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The headache of translating advertisements: to localize or to standardize?

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1. Introduction

The past fifty years have been a tumultuous time in the timeline of the world. Globalization has forced businesses to reshape their processes in order to keep up with a changing reality. This has led to many positive developments. “The global economic boom of the 1990s has been one of the drivers for efficiency, productivity and open, unregulated markets that has swept the world” (Ghauri & Cateora, 2014: 4). As with many types of change, however, new challenges have eventually been discovered as a result. One of these challenges is what this thesis will cover, explain, and attempt to answer, namely: how do you market the same product to several different consumer groups, without alienating one of them?

It has also been questioned whether there is an underlying need to localize (or adapt) processes in this manner in the first place. As Levitt writes: “Gone are accustomed differences in national or regional preference. Gone are the days when a company could sell last year’s models […] in the less-developed world. […] The globalization of markets is at hand” (Levitt, 1983: 92).

The question whether to operate along the standardization model as opposed to the localization approach is one that can be perceived as quite fascinating. Both ideas have their strengths and weaknesses, and it can naturally be difficult to know which one is more suitable for one’s company’s operations from the get-go (for more, see chapter 2). This is another issue that will be discussed in this thesis. The challenge of selecting a suitable marketing strategy is something advertisers in bicultural areas are routinely struck by. There is no evidence to be found of the existence of a “industry standard” way of dealing with this.

Every organization faces different types of scenarios with different variables and influences. Because of this reality, the study consists of a theoretical part in which past research and current debates within the subject are reviewed and explained. This literature review consists of three different parts, each one given its own chapter.

The debate regarding whether to standardize or to localize is dealt with in chapter 2. Some key issues: how different types of products suit a specific standardization (or localization) model better (or worse) than others, how culture plays a vital part in the shaping of one’s marketing strategy, what tools marketers have at their disposal for categorizing and comparing different
cultures with each other and some relevant information regarding previous studies on standardization and localization.

Chapter 3 discusses the advertising industry in international organizations. This chapter builds upon the previous chapter, creating another layer of information on the standardization layer, and steering the topic of standardization or localization towards an advertising context. Examples are brought up with failures and successes, followed by a review of different advertising styles around the world. Lastly, the chapter discusses some limitations advertising has in various regions of the world.

Chapter 4 discusses the concept of translating. First, the school of Translation Studies is presented, followed by different styles of translating. Relevant topics regarding advertising, such as the translation of brands, visuals, and different communication styles, are examined. Lastly, a brief discussion regarding the notion of equivalence in translation studies is undertaken, followed by a review of idioms and metaphors in translation.

Chapter 5 discusses the method used in this study. The decision to base the empirical part of the study on interviews was made at an early stage, with the assumption that the highest level of relevant data could be obtained through these means. This thought will be expanded upon in subchapter 5.2.

The empirical findings are presented and analyzed in chapter 6. The thesis will conclude with a discussion of the results and a summary of the study as a whole (chapter 7). A condensed version of the study written in Swedish can be found at the end of the thesis.

1.1 Problem definition

It seems obvious that, for advertisers, the goal is to reach as many people in the chosen target audience as possible. However, problems arise when some in the target audience speak a different language than others. How does one create a clear and solid message to everyone in the target audience without sacrificing the original quality of the message?

When an employee working at the marketing department of an organization creates a new ad campaign, the initial idea of the campaign is most likely conceived in a specific language. The
translation into other languages is, thus, an afterthought or an attempt to make the original message understood for other cultures, without weakening the statement. How is this done consistently? Is it even a realistic plausibility, or would it perhaps be more productive to write advertisements in different languages, and not even try to translate them? Would that not ensure a more specific and targeted advertisement?

1.2 Objective and research questions

The objective of the study is to explore how international travel agencies create advertisements, and how they determine what ad is shown in what areas. Furthermore, it will attempt to map out what the actual translation process looks like in the interviewed companies. It stands to reason that no major conclusions can be drawn from this, but it can serve as one of the potential solutions to advertisement translation.

The first research question is:

Q1: How do travel agencies differentiate between target groups?

The answers to this question can give us some insight into the minds of marketers in travel agencies, and further illustrate how these companies have chosen to tackle the problem. The second research question posed, is to find out how (or if at all) travel agencies translate their advertisements. It can be seen as an attractive and economical option to simply outsource the translation tasks to third parties. Depending on the size of the company, translating advertisements can also be seen as an afterthought, and done by someone at the office who has the language proficiency needed for the tasks.

Thus, the second research question is:

Q2: What does the translation process look like in travel agencies? Why?

The third question is more abstract and can be quite difficult to provide straight answers to. How do advertisers in travel agencies perceive the notion of standardization versus localization, in terms of advertisements? Certainly, both options have their strengths and weaknesses, but what might be interesting to see is what the respondents have to say about this specific topic.
Thus, the third research question is:

Q3: Do travel agencies generally prefer to standardize their advertisements in favor of localize the advertisements to the target audience?

1.3 Delimitations

Limitations of the study are necessary in order to ensure that it will be clear and specific. Hence, the thesis will focus on international travel agencies operating both in Finland, and in other Nordic countries. This industry was chosen partly because I had a contact in one of these companies, who was willing to participate in an interview, but also because of how important B2C advertising is for these types of companies.

I prioritized interviewing similar types of companies, since a key component of the study is advertising. It can be assumed that different types of advertising demand different styles of translation. For instance, in more technical industries the importance is in translating the texts correctly, so that the technical information is understood regardless of language. In other industries, however, where the focus might lie more on selling perceived benefits, translators could be allowed to work according to more lenient guidelines. If this study had interviewed companies selling computer parts but also companies selling jewelry, the results could easily have been seen as inconclusive. When one focuses on similar types of companies, this problem is sidestepped completely. To stay within the scope of the study, the interviews are conducted with the research questions in mind.
1.4 Key Concepts

This part of the thesis will attempt to describe and explain some of the key components relating to the study. This is done to help the reader understand the core principles of the study and to make the reading of the study as effortless as possible.

1.4.1 Translation

Translation can refer to the general subject field, the product or the process. “The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)” (Munday, 2001: 5).

1.4.2 Standardization and localization

Ghauri & Cateora define standardization as “when the same products are produced for many markets” (2006:310). The authors continue to state that “product standardization leads to production economies and other savings that permit profits at prices that make a product attractive to the global market” (ibid.:310). In other words, standardization is cheaper than the alternative, leading to cheaper prices and more customers.

The other option, localization (or adaptation/local responsiveness) could almost be defined as the opposite to standardization. “Substantial cultural variation among countries dictates a need for differentiated products to accommodate the uniqueness of cultural norms and product use patterns” (ibid.: 310). Because cultures are different, the marketing messages and the products itself might benefit from a localized version depending on the particular market.

1.5 Layout of the study

Chapter 2 begins by discussing the benefits and drawbacks of both standardization and localization and goes on to further illustrate the daily dilemma of any marketing department operating in bilingual geographical locations. This topic is discussed throughout the thesis and
is one of the cornerstones of the study. Without reading about this topic, the implications of the empirical findings can easily be misunderstood.

Advertising in international organizations is also discussed, since it affects and dictates how marketing is traditionally done in circumstances like these (chapter 3). Some known marketing blunders – which can perhaps be attributed to a lack of understanding of the concepts presented in chapters 2 to 4 - are also mentioned in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 reviews the challenges translators face when working with texts. This explains one potential reason for why quality advertisements can even cause an adverse effect to consumers when translations fail. Furthermore, not being aware of this might raise the risk of trivializing the importance and inconsistent nature of translation work.

The empirical part of the study will subsequently be presented, starting with the research method in chapter 5. Following the research method is the discussion and analysis of the findings of the research (chapter 6), and lastly a conclusion of the empirical part (chapter 7). Swedish speakers can read a concise summary of the study in chapter 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Key ideas &amp; topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The idea of standardizing or/and localizing one’s marketing</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What advertising in international organizations can look like, and how it can go wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The myriad of diverse and unique challenges translators face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Presenting and explaining the research method</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Presenting and analyzing the empirical results</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Summarizing the whole study</td>
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</tbody>
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As the table above attempts to illustrate, it can be quite difficult to understand chapters 5 to 7 at a deeper level if one has not read chapters 2 to 4.
2. To standardize or to localize

The question whether to standardize or to localize one’s message from source material to target material is met with many different theories and views. Ruben argues that culture is “directly and indirectly the product of communication” (1989: 141). Pardo-del-val et al. (2014) claim that some of the key benefits of standardization are cost minimization, brand image, and innovation. They continue by discussing how localization could be used in order to attain a higher adaptation to local markets and also raise the entrepreneurial spirit of local franchisees (Pardo-del-val et al, 2014). Furthermore, they argue that the challenge lies in balancing standardization (what franchisers prefer) with localization (what franchisees prefer).

The modern debate on standardization/localization has its origins in texts such as The Globalization of Markets (Levitt, 1983) and Do You Really Have a Global Strategy? (Hamel & Prahalad, 1985). “The globalization of markets is at hand. With that, the multinational commercial world nears its end, and so does the multinational corporation” (Levitt, 1983: 92). Levitt asserts that Coca-Cola and Pepsi are globally standardized products, sold all over the world. He argues that this exemplifies a “drift toward the homogenization of the world and how companies distribute, finance, and price products.” (ibid: 93). Lastly, the author explains that customers will prefer the world-standardized products of a company if it forces costs and prices down while pushing quality and reliability up, regardless of what “conventional market research and even common sense may suggest about different national and regional tastes, preferences, needs, and institutions” (ibid: 94). Hamel & Prahalad inadvertently define the standardization/localization debate by explaining how “Philips and other MNCs need a global strategic perspective and a corresponding shift in the locus of strategic responsibility away from country organizations. That need conflicts with escalating demands by host governments for national responsiveness. The resulting organizational problems are complex” (Hamel & Prahalad, 1985: 145).

The need for standardization or localization can also depend on the type of product in question. Ghauri and Cateora (2014: 306) explain how modern products usually fit into the lifestyles of urban customers regardless of location. Studies have noticed a “commonality of preferences among population segments across countries” (ibid: 306). The authors explain how both American households and Italian households seek the same types of dishwashers. However,
the colours, sizes, voltage requirements, switches, and advertising of the dishwasher might need to be localized (ibid.). The question whether to standardize or localize services is one that should be discussed separately from the question whether to standardize or localize industrial and consumer goods (ibid: 334). This is because tangible products are physical objects (ie. cars, computers, furniture), and their value is embedded within their physical presence. Intangible products (ie. dry cleaning, hotel accommodation, airline passage), however, base their value on the result of a “process, performance or an occurrence that exists only while it is being created” (ibid: 333). This intangibility of services is what makes standardizing operations in the service industry more challenging, because of how virtually unique they are (ibid: 333).

Matusitz (2015) defines glocalization as the idea that in order to be successful in a new area, multinational corporations (MNCs) need to immerse themselves in the local culture by sometimes unconventional strategies. In France, for example, the traditional McDonald’s mascot Ronald McDonald is replaced by Asterix, a famous cartoon in the region (Blatter, 2018). Pardo-del-val et al. (2014) argue how Carrefour’s successful entrance into the Taiwanese market could largely be attributed to their glocalized strategy. Matusitz proposes that MNCs “have to adopt unconventional marketing techniques in this 21st-century global landscape” (2015: 91).

The findings of Sagan’s (2016) study indicate that product standardization is the preferred option in the Polish market. Sagan claims that two thirds of the studied products had been either entirely or extensively transferred from other markets into Poland, and products created exclusively for the Polish market were in the minority. The standardization degree of advertising in the Polish market was, however, lower than in the markets of the selected Western European countries in the study (ibid.: 30).

The fact that cultures are not fixed entities is something that creates a challenge for marketers. Wafler and Badir allude to this by arguing that “the decision to use standardization or adaptation as the product marketing strategy (PMS) is situation-specific and should be the outcome of thorough analysis of the relevant factors prevailing in a specific market at a specific time” (Wafler & Badir, 2017: 573). When discussing “situations” in this context, one should consider both external factors, such as customers, competitors, culture, social and political system; and internal factors such as resources, skills, experiences, competences, product characteristics, and brands (ibid.: 573).
Wafler et al. discuss how smaller organizations should emphasize localized approaches to new markets instead of standardized, as standardization requires “extensive marketing experience” (Wafler et al., 2017: 573). The authors explain how standardization is preferred when the product possesses a unique characteristic or is of a high-tech nature (ibid.: 573).

Past research does not give a clear answer as to which product marketing strategy (PMS) an organization should use. Some studies conclude that adapting marketing strategies to culturally distant foreign countries have negative effects on the performances of organizations, while others point to the opposite (Wafler et al., 2017: 573-574). Thus, the authors propose another solution: a mix of localization and standardization, which they label “semi-adaption”. “Semi-adaptation refers to a product that has been introduced to Vietnam from a neighbouring country” (ibid: 573).

Researchers are not in agreement whether a company’s performance is positively or negatively affected by standardization practices (Zou & Cavusgil, 2002). Furthermore, advancing in this particular field of interest can be a slow process, as it is close to impossible to compare the findings of studies with each other (ibid.).

2.1 Global Marketing Strategy

Three perspectives of global marketing strategy are mentioned by Zou and Cavusgil. The standardization perspective views a firm as pursuing a global marketing strategy if its marketing programs across different countries are standardized, particularly with regard to its product offering, promotional mix, price, and channel structure (Zou et al., 2002: 41). Proponents of this view think that the world is becoming more homogenous as a result of advances in the communications and transport industries respectively (ibid.).

Zou and Cavusgil discuss the consequences of a homogenous world and argue that low-priced and high-quality products are essential for establishing a competitive advantage. They claim that in order to create low-cost products (which enable lower prices), standardized products with standardized marketing programs are required. Thus, the benefits of standardization can include economies of scale in production and marketing as well as consistency in dealing with customers. Adopting standardization processes unconditionally, however, does not always
yield favourable results. Some researchers argue that standardization only works when the whole market and the competition exists on a global scale (Zou et al., 2002: 41).

Zou’s second perspective of global marketing strategy focuses on configuration and coordination. According to this view, global marketing strategy is “considered the means to exploit the synergies that exist across different country markets as well as the comparative advantages associated with various host countries” (Zou et al., 2002: 41). A firm must coordinate and configure their value-chain activities optimally, and a proper configuration leads to the firm being able to utilize location-specific comparative advantages (ibid: 41). According to the configuration perspective, an organization’s value-chain activities should be concentrated into specific areas in order to maximize efficiency. For example, concentrating product development into areas where highly trained engineers can be found and focusing on manufacturing in areas where labor costs are low (ibid.).

