

TORRESI, Ira (2010/2021): *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts*. 2nd edition. London/New York: Routledge, 224 p.

Sonia Langridge

Volume 69, numéro 1, 2024

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1113951ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1113951ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (imprimé)

1492-1421 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce compte rendu

Langridge, S. (2024). Compte rendu de [TORRESI, Ira (2010/2021): *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts*. 2nd edition. London/New York: Routledge, 224 p.] *Meta*, 69(1), 266–268. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1113951ar>

laboral y el panorama de actualidad del campo de la traducción.

A lo largo de sus trece capítulos, y a través de esta doble modalidad teórico-práctica que hemos mencionado a lo largo de esta reseña, la autora nos invita a conocer la realidad profesional de la traducción sin perder de vista la base teórica sobre la que se asienta. Aunque la figura central sigue siendo el traductor, Rico Pérez lanza a la palestra los nuevos perfiles profesionales que surgen de la evolución de la propia labor traductora, como el revisor, el maquetador, el poseedor y el gestor de proyectos de traducción.

Estamos ante una monografía en la que el lector, sobre todo si todavía se encuentra en las aulas universitarias, aprenderá sobre aquello que no se suele incluir en los planes de estudio curriculares: cómo preparar una factura, qué es lo indispensable en la oficina de un profesional autónomo, cuáles son las salidas profesionales de la traducción, cuál es la diferencia entre una empresa y una agencia de traducción o qué significa una tercera ola de traducción feminista. Como se desprende de estos ejemplos que podemos encontrar en *Fundamentos teórico-prácticos para el ejercicio de la traducción*, la autora abarca un amplio abanico de temas candentes y de actualidad, y los respalda con su correspondiente parte de capítulos teóricos, lo que hace que esta lectura sea imprescindible para toda persona que pertenezca o que se encuentre en ciernes de pertenecer a este maravilloso y complejo mundo de la traducción.

IRENE FUENTES PÉREZ
Universidad de Alcalá,
Alcalá de Henares, España

REFERENCIAS

- HATIM, Basil, MASON, Ian (1990): *The Translator as Communicator*. Londres: Routledge.
HURTADO ALBIR, Amparo (2018): *Traducción y traductología. Introducción a la traductología*. Madrid: Cátedra.
NIDA, Eugene (1959): Principles of translation. In: Reuben Arthur BROWER, ed. *On Translation*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 11-13.

TORRESI, Ira (2010/2021): *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts*. 2nd edition. London/New York: Routledge, 224 p.

Willy Brandt, former German Chancellor, is credited with having said: "If I'm selling to you, I speak your language. If I'm buying, dann müssen Sie Deutsch sprechen!" With this quip—offered in decades past—Brandt recognised the simple reality that organisations can increase their chances of success by addressing their target customers in

their own language. In today's increasingly global and multicultural marketplace, this suggestion has never been more valid. But the reality is anything but simple.

Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts offers a practical, methodical and easily digested overview of how to approach the complex task of translating a marketing message into the language of the target audience. As part of Routledge's "Translation Practices Explained" series, this text is one of 26 coursebooks written by specialists dedicated to providing students and self-learners a glimpse into the real-world practices of translating and interpreting.

First published in 2010, the second edition of Ira Torresi's *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts* was released in 2021. Torresi, an Associate Professor of Interpreting and Translation at the University of Bologna and active interpreter and translator, once again expertly engages the reader in her world. In particular, the detailed accounts of marketing-focused translation projects she has worked on are illuminating. Torresi's book offers a range of useful strategies and considerations when approaching the translation of a selection of advertising and promotional texts that she has categorised according to their "addressers and addressees" (p. 26)—that is, who is generating the message and for what audience. Torresi's discussion of these different genres is well supported by examples written mainly in Italian and English, the author's primary language pair. Some examples also include versions of a text or advertisement in other European languages such as German, French or Spanish, and occasionally in Hindi, Russian and Arabic.

Her target readership is as varied as the translation strategies covered. Most obviously, Torresi's insights will be instructive to students, those recently graduated and seeking to find their niche in the translation industry, and to freelance translators or translation agencies. Equally, this text will be of value to organisations that seek to engage with foreign markets or foreign-speaking segments of their domestic market. Her book piqued my interest as it embraces my two key areas of interest: marketing, which was at the core of my "first career" as a practitioner as well as tertiary instructor in the field, and translation, which is the foundation of my "next career."

The common element between the different promotional genres addressed by Torresi is their persuasive imperative: they all seek to sell "a product, a service, a person, a company, an attitude or a behaviour" (p. 26). Drawing on skopos theory, she highlights that promotional translation is assessed only in functional terms: the translator's task is to render the source information in a

target text that preserves its persuasive purpose. The translation must reflect the same intent of the original, and elicit the same response by the intended audience. In some instances, this will be achieved through quite literal translation, but other translations will demand significant cultural adaptation or even rewriting of the original text to preserve the intended function. Torresi considers the categories of personal and self-promotion, business-to-business (B2B), institutional, and business-to-consumer (B2C) promotion, noting that each genre displays different stylistic conventions, distribution methods as well as type and intent of content. Recognising changes in marketplace trends since the first release of this text in 2010, the revised edition includes a new section that discusses the use of social media, specifically Facebook, by individuals and small family businesses aiming to build awareness of their services. Her examples of authentic content by small business owners reflect the importance of multimodal and visual techniques as well as the opportunity to employ translanguaging strategies in this medium.

Whilst it is tempting to skip straight to the latter chapters that deal with the “bells and whistles” aspects of advertising and promotion, the reader is well advised to devote time to earlier chapters. Here Torresi outlines firstly how to use the text as an effective teaching and learning tool in face-to-face or online learning environments. Chapters 2 and 3 act as an important foundation to the subsequent chapters that centre on practical scenarios. The novice translator, in particular, will benefit from Torresi’s insights on non-linguistic skills (such as *agility* to appropriately approach different texts; *persuasiveness* to generate the desired outcome amongst a target audience; *creativity* in rendering source texts into a different cultural and linguistic environment; a preparedness to be *flexible* in one’s dealings with agents, editors and the end client; and *knowledge of laws and restrictions* pertinent to the target environment). Similarly, Torresi’s discussion of the importance of briefs and how they influence the translation choices is instructive; she details in a “model brief” (p. 10) the pieces of information the translator should seek to recognise or acquire to shape the target text (or texts, since it is not uncommon for the translator to provide multiple versions of some creative ideas) in its quest to achieve the desired outcome. The author also outlines the expectations the translator can reasonably have of their client and how best to communicate with them. These points are helpfully referenced and reinforced throughout the practical sections. The revised edition of *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts* devotes more space in Chapter 3 to the discussion of theoretical

frameworks for text analysis, and to the importance of understanding cultural differences to effective promotional translation. The discussion of considerations and challenges associated with translating persuasive content across cultures has found a more logical home in Chapter 3 of the second edition than it did in the final chapter of the first edition, given how directly this factor influences promotional translation. The cultural dimensions (differences) first identified by Geert Hofstede in 1981 provide a useful framework for recognising, understanding and responding to differences between source and target cultures. These dimensions are well illustrated by examples and an introduction to corpus analysis as a tool to assist translation of advertising and promotional texts.

Central to Torresi’s work is the “rule of thumb” she has devised to guide how translators approach the rendering of varied promotional texts into other languages: the information-to-persuasion ratio. The author identifies advertising and promotional texts as falling on a continuum: informative, technical or non-emotional at one extreme, and persuasive and more emotional at the other. She asserts that the information-to-persuasion ratio will influence the translation strategy adopted. For example, high information, low persuasions texts such as B2B technical brochures are usually translated quite closely; in contrast, high persuasion, low information genres such as B2C advertisements demand more creative use of language and more “boost,” rewriting of the original text, and/or transcreation to meet the goals of the brief. Torresi provides a useful chart that shows the collocation of different promotional genres on this continuum (p. 27).

Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 are practical in their focus, each addressing a different category of advertising and promotional text: self-promotion (ranging from CVs and job applications to personal websites and Facebook pages); business-to-business promotion (company brochures and websites); institutional promotion (institution-to-institution and institution-to-user, such as health and tourism promotion); and business-to-consumer promotion (encompassing brochures, websites and advertisements). Readers or teachers can choose at this point to focus on the text types most relevant to them. Torresi illustrates how one might approach translation of the various genres through her detailed analysis of selected texts. Torresi’s discourse on translation projects she has undertaken outlines the analysis, decision-making processes and interactions with the commissioners of the work that combined to produce the target text; such accounts are particularly valuable from a linguistic point of view, and at the same time offer an insight into the real-world practice of a translator.

Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts limits its discussion to advertising and promotional texts that are printed or available online; television and radio advertisements or promotional videos are not covered. Torresi has carefully chosen her examples to illustrate particular points, and indeed a good range of promotional texts and languages are showcased (a further selection of activities is also available via the “Routledge Translation Studies” portal). However, despite supporting the narrative, the examples featured are largely quite dated. Torresi pre-empts this criticism by stating that no matter what examples one presents, they will not long remain current. She also validly encourages teachers to source their own examples to best suit the needs and languages of their learners, and implores all readers to critically view and assess promotional genres in both their source and target environments to facilitate a deep understanding of the cultural and linguistic norms in, and expectations of, those marketplaces. Whilst references to Torresi’s own past translation projects are understandable, there is no getting past the fact that advertisements that are in part two decades old do not well reflect contemporary approaches to advertising or contemporary views of consumers; for example, the woman featured in the 1998 UK New Candy Activa ad (p. 166) states that her “life has taken a turn for the better” now that she has a washing machine she can rely on. Similarly, the fact that many of the advertisements, websites and other texts are no longer accessible online suggests that the authoring organisations also felt their messaging needed an overhaul. It is surprising that in the intervening decade between the first and second editions of this book, Torresi was not able to source additional examples of “fresh real-life materials that best suit learners’ needs” (p. 2).

Given advertising and promotional materials mostly contain strong visual elements, there is scope for this revised edition to present advertisements in full colour rather than simply describing the colour contrasts. This was a surprising change between the two editions. Whilst acknowledging that this text grapples with the same issue of space constraints as the promotional texts described in it, it would however be helpful if some of the sample advertisements/texts were annotated, rather than the reader having to move between multiple pages to match graphics with explanations. Similarly, readers are frequently encouraged to refer to specific points in the Model Translator-Promoted Brief in Chapter 2 and to the information-to-persuasion ratio continuum in Chapter 3; it would be useful if this need to move back and forth between chapters were alleviated. From a further practical viewpoint, there is scope to more easily distinguish the activities included in each section from the general

copy (by way of a shaded block or similar). On occasion, Torresi refers readers to examples outside the textbook that appear, for example, in her other works or the first edition of the text. Consideration might be given to including these examples in the Appendix of the book so that they are readily available. As a further suggestion, glossary terms could be outlined in the margin of the page on which they are first mentioned. The current method of bolding terms that are included in the glossary the first time they occur in the book is somewhat hit and miss. A number of glossary terms are not bolded at all in the text (for example, the terms *bodycopy*, *payoff*, *foreignization* and *overt translation*), while others are bolded only after several mentions (for example, *reale/realia tantum* and *brief*). Finally, the absence of concluding statements or sections means each chapter, and indeed the book itself, ends quite abruptly.

In summary, Ira Torresi’s *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts* presents a uniquely comprehensive resource that meets its objectives and the needs of its target readership very well. I gained much from Torresi’s enthusiastic accounts of her own translation projects and information on practices one can expect to encounter in the industry. These included the importance of the brief, of fostering lines of communication, and of understanding ways in which advertising and promotion reflect the different cultures and languages of the source and target audiences. The early chapters of the book provide a useful framework that guides the evaluation of different advertising and promotional materials to determine the most appropriate translation approach. Combined with the author’s extensive experience and the range of practical examples presented, *Translating Promotional and Advertising Texts* is an engaging and worthwhile resource that will assist translation practitioners expand their range of skills.

SONIA LANGRIDGE

*The University of Western Australia, Perth,
Australia*

REFERENCES

- HOFSTEDE, Geert (1981): Culture and Organizations. *International Studies of Management and Organization*. 10: 15-41.