 the total spending on the promotion of Soviet products for its three hundred million consumers was seven hundred and fifty million dollars, which was equal to the increase [my emphasis] in spending on advertising in Italy during the same year (Mattelart 1991: 27). This ‘precolonial’ advertising, although pleasantly naïve and rudimentary (Hanson 1968: 129), was designed for a different era and was not sufficiently equipped to cope in the new economic environment that Russia was to find itself in.

The Colonial Stage

In this model the ‘colonial’ stage begins roughly in 1985 and continues through the perestroika, ending in around 1998. The ‘colonial’ stage is defined by the invasion of foreign corporations into the Russian market, the receptiveness of the Russian market to this invasion and the role played by translation in facilitating the ‘colonization’ process.
Perestroika and the Fall of Communism

The changes which accompanied Gorbačev’s policies of perestroika and glasnost’ encouraged a limited amount of private ownership and profitability in Soviet industry and agriculture and also resulted in an economic environment that was more receptive to foreign players. Large corporations were quick to take advantage of the changes in the Soviet system, and from 1986, the first joint-ventures took place between the Soviet Union and Western companies. By the late 1980s, Ford Motors, Kodak, Pepsi-Co, Singer Sewing Machines, Gillette and J Kraft were all exporting to Russia (Gricenko-Wells 1997: 104). In 1989, Y&R signed a mixed-ownership undertaking with Vneštoreklama to offer a full range of consultancy and communication services to the increasing number of Western businesses operating in the Soviet Union (Mattelart 1991: 26).

The market reforms introduced when El’cin was elected president in 1991 prompted an advertising boom and Russia’s small advertising industry began to grow. Soon other foreign advertising agencies set up in Russia, for example Ogilvy, Saatchi, McCann, Erikkson and Publitalia all opened local offices in 1991. The interest in Russian shown by the large corporations and advertisers alike was understandable. For foreign investors the newly democratised Russia represented a very lucrative market. The fall of the Soviet Union was heralded ‘a victory for the free market’ (Korten 1999 (1995): 57).

The foreign companies came to this new market armed with advertising weapons, and soon advertising could be found in places where it had never been seen before, on bus and tram timetables and on the walls of underground trains and on vast billboards smothering the buildings of cities.

Receptive Market

The market was ready for the influx of Western goods. Having been denied capitalist commodities for so long, Russians were eager to try Western goods, some of which had achieved mythical status under communism. Take, for example, a scene from the classic 1968 film Brilliantovaja ruka in which, after
returning to the Soviet Union from an eventful trip abroad, the hero’s wife’s first question to her husband is:

A Koka Kola pil?
[Did you drink Coca Cola?] ¹¹

The love of things Western also encouraged Russian companies to take on Western names in order to make their goods more appealing and thus increase sales; a Russian producer of fruit juice, for example, chose to name its product ‘Wimm-Bill-Dann’ (Rozenberg 2000: 32). Within colonial discourse this phenomena could be described as a fetish about the West, a fetish based on difference, in the sense that Bhabha (2000 (1994): 74) describes.¹² Western advertisers fuelled the advertising boom in Russia. The new Russian advertisers did not have experience of working in a market economy, and tended to adopt and copy not only the Western production patterns and technologies; but also Western style and psychology.

The Role of Translation in Colonization

The role of translation cannot be underestimated in the ‘colonization’ of the Russian market. It can be seen in the marketing techniques used in Russia, and also the adverts which appeared in the Russian media.

Literature on Marketing

Although there had been work on advertising during the Soviet period (see Kostomarov 1971, Odincova 1973 and Koxtev and Rozental’ 1978, for example), it was now out-dated and not suitable for the new economic environment. With Russia not having an advertising genre compatible with the market economy, it was necessary to look elsewhere. Many Western advertising books have been translated into Russian, for example Wells, Barnett and Moriarty’s Advertising – Principles and Practice (first published in 1989) is available in a Russian edition. This means that many of the models on which Russian advertising is built have
been passed, almost directly, from those used in the West and therefore translation has played a defining role in the evolution of Russian advertising. There was a desire by the West to teach the Russians the ‘best way’ to advertise; Russian advertising was undeveloped and unsophisticated when compared to that in the West.