The third perspective is the integration view. This view emphasizes the need for participating in all the major global markets to gain competitive leverage, and to effectively integrate the organization’s competitive campaigns in these markets. Operations must be interdependent from each other in global industries, according to the integrated view, but occasions can arise when an operation in one market needs to be subsidized by funds from another operation in another market (Zou et al., 2002). Furthermore, it might be necessary to answer to competitive attacks in one area by counterattacking in another region (ibid.: 42). The purpose of the integrated view is to “integrate the firm’s competitive moves across the major markets in the world” (ibid.: 42).

It is difficult to decide which perspective works best as research on the topic is inconclusive. This can be explained by how the actual concept of global marketing strategy is understood differently by researchers. Thus, studies and findings are difficult to compare and review, as the same concept can be defined differently depending on the study (Zou et al., 2002). Furthermore, it is problematic to measure global marketing strategy, but also to measure it using similar techniques as other researchers. “When different measurement schemes are used, findings of different studies cannot be meaningfully compared” (ibid.: 42).
2.2 Culture

While an individual is heavily shaped by the surrounding culture, at the core, we are similar. Much like how computers can be programmed to perform many different tasks while still being built out of the same parts, humans also have a baseline out of which we are developed and shaped into virtually anything. A possible illustration of this baseline is suggested by Hagerty. He discusses Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as a theory of human motivation that is split into five different needs. The fulfilment of these needs follows a fixed path. If the former needs are not met, plenty of energy is spent on meeting them before moving on to the next. The first types of needs are physiological, i.e. air, water, and survival. When this need is fulfilled the following type of need is introduced: the need for safety. This is followed by the need of love and a sense of belonging, self-esteem and status, and lastly self-actualization (Hagerty, 1999: 249-250).

Ghauri and Cateora (2006) discuss how we consume, how our needs are prioritized, what wants we seek to satisfy, and how we satisfy them. The culture of the area we live in dictates these things. The authors argue that culture “is the human-made part of the human environment - the sum total of knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of their society” (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 74).

According to Hofstede (1991: 5), culture is always a collective phenomenon. Culture is always at least partly a shared experience with people who either live or lived in the same environment where it was learned. Furthermore, he claims that the collective programming of the mind is what separates members of one group from another (1991: 5). Ghauri and Cateora argue that marketers must be students of the culture and that a marketer is constantly dealing with the culture of the people. Thus, “whenever a promotional message is written, symbols recognizable and meaningful to the market (the culture) must be used” (2006: 76).

Hofstede believes that culture is something you learn, not something you inherit. Furthermore, it is challenging to spot the line between human nature and culture and culture and personality (1991: 5). Hofstede introduces the concept of cultural relativism - a cornerstone in every marketer’s set of beliefs. He postulates that “cultural relativism does not imply normlessness for oneself, nor for one’s society. It does call for suspending judgment when dealing with groups or societies different from one’s own.” (1991: 7).
Marketing activities in a culture must be culturally acceptable. The marketer’s efforts are also judged in a cultural context. The success of the marketer’s efforts is determined by how well those efforts interact with the culture (Ghauri et al. 2006: 77).

2.2.1 Hofstede’s cultural dimensions

Hofstede’s cultural dimensions is a study consisting of 11600 questionnaires in more than 50 countries (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 74). The study shows quantitatively how cultures differ from each other. The results are categorized into four conceptual dimensions: individualism/collectivism, power distance, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/region</th>
<th>Power distance</th>
<th>Uncertainty avoidance</th>
<th>Individualism</th>
<th>Masculinity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic countries</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>48</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
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</table>

*Table 1. Adaptation of Values of Hofstede’s cultural dimensions for 52 countries or regions (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 75-76)*

Usunier and Lee (2009) explain how Hofstede raised the issue of cultural relativity of management theories. He was among the first researchers who thought that management theory should be dependent on the region and culture in question, and that one style of management
might not necessarily work in one region even if it works perfectly in another. It could be argued that Hofstede’s cultural dimensions are proof of the importance of cultural relativity when it comes to management theory.

The values in Table 1 show how cultures vary in different countries. While the numbers do not tell much on their own, a lot is learnt by comparing them to other countries’ values. For instance, the power distance in Finland is 33 while it is 104 in Malaysia. A high number in the power distance dimension indicates a high power distance in the country (e.g. the employees of a company being afraid to raise an issue with their boss), while a low number points to a lower distance (e.g. employees preferring a boss with a consultative style than an autocratic one) (Hofstede, 1991: 27). This is important information for marketers who work in organizations active in both Finland and Malaysia. Furthermore, advertisers who plan ad campaigns in these countries benefit from knowing the difference in power distance between these two countries.

Uncertainty avoidance, another dimension seen in Hofstede’s cultural dimensions, educates us about anxiety levels in a country. In Greece, the country with the highest value in this dimension (112), it is socially acceptable to show one’s emotions, talk with the use of one’s hands and be more expressive. Denmark and Sweden receive low scores in this category. These countries are not as expressive, and one’s emotions and aggressions are not supposed to be shown. Stress can therefore not be released in activities and is something one should internalize. Furthermore, countries with strong uncertainty avoidance (e.g. Uruguay) are seen as busy, emotional, and active. Countries with weak uncertainty avoidance (e.g. Singapore) are perceived as quiet, easy-going, and controlled (Hofstede, 1991: 113-115).

The third dimension in Table 1 illustrates where countries are placed on the axis of individualism and collectivism. In the context of business, individualist countries (e.g. Sweden) think that business is done with a company, whereas collectivist countries (e.g. Saudi-Arabia) view business as something that you do with someone you have learned to trust (Hofstede, 1991: 50).

Hofstede elaborates on his view on collectivist societies by claiming that no political connotations are intended, and that the power of the group is the core of it all, instead of the power of the state. Societies where the individual interests triumph over the interests of the
collective, are societies Hofstede label “individual”. Hofstede explains how children perceive their first “group”, and how the children’s later dependence and relationship to their families differs. In collectivist societies, for instance, a lifelong loyalty is built between the person’s “ingroup” (the extended family), and breaking this loyalty is the worst thing one can do. Furthermore, a dependence relationship is formed between the person and the ingroup that is both practical and psychological. In individualist societies things are almost the opposite. When children grow up they think of themselves as individuals (as opposed to thinking they belong to a bigger group, as people in collectivist societies do). Children are also expected to leave the parental home as soon as they can. A healthy person in an individualist society is not expected to be dependent on a group, a direct opposite to members of a collectivist society (Hofstede, 1991: 50-51).

This can be illustrated further by returning to table 1. The country with the highest score, USA, is 85 points away from Guatemala, which is on the other side of the spectrum with a score of 6. Thus, the differences between two companies operating from these countries respectively would be apparent.

The fourth dimension in table 1 consists of masculinity on one pole and femininity on the other end. The reason for why these dimensions were named as such is clarified by Hofstede: “[...] this dimension is the only one on which the men and the women among the IBM employees scored consistently differently (except, as will be shown, in countries at the extreme feminine pole)” (Hofstede, 1991: 82).

Hofstede elaborates on the concepts of masculinity and femininity by explaining the difference in American and Dutch job interviewers. The former expects the applicants to behave confidently and assertively, while the latter expects the applicants to act in a modest and calm manner, being wary of overselling themselves by any way (Hofstede, 1991: 79-80). As seen in table 1, the Dutch received a score of 14 in this part of the table, while Americans had a score of 62.

Things that define the masculine pole are earnings (opportunity to make a lot of money), recognition (opportunity to get recognition when doing something well), advancement (opportunity to advance to higher-level positions and higher pay), and challenge (opportunity to work with challenging things that leave you with a sense of accomplishment when achieved).
Things that define the feminine pole are a good working relationship with one’s superior, working with people who fit in well with each other, living in an area that suits oneself and one’s family, and having the feeling of job security (Hofstede, 1991: 81-82).

Hofstede discusses the notion of gender cultures. He stresses that “individual women can learn to function in a masculine way and individual men in a feminine way” (Hofstede, 1991: 85). The author claims that a masculine culture is more likely to dominate when men are together and that a feminine culture is more likely to take over when women are in the majority (ibid.: 85).

2.2.2 Hofstede’s subsequent two dimensions

At a later stage, Hofstede added a fifth dimension, called the “long/short-term orientation” (Usunier and Lee, 2009: 9). Hofstede (1991: 165-166) explains that on the long-term orientation pole, one finds values such as persistence, ordering relationships by status and observing this order, thrift, and having a sense of shame. On the short-term orientation pole, one finds values such as personal steadiness and stability, protecting your “face”, respect for tradition and reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts. Hofstede characterizes the two orientations as follows: “However, the values on the one pole are more oriented towards the future (especially perseverance and thrift); they are more dynamic. The values on the opposite pole are more oriented towards the past and present; they are more static” (Hofstede, 1991: 166).

Minkov and Hofstede (2012) reveal how China and other East Asian countries received high scores in this dimension. Thus, they possess a long-term oriented way of looking at things. Anglo, African, and South American countries had low scores, pointing towards a short-term orientation. Continental European countries would find themselves in the middle of the spectrum.

The sixth dimension is called indulgence versus restraint (IVR): “Indulgence stands for a tendency to allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Its opposite pole, restraint, reflects a conviction that such gratification needs to be curbed and regulated by strict social norms” (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov et al., 2010: 281).
The authors explain that the gratification of desires in the context of indulgence has more to do with enjoying life and having fun, as opposed to simply gratifying human desires (Hofstede et al., 2010: 281).

What Hofstede et al. are implying, is that a higher score on the indulgence versus restraint table points to a happier people. “The indulgence versus restraint dimension solves the paradox of the poor Filipinas who are happier than the rich citizens of Hong Kong” (Hofstede et al., 2010: 286). Interesting connections are made when comparing the findings of IVR to previous dimensions. For instance, societies with higher scores in the power distance index tend to have lower scores in IVR. Thus, societies with big hierarchies where power and authority are respected, tend to show more restraint (ibid.: 286). Furthermore, regions play a big role when finding connections between indexes. “The relatively rare combination of high indulgence plus long-term orientation groups nine European Union member countries plus Switzerland, Taiwan, and Singapore” (ibid.: 286). Therefore, the closer you are to another country, the higher the chance of finding similar results in the dimensions.

2.2.3 Critique against Hofstede’s cultural dimensions

Ghauri et al. question the validity of the study, as the study was conducted in the late 1970’s. Furthermore, they also mention how radically the world has changed in the last 30 years (Ghauri et al. 2006). Ghauri and Cateora are not alone in questioning parts of Hofstede’s research. Wallerstein is “skeptical that we can operationalise the concept of culture […] in any way that enables us to use it for statements that are more than trivial. Anthropologists […] have argued convincingly that that the concept of ‘human nature’ cannot be used to draw meaningful implications about real social situations” (Wallerstein, 1990: 34). McSweeney argues that on average, the number of questionnaires per country were small at best, and diminutive at worst. In 15 countries the number of respondents were less than 200, and in Hong Kong and Singapore the number of respondents were 88, 71 and 58 respectively (McSweeney, 2002: 94).

Hofstede responded to this critique by maintaining that not much is gained after a sample size has surpassed 50, if a sample is homogeneous with regard to the criteria of the study (Hofstede, 1981). McSweeney argues this statement by comparing it to a study of intelligence with a similar sample size that parts of Hofstede’s study had. “Even if the notion of measuring
‘intelligence’ were not deemed problematic, few, if any, would regard the students in any class in any university to be representative of the entire population of their respective nations” (McSweeney, 2002: 94).

Hofstede’s opinion was that his dimension only could be applied to countries, not individuals (Fischer, Vauclair, Fontaine & Schwartz, 2010). Fischer et al. deem this logical, as individual- and country-level structures are based on statistically independent information (ibid: 136). However, the authors do question how the findings of Hofstede’s research could ever be compared between individuals, if it cannot be applied on an individual level in the first place (ibid.: 135-136).

Subsequent studies attempting to replicate Hofstede’s findings have resulted in contradicting findings. Li and Guisinger (1991) declare that joint ventures with culturally distant partners are often met with problems regarding stability and a higher risk of failure than ventures with culturally similar partners. The findings of Park and Ungson (1997), however, indicate the opposite. Thus, Ng, Lee & Soutar (2007) deduce that cultural distance scores might simplify culture up to a point where the actual meaning of the concept is lost.

2.2.4 Alternatives to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions

Schwartz lists ten different types of values that people in different cultures distinguish between in their decision-making (1992). These ten types are: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, tradition, conformity, security, power, achievement, universalism, and benevolence.

Self-direction is the value that creates, chooses, and explores. It shows how much independent thought and action an individual possesses. It also visualizes how creative, curious, and independent an individual or a culture is. Stimulation is the value that shows how much variation and stimulation an individual or a society needs to feel. Concepts with high stimulation levels are the need for excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. Hedonism refers to a culture’s need for pleasure or sensuous gratification. Achievement refers to “personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards” (Schwartz, 1992: 8). In the power dimension, people with high scores prioritize the attainment of social status and prestige as well as the ability to control and dominate people and/or resources. The security dimension values safety, security, and stability, both in relationships and society, but also for
oneself. Conformity refers to the ability to restrain oneself from acting in ways likely to harm or upset others and violate social expectations and norms. The next dimension is labeled *tradition*. The motivational goals of tradition values are respect, commitment, and acceptance of the norms and values one’s religion or culture imposes on the individual. The spirituality dimension prioritizes “meaning and inner harmony through the transcendence of everyday reality” (Schwartz, 1992: 10). Benevolence refers to focusing on the concern of welfare of close others in everyday interactions. Furthermore, Schwartz suggests an eleventh value, called universalism. “The motivational goal of universalism is understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.” (ibid: 12).

The research conducted by Ng et al. (2007) shows how much results differ depending on how cultural distance is calculated. In Ng’s case, when researching the cultural distance measured from Australia, Switzerland was ranked third according to Hofstede’s dimensions (with a score of 0.27), but when using Schwartz’s values, the rank descended to 22nd (with a score of 2.89) (ibid: 172). This study illustrates how different methods and parameters lead to different results. Ng et al. argue as well that these two cultural frameworks are not congruent (ibid: 172). This aspect is important to be aware of as one format might work in certain contexts but not in others.

