

Transcreation in marketing: a corpus-based study of persuasion in optional shifts from English to Chinese

Nga-Ki Mavis Ho

To cite this article: Nga-Ki Mavis Ho (2020): Transcreation in marketing: a corpus-based study of persuasion in optional shifts from English to Chinese, Perspectives, DOI: [10.1080/0907676X.2020.1778046](https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2020.1778046)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2020.1778046>



© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 25 Jun 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 73



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Transcreation in marketing: a corpus-based study of persuasion in optional shifts from English to Chinese

Nga-Ki Mavis Ho 

School of Modern Languages and Cultures, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

ABSTRACT

This study proposes that creation in transcreation involves optional shifts, shifts made to achieve intended effects in translation. Drawing on Martin and White's Appraisal framework to address a parallel corpus of English marketing texts and Chinese translation, this study identifies the translation patterns of optional shifts in the form of evaluative epithets and compares the way the intended effect – persuasion – is achieved between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). Although both the ST and the TT share the same intended effect, persuasion in the Chinese translation is shown to differ significantly in three ways: 1) it is more noticeable because it has many more explicit epithets; 2) the level of persuasiveness is higher because, in the same category of epithets (e.g. newness, amount, time, quality and infinity), the TT relies more on maximally upscaled epithets and; 3) a more emotive approach is taken to persuasion because the TT relies more on Reaction epithets, the only type related to emotion. It is suggested that these results inform and reflect transcreation practice between English and Chinese in the genre of marketing.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 1 February 2019
Accepted 1 June 2020

KEYWORDS

Transcreation; optional shifts; Appraisal; persuasion; marketing; English-Chinese translation

1. Introduction

Based on the premise that the realisation of creation in transcreation involves optional shifts – that is, shifts made to achieve intended effects in translation (Calzada Pérez, 2007), this study aims to investigate how persuasion (the intended effect) is achieved in the Chinese translation of English marketing texts through the practice of transcreation, and specifically through the use of optional shifts.

In recent years the study of transcreation has gained momentum, and several concepts related to transcreation have taken shape and gained consensus among scholars. These include the notions that transcreation is a type of translation (Bernal-Merino, 2006; Gambier, 2016; Katan, 2016; Munday & Gambier, 2014; Tymoczko, 2005); that translation is creation (Bernal-Merino, 2008; Chaume, 2016; Munday & Gambier, 2014), especially translation in marketing texts (Torresi, 2010), that transcreation is context- and language-specific, which means when these two parameters change, what should or

CONTACT Nga-Ki Mavis Ho  mavis.ho@glasgow.ac.uk  <https://www.linkedin.com/in/ngakimavisho/>

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

should not be transcreated changes (Katan, 2016, 2019; Simmons et al., 2011; Spinzi et al., 2019). Although these studies acknowledge the prominence of creation, the exact nature of creation within ‘transcreation’ is rarely discussed. Furthermore, the boundary between what should, or should not, be transcreated remains an under-researched area. Most studies on the topic of transcreation have examined limited excerpted text samples, and the indicative function of these studies on what should be transcreated is arguable. Adopting the Appraisal framework in a parallel corpus of English and Chinese marketing texts, this study firstly identifies the patterns of optional shifts in the Chinese translation in the form of evaluative epithets (linguistic resources that achieve persuasion) and secondly reveals how persuasion (the intended effect) is achieved in the Chinese translation of English marketing texts through these epithets. Fulfilling these two objectives, in turn, suggests a model for determining the boundary between what should or should not be transcreated between English and Chinese in the genre of marketing texts.

Optional shifts, according to Calzada Pérez (2007) are translation shifts that are not necessary but that are choices made by the translator to relay intended effects. In other words, optional shifts are the original input of translators. This idea coincides with what is acknowledged as creation in the process of transcreation. In Benetello’s (2017) case study on transcreation, her Italian rendition of a slogan for an anti-virus software deviates so much from the English source text that it is to her the creation of a new original. Similarly, in transcreation skills training, Morón and Calvo (2018) acknowledge that interventional strategies such as omissions, additions and modifications are necessary to achieve what is expected in the TT. These are active interventional strategies by translators, and thus can be considered optional shifts.

Optional shifts are motivated by the intended effects in texts. The intended effects are governed by the genre of the text. The genre of the texts examined in this study is marketing. It can be widely agreed that the intended effect of marketing texts is to persuade readers to make purchases. To investigate the optional shifts used to achieve persuasion, this paper draws on Martin and White’s Appraisal framework (2005) because it can help to identify evaluative epithets, linguistic resources to achieve persuasion.