**Borrowed Models**

Just as a child copies its parents in order to learn new things, so Russia copied Western advertising practices. It borrowed Western advertising models and applied them wholesale to the burgeoning Russian advertising industry. Koxtev (1997: 70), for example, offers a four-part model of advertising content (slogan, introduction, content, conclusion) which is also apparent in many Western manuals on advertising (see Arens and Bovée 1994: 248, Rossiter and Percy 1997: 288-89, for example).

**Translation-Specific Issues**

The thirst for Western goods was so great that many Western adverts were introduced onto the Russian market in their original form, without any kind of translation or adaptation for the Russian culture. Even in 1996, advertisers were still finding that they could advertise entirely in a foreign language as an early copy of Cosmopolitan shows. In this edition of the magazine, fourteen adverts are produced in a language other than Russian. The most striking example is Guerlain’s Issima which has a detailed and lengthy description of the product completely in English.

Later, the Russian consumers became more discerning and wanted to know more about the products on which they were being invited to spend their money. The adverts began to be translated, though the translation was often poor and in television advertising the text was pronounced with English patterns of intonation (Ryazanova-Clarke 1996: 102). Since the standard of advertisement translation was so low, one would have expected more to have been written
about the translation of advertising into Russian, although, to my knowledge, there is only one pamphlet devoted solely to this subject: Rodnonova (1999) wrote a booklet dealing with translation issues, but even then only partially: *Anglijskaja i amerikanskaja reklama – istorija i osobennosti perevoda* ‘English and American advertising – history and peculiarities of translation’. The booklet, rather than offering any real advice, highlights the potential problems which could be faced by a translator of advertising material. The problems include the use of colours in different countries, trade names which carry different connotations in the target language, the translation of epithets, figurative language and word play. It is surprising that there appears to be no other work Translation played an important role in ensuring that advertising literature was available in Russian in order to ‘educate’ the Russians; the models which were used by the advertisers were translations of those to be found in the field of Western marketing and the translation of Western adverts into Russian also showed the Russian people how advertising was done in the West. Another major feature of this period was the visibility of the ‘Other’. The language of the adverts themselves was heavily influenced by non-Russian sources, English in particular.

**The Influence of English**

In the ‘colonial’ stage the ‘colonizer’ is extremely visible language. One of the most obvious ways the ‘colonizer’ shows its visibility is through the use of its language within the ‘colonized’ country. In Russia, English was having by far the most influence on Russian, being the chief source for new loan words into Russian.

**Lexical Borrowing**

The ‘Other’ first manifested itself through the complete transfer of English language adverts onto the Russian market. Although, subsequently most advertising texts were translated, English still featured heavily in Russian advertising. This stems from the added value that using English can bring to a
Russian advert, since English is often associated with the West and with better quality goods and services. Ryazanova-Clarke (1999: 221) suggests that there are four levels of lexical borrowing from English: anglicisms which existed previously in Russian and have been recently reactivated; loan words, borrowings and calques undergoing extensive acquisition; English elements in the initial stage of borrowing; and English language elements which have not been adjusted for the Russian system.

The high level of borrowing, both of lexical items and the models on which adverts are based led to criticism in Russian. The mechanical transfer of advertising was not successful in encouraging the target market to buy and much of the Russian population was left cold by advertising. Germogenova (1996: 14) blames advertisers who did not take into account the special characteristics of the Russian consumer. It seems that Russia was ready to move away from the ‘colonizer’ and, paradoxically, the 1998 Russian crisis was to help it achieve this.

The Russian Crisis

Despite a slight recovery in 1997, the Russian economy was not in good shape. Russia was little equipped to cope with the world changes in the prices of commodities on which its economy was dependent (such as energy). The result was a negative impact on both the external and fiscal balances which fuelled Russia’s financial crisis in the summer of 1998. The crisis culminated in the depreciation of the rouble, a debt repayment postponement by the government and a sharp deterioration of the standard of living for most of the population.