House et al. (2002) introduce a third framework for understanding cultures across the globe. This framework is labeled GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness). Its empirical part consists of a survey of thousands of middle managers in food processing, finance, and telecommunications in 61 nations. Much alike the previously mentioned frameworks, the concepts House et al. talk about also incorporate a host of dimensions which are the core of the research. These nine dimensions are: performance orientation, future orientation, assertiveness, power distance, humane orientation, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and gender egalitarianism. (ibid.: 3). House et al. define these dimensions accordingly:

1. Uncertainty avoidance - the extent to which people in a society attempt to avoid uncertainty by relying on social norms, rituals and bureaucratic practices.
2. Power distance - the degree to which people in a society expect and agree that power should be shared.
3. Societal collectivism - the degree to which societal and organizational institutional practices encourage collective distribution of resources and collective action.
4. In-group collectivism - the degree to which people express pride, loyalty and cohesiveness in their organizations or families.
5. Gender egalitarianism - the extent to which an organization or society minimizes gender roles, and gender discrimination.
6. Assertiveness - the degree to which people in societies are assertive, confrontational or aggressive in social situations.
7. Future orientation - the degree to which people in societies engage in future-oriented behaviours (e.g. planning, investing in the future, delayed gratification).
8. Performance orientation - the extent to which a society encourages or rewards group members for improving their performance.
9. Humane orientation - the degree to which people in societies encourage others for fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring or kind behavior (House et al., 2002: 5-6).

The research by the GLOBE project is a topic in cross-cultural management research that has been heavily debated. Fischer describes it as “one of the most heated and controversial debates in contemporary cross-cultural management research” (Fischer, 2009: 26). Minkov and Blagoev claim that the research was met with such resistance because the GLOBE authors framed the work as an improvement to Hofstede’s research. Furthermore, the authors note that the GLOBE authors were quite persistent in their critique of Hofstede (Minkov & Blagoev, 2012: 27). It needs to be emphasized that the GLOBE authors did see their work as an improvement of Hofstede’s. The academic community did not agree with this, and thus, it can be suggested that the GLOBE model is not a perfect framework. What this implicates for marketers and market researchers, is that one option is not objectively better than the others, but simply different. The researcher must decide which framework to choose from depending on the situation.

Three popular and relevant frameworks for shaping and understanding culture have been introduced in this chapter. Other frameworks than the ones mentioned in this chapter do exist. An exhaustive review on these frameworks, however, is beyond the scope of this study. Some other studies that deserve to be mentioned in this section are Parsons & Shills (1951), Hall (1971), Kluckhon & Strodbeck (1961) and Dorfman & Howell (1988).
2.3 Chapter summary

In chapter two, the notion of standardization and localization is introduced. Semi-adaptation, a configuration of the two, is also presented. The chapter discusses culture, Hofstede and his cultural dimensions, but also reviews some of the critique Hofstede’s work has received. This is an integral part of the chapter as it lets the viewer understand the complexity of culture and how that complexity is transferred into many of the problems advertisers and translators face today. In the empirical part of the study, references are made to culture and how all cultures do not see things the same way. In these instances, it might be beneficial to return to this chapter to compare the theory to the findings. In subchapter 2.2.4, alternatives to Hofstede’s dimensions are presented. This gives the reader a better insight into the theories and viewpoints that can be found in academic discourse on culture.

In chapter three, advertising in international organizations is discussed. Furthermore, various scenarios, viewpoints and limitations relevant to advertising in an international context are presented.
3. Advertising in international organizations

Weilbacher defines advertising as “media messages paid for and signed by a business firm or institution that wishes to increase the probability that those reached by these messages will behave or believe as the advertiser wishes them to behave or believe” (1984: 1). Various definitions can be found on the concept of advertising. Journalists might see it as communication. Businesspeople see it as a marketing process, and economists might focus on the economic aspects (Arens & Schäfer, 2007: 4). Kotler defines marketing as “the study of exchange processes and relationships” (1980: 3). Thus, one could claim that advertising is more specific and precise, and while marketing is similar as a concept, the focus is on the bigger picture.

Advertising departments usually consist of an advertising manager and the manager’s helpers. At times, the whole process of advertising is done by this team (Weilbacher, 1984). From the perspective of a travel agency, this statement might be very close to reality even 30 years later. While keeping the whole advertising process (translations included) in-house is not a perfect solution, from a logistical and economical standpoint, it might be the best alternative available.

Walters et al. (2008) argue that many international advertising agencies have IT systems in place, in order to streamline international communication and integration. They imply that standardization is the norm when it comes to branding and positioning policy. Furthermore, this choice could be the result of prioritizing cost efficiency (2008: 236). The authors explain how advertisers tend to separate domestic and foreign advertising, but also suggest that it can be problematic to be both locally responsive and globally integrated at the same time (ibid.).

Ghauri and Cateora (2006) specify two views on how specialized advertising should be in each country. The first view argues that advertising should be customized for each country, as they all pose their own specific problems for advertisers. The other view disregards this notion and suggests that standardization is more important than adapting to whatever regional differences there are.

Ghauri and Cateora (2006) present a real-life example of when executives have sided with the former view. Gillette “has a consistent worldwide image as a masculine, sports-oriented company, but its products have no such consistent image. Its razors, blades, toiletries and
cosmetics are known by many names. Trac II blades in the United States are more widely known worldwide as G-II, and Atra blades are called Contour in Europe and Asia. [...] However, Gillette’s current corporate philosophy of globalisation provides for an umbrella statement, ‘Gillette, the Best a Man Can Get’, in all advertisements for men’s toiletries products in the hope of providing some common image” (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 390).

Ghauri and Cateora (2006) expand on how even subtle (but vital - in the eyes of a marketer) cultural differences can be the life or death of an advertising campaign:

“An advertising programme developed by Chanel, the perfume manufacturer, failed in the United States although it was very popular in Europe. [...] one fragrance analyst commented, ‘There is a French-American problem. The French concept of prestige is not the same as America’s” (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 392).

Okazaki et al. call the concept of image transferability “a crucial aspect of branding-brand image construction” (2013: 62). Furthermore, they argue that culture will moderate the way an image transfers from a source culture to another. The transfer of image from videos and games to brands might work better in cultures where a person’s self-concept is closely related to activities tied to consumption (i.e. what type of car one drives or what type of fashion one wears). In cultures where the opposite is true, this might be more difficult (Okazaki et al., 2013: 63).

3.1 Advertising styles in different regions

The cultural dimensions described in subchapter 3.2.1 can also be applied to advertising in a more quantitative context. De Mooij (2004) uses Hofstede’s dimensions as a cornerstone for her work, as she maps different countries according to their scores received in Hofstede’s study. Finland, Austria and Germany are countries where structured serious advertising will work well. Countries such as India, China and Singapore, contrastingly, are societies where symbolism, visuals, and visual wordplay have a bigger impact. Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, the UK, and the USA are areas where humor is a great tool, but only in the UK and the US (masculine countries according to Hofstede’s dimensions) are celebrity endorsements seen. In Scandinavia and the Netherlands, this phenomenon is rarely encountered. In Brazil, Spain, France, and the Arab world, metaphors and an intention to entertain can be of great advantage (De Mooij, 2004: 194-196).
3.2 Limitations in international advertising

Creating effective advertising messages is a challenging task. To aid marketers in their efforts, many frameworks have been developed. Adcock et al. (2001: 298) present the AIDA sequence. It states that the marketing communication must grab attention, excite interest, create desire, and prompt action. As suggested in chapter 2, cultures differ greatly from each other. While the AIDA sequence is relevant no matter the location, the actual ways the sequence is followed might differ.

Ghauri and Cateora (2006) mention how comparative advertising is prohibited in some countries while allowed in others. It also should be stated that even if comparative advertising was allowed in a country it might still be frowned upon. This is something a marketer should research in the planning phase of the marketing strategy.

Comparative advertising is not the only thing that can be influenced by country laws. Ghauri and Cateora (2006) discuss how some countries limit advertising time on their state-controlled TV channels, and how commercials can be controlled by banning items such as superlative descriptions, indecent clothing, and contests. Baines and Chansarkar (2002: 212) highlight how paid political advertising is legal in the United States but illegal in Britain. The UK does not impose any restrictions on the promotion of products to children (i.e. toys). In Greece, however, restrictions on these types of products exist due to advertising laws in the country.

Some countries impose taxes on specific types of advertising. Austria, for example, has a 10-30 per cent tax on posters, depending on the state and municipality (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 397). Could this lead to companies advertising stronger in areas where taxes are more lenient? Also, could this affect the whole market, with some organizations opting not to advertise at all because of the added costs?

Another limitation that is a nuisance for advertisers globally, is the lack of market data. Ghauri and Cateora (2006) talk about how accurate data cannot always be assured. For example, the only surveys of habits and penetration in China are for three cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. Furthermore, the effectiveness of advertising is hard to know for sure. The authors mention the case of the Doyle Dane Bernbach advertising agency, which created TV
commercials for Alka-Seltzer. These commercials won awards for audience recall and commercial of the year, but despite this, the agency lost their account to another agency. This happened as a result of Alka-Seltzer’s sales dropping (Ghauri & Cateora, 2006: 402). It is, however, difficult to tell if poor advertising was the reason sales declined. Even if one’s commercials win awards it can be argued that the only thing deciding a commercial’s success is revenue.

Misleading advertising can be difficult to interpret depending on the region. “Deception in advertising is a major issue because most member countries have different interpretations of what constitutes a misleading advertisement” (Ghauri et al., 2006: 410). Furthermore, decency and the use of sex in advertising can also become a problem. An advertisement, deemed okay in Europe, can be perceived as offensive in the United States. Ghauri et al. (2006) mention the cases of two different companies which both received criticism over their ad campaigns for being too sexual. The authors comment that both companies experienced an increase in sales, despite the backlash received from the media and business councils (ibid.: 410-411).

### 3.3 Chapter summary

The aim of chapter 3 is to introduce some advertising concepts and definitions which are vital for one’s understanding of the empirical research, found in later chapters. The limitations and rules of international advertising are also covered, as well as real-life examples from big corporations that either succeeded or failed. Various translation techniques are reviewed in the following chapter, as well as relevant issues in contemporary translation studies.
4 The challenges in translating texts

4.1 The concept of translating

The style of translation needed for a specific text can heavily depend on the specific topic that is being translated. For instance, the authors tell the story of a translator in the aviation industry, that could not follow the same translating principles and guidelines that translators of religious texts, such as the Bible, did. “‘With us,’ he said, ‘complete intelligibility is a matter of life and death’” (Nida et al., 1974: 1).

When translating, context is of high importance. “Even the old question: Is this a correct translation? must be answered in terms of another question, namely: For whom?” (ibid.: 1). The authors emphasize how correctness must be determined by how well the average reader understands the translated message. The focus is not on the possibility of the reader understanding the message, but instead on how well the reader understands it. “[...] we are not content merely to translate so that the average receptor is likely to understand the message; rather we aim to make certain that such a person is very unlikely to misunderstand it” (ibid.: 1).

The authors highlight several new attitudes in translation studies. The first attitude the authors present is the notion of how every language “has its own genius”. Every language has certain distinctive characteristics which attribute to its own special character. The vocabulary in each language can at times focus on things central to the culture of the people. Some languages have specialized in figurative language, whereas others have concentrated on rich literary resources (Nida et al., 1974: 3-4).

The authors argue that one must respect the genius of each language. “[...] in some instances translators have actually tried to ‘remake’ a language. [...] one missionary in Latin America insisted on trying to introduce the passive voice of the verb into a language which had no such form. Of course, this was not successful” (ibid.: 4).

The third attribute Nida et al. detail is the idea that anything said in one language can be said in another (unless the form of the message is a vital part of the actual message). An expression such as “white as snow” could be translated in different ways, but snow as an object is not
crucial to the message (Nida et al., 1974: 4-5). The actual methods of translating expressions and idioms are expanded upon in subchapter 4.3.

The fourth attribute Nida et al. mention is how the form of the message must be changed, in order to preserve the content of the message. “If all languages differ in form (and this is the essence of their being different languages), then quite naturally the forms must be altered if one is to preserve the content” (Nida et al., 1974: 5). The extent to which the form of the message needs to be changed depends on the linguistic and cultural distance between languages. The easiest translations are ones where the source and target text consist of languages which are closely related. Furthermore, even if the languages are not closely linked to each other, the translation process might still be uncomplicated, if the cultural settings are similar (ibid.: 5-6). Lastly, translators must try to reproduce the meaning of a passage as understood by the writer (Nida et al., 1974: 8).

Nida et al. define the informative function as the “function in language [that] can only be served by a translation which is thoroughly understandable” (ibid.: 24). As an example, they mention how a phrase such as “the God of peace” must be translated in a way that no misunderstandings can be made. A God of peace is not a peaceful God, but a God that creates peace.

The expressive function argues that it is not enough for readers to realize what is being said in the translated text, but that they should feel as well as understand. “The poetry of the Bible should read like poetry, not like a dull prose account” (Nida et al., 1974: 25).

Katan (2004: 167) explains how influential the decoding-encoding translation model, proposed by Nida, has been for translation studies. The original model, however, has been thoroughly reworked over the past fifty years. This is illustrated by figure 1 and 2.
The biggest differences between these models are how the translator in each model views the source text and the target text. Bell (1991: 161) notes that a translated text is not a copy (as suggested in figure 1), but moreso a reconstructed text that spawns from understanding the frames of both the source and target culture (as suggested in figure 2).
All texts cannot be translated using the same mindset. As Simonnaes (2013) states, even experienced translators can run into problems when translating legal documents. The differences between legal systems lead to translators having to use an “appropriate translation strategy that overcomes the gap between source (legal) culture and target (legal) culture” (ibid.: 92).

While it is true that this study is not focusing on the challenges that legal translators face, it is still a good example to be aware of. It could be argued that the quote by Simonnaes would be just as relevant if we removed the words “legal” from the sentence. Because of cultural factors and other variables, a word-for-word translation can often be weaker than one that takes the specific context into account.

Many cases can be found where the translator might not be an expert in the given field of the document (Simonnaes, 2013: 95). This piece of information is relevant for companies who outsource translation tasks to freelancers and other third parties. Sanchis-Pedregosa et al. (2018: 21) write that outsourcing has been identified as one of the key factors contributing to a company’s financial performance.