The next section introduces the Appraisal framework, and the way it enables the identification of evaluative epithets (optional shifts that achieve persuasion) and a systematic comparison of these epithets in the ST and the TT. It will be followed by a presentation of the data and method used in this study, and finally, the results will be revealed and discussed.

2. The Appraisal framework

The Appraisal framework is a system which can identify evaluative uses of language. These evaluative uses of language can be identified by evaluative epithets, which can be either explicit or implicit. An explicit epithet – an inscribed attitude, according to Martin and White (2005), is a clearly attitudinal lexical item that marks the evaluation in an utterance. Its positive or negative sense is unambiguous in any context. Words like ‘good’ or ‘bad’, for example, are explicit epithets. By contrast, an implicit epithet – an invoked attitude, according to Martin and White (2005) – can be any linguistic resources in texts that are considered attitudinal through the support of other factors that are intra-textual (e.g. metaphors, intra-textual references) or extra-textual (e.g. the reader’s knowledge, references outside

the current text). Its positive or negative sense is ambiguous when taken out of context. For example, the word ‘ageing’ in texts about wine appreciation has a positive meaning. When the target of evaluation is wine, ‘ageing’ refers to the wine’s potential vintage quality, something that indicates a higher economic value. However, in the cosmetics industry, when the target of evaluation is skin, ‘ageing’ will have a negative connotation.

Evaluative uses of language can also be categorised by the entity being evaluated. For example, the target of evaluation can be a person’s emotion, termed ‘Affect’ by Martin and White (2005); a person’s behaviour, termed ‘Judgement’ (Ibid.), or a concrete or abstract object, termed ‘Appreciation’ (Ibid.). Since the targets of evaluation in marketing texts are mostly products, which are objects, the investigation in this study will draw on the subsystem of Appreciation only. Appreciation is the assessment of the form, appearance, composition, impact, significance, etc., of human artefacts and natural objects by reference to aesthetic and non-aesthetic values (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2015). It consists of three types: Reaction, Composition and Valuation.

Reaction is the only type of Appreciation that is related to emotion. It refers to the sense of affection and concerns whether or not the target of evaluation possesses an attribute that can please the reader (‘Reaction: quality’, in Martin & White, 2005, p. 56). For example, in the phrase ‘a beautiful jacket’, ‘beautiful’ is a positive attribute of the jacket, which evokes a positive emotional response in readers, i.e. it pleases the readers. Other examples of explicit positive Reaction epithets include ‘okay’, ‘fine’, ‘good’, ‘lovely’, ‘splendid’, ‘appealing’, ‘enchanting’ and ‘welcome’ (Martin & White, 2005, p. 56). From these examples, it can be deduced that epithets of the pleasing qualities of objects are positive Reaction epithets – epithets that elicit positive emotion.

Composition relates to the structure of the target of evaluation in terms of its proportion and complexity (Martin & White, 2005). For example, ‘symmetrical’ and ‘simple’, as in ‘the pockets on this jacket are symmetrical and the cut of this jacket is simple’, are epithets of Composition, referring to the proportion and the complexity of the object respectively. Compared to Reaction epithets, the use of Composition epithets is a relatively more rational evaluative approach, because although the writer may impose her/his own perception of what an object is like, this evaluation is based on this object’s composition, rather than relying wholly on emotions, as with Reaction epithets. The one thing that Reaction and Composition epithets have in common is that instances of evaluation in both categories are based on aesthetic values, whether these aesthetic values provoke feelings – for example, ‘beautiful’ – or inform the structure of the target of evaluation – for example, ‘symmetrical, simple’.

Unlike Reaction and Composition epithets, those of Valuation are based on non-aesthetic values (Martin & White, 2005). In Valuation epithets, the target of evaluation is assessed against established societal norms, i.e. social worth (Hommerberg, 2011; Hommerberg & Don, 2015). However, it is important to understand that established norms can vary from society to society. Certain values may be considered to have worth in one social group but not in another (see the earlier example of the term ‘ageing’). Because of this, Valuation epithets are more sensitive to context than the other two kinds.

Evaluative epithets can also be graduated. Graduation in Appraisal means the upscaling or downscaling of the quantity or the intensity of quality in the text. For example, something that is good can be upscaled as ‘better’ or even ‘best’. ‘Best’ in this case is the maximally upscaled epithet.