The small advertising industry dropped some seventy per cent in dollar terms following the crisis. Western corporations were major players in the Russian advertising market; but with the crisis many of them put their advertising campaigns on hold after the rouble devaluation on 17 August 1998 and companies who were importing their goods into Russia, such as Rowenta/Tefal, Samsung Electronics, Philips, Electrolux, Bosch/Siemans, pulled out. Those large Western companies who had been producing their goods in Russia, such
as Proctor & Gamble, Nestlé, Unilever, Cadbury and Coca Cola scaled down their levels of advertising in line with the sales, choosing for example to regulate the goods advertised according to the season, or to advertise in conjunction with another advertiser. Others moved away from more expensive forms of advertising such as television and concentrate on cheaper point-of-sale promotions.

The financial crisis, however, was advantageous for domestic producers: a reduction in the cost of advertising space meant that there were opportunities for domestic producers to promote their brands, which had not been possible due to the extortionate costs prior to 1998. Furthermore, as consumers felt the pinch, advertisers were compelled to produce adverts with more domestic appeal, concentrating on real product strengths, rather than lifestyle branding. With the market less saturated with foreign competitors, Russian producers began to realize the power and importance of advertising campaigns in a market economy and the demand for services such as consultation and PR increased.

This change in the balance of power and the ensuing change of focus in the Russian advertising industry has been reflected in the strategies employed for the translation of advertising material and have led Russia into another stage of evolution, the ‘postcolonial’ stage.

**The Postcolonial Stage**

The ‘postcolonial’ stage begins in 1998 following the Russian crisis, and continues into the present. The ‘colonizer’ is no longer the dominant player that it had been in the past, although its influence is still markedly present in the discourse of the ‘colonized’. This results in texts which, whilst being restrained by the dominant form, are searching and experimenting with new and more culturally applicable styles and models. ‘Postcolonial’ texts are often described as hybrids due to the culturo-linguistic layering which exists within them (Mehrez 1992: 121); and demonstrate a search for identity, where the ‘colonized’ assess their position in light of the experiences of ‘colonialism’.
In a metaphor employed by the Brazilian translation community, the postcolonial stage can also be likened to the process of cannibalism.

The colonizers and their language are devoured, their life force invigorating the devourers, but in a new purified and energized form that is appropriate to the needs of the native people. (Munday 2001: 136)

Applying this metaphor to the evolution of Russian advertising, we may say that the experience and the language of the multinational companies was devoured by Russian advertising agencies. All of this knowledge was taken in by the Russians, and digested. Its energy, however, was used in a way which was suitable to the Russian people, by producing advertising based in part on Western models but fulfilling the needs of the Russian consumers. This is a very positive way of viewing the colonization period, the colonized (here Russia) is no longer seen as the helpless victim; but as a powerful group fuelled by the colonizers.

**Hybridity and Translation**

A hybrid text can be seen as a text that results from a translation process which shows features that are perceived as ‘strange’ in the target culture. The text may not be fully established in a culture (due to this perceived ‘strangeness’); but it is accepted as it fulfils its intended purpose in a communicative situation (Schäffner and Adab 1997: 325). The result, then, is a text that shows features of both the ‘colonizer’ and the ‘colonized’.

**Hybrid Models**

According to Ryazanova-Clarke, it was possible in 1996 to observe the mutation of the Western genre resulting from contact with Russian culture (1996: 104). This is a clear example of the Western genre being used in a way which is more reflective of the Russian need. Pankratov, Baženov, Seregina et. al (2000: 36) take this observation even further when they suggest that there are even the
beginnings of actual ‘Russian Advertising’. This advertising differs from that produced by foreign firms as it takes the Russian mentality into account.