Asuncion-Lande argues that both a deep structure and a surface structure can be found in all human language:

“The deep structure of a sentence refers to its semantic interpretation, while the surface structure refers to the organization of a sentence into categories and phrases directly associated with the physical signal” (1989: 255).

Translation Studies (TS) might not develop similarly all around the globe, and whatever is being focused on in one region might not be as highly prioritized in others (Wang & Li, 2017). Few studies have focused on this topic, however. In their own study, the authors found that Spanish scholars are likely to conduct research before translating, whereas South Korean scholars prefer a simultaneous translation process. Furthermore, Spanish scholars seem more interested in conducting empirical studies compared to South Koreans, who instead pick conceptual reflections and theoretical implications (ibid.: 299).
4.2 Why translate advertising?

The original title of this subchapter was “why translate?” but as the answer to that is quite clear, this subchapter is focused more on explaining the reasons and arguments for why advertising (in general) should be translated. Cases can be found, however, where translating is not necessary or even an option.

De Mooij (2004) discusses the article by Ted Levitt, titled *The Globalization of Markets*, which argued that the needs and desires of the consumer had homogenized. A while after this article was published, the global media committee of the IAA (International Advertising Association) labeled global advertising a breakthrough marketing tool (De Mooij: 2004: 179-180). What they inferred by this, was that a need for a specific advertising campaign in every country would not be necessary. This point of view had decreased in popularity by the year 2000, when the CEO of Coca-Cola, Douglas Daft, announced that the company would “get closer to local markets” (ibid.: 2004: 180).

One of the many reasons why Coca-Cola elected to localize their advertising strategies, could be that marketers overestimated how well non-native speakers comprehend the English language. De Mooij (2004: 184-185) writes that the optimal global advertisement is the same no matter the region and written in English. She mentions how the consumer has regular problems understanding a native English speaker. This easily leads to misunderstandings in international advertising. One example was the British ad campaign for Bacardi Breezer, which was also shown in the Netherlands without being localized. In the commercial, the wordplay “chasing birds” (i.e. chasing/flirting with women) was used, a phrase most Dutch people did not understand. The same advertisement also included a reference to a tomcat, “kater” in Dutch. What the British creators of the advertisement did not realize, is that “kater” is also a word for hangover. This might have had some negative connotations on the advert, as Bacardi Breezer is an alcoholic drink (De Mooij, 2004: 185). The author explains how young Dutch people misunderstood various words and sayings, such as the English words “blazer” (understood as “remote control”), “research” (understood as “rubbish”), sophisticated (understood as “ugly”), and “entertainment” (understood as “working with a computer”). The sentence “Philips invents for you” was understood as “Philips invites you”. It needs to be reminded that other nationalities also made similar mistakes. The sentence “We are drivers too” was translated as
“We are two motorists” (ibid.: 185-186). This illustrates how easy it is to misunderstand a message, even if one’s English comprehension is at a satisfactory level.

The pronunciation of words can also change the way messages are perceived. For instance, the taglines “O₂, see what you can do” and “If anyone can, Canon can” rhyme, which adds some weight to the sentence. Countries that pronounce the brand name differently, however, do not even notice the rhymes at all, which makes the taglines considerably weaker (De Mooij, 2004: 189). It needs to be stated that simply translating the taglines might not always work either. De Mooij suggests that when Western companies translate their texts, the focus on sound and pronunciation leads to translations that have adapted themselves more vocally than visually (ibid.: 189). Since Chinese speakers, for example, place more weight on visual representations than on verbal sounds, as English speakers do (ibid.: 188), problems can arise. As Li explains, Motorola translated into Cantonese becomes “nothing to take”, and Peugeot’s car model 416 becomes “die all along the road” in some Southern Chinese dialects (Li, 2001).

4.3 Different approaches to translating text

There are many ways and ideas regarding how one should approach the task of translating a text. In this section, the most popular approaches will be detailed. It needs to be pointed out that the field of Translation Studies is rather divided when debating which approach one should use. In her article Metaphor and translation: some implications of a cognitive approach, Christina Schäffner discusses various paradigms.

The linguistic-based approach to translating text sees translation as transferring meanings. In other words, “as substituting source language (SL) signs into target language (TL) signs [...] The source text (ST) is to be reproduced in the TL as closely as possible, both in content and in form” (Schäffner, 2004: 1254).

The textlinguistic approach is defined by Schäffner as “source text induced target text (TT)” (Schäffner, 2004: 1254). The actual text is what should be focused on, and the whole idea of equivalence is now emphasized on a textual level. (ibid.: 1254-1255). Kvam sheds further light on this by expressing that a “text simply does not exist as a purely structural entity, but primarily as a socio-cultural entity for the purpose of establishing meaning within a given socio-cultural setting” (Kvam, 2014: 22). What both authors seem to be pointing at is that the
textlinguistic approach emphasizes the importance of the specific environment the text is being read in more so than the linguistic-based approach.

Functionalist approaches look at translation as a purposeful activity, and the target text is a result of a transcultural interaction which has taken the target addressees and the target circumstances into account (Schäffner, 2004). Functionalist approaches do not put as much weight on the source text as other approaches, and the actual form of the target text is defined more by the intended purpose of the target text than the form of the source text. Equivalence is therefore another concept functionalists do not prioritize that highly (ibid.). Schäffner further writes that more modern linguistic approaches do not even think of translation as translating, but instead see it as a word-processing activity. According to some, the actual label “translating” should only be used when an equivalence relation can be seen between source text and target text (ibid.: 1255).

It is, of course, also possible to look at translation through the scope of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). It focuses on socio-historical conditions and attempts to tie the regularities to translators’ behaviour, in order to eventually form translation norms which are apparent in both social events and in the cognitive act of translation. From a DTS-based view, translation is therefore a norm-governed behaviour (Schäffner, 2004: 1255).

4.3.1 Translating brand names

Translating brand names to other languages can have unforeseen consequences. A notable example of a failure in this area can be the Ford Nova, which means “does not go” in Spanish. Certain languages have more homonyms than others, and to translate brand names into languages with a high number of homonyms (most notably the Chinese language) can be tricky. One must choose the most fitting characters among these homonyms, in order for the translation to work. To illustrate, Coca-Cola uses kekou kele (translates to “tasty and happy”) (De Mooij, 2004: 189).

Li distinguishes between three different ways to translate the names of brands. The first one is not to encode any specific type of meaning (such as Nokia becoming Nuojiya, which does not mean anything specifically). Secondly, one can introduce some type of meaning to the brand, such as Coca-Cola, as mentioned above, or Hewlett Packard, with hui (‘benefit’) pu
The third approach Li specifies is one used by the Finnish machinery company Kone. This strategy changes the brand into something entirely different. In Kone’s case, the brand became known as Tong Li (“general power”) (Li, 2001).

4.3.2 Translating visuals

Little focus has gone into translating the visual aspect as well as the written (Munday, 2004). There are many plausible reasons for this. Firstly, there is the aspect of money, and the fact that translators usually are paid only to translate the written word. A change in visuals might even result in a completely new ad campaign. This can have many different consequences, on top of it being considerably more expensive. If the link between visual and text is inseparable, however, or an image play will not work in the target language, this will not be possible (Munday, 2004: 211). Another reason why little focus is put into translating the visual is that most translators are not educated in semiotics. Lastly, there is the issue of copyright, which can often make it difficult to “secure permissions to reproduce, and therefore comment upon, visual material from high-profile publicity campaigns” (ibid.).

Munday also presents the concept of visual grammar. “The visual grammar covers such areas as the functional ordering of elements in an ad and the use of colour ads a formal semiotic device” (Munday, 2004: 212). This is seen in many ways in practice. One of these ways is to make sure that left-right comparisons are flipped in regions where texts are read from right to left. While it might seem like cases like these are few and far in between, it did happen in a washing powder advert where the before shot was of dirty clothes and the after shot was of clean ones. For Westerners, that is. For people in the target country, however, the opposite was true. There are cases where even subtler mannerisms are perceived differently. Andonova & Taylor (2012) remark that while nodding one’s head is seen as something positive (“nodding in agreement”) in the US, the exact opposite is true in Bulgaria.

Colours have different connotations depending on the geographical (and cultural) region. One colour might have zero negative connotations in one area but some quite unpleasant ones in others. An example of this is the case of the now defunct mobile phone company Orange, a UK based brand. Munday (2004: 212) ponders over the difficulties the company must have had in Northern Ireland, where orange is the colour of “hard-line protestantism”, as he puts it.
4.3.3 Different communication styles

Advertising styles in different regions reflect the different communication styles available (De Mooij, 2004). A clear distinction can be made between direct and indirect communication. In collectivistic cultures, indirect communication prevails. Furthermore, metaphors tend to be used more in these societies. De Mooij also mentions how metaphors are not always understood the same way - or at all - in different cultures. LG and Nokia realized this after some failed ad campaigns. LG created an advertisement showing an old man with a baby on a mountain top, with the intent of symbolizing continuity and long-term orientation. However, this is not how Europeans and Americans would perceive it. Similarly, Nokia’s advertisement with a squirrel in the woods, attempting to symbolize good reception and free movement, was simply understood as a squirrel living far away from people. Thus, the original message Nokia was trying to convey was lost (De Mooij, 2004: 192-193). Metaphors in translation are reviewed more thoroughly in subchapter 4.5.

4.4 Equivalence in translation

Schäffner (2004) comments on some interesting ideas when discussing the notion of equivalence in translation, while also remarking that it is a subject filled with controversy in Translation Studies. Hermans (1998:61) maintains that “it is difference, not sameness or transparency or equality, which is inscribed in the operations of translation”. Schäffner argues that texts, in themselves, do not have any intrinsically stable meaning that would be repeatable in other areas (2004: 1255). Venuti argues that the target text is where “a reader gets a glimpse of a cultural other” (Venuti, 1995: 306).

Nida et al. define dynamic equivalence as the degree of which a person responds to a text in the target language in a similar manner to a person in the source language. The authors argue that the response can never be identical due to cultural and historical contexts being too different, but a high degree of equivalence of the response is the goal. If a high degree of equivalence can not be found, the translation has failed to accomplish its mission (Nida et al., 1974: 24).

Therefore, what can be deciphered from these statements is that equivalence might not be the best word to use in the context of translation. One could even argue that a completely equivalent
relation between source and target text can result in subpar translations. Nida et al. (1974) refer to this by arguing that equivalence should be a higher priority for a translator than identity. In other words, the reproduction of the message is more important “than the conservation of the form of the utterance” (Nida et al, 1974: 12). As Petronienė and Žvirblytė (2012: 66) assert, the goal of a translation is to substitute the source text with a target text that accounts for the same situation, even if any formal or semantic correspondence cannot be found. Thus, the whole idea of equivalence being the correct or incorrect word to use will largely depend on one’s personal view on the whole concept.

4.5 Metaphors and idioms

Another challenge relating to text translation is how idioms and metaphors that only exist in one language should be translated. Rojo, Ramos and Valenzuela (2014) argue that the reason why metaphors are such a problematic field for translators, is the ubiquity of them. The authors maintain that the topic is one of the central subjects in Translation Studies. The two main issues debated are the translatability of the metaphor and the different strategies used to do the translating. Rojo et.al. mention that a translation can either result in a complete equivalence in both image and sense, or a partial one with only one of the factors being the same. This can be achieved either by substitution - a replaced image - or by paraphrasing - a different metaphorical image (ibid.: 32).

Rojo et al. point out that the use of foregrounded language (linguistic features in a text that stand out as rare or creative) has been shown not only to arouse more emotions in the reader, but also a higher involvement in the right hemisphere of the brain (2014: 33).

Rojo et al. (2014) discuss how much power and weight metaphors have, and how much of this power disappears when one translates the metaphor by paraphrasing. As an example, they mention the metaphor “boiling with anger”, which conveys an intensity that adverbials (i.e. very, extremely) have problems equaling (ibid.: 38). Thus, the quality of a text weakens if one often resorts to paraphrasing. The authors also provide empirical evidence that suggests that the loss of metaphorical image can result in a weaker emotional response (ibid.).

Dagut sees metaphors as “an individual flash of imaginative insight” (1976: 22). The idea of metaphors, according to Dagut, is to shock readers by creating an aesthetic impact (Schäffner,
Thus, metaphors depend quite heavily on the culture in question, in order to be understood.

Newmark is a proponent of using a more prescriptive framework in translation. He distinguishes between five different types of metaphors: dead, cliché, stock, recent and original, and provides seven different procedures to translate these metaphors (Schäffner, 2004: 1256-1257):

1. Reproducing the same image in the target language
2. Replacing the image in the source language with a standard target language image which does not clash with the target language culture
3. Translating metaphor by simile, retaining the image
4. Translating metaphor (or simile) by simile plus sense (or occasionally a metaphor plus sense)
5. Converting metaphor to sense
6. Deletion, if the metaphor is irrelevant
7. Using the same metaphor combined with sense, in order to enforce the image.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 aims to enlighten the reader of the daily challenges translators deal with. Furthermore, the chapter details how diverse and multi-layered the issues are, and how problematic it is to find solutions that can be applied consistently. The chapter discusses how different texts might require different types of translators hailing from different backgrounds, equipped with different experience, in order to be properly translated.

Different methods and approaches have been invented over the years, in order to deal with the challenges. A detailed view regarding metaphors in translation is found in the chapter, along with a brief review of important concepts. Chapter four is essential reading for a reader who is yet to read the empirical part of this study. Chapter five introduces the empirical part of the thesis, basing itself on the various models, frameworks and theories presented in chapters 2 to 4. Furthermore, the credibility and trustworthiness of the study is evaluated.
5. Method

This chapter describes the choice of method for the empirical part of the study. Qualitative research as a concept is presented briefly, followed by the concepts of credibility and trustworthiness. Various strategies relating to qualitative data gathering are suggested. Furthermore, the chosen method for gathering the data is explained, as well as how this data was analyzed. The chapter ends in a discussion about the credibility and trustworthiness of this thesis.

5.1 Qualitative Research

Baines and Chansarkar (2002: 64) distinguish between qualitative and quantitative approaches, by explaining that qualitative research is used when an exploratory design is being employed, and quantitative approaches when the research design is conclusive. They quote Malhotra (1996: 89), who suggests that exploratory research should be employed when the objective of the research is to discover new ideas and insights. Bryman and Bell (2011: 392) mention a host of ideas which are relevant for this study. For one, they quote Marshall (1981), who argues that it is hard to see clearly what the data will look like, ahead of time.