3. Data and method

3.1. Corpus design

An English and Chinese parallel corpus in the marketing genre was compiled from 240 parallel articles in English and Chinese from the websites of the three best-selling luxury fashion brands: Chanel, Dior, and Louis Vuitton (see Appendix 1). This has 17,268 English words and 19,103 Chinese words (these are segmented from individual Chinese characters for a comparison based on the same units, i.e. words in the English language).

3.2. Annotation procedure

Manual annotation is a common practice in studies that have applied the Appraisal framework (Fuoli, 2015; Fuoli & Hommerberg, 2015). One of the main reasons for this practice is that there is no standard group of search words to identify implicit epithets for systematic tagging in concordance software such as WordSmith. Any linguistic resources in texts can be considered implicit epithets as long as they have potentially evaluative meanings. Because of this, manual annotation was adopted in this study, as follows:

- (1) Determine whether a lexical item or phrase is an instance of evaluation.
- (2) Determine whether this lexical item or phrase is an explicit or implicit epithet.
- (3) Determine which type of Appreciation epithet this is: Reaction, Composition or Valuation.
- (4) Determine whether the epithet is graduated (upscaled or downscaled), and the level of graduation (whether it is maximised or not)
- (5) Steps 1–4 are repeated between English and Chinese entries alternately – i.e. the English and the Chinese text data is coded simultaneously.

The reason for employing Step 5 is to enhance the reliability of the accumulated results, because it can reduce the likelihood of establishing a category which favours one corpus (highlighting the linguistic resources that only exist in one corpus as being more explicit or emotive).

4. Results and discussion

Table 1 below shows the distribution of evaluative epithets in the ST and the TT. The general pattern is that persuasion in the TT tends to be explicit, while that in the ST tends to be implicit.

Table 1. Frequency of evaluative epithets in the parallel corpus.

| | Explicit | | Implicit | |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | ST | TT | ST | TT |
| Appreciation | 538 | 1217 | 1369 | 1204 |
| Reaction | 241 | 503 | 67 | 66 |
| Composition | 61 | 201 | 242 | 162 |
| Valuation | 236 | 513 | 1060 | 976 |

After comparing the parallel corpus for epithets that are optional shifts only, three distinctive patterns emerged: persuasion in the Chinese translation is more noticeable, forceful, and emotive. These patterns are evidenced by the deployment of four kinds of evaluative epithets in the Chinese translation: explicit epithets, implicit epithets, graduation epithets and Reaction epithets. The following four subsections will detail and exemplify the shifts within each of these four types of epithets.

4.1. Translation of explicit epithets in Chinese marketing texts

As defined in Section 2, explicit epithets are clearly attitudinal lexical items that mark the evaluation in an utterance. The explicit epithets are 2.26 times more frequent in the Chinese translation than in the ST (1,217 in TT versus 538 in ST). The level of persuasion is more noticeable in the Chinese translation, because there are more explicit epithets. The occurrence of explicit epithets in the TT can be identified in three ways: those that are maintained as in the ST, those that are added in the TT, and those that are substituted by other lexical items which do not share the same meaning in the ST. There are no cases of omission (See Table 2 below).

Maintained translation strategy is not an optional shift, so it is not discussed here. Additions and substitutions are realised in three ways: 1) the TT adds more explicit epithets; 2) implicit epithets in the ST are substituted by explicit epithets in the TT and; 3) there are no evaluative epithets (implicit or explicit) in the ST, but explicit epithets are added in the TT. Example 1 below illustrates the first type of shift.

Example 1. Both the ST and the TT have explicit epithets, but the TT has additional ones:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ST | All walked down the catwalk in silver leather stilettos or precious embroidered thigh boots. |
| TT | 每位 模特 都 身着 银色 皮质 高跟鞋 或 饰 以 珍贵 刺绣 的 无尽 美腿 长靴， 一 袭 袭 优雅 身姿 在 镜 厅 中央 交映 折射， 流转 无尽 衣香 鬓影。 |
| Back translation | Every model wore silver leather heels or preciously embroidered endless beautiful legs long boots, one after another elegant figure in [the] mirror hall centre cross reflecting, revolving endless resplendent attire . |

(Target of evaluation: garments on models in a fashion show)

In this example, both the ST and the TT contain explicit epithets, but the TT has three more than the ST. The only explicit epithet in the ST, ‘precious’, is retained in the TT ‘珍贵’ [precious]. In addition, there are three other explicit epithets: ‘美腿’ [beautiful legs], shown by the pair of long boots; ‘优雅 身姿’ [an elegant figure] and ‘衣香鬓影’ [resplendent attire] of the models wearing the garments. All these lexical items encourage the reader to perceive the boots and garments favourably in terms of appearance. It can be argued that these appearance-focused explicit epithets are placed here to make the readers think that if they buy these items of resplendent attire, they will have beautiful legs and an elegant figure. Compared to the ST, the persuasive presentation of the products in the TT is clearly more noticeable.

Table 2. Translation of explicit epithets.

| Level of explicitness | No shift – maintained | Up-shifting by addition | Up-shifting by substitution (implicit in ST to explicit in TT) | Down-shifting by omission |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| | 538 | 514 | 165 | 0 |

Example 2. Substitutions from implicit epithets to explicit epithets:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ST | Its fluid texture corrects the skin's texture <u>without</u> feeling heavy |
| TT | 流畅 清透 的 质地 可 有效 美化 肌肤 纹理, <u>不会 使 肌肤 拥有 任何 厚重感。</u> |
| Back translation | smooth [and] clear 's texture can effectively beautify skin texture, <u>it will not make the skin have any heaviness.</u> |

(Target of evaluation: a makeup foundation)

In the ST, 'without' signals a contrast between 'Its fluid texture corrects the skin's texture' and 'feeling heavy'. It implies that these two functions of a makeup foundation, to correct the skin texture and not make the skin feel heavy, are not usually expected to be achieved at the same time. The word 'without' here highlights this unexpectedness and is an implicit epithet: 'without' links two features of the product together to emphasise the quality of the product.

The linkage created by 'without' in the ST, a preposition with a property of counter-expectancy, is not apparent in the TT. Instead, the two clauses separated by the commas in the TT seem to have an additive, or even causal, relation. The first clause is loaded with four explicit epithets: '流畅' [smooth], '清透' [clear], '有效' [effectively] and '美化' [beautify]. The second clause, '不会使肌肤拥有任何厚重感' [it will not make the skin have any heaviness], can be regarded as an additional attribute of the foundation. It can be considered an implicit epithet because this clause has no explicit epithets. Its evaluative meaning can be invoked by intra-textual references from the first clause because both clauses share the same target of evaluation – the second clause can be considered positively due to its anaphoric linkage to the four explicit epithets in the first clause.

In this example, the persuasion in the ST relies heavily on the knowledge of the reader. Only readers who are familiar with cosmetic products will know that a foundation that does not make the skin feel heavy but also has a coverage that can 'correct the skin's texture' is regarded as a high-quality foundation. In the Chinese translation, it can be seen that the persuasion is made much more obvious by the addition of explicit epithets, so that there is no ambiguity about the quality of this makeup foundation.

This example also reveals that evaluation of the quality of an entity as a product can be implied on a grammatical level in English by means of a preposition. Evaluation in the Chinese TT, on the other hand, is more widely and explicitly expressed on a lexical level (with 2.26 times more explicit epithets than the ST).

Example 3. No evaluative epithets in the ST, but explicit epithets in the TT:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ST | Fall-Winter 2017/18 Ready-to-Wear collection |
| TT | 2017/18 秋 冬 高级 成衣 系列 |
| Back translation | 2017/18 Winter Fall High-Class/Premium Ready-to-Wear collection |

(Target of evaluation: title of a fashion collection)

Here, there is an absence of any kind of evaluation in the ST, but the TT is marked by '高级' [high class/premium], an explicit epithet. This optional shift not only demonstrates that the persuasion used in the Chinese TT is more apparent. Given that whenever '成衣系列' [Ready-to-Wear collection] appears, '高级' [high class/premium] is added to it in the parallel corpus, it can be suggested that this optional shift is the norm in the

transcreation practice of luxury fashion marketing texts from English into Chinese. This shows that the boundary of what should, or should not, be transcreated in a certain genre between two languages can be specified through corpus-based discourse analysis with the identification of evaluative epithets by application of the Appraisal framework.

4.2. Translation of implicit epithets in Chinese marketing texts

Implicit epithets, as mentioned above, are linguistic resources in texts that are considered attitudinal through the support of other intra- or extra-textual factors (see Section 2). Table 3 shows the distribution of implicit epithets in the TT.

Apart from the shifts of explicit epithets, the shifts from more implicit epithets in the ST to less implicit epithets in the TT also demonstrate a more distinct level of persuasion in the Chinese translation. Example 4 below illustrates this.

Example 4. The ST is implicit; the TT is less implicit:

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ST | Melting onto the lips, it provides an intense colour in a single application |
| TT | 唇膏 仿佛 奶油 般 在 唇 上 融化， 轻轻 一 抹， 便 可 留下 浓郁 色彩 |
| Back translation | Lipstick like cream melting on the lips, lightly apply once, then can leave intense colour |
| (Target of evaluation: a lipstick) | |

Only implicit epithets are found in the ST and the TT here. In the first clause, the TT has a more explicit evaluation. ‘唇膏 仿佛 奶油 般 在 唇 上 融化’ [Lipstick like cream melting on the lips] is a metaphor: it creates a mental image of a cream-like texture. A lipstick that has a texture like cream can be perceived as positive in general. In comparison, ‘Melting onto the lips’, in the ST, is comparatively more neutral.

Like Example 2, a potentially positive evaluation of the quality of the product in the ST can be derived from a counter-expectancy, because ‘it provides an intense colour in a single application’ implies that it may be unusual to obtain an intense colour with only one application of a lipstick. In the TT, the corresponding phrase ‘轻轻 一 抹， 便 可 留下 浓郁 色彩’ [lightly apply once, then can leave intense colour] offers a similar contrast to that in the ST. When examined more closely, the contrast in the TT is sharper. In the TT, ‘轻轻’ [lightly] is added to emphasise further how easy it is to obtain intense colour with the product. Compared to the ST, not only does it only need to be applied once – it can even be applied lightly.

If the effect of evaluation caused by the two additions in the TT, the metaphor in the first clause and ‘轻轻’ [lightly] in the second clause, is considered together, although they are not explicit epithets, these two additions in the TT contribute to the persuasiveness of the more positive perception of the product in Chinese.

All these examples suggest that Chinese readers may need more obvious clues to be persuaded than English readers, that the act of transcreation – these optional shifts of

Table 3. Translation of implicit epithets.

| Level of explicitness | Maintained | Up-shifting by substitution (less implicit) | Down-shifting by substitution (more implicit) | Up-shifting by omission |
|-----------------------|------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| | 885 | 278 | 30 | 11 |

explicit or less implicit epithets – is necessary to achieve the intended effect of persuasion in the target audience.

4.3. Translation of graduation epithets in Chinese marketing texts

Graduation, as explained earlier, is the upscaling or downscaling of the quantity or the intensity of quality in the text. During the investigation, all the graduation epithets in the ST and the TT were counted. The level of graduation was either maintained or upscaled in the TT. No downscaled shifts were found in the TT. In the upscaled shifts, the greatest difference is that the TT contains 1.94 times the number of epithets that are maximally upscaled. It is argued that maximally upscaled graduation epithets can invoke a higher level of persuasion than those that are at a lower scale (e.g. good versus best) because maximisation implies the highest degree of something, and the targets of evaluation are portrayed as the best or the maximum quality of the same kind. The use of maximally upscaled graduation epithets can convey the value of distinctiveness, which is an important value in differentiating a product from its competitors.

After a more detailed categorical examination, five types of graduation epithets were identified as the most maximally upscaled in the TT. They are graduation epithets of newness (e.g. ‘brand-new’), amount (e.g. ‘full of’), time (e.g. ‘classic’, ‘forever’, ‘eternal’), quality (e.g. ‘perfect’, ‘impeccable’), and infinity (e.g. ‘perpetual’, ‘endless’). The occurrence of these maximally upscaled epithets in the TT is at least more than doubled when compared to the ST (see Table 4 below).

Table 4 shows that the TT has 70 more maximised epithets relating to newness than the ST. The distribution of shift patterns in these epithets is illustrated in Table 5. As noted earlier, a higher number of maximally upscaled graduation epithets means a higher level of persuasion. The TT thus possesses a higher level of persuasion, i.e. more forceful. A similar distribution of shift patterns was identified in the other four types of maximised graduation epithets, where the overall additions of these epithets contributed to a higher level of persuasion in the Chinese TT. As mentioned above, the use of maximally upscaled graduation epithets can convey the value of distinctiveness: the pattern in the TT thus

Table 4. Maximally upscaled graduation epithets.

| Maximisation in Graduation | ST | TT |
|----------------------------|----|-----|
| Newness | 42 | 112 |
| Amount | 1 | 35 |
| Time | 23 | 56 |
| Quality | 23 | 53 |
| Infinity | 11 | 26 |

Table 5. Translation of graduation epithets of newness.

| ST | TT | Total: 70 |
|--|----------------------------|-----------|
| Epithets related to newness but not maximised e.g. new | 全新/嶄新 | 33 |
| Other explicit epithets e.g. unique | [brand-new/completely new] | 5 |
| Other implicit epithets e.g. revisit | | 5 |
| No evaluation | | 27 |

suggests that maximisation may be a more common way to highlight distinctiveness in Chinese marketing texts.

4.4. Translation of Reaction epithets in Chinese marketing texts

As mentioned in section 2, Reaction is the only form of Appreciation that is related to emotion, because its epithets can elicit a pleasant feeling based on an object’s aesthetic value in the reader (See Section 2 for examples of explicit Reaction epithets). The TT has 2.09 times more explicit Reaction epithets than the ST (503 in the TT versus 241 in the ST, see Table 1); the persuasion embodied in the TT thus adopts a more emotive approach than that in the ST. Two translation strategies are identified as the reason for this higher frequency of explicit Reaction epithets in the TT: 1) additions of Reaction epithets in the TT, and 2) substitutions from Composition or Valuation epithets (non-emotive) in the ST to Reaction epithets in the TT. Examples 5 and 6 below illustrate these two translation strategies respectively.

Example 5. The TT is more emotive by additions:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| ST | ... Hollywood stars enthusiastically embraced his vision of elegance . |
| TT | ... 众多好莱坞明星也对其作品的优雅风范倾心不已。 |
| Back translation | ... many Hollywood stars also to his work’s elegant graceful demeanour fell so much in love. |

(Target of evaluation: the work of a fashion designer)

The word ‘elegance’ in the ST is a Reaction epithet, as it is an attribute that elicits pleasant feeling.¹ It is retained in the TT: ‘优雅’ [elegant/elegance] (no distinction between word forms in Chinese). In addition, the noun ‘风范’ [graceful demeanour] is added, to modify ‘优雅’ [elegant] and make it an adjective. ‘风范’ [graceful demeanour] is also a Reaction epithet. The addition of ‘风范’ [graceful demeanour] is an optional shift because the TT can be rendered as ‘优雅 的作品’ [elegant work] without compromising the syntax in Chinese or the meaning in the ST. Since there are two Reaction epithets in the TT compared with one in the ST, the persuasion employed in the TT is more emotive. This kind of addition is common. In the parallel corpus, Chinese nouns that have the meaning of demeanour, vibe or charm, such as ‘风姿’ [charm/graceful demeanour], ‘风情’ [charming vibe], ‘风范’ [graceful demeanour], 风采 [elegant demeanour], ‘风韵’ [charm/graceful demeanour], and ‘风度翩翩’ [dapper/graceful male demeanour], appear always to come after another explicit epithet in the form of an adjective in the Chinese translation.

Example 6. The TT is more emotive by substitutions:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| ST | Removable straps allow them to be carried by hand, over the shoulder, cross-body or on the elbow, for looks that go from casual to formal, but always chic . |
| TT | 可脱卸包带设计, 方便手提、肩背、斜挎或手挎, 无论休闲或正装造型, 均亮丽优雅。 |
| Back translation | Removable strap design, easy to hand carry, shoulder carry, cross-body carry or elbow carry, no matter casual or formal looks, both brightly beautiful [and] elegant . |

(Target of evaluation: looks created by carrying a bag)

Although the word ‘chic’ can be argued as a Reaction epithet as its meaning is similar to ‘elegant’, the value of modernity in ‘chic’ is more prominent. Since what is chic or

fashionable is governed by social norms, which can vary from one culture to another, the word ‘chic’ is categorised as a Valuation epithet rather than a Reaction epithet.

In this example, it can be interpreted that the handbag in the ST may be considered chic in the source culture, but this is not necessarily the case in the target culture. This Valuation epithet is changed to two Reaction epithets: 亮丽 [brightly beautiful] 优雅 [elegant] in the TT. Since Valuation epithets are not related to emotion, the evaluation marked by the Reaction epithets in the TT here is more emotive. Double Reaction epithets are common in the TT and contribute to its high level of emotiveness compared with that of the ST.

5. Conclusion

By taking a corpus-based analysis that draws on optional shifts in the form of evaluative epithets in the Appraisal framework, this paper reveals how persuasion (the intended effect) is achieved in the Chinese translation of English marketing texts. Although the ST and the TT share the same intended effect, persuasion in the Chinese translation differs in three ways: 1) it is more noticeable because it has many more explicit epithets; 2) the level of persuasiveness is higher, and thus the persuasion more forceful, because, in the same category of epithets (e.g. newness, amount, time, quality and infinity), the TT has a greater number of maximally upscaled epithets; and 3) the persuasion takes a more emotive approach because the TT has more Reaction epithets, the only type that is related to emotion. These results inform transcreation practice between English and Chinese in the field of marketing.

This study further confirms other established notions mentioned earlier: that transcreation is a type of translation (Bernal-Merino, 2006; Gambier, 2016; Katan, 2016; Munday & Gambier, 2014; Tymoczko, 2005), and that translation is creation (Bernal-Merino, 2008; Chaume, 2016; Munday & Gambier, 2014; Torresi, 2010); these two notions can be supported by the premise that this paper newly proves, that creation in transcreation involves optional shifts in translation. Section 4 shows that optional shifts are found in the TT, and since they result from original human input they can be considered creation. Transcreation may arguably have more optional shifts (i.e. more creation), but in a language transfer, wherever there are optional shifts there will certainly be non-optional shifts (see Calzada Pérez, 2007). Having both optional and non-optional shifts is the embodiment of translation.

The notion that transcreation is language-specific (Katan, 2016, 2019; Simmons et al., 2011; Spinzi et al., 2019) has been verified through an examination of the different strategies of persuasion in the English ST and the Chinese translation. Further Appraisal analyses could usefully be done in the genre of marketing texts, in different language pairs, in order to further verify that transcreation is language-specific. That transcreation is context-specific (Ibid.) is supported by the fact that the intended effects, and in turn the optional shifts to achieve these effects, vary from one context to another. Because of this, the findings in this paper can only represent to a certain degree transcreation practice between English and Chinese in the genre of marketing texts. More research is needed on the intended effects in other creative genres – for example, literary texts. However, while the Appreciation and the Graduation systems in Martin and White’s Appraisal framework (2005) are applicable to the study of marketing texts, as they identify the evaluative linguistic

resources that achieve the intended effect in this genre, the study of literary transcreation may call for another system in the same framework, or a different framework, as the context changes and the intended effects do not necessarily involve persuasion.

Finally, this corpus-based study demonstrates that the boundary between what should or should not be transcreated in a particular genre between two languages can be identified systematically. A corpus-based analysis like this one, as Li and Pan (2020, p. 15) point out, ‘helps reveal repeated patterns in translation discourses’. This is significant for translation studies, especially studies of transcreation, because current transcreation studies, as identified at the beginning of this paper, have only focused on limited samples of excerpted texts.

Note

1. The word ‘elegant’ is categorised as a Composition epithet in Martin and White’s (2005, p. 56) book but it seems more appropriate to categorise it as a Reaction epithet in the context of this study: luxury fashion, because the meaning of ‘elegant’ in the luxury fashion context is usually in the sense of appearance than the composition of an entity. For a more detailed explanation, see Ho (2019, pp. 80–81, the section on Reaction:Quality).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Nga-Ki Mavis Ho is a Lecturer in Translation Studies at the University of Glasgow. She also teaches at Nankai University in Tianjin, China. She received an MSc in Chinese-English Interpreting and Translating in 2015 and was awarded her PhD in Translation Studies and Linguistics in 2019 (both at Heriot-Watt University, UK). She currently studies translation phenomena of transcreation and academic translation with the applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics, especially the Appraisal framework. She is a member of the *Target* Online Multilingual Advisory Board, where she reviews and produces Chinese translations for this journal. She has been an active practitioner in translation and interpreting since 2013, specialises in conference interpreting (simultaneous and consecutive), court interpreting, business liaison interpreting and marketing transcreation.

ORCID

Nga-Ki Mavis Ho  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3840-8776>

References

- Benetello, C. (2017). Transcreation as the creation of a new original. *Exploring Creativity in Translation Across Cultures*, December, 237–247. <https://doi.org/10.4399/978882550960117>
- Bernal-Merino, M. (2006). On the translation of video games. *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialized Translation*, 6, 22–26. https://www.jostrans.org/issue06/art_bernal.php
- Bernal-Merino, M. (2008). Creativity in the translation of video games. *Quaderns de Filologia. Estudis Literaris*, 8(2008), 57–70. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/71017603.pdf>
- Calzada Pérez, M. (2007). *Transitivity in translating: The interdependence of texture and context*. Peter Lang.

- Chaume, F. (2016). Audiovisual translation trends: Growing diversity, choice, and enhanced localization. In A. Esser, I. R. Smith, & B.-M. Miguel Á (Eds.), *Media Across Borders: Localising TV, Film and Video Games* (pp. 68–84). Routledge.
- Fuoli, M. (2015). A stepwise method for annotating APPRAISAL. *Functions of Language*, 25(2), 229–258. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fol.15016.fuo>
- Fuoli, M., & Hommerberg, C. (2015). Optimising transparency, reliability and replicability: Annotation principles and inter-coder agreement in the quantification of evaluative expressions. *Corpora*, 10(3), 315–349. <https://doi.org/10.3366/cor.2015.0080>
- Gambier, Y. (2016). Rapid and radical changes in translation and translation studies. *International Journal of Communication*, 10(2016), 887–906. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/3824/1570>
- Ho, N.-K. M. (2019). *Evaluation in English and Chinese marketing communications: An adaptation of the Appraisal framework for the genre of luxury fashion promotional texts* [PhD thesis]. Heriot-Watt University.
- Hommerberg, C. (2011). *Persuasiveness in the discourse of wine: The rhetoric of Robert Parker* [PhD thesis]. Linnaeus University.
- Hommerberg, C., & Don, A. (2015). Appraisal and the language of wine appreciation: A critical discussion of the potential of the appraisal framework as a tool to analyse specialised genres. *Functions of Language*, 22(2), 161–191. <https://doi.org/10.1075/fol.22.2.01hom>
- Katan, D. (2016). Translation at the cross-roads: Time for the transcreational turn? *Perspectives*, 34(3), 365–381. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2015.1016049>
- Katan, D. (2019). Translatere or transcreate: In theory and in practice, and by whom. In C. Spinzi, A. Rizzo, & M. L. Zummo (Eds.), *Translation or transcreation?: Discourses, texts and visuals* (pp. 15–38). Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Li, T., & Pan, F. (2020). Reshaping China's image: A corpus-based analysis of the English translation of Chinese political discourse. *Perspectives*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2020.1727540>
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Morón, M., & Calvo, E. (2018). Introducing transcreation skills in translator training contexts: A situated project-based approach. *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialized Translation*, 29, 126–148. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f68b/74a1062126ecfd6f3e084d2059cb662bd545.pdf>
- Munday, J., & Gambier, Y. (2014). A conversation between Yves Gambier and Jeremy Munday about transcreation and the future of the professions. *Cultus. Journal of Intercultural Mediation and Communication*, 7, 20–36. http://www.cultusjournal.com/files/Archives/conversation_gambier_munday_3_p.pdf
- Simmons, V. N., Quinn, G., Litvin, E. B., Rojas, A., Jimenez, J., Castro, E., Meade, C. D., & Brandon, T. H. (2011). Transcreation of validated smoking relapse-prevention booklets for use with Hispanic populations. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, 22(3), 886–893. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hpu.2011.0091>
- Spinzi, C., Rizzo, A., & Zummo, M. L. (2019). *Translation or transcreation? Discourses, texts and visuals*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Torresi, I. (2010). *Translating promotional and advertising texts*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Tymoczko, M. (2005). Trajectories of research in translation studies. *Meta: Translators' Journal*, 50(4), 1082–1097. <https://doi.org/10.7202/012062ar>
- White, P. R. R. (2015). *The Appraisal Website*. Retrieved April 13, 2020, from <http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/>

Appendix

1 Primary data

Articles chosen as the text data of this study can be accessed on the following websites. To access the articles specifically between 6th January and 8th March 2017, the pages need to be scrolled to the right date as the most recent articles are always shown on top.

English:

<https://eu.louisvuitton.com/eng-e1/lv-now> (Louis Vuitton)

https://www.chanel.com/en_WW/fashion/news.html (Chanel)

https://www.dior.com/diormag/en_int (Dior)

Chinese:

<https://www.louisvuitton.cn/zhs-cn/lv-now> (Louis Vuitton)

https://www.chanel.com/zh_CN/fashion/news.html (Chanel)

https://www.dior.cn/diormag/zh_cn (Dior)

(All links were last accessed on 8th March 2019)