**Hybrid Texts**

The hybrid mix is also visible within the text itself, for example, the combinations of Latin script, transliterated foreign words and Russian within a single advert. Advertising images often show famous Western models and actresses, or environments that differ from the Russian norm; however there are some which employ those famous within the Russian Federation. One interesting example is an advert for La Grande Classique watch by Longines (*Marie Claire*: November 2001). The print advert carries the headline, in English:

{Elegance is an attitude}

The headline is accompanied by a smiling Oleg Men´šikov, who is famous throughout Russia for his theatre and cinema acting. The combination of the English text and the Russian star is unusual; usually the text is transferred rather than the image. This perhaps demonstrates Longines’ appreciation of the power the image often has over the text in contemporary advertising.

Another example of hybridity can be see in the ill-fated MMM adverts.\(^\text{14}\) The adverts were designed to resemble the Mexican and Brazilian television soap operas that are phenomenally popular in Russia. The creators of the adverts ‘took the *telenovela* and Russified it’ (Borenstein 1999: 55-56). The campaign was extremely successful, as the people appeared to be real for the viewing public; they were characters to whom the viewers could relate.

Only by experiencing the Western style of advertising could the Russians learn what was suitable for them and then adapt the adverts to their requirements. This assimilation of the ‘Other’ is a necessary in order to move to the next stage.
Towards Decolonization

The ‘decolonized’ stage in this model is some time in the future. It is a period where the former ‘colonized’ has found its own identity based on the past experiences of ‘colonial’ rule. In the ‘decolonized’ stage a level of self-awareness allows the former ‘colonized’ to act in such a way that it remains true to itself, not pressurised by outside influences. Referring to advertising and its translation specifically, ‘decolonization’ will have occurred when Russian advertising is created to reflect the needs of the Russian consumer, when Western adverts are translated with the Russian target market in mind and when Russian advertising exists on a level with the West’s and not subservient to it. Although I do not believe that Russia has entered the ‘decolonized’ stage there are indications that the Russians are beginning to think about loosening the ties with the West, at least where advertising is concerned.

Russian Marketing

Time brings experience and with experience come both knowledge and power. The growing number of advertising courses in Russian universities and texts written in Russian about advertising practice in the Russian Federation suggest that when the new generation finish their courses on advertising they will be more attuned to the specific characteristics of the Russian market.

Changes in the Russian Advertising Law

Changes to the Russian Advertising Law have also been introduced or proposed which will have far-reaching effects on the Russian advertising industry. Prior to April 2001, Russian companies were in a disadvantageous position when compared to their Western counterparts. A new law, however, allowed enterprises to increase their advertising expenditure. This should increase the
potential for domestic advertisers to launch campaigns that can compete with those of the more expensive Western corporations.

On the 23 May 2001 there was also the first reading of a bill to prevent the use of foreign languages in Russian advertising. If the bill is passed, foreign language advertising will be classed as nenadležaščaja ‘improper’ advertising. Infringing the law will lead to the company being fined. The clause has been introduced in the belief that Russians seldom understand foreign adverts and that this can be very dangerous when advertising products such as food, perfumes and goods for children.15 Although a negative reaction to this law has been voiced by Putin and the government, the fact that it has been drafted at all suggests the disaffection with the former ‘colonizer’.16

Concluding Remarks

When the Soviet Union first opened its doors to foreign investors it presented a vast untapped market, a relatively unique situation in today’s consumer culture. The country was ripe for ‘invasion’, and although other countries may feel dominated and invaded by multinational corporations, the effect is more marked within the Russian Federation, which went very rapidly from practically no advertising to an advertising overload. The postcolonial model charts the progression of the advertising genre and helps to explain why certain strategies have been employed for the translation of advertising texts at certain points in history. It also shows how translation strategies can change with time and that when charting strategies it is important to take into account a number of external factors, which are perhaps outside of the translator’s control. The translator can be constrained in all directions: the advertiser may insist that the advert be delivered in a certain style, or call for a very close rendering of the target text; the target text receiver may have very different expectations about the advertising genre or the product being advertised than the source receiver, thus forcing the translator to make fundamental changes to the advertising message; the economic and political environment within the target country could well affect the
means of advertising, for example a command versus a market economy, laws which restrict advertising or financial instability which reduce the potential market’s disposable income. These constraints mean that, when discussing the translation of advertising at least, the translator cannot be seen in isolation.