5.1.1 Credibility and trustworthiness

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) observe several various checks researchers can go through, in order to confirm the credibility of the study. These checks include having descriptions which are filled with detail, having accounts which seem plausible, identifying areas of uncertainties, seeking negative evidence, having actively considered rival explanations, and reporting on the accuracy of predictions made in previous sections of the study.

Furthermore, the authors mention how analytic biases in the researcher can weaken the quality of the empiric findings. Four of the most prevalent ones are presented: the holistic fallacy, elite bias, personal bias and going native (ibid.).
The holistic fallacy indicates that the researcher perceives events as more patterned and consistent than what the reality is. Elite bias points to the researcher placing higher value on data from “high-status” participants (such as articulate or well-informed individuals) and disregarding information obtained from “lower status” participants. Personal bias specifies how a researcher’s own agenda and points of focus can alter the trustworthiness of the data being analyzed. Lastly, going native implies that the researcher loses their own perspective and adopts the frame and view of the participants (Miles et al., 2014).

Miles et al. offer thirteen different tactics for confirming the findings in the empirical part of the study. These thirteen tactics are:

1. Checking for representativeness – how representative is a specific finding in the study?
2. Checking for researcher effects – will the presence of the researcher lead to behaviour in the participants that would not normally occur?
3. Triangulating – attempt to support a finding by showing at least three independent measures of it that do not contradict it
4. Weighting the evidence – how strong is the data on which the conclusion is based on?
5. Checking the meaning of outliers – the exception proves the rule
6. Using extreme cases – approach individuals known to have strong biases
7. Following up surprises – reflect on how the surprise violated your theory, revise the theory and look for evidence that support the revision
8. Looking for negative evidence
9. Making if-then tests – Assuming X is true, will Y be true aswell?
10. Ruling out spurious relations – things that are connected incorrectly
11. Replicating a finding – findings are more dependable when many independent sources confirm the same
12. Checking out rival explanations – staying open to other explanations than one’s own
13. Getting feedback from participants (Miles et al., 2014).

5.1.2 Genres of qualitative research

This subchapter presents several different styles of qualitative research. It needs to be noted, however, that this is only a small list of all the possible options available.
Ethnography is a type of methodology that focuses on direct observation. “[…] what most distinguishes ethnography from other methodologies is a more active role assigned to the cognitive modes of observing, watching, seeing, looking at, gazing at and scrutinizing” (Gobo, 2011: 15). Two different research strategies are available in this methodology. Non-participant observation is defined as when researchers observe the subjects from a distance without any interaction. Participant observation is the opposite. It is characterized by the researcher establishing a direct relationship with the participants and staying in their natural environment (ibid: 17).

The grounded theory method (GTM) is one of the most popular qualitative methods for theory construction (Charmaz & Bryant, 2011: 291). In GTM researchers develop “inductive theoretical analyzes from their collected data and subsequently gather further data to check these analyzes. The purpose of grounded theory is theory construction, rather than description or application of existing theories” (ibid: 292). There are different versions of GTM but all of them share the same set of methodological strategies (ibid.).

Miles et al. (2014) explain how phenomenology looks at data thematically, in order to obtain the essence and core meanings of participant narratives. Creswell notes that phenomenologists “focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (2007: 57-58). In phenomenology, data is analyzed by going through the data and highlighting significant statements. These statements are developed into themes, which are used to write a textural description of what the participants experienced, and a structural description of the environment that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon. With these descriptions in mind, the researcher writes a composite description that becomes the essence of the phenomenon (ibid: 61).

5.1.3 Interviewing

Bryman & Bell lists 12 different types of interviews: structured, standardized, semi-structured, unstructured, intensive, qualitative, in-depth, focused, focus group, group, oral history, and life history interview (2011: 205). It is redundant for this study to introduce and dissect each style of interview, and as such, only the structured, semi-structured and unstructured types will be focused on. The aim in a structured interview is to structure (or standardize) the interview in a way that the context of the interview will be the same to all respondents. Thus, the replies can
be aggregated. Furthermore, the standardization of questions reduces interviewer variability. An example of this are surveys where respondents can only choose from a fixed set of answers. This also makes the data processing of the answers easier. If open questions are asked in quantitative studies, the answers need to be coded in a way that makes them eligible for data processing (ibid.: 202-204).

Interviews in qualitative research are usually less structured, and the emphasis lies on greater generality. Rambling and going off-topic is also something qualitative researchers see as a positive, and there is a higher interest in the views and thoughts of the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 466). Semi-structured and unstructured interviews are often used in these contexts. In semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of questions on specific topics (an interview guide), but the respondent is still given a lot of leeway in how to respond. In general, the same questions are asked in roughly the same manner in each interview, but nothing forces the interviewer to do so. The questions do not need to be asked in the same order, and follow-up questions might arise as the interviewer picks up on something the respondent is talking about (ibid.: 467).

The unstructured interview is almost completely unstructured. The researcher might only have one specific question (or a few specific themes) that the discussion should revolve around. From a theoretical standpoint, there is not much difference between unstructured interviews and a normal discussion. The respondent is allowed to respond freely to the questions of the interviewer. The answers are usually followed by some sort of response by the interviewer. The flexibility of the process is an important concept in both the semi-structured and the unstructured interview (Bryman & Bell, 2011: 467).

5.2 The chosen method for the study

The research method chosen for this study was a qualitative analysis through a series of interviews. The choice to conduct a series of interviews and disregard all the other available alternatives was made as it appeared to be the most appropriate option at the time. There were plans of having a focus group put together, but the idea was scrapped because of the many uncontrollable variables focus groups are characterized by. Some of these variables are the background, mood, engagement (or lack of), and language proficiency of the participants in
the study. While these variables can also be found in a traditional interview, some respondents might feel more at ease, as the discussion is between only two people.

Another reason for opting for a series of interviews was that the respondents were all professional marketers in the same industry. Thus, a straight comparison could (in theory) provide more reliable findings. A focus group would have required more effort from the participants, and it is unclear if the respondents would have accepted an invitation to take part in one. The respondents were not asked this during the interviews, and as a result, the question remains unanswered. Access to professional marketers with years of experience is not something one can take for granted. Therefore, if one gets the opportunity to interview people with possibly enlightening views on the subject matter, one should take it. The method of the study also needed to adapt to the respondents, in order to benefit the most from them. Thus, the method for gathering empirical data became a face-to-face interview when possible, and e-mail correspondence when not.

The study opted to explore what Baines and Chansarkar (2002: 25) label primary research data. If one were to categorize the study further, one could label the empirical study as an exploratory one, according to Baines and Chansarkar’s previously mentioned theory. A quantitative approach might have resulted in different findings but as academic research on the studied topic is scarce at best, a base for quantitative research needed to be established first. The results, answers and discussions (presented at a later stage of this study), can help in narrowing down the quantitative paths to take. This, in turn, leads to a clearer and more accurate continuation study taking place.

“Quantitative research methods [...] are designed to elicit responses to predetermined, standardized questions from a large number of respondents” (ibid.: 23). “These [qualitative] techniques are often used at the preliminary stages of a research project to identify the basic factors affecting the management problem” (ibid: 24). Thus, this study can be characterized as the “preliminary stage of a research project”, and as such, it needs to be continued on in the future.

Several limitations and challenges arose during these interviews. The most obvious limitation was how the respondents did not have enough time for a thorough set of interviews, where the respondent’s thoughts and experiences would have been clearly recorded. This is apparent in
the transcription of interview one, where the interview is cut short due to other obligations by the respondent. While it is unsure how much relevant information was lost due to this, one could argue that the empirical part is weaker as a result.

Another limitation to this study was how the third interview had to be conducted via email. This was unfortunate, as the person being interviewed (who remains anonymous by request) could have contributed remarkably more to the empirical findings, had a longer and more open conversation been possible.

5.2.1 The chosen method for analysing the data

A modified version of the phenomenological approach, described in subchapter 5.1.2, was used when analyzing the data received. The reasoning for choosing this approach was that the manner of gathering the data in this study required a fluid and flexible method. The core concept of phenomenology made it clearly suited to the empirical data, which was being developed at the time. It needs to be said that while the approach, detailed in subchapter 5.1.2, is quite rigid, the modified version did not make use of the structural description at any point.

After transcribing the interviews, the transcriptions were systematically read through, and the most relevant findings were noted mentally (instead of visually, as detailed in subchapter 5.1.2). Various mind-maps and sketches were created, in order to create a clearer picture of the essence of the interviews. This data was cross-examined with the theory in chapters two to four.

5.3 The interviews

The first interview in this study was with company X. The interview was conducted in Helsinki the 7th of March 2018. The interview was scheduled and agreed upon during a brief discussion via email. The respondent was a marketing manager at the firm and was equipped with a host of knowledge regarding the topics of the study. The interview became a mixture of a semi-structured and unstructured interview. The interviewer had some topics in mind before the interview, but these were not clearly defined on paper. The discussion that followed also reflected this quite loose format, as the interviewer encouraged the respondent to talk about anything, without interrupting at any point. While this led to the interview not being led in any
specific direction by the interviewer, at least in the strict sense, the benefits of this approach clearly showed while transcribing the interview.

During the interview, which could almost be classified as a conversation, the respondent did the most part of the talking, while the interviewer only interjected in the conversation when the respondent seemed to have run out of things to talk about regarding the topic. In many researchers’ eyes, this could be perceived as a good interview purely when one looks at how open and willing the respondent was to share personal ideas, knowledge and experiences regarding the topics discussed.

The interviewer did not give much thought to the interview location, which was chosen to be the company headquarters of the firm. This turned out to be beneficial for both parties. In this case, the interview was scheduled for 30 minutes but continued for ten minutes more. Thus, it can be suggested that choosing an interview location which suits the respondent the most has many benefits. The biggest one is that the respondent is not in a hurry to leave. The interview with respondent X continued ten minutes longer than expected, but had the setting been in a cafeteria or another external venue not owned by the company, the time required for the respondent in terms of travel could have consumed some of the interview time. Another benefit of the location of choice was the lack of distractions. In a meeting room with acoustics specifically designed to facilitate discussion, listening became considerably easier. Thus, the quality of the interview was also improved. The language spoken during the interview was Swedish, something that helped the discussion, as this was the native language of the interviewer. Thus, the discussion ran smoothly without any noticeable hiccups.

The main topic that the interview revolved around was translation, both in the broader sense but also, at times, in specific detail. Several smaller topics were also discussed. As the preceding paragraphs indicate, the interview was quite broad with the discussion frequently flowing to topics outside the scope of the study. These moments were seldom long-lasting, however, and the interviewer managed to steer the discussion back on track quite quickly.

The second interview was held with company Y, the 20th of March 2018, in Helsinki. This interview was also agreed upon after a brief discussion via email. The location of the interview was at the offices of the company, which turned out to work well as few employees were around during the interview. This made for a very relaxing and quiet atmosphere, which enhanced the
quality of the interview. It lasted about 40 minutes, and followed the same themes as the ones in the interview with respondent X.

The style of the interview differed from the first one, however, as respondent Y was not as talkative as respondent X was. This meant that some further actions had to be taken by the interviewer, in order to get the respondent to speak more freely. Whether the interviewer succeeded in said task is difficult to tell, as the interview flowed quite well. However, after reading the transcript and listening to the audio tapes one could argue that a question could have been phrased better, and that the interviewer should have followed up on something specific the respondent had mentioned in passing. While the first interview did have moments like these, they were not as frequent.

The interview might have been impacted by how respondent’s role in the company was different than respondent X’s role. The job description of this respondent was “content manager”, which is a different title than the other two respondents’: “marketing team leader” and “head of central marketing” respectively. This influences the empirical data gathered as different job descriptions lead to different experiences. Different experiences, in turn, could lead to different opinions. From the scope of the study it means that the interviews did not share the exact same foundations, which would have been optimal.

Empirical research theory discusses the consequences of an interviewer’s individual actions in detail. In the second interview, one might suggest that a more experienced interviewer could have extracted more relevant information from the respondent. While it is true that this issue could have been avoided by choosing a quantitative method, one could argue that it is difficult to turn the topic of this study into a quantitative survey.

The third and last interview in this study was conducted via email, by request of the respondent (henceforth known as respondent Z). The discussion lasted from April of 2018 to August of 2018. The first thing that comes to mind regarding email correspondence in an empirical study, is how seemingly difficult it is to receive as much data as in a face-to-face interview. Counterarguments can be made, however. Firstly, while it is true that the discussion will not be as free-flowing and casual when the communication is in written form, the quality of what is said can still be higher. This could be a result of the respondent having more time to read and understand the question, but also to clearly construct answers that are targeted exactly at
the question in hand. In unstructured interviews discussions can often derail into redundant topics, but in email correspondence (which is very similar to structured interviews) the questions and answers are focused. It is true that it did not take 40 minutes to read the questions and answers from the correspondence. However, the discussions in the emails were always clearly within the context of the study. Thus, one can argue that the actual length of an interview does not necessarily correlate to an interview of high quality. Furthermore, one could also suggest that interview Z was not of a lower quality than the other interviews, even if the methods differed.

The language used in this interview was Swedish. Much alike the interview with company X, no problems were found regarding language and communication. Swedish was the native language of both parties, and as this interview was conducted via email, more time was given to structure one’s questions and replies.

The three companies are all active in the same industry. Seeking respondents in the same industry was done deliberately, as this contributed to the findings of the study becoming as trustworthy and comparable as possible. After conducting the interviews, transcriptions were written, in order to create the most accurate and transparent representation of what had been discussed. As a big part of communication is nonverbal, parts of the transcriptions make little sense or imply something entirely different than what was communicated. Listening to the actual recordings of the interviews (and remembering the body language of the respondents) clarifies everything, but one can easily be misled by only reading the transcriptions.

Two interviews were unscripted and lengthy discussions between the parties, and one was a more structured interview via text. It can be argued that approximately as much data was received from each interview, even if some of the interviews took longer than others.

The job titles and job descriptions within the firm were not the same across all respondents. Respondent X and Z were both team leaders or heads of marketing, whereas respondent Y was more of a content manager. This fact is noticed when comparing how abstract or direct the respondents were in their answers. When respondent Y would offer some clear examples of something that she had worked with personally, the answers (and the discussion as a whole) from respondent X were almost the complete opposite. Specific, concise answers were seldom given, and instead the respondent focused on the big picture. Respondent Z, contrastingly,
viewed everything from a frame focused on making money. These observations might not be entirely objective, however. Thus, any conclusions based on these findings alone should be taken with a pinch of salt.

5.4 Discussing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study

The quality of the chosen method and the findings of the study are discussed in this subchapter, according to the frameworks illustrated in subchapter 5.1.1.

The following criteria have been met to an acceptable degree: having descriptions which are filled with detail; having accounts which seem plausible; identifying areas of uncertainties; seeking negative evidence; having actively considered rival explanations; and reporting on the accuracy of predictions.

Efforts were made to ensure that the accounts were as plausible as possible, narrowing down the industries studied to only one. Furthermore, attempts were made to meet in environments where the respondents were at ease, feeling that they could speak as freely as they wanted. Arguments can be made suggesting that the accounts were not as plausible as possible. However, this is something that is beyond the reach of the researcher. As an example, the respondent could mention something that was false without being aware of it. The respondent could also be simply having a bad day and not be interested in participating in the interview as actively as the researcher would have hoped. Areas of uncertainties are pointed out in subchapter 7.4. In order to stay objective, negative evidence was researched as well as discussed (as seen in the chapters regarding various cultural dimensions).

Finding negative evidence was difficult partly due to how specific in nature this study is, but also because no greater research on the topic has been conducted in the past. Furthermore, any past research would have a vast number of variables differing greatly from the ones in this study. Thus, it would be difficult to compare rival explanations, as the explanations would not be based on similar data. Few predictions were made as a result of the open-ended nature of the study. As such, there are no predictions to report the accuracy on.

While the researcher was mindful of the biases (the holistic fallacy, elite bias, personal bias and going native) mentioned by Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014), the findings of the thesis
might still not be free of any bias. The trustworthiness of the thesis is measured with the help of the thirteen bullet points mentioned by Miles et al. in subchapter 5.1.1.

Checking for representativeness was done automatically, as the interviews were similar in nature, with respondents working in similar positions. Any researcher effects were not found by the researcher. Triangulating proved to be difficult as getting access to the necessary data was not easy. In this case, findings were either supported or contradicted by two other sources of data (the respondents). No actual weighting of the evidence was made in the empirical part of the study, as that might have strayed into the territory of elite bias. Weighting of evidence and data was done in the literature review, but in this case the source was simply discarded and thus not seen in this study. As this is not a quantitative study and the interviews did not contradict each other too strongly, there was no need to check the meaning of any outlier, as no outlier was found.

There was no real opportunity to approach individuals with strong biases, as the companys and employees were not known to the researcher in advance. The seventh bullet point in Miles’s list (following up surprises) could be the headline of this empirical study. Little was known of the respondents in advance, and the early empirical findings helped shape the topics in the following interviews. An open mind with open questions was prepared for the interviews, which helped the researcher follow up on any surprising answers immediately. If-then tests and spurious relations did not seem to be relevant for this study.
6. Empirical data presentation and analysis

Three interviews were conducted during this study, two being face-to-face interviews, and one being a correspondence through emails. The respondents were employees of companies in the same industry and had about the same responsibilities and job descriptions. Disparities were found especially when analyzing the interviews. The dialogue in the second interview (with company Y) was more focused on the specifics and the day-to-day processes, whereas the first interview with company X focused on general ideas, problems, and solutions relating to the marketing world. The interview with company Z was quite rigid in its shape, but that could largely be attributed to the style of interview being conducted. The empirical data received during the interviews is presented in the following subchapters, in the form of the phenomenological essences derived during the data analysis process. These essences are: marketing messages, standardization/localization, culture, visuals, and outsourcing.

6.1 On marketing messages

The biggest question was how organizations in the travel industry approached the challenges in translation. Company X had taken an approach that might not even be labelled as translating. As the respondent explained, the company did have translators working for them to an extent, but they were never working on the advertising campaigns. The actual copy was never translated literally, or on a 1:1 basis. Instead, the method used was to have one (or several) master copy, which was made available for all the copywriters in the organization. When needed, local copywriters were tasked with rewriting the master copy (which was usually written in English) into the target language. Thus, any marketing material was never translated per se (depending on how one defines the concept of translation). Instead, the copywriters were to rewrite the text into a format which reflected the master copy in style and idea.

“[…] there is someone who creates a master [copy], which moves on, and depending on the country you could have access to several masters” (Respondent X)

Respondent X suggests that copywriters should not tie themselves to the actual words in the text, but instead to the core idea of the message. He acknowledges that this can be challenging and explains how the Finnish copywriters are sometimes given a master copy which has already
been translated into Swedish. In challenging situations like these, getting a hold of the original copy is vital. Furthermore, it helps to ask the authors of the copy some questions to better comprehend and understand the actual message of the communication. In company X, the same emotions and desires were meant to be evoked from the reader regardless of the language, and the marketers who localized the content were given free hands in how to accomplish that. A specific idea for a campaign might spawn in some area of the organization, but that idea always needs to be localized to the other areas.

In the case of respondent Y, many directions and guidelines are sent from the parent company to the subsidiary (where respondent Y works). While localization is handled in the Finnish subsidiary, the idea and the core copy are created in the parent company, which is in Denmark. The biggest factor that determines the processes in the Finnish subsidiary is the budget. Few guidelines are given on how exactly the budget should be spent.

“The guidelines on what to do and how to do it is sent from there [Denmark], the localization is done here [in Finland]” (Respondent Y)

Respondent Y reveals how much the target group in Finland differs from target groups in other countries. A vast majority of the company’s marketing is focused on people living on the countryside. Thus, the subsidiary has a clear need to create more printed advertisements than they perhaps normally would. The print ads are created independently in Finland, without any guidelines from the Danish parent company.

Company Z employs several copywriters, and the process of localizing text is usually their task. Translators are consulted at times, but the final versions of the texts are always reviewed by the company’s copywriters. This method is preferred as the copywriters understand the company brand and the communicative strategy being used.

In company Z’s case, ideas for marketing campaigns originate in different ways. The same type of master copy that company X employed can be found in company Z as well. Every market, however, has its own team that produces and modifies specific campaigns locally. Major campaigns are primarily produced by the core team in tandem with the company’s strategic brand agency. Smaller campaigns are handled internally, with both master copys and complete
translations available for different teams to use. Various concept descriptions are also made available, detailing the main message, time period, choice of media, visual aspects, and goals.

“We don’t believe in direct translations, instead we adapt as needed. The message and feel should be the same though” (Respondent Z)

Localization and customization do occur in company Z, but direct translations are not favoured. Respondent Z emphasizes how the message and the overall feel of the communication should be similar regardless of language. He does concede that some texts are almost impossible to translate in ways that do not change the intended message and reveals that this is a common issue for copywriters in the company. Respondent Z comments on how problematic these situations are, and how no frameworks are used to solve them. Therefore, the new text is always carefully crafted. There is no simple solution to this issue, and the copywriters rewrite texts on a case-by-case basis.

6.2 On standardization/localization

Respondent X explains that almost every campaign in the organization is localized by the local copywriters and the marketing team available. However, everything in the organization is not localized. An example of this is the online store. The store is created and maintained in Sweden, but the Finnish version is shipped only with the Finnish language. Thus, the Finnish version does not include a localized version of Swedish for Swedish-speaking Finns. The respondent argues that an apparent demand, strong enough to justify the resources needed for creating this version, has not been identified.

Some campaigns in the organization have not been localized. Here, the respondent gives televised ad campaigns as an example. This type of advertising is not localized mostly because of the large resources necessary to create a TV ad. The time needed to create an advertisement meant for TV audiences is much higher than in other types of advertising. Furthermore, it is considerably more expensive. Respondent X reveals that the advertisements received by the Finnish department of the firm are not even made in the Nordic countries. The same advertisements are used in fifteen different countries. Respondent X prefers this alternative, as the quality of the advertisements are higher than what a Finnish production could produce. This
is a matter of resources, and the resources the headquarters can allocate are higher than what a single department could in Finland.

“The price I pay in Finland for the whole production is one we couldn’t produce ourselves with as high quality.” (Respondent X)

Respondent X reveals that TV-campaigns, which are also available on social media, are localized by the company. In these types of advertisements, the only thing that is localized is the voice-over, which is translated into the local languages of the region. No clearly defined guidelines are mentioned as to what needs to be said in the voice-over, and the task is handled by the local marketing teams. Respondent X concedes that localizing some advertisements and slogans can be challenging. As an example, he mentions the slogan “the more we do our thing, the more you can do yours”. A direct translation into Swedish does not the carry the same weight as the English version, even if the sentence is correctly translated. A Finnish translation suffers the same problem.

Respondent X notes how some languages use more letters to communicate the same message. This makes advertising online quite challenging when considering the strict rules and limitations online marketing channels need to follow. As an example, Google AdWords has a clearly defined maximum number of letters for a specific ad spot. Respondent X considers the Finnish language a specifically difficult language to deal with in this context, at least when compared to Swedish. Regardless of what is being translated or rewritten, the main idea is that while the target text might look different and say different things than the source text, the idea needs to be the same. The core principles of the messages need to be similar, and after one has figured out what these principles are, one can move on to deciding how these ideas will be communicated.

A problem with localization, according to respondent X, is how to measure it. Furthermore, the actual way one measures localization can also be problematic, as different methods yield different results. Respondent X has no answer as to which option – standardization or localization - is better. He argues that this depends not only on how one defines the concepts, but also on how the consumer perceives them (and how one views the customer to perceive them). Furthermore, on the topic of standardization, the respondent thinks that while one can have a clear vision of things in a general sense, it is quite easy to localize in the online world.
The respondent illustrates this by revealing that the company offers local flights from different places and raises the question if they should advertise them as such (“fly from Tampere” or “fly from Oulu”). This example is followed by him stating that the company has the tools to place ten different advertisements in the same marketing channel and get data on which of the advertisements has received the most clicks. He suggests that the world of today can be a very complex one, and that people are equally so. He illustrates this by pointing out how people act on social media.

“I think that we have hundreds of thousands of different people in Finland, and hundreds of thousands of different people in Denmark. [...] Your purchasing and traveling behaviour, for instance, could be very close when you’re 24 or 20 and when you’re 70 years old. It depends more on you, what you value, and what you’re interested in.” (Respondent X)

Respondent X argues that people’s behaviour on social media differs greatly. If one wants to, for instance, use the same TV advertisement regardless of region, that is a strategic choice. He points out that, for some marketers, it might be enough to show the company’s logo accompanied with a nice slogan. Some advertisers think that three pictures in a marketing campaign suffices, whereas others believe that three images are not even close to being enough for the same campaign to be a success. In this context, the respondent argues that data-based marketing can be of great assistance, as it gives a lot of insight into the views, wants, and desires of the consumer. Company X employs this in many ways. When visiting the company’s website, the site sends the marketers a message that this person is looking to go on holiday.

Company Y localizes substantially as a result of their target market being well-suited for it. This target market is geographically found in other places than Southern Finland. The home region is very important and dear to people living in Central and Northern Finland, according to respondent Y. She mentions the airport of Kokkola as an example. This airport is located between the cities of Pietarsaari and Kokkola (nearby the village of Kruunupyy). If an advert with a slogan such as “fly from Kokkola airport” is posted, this will anger the residents of Pietarsaari, as they consider the airport to be shared between the cities. Thus, the airport should be labeled “Kokkola-Pietarsaari Airport” in adverts, in order to avoid any backlash from either of the cities’ inhabitants. According to respondent Y, Finns living in northern areas are very proud of their region. This fact that can be used to an advertiser’s advantage, she claims.
Company Z strives primarily for profit. Maintaining the brand comes as secondary, as without profit there would be no brand to guard in the first place. Respondent Z does concede that it is important to have a long-term strategy in place for the brand, as to not dilute the message and confuse one’s clients. If he would have to choose, however, he would pick the option that would prove to be beneficial in the near future.

“First we make money, then we protect the brand. Without money there’s no brand to protect” (Respondent Z)

The respondent notes that consumers will perceive localized content as individuals, based on their own views and experiences. This means that, while the company attempts to localize as often as possible, it is challenging to assume the recipient’s cultural upbringing. The company has neither the time nor the resources necessary to be able to localize text at that level. They attempt to maintain an honest and consequent style of communication and to localize marketing material - when possible - in order to increase sales.

6.3 On culture

Respondent X argues that feelings and emotions are quite universal. He suggests that the core needs of an individual are usually the same. Everyone needs food, shelter, safety, social needs, etc.

When asked the question of whether one should approach different cultures in different ways, the respondent explains that while some cultures have topics or areas that should be avoided, the general approach usually does not change. The interviewer is reminded by how this is not a concern for the company’s marketing team, as they do not create the original thought. Their task is only to localize it. Respondent X suggests that the thoughts advertising material in travel agencies want to evoke from viewers could be something like: “It would be so lovely to go on holiday and relax”. The when and where one goes on holiday might differ, but the general feelings and thoughts about going on holiday does not. Respondent X illustrates this line of thinking by reminding the interviewer that very few Finns (and Scandinavians) own a swimming pool in their backyard.
Respondent Y suggests that Swedes, for instance, have their own way of communicating, and that it differs greatly from the Finnish communication style. Swedes like to express themselves with the use of superlatives. These words and sayings are things the respondent always removes from texts when translating or rewriting Swedish into Finnish. This is because it is unnatural for Finns to communicate using the same style as Swedish people. Respondent Y thinks that culturally, Finns are very strict. Therefore, if something is promised in an advertisement, the company must be able to keep that promise. Also, from a legal aspect, many laws in Finland regulate and restrict what kind of advertising that can be created.

"Finns are pretty strict in certain things, we [advertisers] can’t promise things that we can’t fulfil." (Respondent Y)

Respondent Y compares the above with the Danish society, in which the threshold for complaining about something is significantly higher than in Finland. To illustrate, the respondent mentions how Finns look to be compensated if they have been promised a room with a view and not received it, whereas the Danes might not even address the issue. As such, it is vital for Finnish marketers to be able to deliver on any promises. The respondent points out that Finns in general are quite quick to file complaints against something, if they feel that they have been mistreated. Thus, it is of the essence to be precise in one’s advertising texts, which consequently leads to the texts being very restricted on what can and cannot be written.