The ‘postcolonial’ model has demonstrated that in the evolution of advertising, and by extension its translation, the balance of power can shift with time and that the progression has, in the case of Russia, been cyclical. In the first period of the ‘precolonial’ stage, the power was in the hands of the people who could buy or not buy the products advertised in the free market, the power was limited as the availability of advertising was somewhat limited. During the second period of the ‘precolonial’ stage, the power was in the hands of the Communist government who controlled demand through its planned economy. In the ‘colonial’ stage the power rested in the hands of the multinational companies from outside of the country who enforced their own ideas of what was most suitable for the country. In the ‘postcolonial’ stage the power begins to return to the people, who start to exercise their right to shape their own needs and desires; buying what they need or want. In the ‘decolonized’ stage, the ideal, the power will be completely in the hands of the people, with no outside influence. Although advertising is undoubtedly powerful, the real power in the ‘postcolonial’ and ‘decolonized’ stages lies with the consumer. Consumers cannot be forced to buy as it is their choice whether they ignore or are persuaded by the advertisements. If an advert is to be successful, then, it is up to those who create advertising material (be it the advertisers or the advertising translators) to ensure that the message will appeal to the potential consumers.

A further advantage of the ‘postcolonial’ model is that it can help predict what will happen to the evolution of translation strategies. I have, therefore, suggested that Russian advertising is currently in the ‘postcolonial’ stage, although there are indications of a movement towards ‘decolonization’, more empirical research is needed in order to substantiate this hypothesis.
References


Germogenova, L. Ju. 1994. Èffektivnaja reklama v Rossii. Praktika i rekomendacii, Moscow: RusPartner Ltd.


Hanson, P. 1968. The Consumer in the Soviet Economy, London: Macmillan


Koxtev, N. N. and Rozental’, D. 1978. Slovo v reklame, Moscow: Èkonomika

Ljaxov, V. N. 1972. Sovetskij reklamnyj plakat 1917 – 1932, Moscow: Sovetskij xudožnik


It could be argued that we are talking here about globalization, where products are marketed in many different countries in the same way in order to lead to competitive advantage. However, globalization is only part of the changes which have occurred in the Russian advertising industry.

2 GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT – the gross domestic product plus the total of net income from abroad (COD 1990: 521)

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT – the total value of goods produced and services provided in a country in one year (COD 1990: 521)

3 It should be noted that the markets did not open with the fall of Communism after the 1991 coup; but that the market was becoming more open due to changes to Soviet economic policy under the leadership of Gorbachev. CROSS REF

4Fairclough (1989: 208 – 211) takes a different view and suggests that advertising itself can have colonizing tendencies within a specific country. He argues that the increase in the volume of advertising into contemporary society means that it has permeated all areas of our lives and that as a result it has been reshaping family life and other aspects of non-economic life.

5 Bassnet (1996: 21) has put forward an argument that translation itself can be likened to the colonial experience. The source/original holds the power while the copy/colony is disempowered. The colony is perceived as a perpetual translation and never quite an original.

6 STATE – an organized political community under one government; a commonwealth; a nation (COD 1990: 1190)

7 Vedomosti was the first Russian newspaper, which debuted on 13 January 1703.

8 The ‘secret speech’ was a closed meeting at the 20th Party Congress where Xruščev made a speech entitled ‘On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences’. During this speech Xruščev
criticised Stalin’s career, highlighting the arrests, killings and purges. Although supposedly secret, the speech was soon known throughout the Soviet bloc and in the West and was to seal the beginning of liberalisation in the Soviet Union.

9 This differs from Western economies where the retailer is not expected to know a great deal about creating demand. Demand is moulded by the producer by means of advertising (see Hason 1968: 191)

10 Contrast this with the worry about subliminal advertising in the West at the same time and highlighted by Vance Packard in his book, The Hidden Persuaders, first published in 1957.