When asked if there has been any significant change in culture during the last twenty years or so that has influenced how marketers conduct their advertising, respondent Y answers that our society has changed immensely. As an example, cultures are more fragmented than before, and it is harder to find big communities or groups. She is of the opinion that everyone wants to be an individual. The respondent explains that if advertisers try to target, for example, a forty-year old woman, no universal recipe exists anymore that would ensure the interest of this person.

Respondent Y believes that people love to express themselves. Age does not matter, and both young and old consumers are happy to take part in contests and surveys. She points out that this phenomenon is not limited to instances where the consumers could win something and continues that the actual content is almost irrelevant. The respondent also remarks on how many senior citizens can be found on social media nowadays, and how actively they post and participate. This can be a result of retirees having more free time to browse social media.
“In social media you could on Facebook or Instagram [...] you’re able to comment... People are really willing to comment on things even if they wouldn’t even win anything.”

(Respondent Y)

Company Z strives to learn more about how consumers perceive the marketing campaigns of the company by conducting both quantitative (through surveys) and qualitative (through focus groups) research. Furthermore, they analyze the purchasing behaviour and the reactions to advertisements, especially on social media. Another way the company learns about consumer behaviour is by having different codes for products, and by measuring the effects of marketing decisions in sales.

Categorizing consumers based on age is easy but not the optimal solution, according to respondent Z. When attempting to identify target groups, the company employees base their work as much as possible on previous buying behaviour and generalizing with the help of similar consumers if no data is available. The specific cluster a customer is assigned to depends on many variables, of which age can be one. However, the chosen variables are seldom age or gender, and usually a result of analyzing the data. The respondent comments on how challenging this aspect of marketing can be, as the company in theory has all the tools necessary for the task, apart from consumer data (something the company has too little of). Also, he notes that a customer might not always travel for the same reasons. This further complicates things for marketers.

6.4 On visuals

Respondent X argues that while it cannot be excluded that, as an example, a person in Denmark could not perceive the visuals in a marketing message differently from a person in Finland, he thinks that one should not view things that way. Instead, one should have the view that there are hundreds of thousands of different personalities in both Finland and Denmark, and while one might find more things in common between the Finnish personalities within themselves, this type of demographic thinking is something that is becoming obsolete. Previously, a lot of emphasis was put on age in marketing research, but this is uncommon nowadays. As an example, respondent X argues that one’s decisions can be quite similar when one is 20 and 70-years old, but the age is not important. What should be focused on, however, are the values one
shares and where one’s interests lie. Respondent X reveals how some customers might only go vacationing in places where, for instance, smoothies and gyms are available, but he questions the thought that this would have anything to do with nationality.

“Maybe it would be stupid to say that no, that is completely impossible. Maybe. I don’t believe in that.” (Respondent X on the question whether a visual could be perceived differently in Denmark than in Finland)

Respondent Z states that visuals are processed with the same framework regardless of where the advert is shown. Adaptations are made if necessary, depending on the country and product. The core is similar in all videos regardless of the market, but the videos might differ in certain details (most notably the ending). The company has produced a wide range of tailor-made marketing campaigns and the local subsidiaries can choose from this selection. On paper, the company uses four general campaigns with about eight local ones. Furthermore, the company has almost twenty smaller theme-based visual templates the teams in each market can choose between.

6.5 On outsourcing

Respondent X is not convinced that outsourcing is always the most beneficial choice and argues that outsourcing is merely a technical detail. Outsourcing is necessary for finding short-term replacements when people are ill, but otherwise, any need or desire for external workers (mostly in the form of copywriters) is not expressed by the respondent. He argues that it is beneficial if the outsourced worker understands the travel industry and the company processes, as that increases productivity and makes it easier for the worker to successfully complete the task. Outsourcing introduces its own challenges. For example, when the outsourced workers are not physically present in the company premises, it is difficult to know who one is dealing with. Furthermore, making sure that the same person that worked on the last project also will work on the next one can be problematic. Measuring the quality in text is also challenging.

“It’s more of a technical question. It’s not necessarily a question of money, who says it’s even cheaper to outsource?” (Respondent X)
Company Z outsources only if necessary. The company prefers to outsource to the same external partners in order to alleviate the common problems with outsourcing and consulting. These partners will have been briefed on the type of language being used and on the brand strategy. Work is outsourced primarily due to resource shortages (not enough staff or time). The respondent maintains that outsourcing can at times lead to problems and missed deadlines, but that they can be avoided with proper planning. The most important and hectic matters are done by staff in-house, whereas the rest of the business is outsourced (if needed).

6.6 Findings and comparisons

In this subchapter the findings are presented and compared with each other. The phenomenological approach used to formulate the previous subchapters is also used in this subchapter, in order to present the findings as clearly as possible.

6.6.1 The translation process

The findings in the interviews are quite similar in nature. Firstly, the translation process is viewed and handled in similar ways. No respondent thought that a literal translation would be superior to a more adaptive approach. As such, one can assume that the whole industry shares the same view. It needs to be clarified that the way we define the concept of translation has great implications for the findings and comparisons. As an example, company X and Z tended to rewrite texts from an existing master copy. Is this process even translating? Some theory reviewed in earlier chapters would point to it still being a version of translation, but it can be argued that no translating is being done at all.

Respondents X and Z had similar views of the topics studied. The main takeaway from both interviews was that translating - in the traditional sense of the word - was seldom the primary option. While translators were employed in these companies, their primary objective was not to translate marketing campaigns. Respondent X explained that translators were hired to the company from time to time, but it was always the copywriters that handled the localization and customization of marketing material from source to target text.

Respondent Y had a different answer, asserting that they did not employ translators, but unlike company X and Z, this company was still relatively young. It had recently been bought by a
larger international corporation, and the respondent gave the impression that things were still being figured out and micromanaged by the new parent company.

6.6.2 Culture through the frame of marketers

Even a smaller change in geographical location might result in a big change in culture. Respondent Y explained how people in bigger cities compared to people in the countryside. Respondent X suggested that any person has their own tendencies and desires, which differ from others. As such, generalizing and stereotyping people into the same categories would not be beneficial. He illustrated how thousands of different subcultures could be found in the same country. Furthermore, he pointed out how easy it is to find one’s own group with the help of the internet nowadays. Respondent Y maintained that our culture in Finland has become more fragmented than what it was twenty years ago, and that it can be troublesome for marketers to spot any bigger communities, as was possible in previous years. Furthermore, she believed that the need for everyone to be more of an individual has increased in recent times. Thus, it could be suggested that there it is no longer possible for campaigns or adverts to have an almost universal appeal.

Respondent Z thought that knowing what the consumers are thinking is difficult. Continuing that thought, he argued that how consumers perceive the marketing campaigns cannot be known. Respondent X shared the same sentiments. He mentioned how everything in this context is a matter of opinion. Different research methods reveal different results. Respondent Z pointed out how the cultural upbringing (which may or may not be unknown to the company) is partly what creates the frame of reference, through which the customer perceives the marketing communication. When discussing culture, the respondents mentioned many problems and challenging situations while not being able to offer any clear solutions to these issues. This is a common occurrence in marketing debates, as marketing deals with people, who can be quite complex and complicated at times.

Respondent X maintained that emotions and feelings are quite universal, and indirectly referenced Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (presented in chapter 2). Furthermore, he suggested that the thoughts and feelings that marketers want to evoke are usually the same. Respondent Y explained how different cultures express themselves differently, and how certain words and mannerings had to be removed when translating texts from Swedish to Finnish. The word
“härlig” was one she pointed out as being a favorite among the Swedes. This way of expressing oneself, however, is not as common in Finland. When comparing the Finns to the Danes, she maintained that Finns are quite prone to complain about things when they feel they have been wronged, whereas the Danes are more tolerant. It did seem like respondent X and Y shared the same opinion on this topic, even though the views were stated using different words.

6.6.3. Standardization & Localization

A clear answer to the question whether standardization or localization was to be preferred was not found in any of the interviews. Respondent X illustrated how problematic it was to gather the data necessary for answering questions like these. Respondent Z had a more pragmatic view, maintaining that the alternative showing a higher chance of a short-term profit would be preferred. He did mention that forgetting about the brand altogether would not be profitable, and that a diluted brand strategy could alienate customers.

Respondent Y pointed out how much was localized in her company, mostly because the target group of the company’s marketing efforts was well-suited for that solution. One could claim that localization was more popular than standardization, among the respondents. Respondent X maintained that almost every campaign was localized by the local marketing team but conceded that some campaigns had to remain standardized.

Respondent Z inferred that localization was the primary alternative for his company as well, as they opted to localize as much as the resources allowed. Respondent Y had “localizing ideas and master copys” in her actual job description. Even if this was not mentioned in the actual interview, she did explain the actual situation in the company, which clearly states that localization is what her department does. As such, one can point out that while the sample size might not be close to being significant enough, the findings suggest that localization is preferred. Scenarios exist where standardization is the more sensible choice, however, as explained by respondent X on the topic of TV campaigns.

6.6.4 Visuals

The differences in culture are not big enough for the respondents to feel that visuals in ad campaigns would need to be localized. While respondent X maintained that this way of
segmenting consumers is on its way to obsoletion, respondent Y believed that the nordic cultures are too close to each other to perceive visuals differently. Respondent Z explained how local departments are given different alternatives to use in their own localized campaigns, but the visuals do not differ from each other in any of these alternatives. This aspect of the study seems to be one that all respondents share the same view on.

6.6.5 Outsourcing

Outsourcing is something all respondents discuss, but unlike what might have been expected, the reasons companies outsource is mostly related to how irregular the workload is. Respondent Z implied that hiring more staff would not be logical as there might not always be enough work for these employees. Instead the firm outsources less important tasks. Respondent Y explained how tasks are outsourced to previous employees of the company when possible, which removes the problem of freelancers not understanding important aspects of the company (such as brand, marketing strategy, or internal processes). Respondent X viewed outsourcing as a “technical detail”, something one resorts to in order to cover for when people are on sick leave, for example. All respondents seemed to agree that a host of problems can be found in outsourcing, but also that these problems are not unsolvable. Company Z uses the same partners for outsourcing, which over time has made the freelancers understand and identify with the company on a deeper level. Company Y uses previous employees for their outsourcing. Opinions differ on whether outsourcing is more frugal or not. While respondent X disagreed on outsourcing being more economical, the reasons why company Z outsourced at all seemed to be purely based on money (why employ people that you will only need for one project?).

6.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presents the interviews and findings of the interviews in no specific order and compares the findings of each interview. The comparison in this chapter is only between the actual findings of each interview, without taking the theory in chapters 2 to 4 into account. That is the aim of chapter 7.
7. Discussion and conclusion

This chapter combines the theoretical knowledge with the empirical study and discusses the implications of said findings.

7.1 Theory and empirical findings compared

7.1.1 On translation

When comparing the empirical findings to the literature review in chapter 4, one notices how much of the theory also rings true for the studied companies. When comparing the findings to Schäffner’s (2004) methods (mentioned in subchapter 4.3), one could draw the conclusion that the translating style in the studied companies fits the description of a functionalist approach. The weight is put on the target text and the target addressees and circumstances are thought of while doing the translation. Respondent X even mentioned that what they were doing might not even be called translating by some. The overall insight received from the three interviews corroborates what Nida et al. (1974) and Petronienė & Žvirblytė (2012) argue, as seen in subchapter 4.4. During all three interviews, the processes in each of the companies seemed to be to reproduce the idea and themes of the texts without translating them on a word-for-word basis. When Petronienė & Žvirblytė claim that the goal of a translation is to substitute the source text with a target text that accounts for the same situation (regardless of formal or semantic correspondence), it does concur quite well with the respondents’ view of translation. The same can be said regarding Nida’s views on reproduction of the message rather than conservation of the form of the utterance.

7.1.2 On culture and visuals

Anything that would corroborate Munday’s (2004) statements regarding visuals, as reviewed in subchapter 4.3.2, could not be found in the empirical part of this study. One reason for this could be that the studied companies were not transcontinental, and the cultural differences between Nordic countries are not vast enough for the translation of visuals to be a subject of discussion in the translating process. If this particular topic is studied further in the future, it might not be enough to study international companies. Organizations operating on a transcontinental level might be a better target for this type of research. The same can be said
about Matusitz’s (2015) notions regarding glocalization and how unconventional strategies might be needed when immersing the company in the local culture. The cultures - where the studied companies operate - are so closely linked, that the strategies developed could not be considered unconventional.

7.1.3 On communication styles

The topic of different communication styles (found in subchapter 4.3.3) is something the study did manage to, at least partly, corroborate. The idea presented by De Mooij (2004) regarding how advertising in different regions reflects the different communication styles available was corroborated partly by respondent Y, who mentioned that some phrases always had to be removed when adapting a Swedish version of a sales copy into a Finnish one. She also explained the difference between people living in bigger cities and people living in the countryside, and how the company had to adapt accordingly. Respondent X, however, gave an example of a situation where this was not the case. The respondent’s company had a webshop with only a Finnish version for people in Finland. As a result, Swedish-speaking Finns were to browse the same version as other Finns. According to the respondent, there was not a strong enough need to justify the resources needed to create a Swedish version of the Finnish webshop. Thus, one could argue that there are cases where the communication style of the marketing material might not reflect the communication style of the culture. We do need to remind ourselves here that there seemed to be no disagreement about the idea that a Swedish version for the Swedish-speaking Finns would have been an improvement. It was simply a question of money and the benefits not justifying the expenses.

7.1.4 On standardization/localization

Something that kept returning in the interview discussions was that any business decision that could be viewed as standardization in the three companies was done as a result of cost minimization. In that sense, one could claim that the key benefits of standardization in chapter 2, as mentioned by Pardo-del-val et al. (2014), are at least partly corroborated. Pardo-del-val et al. mentioned cost minimization, brand image and innovation as the three key benefits, but only cost minimization can be corroborated by the findings of this study. While there were answers that might have implicated that brand image is a key part of standardization, innovation was not mentioned once. We do need to put the industry of the companies into context as well.
When hiring a freelancer to help complete a project in the travel industry, innovation might not be the first thing on the hiring companies’ minds.