11 Contrast this with the current situation where the Coca Cola corporation is now producing the Russian soft drink Kvas, and is planning to re-introduce the Soviet favourites Tarkhun and Buratino in order to raise its sales in Russia. The Coca Cola logo will not be prominent on the packaging of these new drinks. (Gentleman 2000: 23)

12 One cultural group believes ‘all men have the same skin / race / culture’; later it realises that, in fact, ‘some do not have the same skin / race / culture’ and it is the differences that make the Other so appealing. (Bhabha 2000 (1994): 74)

13 Cosmopolitan was first launched in Russia in 1994.

14 The MMM company mounted a campaign of television advertisements to promote their pyramid investment scheme. The adverts were a huge success, but the pyramid scheme collapsed causing many Russians to lose vast amounts of money. For more information about the campaign see Borenstein 1999.

15 Gramota. 2001. Za reklamu ne po-russkij – straf i daże ugolovnaja otvetstvennost’ (24-5-01) [online]. Russia: Èleks-al’fa.. Available at: <URL:http://www.gramota.ru/nws_arch.html?nn=124> [Accessed 30 May 2001]. It is possible, of course, to see these matters in terms of defending the status of Russian, or alternatively as a matter of consumer protection.


Karen Smith is a final-year postgraduate student in the department of Russian and Slavonic Studies at the University of Sheffield. She graduated from Bradford University in 1998 with a degree in French and Russian. She has since completed an MA in Translation Studies at Sheffield and is her current field of research is the translation of advertising texts for the Russian market. Email: RUP99KLM@sheffield.ac.uk.
When translating advertising texts, the translator’s main purpose is to transmit a message that would produce the same impact on almost all the readers of the target text. The translator should be concerned both with the translation of the source text elements and with transmitting the source text message. The creativity of the advertising language makes the translator become a text writer. This functional model of collective information can also be applied to advertising. In advertising, the sender is represented by the advertiser. The sender codifies the ad with the help of editors, designers, photographers, copywriters and researchers. The object of research is Russian-language advertising in printed media and on television. In the end of the article we made conclusions about groups of language means used for different stylistic devices in informative and comparative advertising texts. Analysis of stylistic features of modern informative and comparative advertising texts can be of great interest to specialists in the field of theoretical studies of modern advertising. Stylistic features of advertising texts of informative and comparative types. Abstract. The relevance of this article is related to the fact that nowadays advertising has a very strong impact both on the consumer market, political and cultural life of society, and on the language and its development as a system. Someone thinks that for efficient conversation good communicational skills and language proficiency (usually, in English) are enough. However, it's not is easy. Knowing and minding the specificity of another culture is very important and in this case the Lewis model comes in handy. According to the scientist, people from all over the world can be divided into 3 clear categories, based not on nationality or religion but on behaviour. He named this typologies as linear-active, multi-active and reactive. Here below I will show a picture, where features of every group are represented. Linear- a) Translation strategies apply to a process; b) They involve text-manipulation; c) They are goal-oriented; d) They are problem-centered; e) They are applied consciously; f) They are inter-subjective. Translation is a complicated task, during which the meaning of the source-language text should be conveyed to the target-language readers. In other words, translation can be defined as encoding the meaning and form in the target language by means of the decoded meaning and form of the source language. Different theorists state various definitions for translation. 2.1.2. The definition of general translation. When a translator translates a text literally, translation strategies may not be needed. Translation of religious texts from Greek into Old Church Slavonic New Testament, Psalter, the Prayer Book word-for-word rendering. Non-religious material began to appear, important translators were no longer anonymous Scholarly translations included topics in astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, geometry, anatomy, medicine. The Soviet Period The fact that the Soviet Union was a multinational state contributed to the growing demand for translation. Russian readers become familiar with the great epics from Georgia, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and elsewhere. Iakov Retsker ((1897 â€“â€” 1984 )) Translator, linguist, scholar Established the correlation between logical categories and transformations in translation.