As can be understood from the interview with respondent Y, it seems like the company has chosen to forgo a more globally integrated marketing strategy in order to be more locally responsive. This corroborates the findings of Walters et al. (2008). One could state that as the companies in this study opted to localize marketing communication, they follow the former view of Ghauri and Cateora (2006), which in its essence states that advertising should be customized specifically for every country. Furthermore, the case about Phillips, told by Ghauri and Cateora (ibid.: 390), seems similar to the answers of respondent Z, regarding the processes the company uses with international advertising campaigns. The example by Ghauri and Cateora (ibid: 392) that tells the story of Chanel’s failed converted advertising campaign from the United States to France (due to different cultural perceptions on the concept of prestige) is one example that the respondents did not have any corresponding examples of. The reason for this could be the same reason that nothing in the empirical part of this study could be found to corroborate the findings of Munday. The cultures compared in this study were simply too close to each other for any meaningful corroboration to be made.

7.1.5. On limitations in advertising

When it comes to comparing the theoretical part on limitations in advertising and the empirical findings in this area, the findings on clearly defined limitations were scarce. Respondent Y mentioned how specific Finnish law is, and how careful one must be not to promise something that cannot be delivered. Any other findings that could be tied to a limitation in advertising were cultural ones, such as when respondent Y spoke about how certain mannerisms and communication styles work in some areas, but not in others. This could be considered a type of limitation in advertising. The reason why no further findings on advertising limitations could be found is that culturally (and perhaps legally), Nordic countries do not differ from each other too much.

7.2 Answering the research questions

This subchapter details the research questions and attempts to answer them as well as possible with the help of the empirical findings.
The first research question was created in order to find out how travel agencies differentiate between different types of consumers, and if any possible similarities or themes could be found by combining the answers of each respondent. The question reads as follows:

Q1: How do travel agencies differentiate between target groups?

While some similarities and conclusions could be drawn based on the interviews with the respondents, it would be unfounded to simply state that there is one clear way that all these companies have opted for. What can be concluded, however, is how there is a big interest in pursuing solutions based on information and data. This was something that respondent Z literally stated, whereas respondent X discussed the importance of data-based marketing. While no certain conclusions can be made from the empirical findings alone, one could piece the details together and suggest that differentiating between target groups by the means of data is an interesting solution. This research question could be expanded upon in future studies, however. While the author did not initially have any specific thoughts about connecting the data-collection with the differentiation of target groups, it seems like a topic in marketing that could benefit from further research. As a quick example, one could approach similar companies with the intention of mapping out how much of market segmentation and differentiation is done based on collected data on the customers.

The second research question was thought of in order to map out how translation fits in with marketing texts, and how the marketing departments of various organizations have chosen to approach this issue. The question in its literal form can be found below:

Q2: How does the translation process look like in travel agencies? Why?

Out of the three research questions posed, the second question received the clearest answer. This can be claimed on the grounds that all companies used a similar style of translation, and few counterarguments implying otherwise could be found in the interviews. The closest argument would be the situation of company Y, which did only seem to be a temporary solution, as company Y had recently been acquired by an international parent company, with incomplete understanding of the Finnish target market.
To answer Q2, translation processes in the travel agencies studied focus largely on translating the idea and the theme. Translating the marketing literally and with the semiotics in mind is not in favor in any of the companies. As has been stated previously, arguments could be made that the companies do not translate their marketing material at all, and that a more suitable word could be “rewriting”.

The reason for the companies opting for a more liberal translation style could be the sheer differences between languages. Respondent Z agreed that some things said in one language cannot be stated in another, and that every case had to be figured out based on the surrounding variables of that specific case. In other words, translating with the help of a specific framework would probably not be beneficial for the marketing purposes of these companies. Different companies in different industries might not necessarily share these sentiments, however, but it does seem plausible. While target markets, products, and marketing channels change, all marketers need to use and follow the same grammatical rules of a language. Although it is true that marketers sometimes create new words for the sake of branding or advertising purposes, they still need to follow the grammatical framework of the chosen language in order to be perceived correctly by the target audience.

The final research question posed investigates the views on standardization and localization. While the author initially expected this question to be one of the hardest to answer, the interviews showed that some concrete information could be found on this topic. Therefore, this is one part of the study that a quantitative follow-up study could investigate further. The actual question posed was:

Q3: Do travel agencies generally prefer to standardize their advertisements in favor of localizing the advertisements to the target audience?

The findings are not too one-sided for a researcher to make any grander conclusions. Many factors and opinions exist, suggesting that localization would be better in many cases, but one can also find a few contradictions between the answers of each respondent, which does complicate the comparison. Respondent Z explained how localization is the method of choice (because of reasons mentioned previously) but that a line needs to be drawn when it is simply not possible any longer, as a result of budget constraints. Respondent Y, contrastingly, mentioned how brand advertising is profoundly expensive. Other than this oddity, most of the
findings would point to localization being more important. To answer Q3, one needs to thread carefully in order to not assert something the findings might not account for. A hasted answer would be that localization is preferred, but the true answer is more layered. There are situations where localization works and other situations where standardization would be preferred. The answers given in this study could easily change depending on the industry of the companies. However, as the question limited the frame to travel agencies, one could theorize that localizing (instead of standardizing) the advertisements to the target audience is to be preferred. On the other hand, it is true that one can do a mix of both, as explained by respondent X and implied by respondent Z. In both cases, parts of the major marketing campaigns were localized whereas the major underlying theme remained unchanged. As a result, one could argue that a mixture of standardization and localization is used in larger campaigns, whereas more tactical and local campaigns are as localized as possible.

7.3 Managerial implications

The findings of this thesis give strong arguments for how localization and adapting to the target market as well as possible is favoured, as opposed to maintaining a strong brand identity without focusing too much on the localization aspect.

While it is not a negative character trait to take everything with a grain of salt, having an open mind towards certain topics could prove to be beneficial for managers across the world. Thus, what managers could surmise from reading this thesis, is that it looks likely that companies in the travel industry focus on localization. Secondly, it is equally likely that translating in the traditional form is not something international companies do. Instead the norm seems to be to rewrite the ideas and themes without putting much focus on the literal meaning of the target text. Thirdly, data-driven marketing is on the rise and demographic-based marketing is becoming more irrelevant as time passes.

7.4 Limitations and suggestions for future research

When it comes to reviewing the thesis as critically as one can, having authored the whole text, the biggest critique is how the small sample size might not be deemed enough to draw solid conclusions from. While it might have been better to have five (or ten, or fifty) respondents instead of three, what needs to be pointed out is that this was not a deliberate choice. Time
constraints were a factor in this study. Furthermore, the number of respondents was limited by the limited access to businesses of similar scale, operating in the same field. Contacting the right people in the companies was also something that proved to be challenging. The most obvious and suitable choices for this study were approached during the spring of 2018, which resulted in the three interviews.

The findings might have been more numerous and richer in content if the industry in focus had not been travel agencies, but something broader and easier to get access to. One example of this is department stores. The reason for choosing travel agencies was mostly a result of having access to one employee to be interviewed, who just so happened to be working in the travel agency world. What does need to be pointed out, at this stage, is the importance of having respondents in similar fields in order to ensure better comparability between the interviews.

This notion does introduce another piece of criticism, which is how all respondents did not have the same job descriptions. While some might call it nitpicking, one could notice a difference in the answers and the conversations in general, which could be attributed to the differences in job titles and descriptions. However, a counterargument could be made that there are a myriad of variables contributing to the conversational style of a person, and suggesting that the answers a person gives is mostly based on the job title of the person would be to grossly underestimate the complexity of the human mind. Furthermore, one would have to be the luckiest researcher in the world to be able to demand the respondents to have the same job title in order to “qualify” for the interview. Such requests would most likely find themselves at the bottom of the recipient’s trash can, if not worse.

One could also critique some parts of the theoretical sections to be insignificant or not detailed enough. A reason for this is the topics discussed being quite vast and complex, especially for an outsider with - at times - limited experience in the field. The field of Translation Studies was particularly challenging.

Further research is vital for marketers to get a definite answer to the research questions posed in this study. That is not to say that the research in this study is redundant, but more so that it should be used as the spine of a continuous, expanding research on translation in marketing. Therefore, the author suggests that a qualitative continuation study should be conducted, in which a larger number of recipients are approached, ensuring more significant findings.
Continuing this thought, it could also be an option to continue researching and expanding on only one of the research questions. The question of how travel agencies differentiate between target groups and the following findings that data-based marketing is something of possibly great importance needs to be considered. This does open a whole new world of possibilities for future researchers, as there might not even be a need to link these types of studies with translation at all. One could simply discard that research question and replace it with something related to data-based marketing in a more detailed way. The findings of this study might pique the interest of a researcher with the focus on data-based marketing.

The findings of this study could be used as a frame of reference when researchers find themselves in the creation phase of a quantitative survey (if that is the alternative chosen by the future researcher) on the same topic. It could also be beneficial for the marketing community if a similar study were to be undertaken in a different field. The chosen field for this study was travel agencies in the Nordic countries, and while the translation methods might be the same in different industries, hard data is always better than assumptions and theories.

Lastly, the third research question (whether companies standardize their campaigns or localize them) is quite broad in its character. While there undoubtedly have been several studies in this field, one can always go one level deeper. In this study, the focus was on travel agencies in the Nordic countries. As mentioned previously, one could possibly research the same question in different industries, but another option would be to change the geographical location. This study focused on Nordic countries and it could be interesting to study whether any similarities could be found in the rest of Europe. At a quick glance, the findings in these studies could prove to be quite fascinating as the cultures in the rest of Europe vary quite largely from each other. It might not be too ludicrous of an idea to think that marketers in these areas have more to think about because of the cultural differences alone. While it is true that these assumptions are made without any theoretical ground to stand on, the notion is still one of interest.
8. Svensk sammanfattning: En studie i hur reseföretag ser på översättningen av reklam, och hur de i praktiken har valt att gå till väga när det gäller översättning av text från ett språk till ett annat


I början av avhandlingen tas de relevanta forskningsfrågorna upp. Dessa frågor utgör stommen till hela avhandlingen, och det är också dessa teman som tas upp i de tre intervjuerna som gjordes.

1. Hur differentierar reseföretag mellan målgrupper?
2. Hur ser översättningsprocessen ut i praktiken i företaget?
3. Väljer reseföretag huvudsakligen att standardisera eller att lokalisera sina reklamkampanjer?

För att forskningsresultaten i en studie överlag ska kunna jämföras och analyseras, är det bäst om de olika variablerna kring företagen är så likadana som möjligt. Detta försökte jag åstadkomma genom att hålla mig till samma bransch i alla företag jag intervjuade. Orsaken till att just reseföretag valdes var helt enkelt en fråga om tillträde. Det råkade sig att min handledare tidigare hade gjort en undersökning med en person från en resebyrå, som också skulle passa in bra i denna undersökning. I efterhand märkte jag hur bra detta val var, eftersom det inte är så enkelt att få tillträde till ett företag. Det bör också påpekas att även om tillträde skulle fås, betyder det inte att all erfarenhet och allt kunnande skulle serveras till forskaren på ett silverfat. Detta kan exemplifieras i hur två av tre företag ville vara anonyma i undersökningen, fastän


Översättningar är enklast när antingen båda språken har likadan grammatisk uppbyggnad eller när kulturerna inte skiljer sig åt så mycket (Nida et al., 1974: 5-6). Enligt författarna ska översättaren också skapa den nya texten enligt hur den ursprungliga författaren har förstått texten (ibid.: 8).


I vissa fall kan sloganer och motton också ställa till med problem för översättare, som exempelvis marknadsförare för varumärkena O₂ (‘O₂, see what you can do’) och Canon (‘If anyone can, Canon can’) märke. Bland annat fransmän skulle uttala varumärkena på ett annat sätt än engelsmän, vilket skulle försvaga på budskapet på mottot (De Mooij, 2004: 189).

Det finns många olika metoder och modeller att översätta en text. Schäffner (2004) nämner fyra olika modeller:

- den lingvistiska (att översätta vad som menas i texten)
- den textlingvistiska (fokus på själva texten)
- den funktionsorienterade (måltexten är ett resultat av en interkulturell interaktion som har tagit målgruppen i beaktande)
- deskriptiv översättningsvetenskap (ämnar skapa översättningsnormer).


De Mooij nämner hur reklam på olika områden brukar reflektera de olika kommunikationsstilar som används, och skiljer mellan direkt och indirekt kommunikation (2004). Författaren fortsätter genom att ge exempel på olika case där reklamen för företag har uppfattats på ett helt annat sätt än vad som förväntades (ibid.).

ut källtexten mot måltexten så att den motsvarar originalet, även om man inte skulle hitta någon formell eller semantisk korrespondens i texterna.

Rojo et al. menar att metaforer kan tillföra budskap, och en stor del av detta försvinner då översättningen inte använder sig av liknande metaforer (2014). De ger ett exempel på hur boiling with anger medför en viss intensitet som kanske tappas bort om man omskriver budskapet med hjälp av adverbial (t.ex. very, extremely) (ibid.: 38).


Den andra frågan om hur översättningsprocessen ser ut i företagen fick man rätt så klara svar på, högst sannolikt p.g.a. hur konkret och lättförståelig frågan var. Från respondenterna fick jag den bilden att det sällan handlade om att översätta den egentliga texten i reklamkampanjerna, utan att man istället fokuserade på att översätta temat och budskapet som texterna försökte kommunicera till kunderna. Processen i dessa företag handlade mera om att skriva budskapet i texterna pånytt på nya språk istället för att översätta ordagrant.


När man tänker på vad forskningsresultaten innebär för ledningspersonal inom marknadsföring kan man nämna hur reseföretag verkar favorisera lokaliserings oftare än standardisering som marknadsföringsstrategi. Som det närmades i en tidigare paragraf är detta dock inte ett fullkomligt svar. Det finns också situationer då standardisering är ett mera logiskt alternativ (t.ex. fallet respondent X nämnde i en tidigare paragraf). Följaktligen gav respondenterna svar som skulle tyda på att en blandning av standardisering och lokaliserings används i större kampanjer. Ett exempel på detta är hur stommen av en större kampanj i de undersökta företagen var samma oavsett var kampanjen visades. Mindre detaljer blev dock lokaliserade av den lokala marknadsföringsavdelningen.

Reseföretag verkar inte översätta enligt traditionella översättningsmetoder - i alla fall när det pratas om marknadsföringskampanjer. Från forskningsresultaten kan man avläsa att det finns en överliggande trend att använda sig av en mera funktionalistisk stil av översättning var man inte lägger fäste på de egentliga orden. Istället ligger fokusen på temat och det underliggande budskapet i kommunikationen. Slutligen måste man iakta hur databaserad marknadsföring är något som kan möjligtvis hamna i en allt större roll för marknadsförare i framtiden.
References:


