2018

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Recommended Citation
DOI: https://doi.org/10.70163/0036-0252.1061
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/rlj/vol68/iss1/5

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Cultural Differences in Russian and American Magazine Advertising: A Pragmatic Approach

EMILY FURNER

1. Introduction

Though some may think that TRANSLATION and LOCALIZATION are two words that represent the same function, many scholars make a distinction between the two terms, and some even add a third term, GLOBALIZATION, into the mix. Translator and localization specialist Bert Esselink (1998) perhaps best defined the distinctions in these terms:

Globalization […] is typically used in a sales and marketing context, i.e., it is the process by which a company breaks free of the home markets to pursue business opportunities wherever their customers may be located. Translation is the process of converting written or displayed text or spoken words to another language. In localization, translation is not a word-for-word “global replacement” process. It requires accurately conveying the total meaning of the source material into the target language, with special attention to cultural nuance and style. (3)

Thus, localization is, in addition to the lexical translation of a text, a process that involves considering the cultural implications for how every component of a given message will be received by the new audience.

Understanding the localization process requires an understanding of cultural differences. In order to explore differences across cultures, Hofstede (1984) polled various IBM workers in forty different countries to understand how culture impacts work-related values. From his empirical data, the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions framework was created to explain differences between the cultures of different countries. This model expanded over time—it now contains six dimensions instead of just four—and it is regarded as the oldest and...
most reliable framework for comparing cultures (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sanders 1990; Yates and Cutler 1996; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). Many businesses often question the need for localization—are cultures really so different that international advertising needs to undergo a localization process to succeed? A comparison of US and Russian cultures using the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions Model reveals clear differences (see figure 1). The two countries differ across all categories by a score of at least 25, with the largest difference reflecting the Long Term Orientation dimension of the model (a difference of 55). With such large differences in culture, the need for the localization of both the images and text in advertisements becomes not only evident, but also vital to the success of international marketing campaigns.

Figure 1. Hofstede cultural dimension scores for Russia and the United States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural dimension</th>
<th>Russia</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power distance</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualism</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity/femininity</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term orientation</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indulgence</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many scholars have examined localization differences in women’s fashion or beauty magazines, as these types of magazines try to appeal to different regional demographics (Machin and van Leeuwen 2005; Frith and Feng 2009; Cao 2014). For example, from the US and Chinese editions of *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue* magazines, Xie and Zhang (2013) note that, for Asian markets, the ideal skin tone is viewed as

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1 The Hofstede Cultural Dimensions model is composed of six different dimensions. Power distance, individualism, masculinity/femininity, and uncertainty avoidance are the first four dimensions that make up this model. In Hofstede’s subsequent work, two more dimensions, long term orientation and indulgence, were added. Countries under Hofstede’s model are given scores out of 100 for each of the six individual dimensions that can then be used to compare different cultures. For more information, please visit geerthofstede.com.
“white” and “pale,” while the ideal skin tone in America is viewed as “tan,” “bronzed,” or “sun-kissed” (542). Similarly, Iglikova (2013) looked at the differences in health content among the US, British, and Bulgarian editions of *Cosmopolitan* magazine and concluded that there are large distinctions in the way that health topics are treated among the three nations.

1.1 Pragmatics of advertising discourse

Advertising features such as phonology, morphology, lexical innovation, and syntax, have all been studied in detail (Vestergaard and Schroeder 1985; Cook 1992; Myers 1994; Goddard 1998; Bell 1999; Anca and Elena 2013; Luján-García 2015); however, this study will focus on combining the pragmatic features of advertising in order to learn about the persuasive goals of advertisements. Leech (1966) was one of the first linguists to propose a framework for the goals of advertisements. He theorized that there were four main categories that an advertisement must address in order to be successful.

Leech’s components for persuasive advertisements (1966, 27):

1. It must draw attention to itself. (Attention value)
2. It must sustain the interest it has attracted. (Readability/listenability)
3. It must be remembered, or at any rate recognized as familiar. (Memorability)
4. It must prompt the right kind of action. (Selling power)

Later, Simpson (2001) changed the focus of Leech’s framework from the goals of an advertisement, or what it tries to accomplish, to an advertisement’s function, or how it accomplishes its goal. Simpson’s work built on the work of David Bernstein, who first proposed in 1974 that advertisements could be categorized into two distinct categories based on their marketing function: “reason” advertising and “tickle” advertising. Bernstein’s work lacked a linguistic foundation; however, Simpson used Grice’s (1975) theory of cooperative behavior (the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner), Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, Sperber and Wilson’s (1986) relevance theory, and Halliday’s (1994) systemic-functional framework to define how linguistic components such as directness might make up the distinction
between “reason” and “tickle” advertising, although he never formalized his framework.

Even though Simpson (2001) did not clearly formalize the distinctions between reason and tickle advertising, the linguistic foundation that he built his framework upon was a powerful combination of ideas and theories. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory emphasizes positive and negative politeness, two concepts which revolve around the idea of face, or “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (311). Positive politeness is “approach-based; it ‘anoints’ the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respects, [the speaker] wants [what the hearer] wants” (Brown and Levinson, 317). Negative politeness, on the other hand, consists of “assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee’s negative face wants [‘the want to maintain claims of territory and self-determination’] and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee’s freedom of action.”

These two forms of politeness work hand-in-hand with Grice’s (1975) maxims. Grice theorized that a speaker in an optimum conversation will give only succinct, related, and true information to a hearer in a clear way, thus following the four maxims of quantity (be succinct), relation (be relevant), quality (be truthful), and manner (avoid ambiguity). These maxims form the basis of what Grice called implicatures, or inferences that people draw in conversations. Grice explains that the maxims are an integral part of processing implicature: “to work out that a particular conversational implicature is present, the hearer will rely on . . . the CP [cooperative principle] and its maxims” (50). Conversation between individuals often requires negotiating perception and context; when these negotiations require a fact that “must be supposed,” implicature is needed in order to ensure that the maxims are followed during communication and that meaning can be determined (58). Some conversations require strong implicature on the part of the hearer, who must read between the lines and make inferences to understand the speaker’s intended meaning. Other conversations are more straightforward and thus require only weak implicature, or few to no inferences on the hearer’s part, to understand the speaker’s intended meaning.
Simpson attempted to apply these theories of conversation to advertising, but it would take six more years before a scholar would clearly define how each part within Simpson’s proposed framework could be applied to the figurative conversation between an advertisement and a consumer. Kim’s (2007) operationalization of Simpson’s proposed framework includes six main categories of discourse-pragmatic features (based on Cook 1992; Delin 2000; Hardin 2001; and Simpson 2001) that, when combined, can be used to label a given advertisement as either reason or tickle. In general, reason advertisements “enhance and highlight the primary motives for buying the product and [provide] a simple, direct, and unequivocal message that is easy to decipher and does not require complex inferencing on the part of the prospective buyer” (Kim 2007, 27). On the other hand, “tickle” advertisements “[do] not observe the criteria for reason advertising (the expressing of clear and unambiguous reasons to buy) and [place] emphasis on engaging the inferencing faculties of the reader to ‘figure out’ what is promoted” (27).

Since Simpson’s (2001) framework, numerous scholars have used the reason and tickle framework to analyze the pragmatic function of advertisements. For example, the reason and tickle framework has been applied to Romanian advertisements by Pop (2009), radio advertisements in Greek by Politis and Kakavoulia (2010), and television broadcasts in Mexico by Martínez-Camino and Pérez-Saiz (2012). The present study addressing Russian likewise applies this framework; however, localized advertisements will be discussed in light of how a specific advertisement’s reason or tickle structure might change due to the localization process. Until now, scholars have not specifically addressed the effects of the framework on messages that need to be understood by multi-lingual audiences from different nations and cultures.

1.2 Research questions
This study compares localized Russian advertisements (created by international marketers) with non-localized Russian advertisements (created by Russian marketers) through the lens of Simpson’s (2001) reason and tickle pragmatic framework. Two samples of magazine advertisements taken from American and Russian beauty magazines
were categorized according to certain pragmatic features to determine whether localized and non-localized advertisements use similar persuasive techniques to sell products to a female Russian demographic. This research will address the following questions:

1. How does localization in advertisements affect the different pragmatic structures (i.e., reason advertising vs. tickle advertising) found in American and Russian magazine print advertising?

2. Do specific discourse variables exist within Simpson’s (2001) framework that characterize non-localized Russian advertisements in magazines?

2. Method

For this study, a small corpus of print magazine advertisements was created in order to compare American and Russian advertising strategies. Advertisements were sampled from the 2016 American and Russian editions of three top-selling beauty magazines, Elle, Vogue, and Glamour, and assigned either to a localized or non-localized subsample. Localized advertisements were paired, one in the source language (English), and another in the target language (Russian), that advertised the same product. Non-localized advertisements were advertisements created for Russians by Russian companies in Russian editions. Advertisements within the samples were then categorized according to different pragmatic variables taken from Simpson’s (2001) reason and tickle framework. These variables include the following (Kim 2007, 96–97; Simpson 2001, 595–97):

1. Presence of conjunctive adjuncts (and their Russian equivalents)²
2. Problem-solution discourse structure³
3. Negative and positive politeness strategies⁴

² Words that denote a conditional, casual, or purposive relationship, such as when, because, or in order to.
³ Advertisements with a problem/solution discourse structure identify a specific problem that the advertised product can solve, e.g., Tired of getting a sunburn? Our new sunscreen can protect you for three hours straight.
⁴ Negative politeness strategies in advertising are lists of easy-to-decipher reasons and/or benefits to buy a product that allow the consumer to make up their mind without being imposed upon, hedges that mitigate face-threatening and minimize imposition (example:
Presuppositions and conventional implicature

Conversational implicature (through the flouting of the Gricean maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner)

Number of words per advertisement

From these variables, an overall advertising strategy of either reason or tickle was assigned to each advertisement in both the LOCALIZED and NON-LOCALIZED samples of advertisements.

Advertisements within the localized sample were separated into the categories of original source language (English) and target language (Russian), and then the English and Russian versions of the advertisements were compared side-by-side to see if companies localized advertisements. This comparison was based on different levels of localization change: mere direct translation, changes in phrasing and/or cultural references, and finally, changes in persuasive strategy. These levels were based on the pragmatic variables that were assigned to each advertisement. After this comparison, the localized Russian advertisements were compared to the non-localized Russian advertisements through the specific pragmatic features to see if localization caused a difference in advertising strategies. Variables perhaps, possible, sort of, and modal verbs), nominalizations, passive voice, general statements, and the use of announcers and authorities to convey information to impersonalize the consumer. Positive politeness strategies in advertising are attendance to reader’s interests, wants, needs, and approval; situations that evoke a feeling of a face-to-face conversation; personal address, colloquial phrases, etc. (elements that evoke solidarity and shared experiences and values); references to common ground; jokes, flattery, promises, and gifts; and rhetorical questions or other forms of invitation and suggestion. For more information on politeness theory, see Brown and Levinson (1987).

Presuppositions are facts or implicit beliefs that a listener needs to assume in order for the message to make sense. For example, nail polish that makes you feel like you just got a spa manicure presupposes that the reader knows what spa manicures are like.

For definitions of these maxims, please refer to Grice (1975). For the purposes of this study, a violation of Gricean maxims constituted the following: In order to violate the maxim of quantity, the advertisement needed to contain ellipsis, repetition, or a lack of information about the product. In order to violate the maxim of quality, the advertisement needed to contain false assertions, metaphor, hyperbole/understatement, or irony. In order to violate the maxim of relation, the advertisement needed to avoid topics, have non-relevant information, or imply relations/comparisons. In order to violate the maxim of manner, the advertisement needed to contain rhetorical questions, ambiguous statements, vagueness, obscure language, euphemism, redundancy, excessive verbosity, or novelty.
related to reason and tickle advertising were further analyzed to look for possible patterns in overall Russian cultural advertising strategy.

3. Research Question 1: Localized sample
The localized sample contained pairings of advertisements bought by international companies that advertised the same product in two different cultures. These advertisements \((N = 128)\) were analyzed according to the pragmatic features of reason and tickle advertising and then, by also taking word count into consideration, assigned an overall designation of reason or tickle. For each advertisement pairing, the English version was rated for pragmatic features followed by the Russian version that was rated using the same criteria. The results of the reason and tickle coding applied to the localized sample appear below in figure 2.

**Figure 2. Number of advertisements per pragmatic category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic features</th>
<th>English localized sample</th>
<th>Russian localized sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctive adjuncts</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem/solution structure</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive politeness</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong presupposition/impliciture</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Gricean maxims</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reason advertisements</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total tickle advertisements</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above data, it is apparent that localization did not affect the total number of pragmatic features within the reason and tickle framework, which, perhaps, can be explained by the fact that many of the advertisements had few, if any changes. Figure 3 summarizes the findings of the localized comparison between the original English advertisements and the localized Russian advertisements.
These comparisons were based on how many of the original English pragmatic variables changed in the Russian version of the advertisement. An assignment of a low/none degree of change to an advertisement pairing indicated that none of the six pragmatic variables changed when the English advertisement was localized, and the wording of the Russian advertisement remained similar to the original English text. An assignment of a mid-level degree of change to an advertisement pairing indicated none of the six pragmatic variables changed when the English advertisement was localized, but the wording of the Russian advertisement differed from the original English text significantly. Finally, an assignment of a high degree of change to an advertisement pairing indicated that at least one of the six pragmatic variables changed when the English advertisement was localized, signifying a shift in the advertisement’s pragmatic function (and the advertising strategy).

3.1 Low/No Degree of Change
An advertisement pairing was categorized as having a low/none degree of change if the contact information of the advertisement was merely changed from displaying American cities/addresses/telephone numbers to Russian ones. Additionally, if minor words were added or removed from the text, the advertisement pairing was also assigned this category. Two pairings that reflect this category include La Perla Clothing and Piaget Jewelry (see appendix A):

1. La Perla Clothing (English: taken from *Vogue*, January 2016, 14; Russian: taken from *Vogue*, February 2016, 50)

The advertisement for La Perla represents a low degree of change, with only slight changes to the image. The advertisement contains two large pictures of models in La Perla clothing. The only two textual elements of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of change</th>
<th>Number of advertisements</th>
<th>Percent of advertisements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low/None</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the advertisement, the website and the brand name, remain unchanged between the English and the Russian version. Since nothing in the text changed, there was no change in the codes assigned to this advertisement among the six different pragmatic features tracked. The word count also remained the same (WC = 2). The advertising strategy remained “tickle” in both versions.

2. Piaget Jewelry (English: taken from Elle, April 2016, 163; Russian: taken from Vogue, April 2016, 79)
The advertisement for Piaget also represents a low degree of change. The differences between the English advertisement and the Russian advertisement are minor. In both languages, the advertisement uses the same photo of three gold rings on a blue background. The phrase describing the jewelry collection advertised, “Possession Collection,” is only partially translated in the Russian version, “Коллекция Possession*” [Collection Possession]. The wording that accompanies the product website in the English version, “e-boutique on piaget.com” is simplified in Russian to just “piaget.com” and the English phone number is removed entirely. Finally, the list of cities on the English version containing Piaget boutiques in America is replaced instead with three specific addresses of Piaget stores in the Russian area and their respective phone numbers. Overall, the advertisement remained “tickle” in both the English and the Russian versions.

Minor changes that advertisers made among the low/no change sample include the following:

1. Adding/removing telephone numbers
2. Adding/removing addresses
3. Adding the Cyrillic equivalent of an English product name or designer in fine print
4. Adding translations of French, Italian, or English in fine print
5. Removing text around websites so just the website remains
6. Adding/removing the names of stores where the product can be bought
7. Adding/removing hashtags or social media references
8. Removing company taglines

All of these changes were classified as low or none because the effort a localizer would need to put into the advertisement to switch
between the different language versions is minimal. Most of these changes could even be done by a worker who does not speak Russian at all. Interestingly, of the 103 (80.5%) advertisements that fall into the low/none degree of change category, the majority of them (88) used an overall “tickle” strategy to sell their products.

### 3.2 Mid-level change

Mid-level advertisements normally contain localized phrases, but these phrases do not constitute a major redirection of the overall strategy for selling the product. This includes advertisements where text was added or altered to be more culturally appropriate for a Russian audience. Two advertisement pairings that reflect this category are Sally Hansen Nail Polish and Always Feminine Products (see appendix B):

3. **Sally Hansen Nail Polish** (English: taken from *Glamour*, February 2016, 27; Russian: taken from *Glamour*, March 2016, 143)

The advertisement for Sally Hansen represents a mid-level degree of change, with some lexical changes to the image that denote cultural understanding. The advertisement consists of a photo of a model with a surprised look on her face, text, and several nail polish colors along the bottom. While this advertisement pairing had elements of a low/none change (addition of a website, addition of Cyrillic translations of the English nail polish colors, etc.), the modification of text on the bottom right is clear evidence of more effortful, localized change in the language. The acronym “OMGel!” [“Oh my gosh!” or “Oh my God!”] in the English version was not directly translated. Instead, the colloquial Russian interjection “Ого Гель!” [Wow!, or Woah!] was used so the alliteration of the “g” sound in gel could be kept. Even though this phrase was localized, the pragmatic function of the phrase (positive politeness from a use of a colloquial phrase) remained unchanged; therefore the advertisement pairing did not fall into the “high” change category.


The advertisement for Always also represents a mid-level degree of change. The advertisement displays eight different named poses to illustrate how Always pads can protect women on their periods when
they try to sleep. The grammar of the main text in the middle of the advertisement was localized (but still conveys the same meaning): the English “However you sleep, you’re protected.” changed to the Russian “В какой бы позе вы ни спали, вы под защитой” [In whatever pose you sleep, you are under protection]. The addition of the grammatical structures “В какой бы” and the preposition “под” make this translation more advanced than Google Translate or a similar program. Additionally, this advertisement was given a mid-level categorization because some of the pose names in the American version were changed to make sense to a Russian audience. For example, one of the pose names in the English advertisement is “The Doggy Paddler.” That same pose in the Russian advertisement is titled “Крадущийся тигр” [Prowling tiger]. Here, the American cultural reference to swimming was replaced with a more understandable animal reference in the Russian version. Another pose in the English advertisement was named “The Jumping Jack.” However, in the Russian advertisement, this name was changed to the much simpler “Звезда” [Star]. These changes in the different names of the sleep poses actually affected the coding of the pragmatic features identified in the codebooks. The English pose names constituted a code for Strong Presupposition/Implicature, whereas, the Russian names (changed to animal/shape references) required much less foreknowledge to understand, so the coding of the Russian advertisement was changed to Weak Presupposition/Implicature. However, since the overall strategy of “reason” did not change in the advertisement going from English to Russian, this particular pairing of advertisements was given a categorization of mid-level change in localization.

Advertisements that were classified as mid-level localization were given this classification because a native speaker or high-proficiency L2 speaker would need to be consulted in order to make these changes in wording. However, though still a step above the low/no change category, the mid-level changes are still only lexically deep. The three main changes that were found in these advertisements were the following:

(1) Cultural phrasing changes
(2) Grammatical changes
(3) Colloquial lexical changes
These changes are improvements or changes to make sure that the original, American marketing strategy would not be misunderstood, but they do not reflect any difference in persuasive techniques of the advertisements.

3.3 High Level of Change
An advertisement pairing was categorized as having a high degree of change if the content of the advertisement was changed so much that the reason/tickle strategy of the advertisement was significantly affected. These types of advertisements reflected a deep cultural knowledge of the Russian people and how to sell to them differently as a result of understanding their national values. The most common examples of changes in this category are the following:

(1) Negative politeness (list of reasons) to negative politeness (use of authority/celebrity)
(2) Negative politeness (hedges) to violation of Gricean maxims
(3) Negative politeness (any) to positive politeness (increased solidarity)
(4) Addition of problem/solution structure
(5) Addition of positive politeness (promises and gifts)

Most of the Russian advertisements in this category kept the original reason or tickle designation of their English counterpart, but the designation was due to entirely different reasons or pragmatic features. However, some advertisement pairings in this category did switch from reason to tickle or from tickle to reason, two examples of which are Head and Shoulders shampoo and Lexus RX car (see appendix C):

5. Head and Shoulders Shampoo (English: taken from Elle, May 2016, 173; Russian: taken from Vogue, January 2016, 107)

The advertisement for Head and Shoulders represents a high degree of change, with major changes to the text. This advertisement in English is focused on the reasons that Head and Shoulders hair products can improve a person’s hair. The text from the advertisement claims that the “lavender essence and natural extracts” in this product line will give someone “both 100% flake-free and beautiful hair,” which represents a primarily reason-based approach, i.e., the consumer is given a list of
reasons why the product is beneficial (an aspect of negative politeness). However, the Russian advertisement for the same product line utilizes a completely different pragmatic strategy: the Russian advertisement revolves around the actress, Sofia Vergara, who is pictured in the photograph accompanying the text (interestingly, the English version uses the exact same photograph, but never mentions anything about the person in the photograph, so American audiences unfamiliar with Vergara’s role in the ABC series Modern Family must assume that it is a nameless model instead of a well-known actress). The Russian version not only mentions the name of the actress four times, but the entire text of the advertisement is centered around the actress’s use of Head and Shoulders products:

Узнайте, какой шампунь помогает волосам Софии выглядеть восхитительно!

[Find out which shampoo helps Sophia’s hair look amazing!]

София Вергара живет на полную - посвящает себя карьере, путешествует, постоянно пробует новое и получает максимум эмоций! Плотный график востребованной и успешной актрисы не помеха тщательному и эффективному уходу за кожей головы. Главный секрет Софии — свобода от перхоти и пышные здоровые локоны. И когда речь идет о красоте и здоровье волос, она выбирает невероятный объем с Head & Shoulders!

[Sofia Vergara lives life to the fullest—she devotes herself to a career, travels, and is constantly trying new things and getting maximum emotion (as a result)! The sweaty schedule of a popular and successful actress does not interfere with the careful and effective care of her scalp. The main secret of Sofia is freedom from dandruff and lush healthy curls. And when it comes to beauty and healthy hair, she chooses an incredible amount of Head & Shoulders!]

The text of the Russian advertisement uses the actress’s credibility (an aspect of negative politeness) to sell the product, whereas the English advertisement does not explicitly use any authority figures to sell the product. This shift in the pragmatic features used to sell the product does not affect the main advertising strategy: the advertisement was classified as reason in both English and Russian. However, since the
selling persuasive strategy of the advertisement changed, this pair of advertisements was classified as reflecting a high localization change because, in order to make this switch, the company had to understand key differences between American and Russian culture. Under the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions model, Russia ranks 93 (out of 100) for power distance, an element that “leads to a great importance of status symbols” and the opinion of powerful people in the culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). The United States, on the other hand, ranks only 40 (out of 100) in power distance, meaning that Americans base their decisions not on authorities, but on the merit or evidence presented to them. As such, these two advertisements underscore a deep cultural difference between Russia and America that manifests itself in advertising strategy. Indeed, the Russian version uses a celebrity to sell the product, whereas the text of the American version lays out several reasons the product will help the consumer and leaves it to the consumer to arrive at a conclusion, though the accompanying photograph does imply celebrity endorsement (this also taps into the Hofstede value of individualism, of which Americans scored a 91 and Russians only scored a 39).


The advertisement for Lexus also represents a high degree of change, with not only major lexical changes to the image but also changes in advertising strategy. In the English version of this advertisement, the advertisement lays out several options for customizing the new Lexus model, “Adaptive Variable Suspension” and “20-inch alloy wheels,” as well as features of the car that make it worth buying, e.g., “30-MPG combined rating” and “308 total system horsepower.” The text ends with “Never has luxury been this expressive.” The English version makes it very clear that there are logical reasons to buy the car (a feature of negative politeness) and also violates the Gricean maxim of quality when it says, “Never has luxury been this expressive.”

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7 Quality is where the speaker strives to say what they know to be true. If an advertisement follows the maxim of quality, the advertisement contains true, factual information that can be taken literally. In the case of the Lexus RX advertisement, the words “never has luxury been this expressive” in the text cannot be taken literally, since the statement cannot be proven.
been this expressive.” The English version was classified as reason for its overall advertising strategy. The Russian advertisement, however, completely changes the focus of its text. The Russian version contains several forms of personal address (a feature of positive politeness): “культурный кроссовер Lexus RX нового поколения станет вашим проводником в волнующий мир роскоши” [The cult crossover Lexus RX of the new generation will become your guide to the exciting world of luxury]; and “они создают для вас невероятный стиль жизни – жизнь, в которой вы всегда в центре внимания и в центре событий” [They create for you an incredible life—a life in which you are always the center of attention and in the center of events]. The advertisement in Russian offers incredible promises of social acceptance and increased status (an additional feature of positive politeness), whereas the English version does not contain any promises of this kind. Due to this, the Russian version was classified as tickle and is a rare example of an advertisement in which the overall advertising strategy changed when localized for a Russian audience.

Out of the 25 advertisement pairings that had either mid- or high-level changes in the wording of the advertisement text, in only 13 were the overall advertisement strategies changed in the localized version. Out of the 13 advertisements in which the strategy changed, 6 included a celebrity or authority figure. In the remaining pairings, the advertising strategies remained the same.

4. Research Question 2: Pragmatic features of the non-localized sample
The non-localized sample contained advertisements (N = 235) bought by local, Russian companies that advertised Russian products, services, or events in the Russian editions of Elle, Vogue, and Glamour. These advertisements were analyzed according to the same process as the localized sample. To see the results of the reason and tickle coding of the non-localized sample, please refer to figure 4 below.

In order to find out which, if any, of these pragmatic features were more characteristic of (non-localized) Russian advertisements, a statistical analysis was conducted for each of the above categories that compared the coding results from the localized Russian advertisements with the non-localized Russian results. Side by side, the comparison is
shown in figure 5, along with the calculated percentage of advertisements in each category (non-localized Russian advertisements, $N = 235$; localized Russian advertisements, $N = 128$). In two categories, negative politeness and total reason advertisements, the localized Russian advertisements differed from the non-localized Russian advertisements by over 20%.

Figure 4. Number of advertisements per pragmatic category, non-localized sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic feature code</th>
<th>Russian non-localized sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctive adjuncts</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem/solution structure</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive politeness</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong presupposition/implicature</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Gricean maxims</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reason advertisements</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total tickle advertisements</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5. Comparison of Russian and localized Russian advertisements per pragmatic category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pragmatic feature code</th>
<th>Russian advertisements</th>
<th>Localized Russian advertisements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conjunctive adjuncts</td>
<td>41 / 17.4%</td>
<td>27 / 21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative politeness</td>
<td>137 / 58.3%</td>
<td>42 / 32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem/solution structure</td>
<td>17 / 7.2%</td>
<td>2 / 1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive politeness</td>
<td>112 / 47.7%</td>
<td>49 / 38.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong presupposition/implicature</td>
<td>7 / 3.0%</td>
<td>11 / 8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Gricean maxims</td>
<td>108 / 46.0%</td>
<td>40 / 31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reason advertisements</td>
<td>94 / 40.0%</td>
<td>26 / 20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total tickle advertisements</td>
<td>141 / 60.0%</td>
<td>102 / 79.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using this data, a chi-square analysis was conducted to determine whether any of the categories were dependent on each other, or, in other words, if there was any effect of localization on the use of pragmatic features that Simpson (2001) and Kim (2007) included in their reason and tickle studies (Preacher, 2001). The significance for all Chi-square tests was determined at $p < .05$ (Kline, 2013). The chi-square test of independence for the number of reason advertisements was significant: $\chi^2 (2) = 13.45$, $p < .0005$, which means that, overall, Russian advertisements are significantly more likely to be reason-based than the localized advertisements in this sample.

### 4.1 Reason-based advertising

Further statistical analysis was needed to find out which, if any, of the three “reason” pragmatic features—conjunctive adjuncts, negative politeness, and problem/solution structure—contributed to the Russian tendency for reason-based advertising. After conducting the tests for each of these three categories, the chi-square test of independence for negative politeness was found to be significant: $\chi^2 (2) = 21.53$, $p < .0001$. However, the test for conjunctive adjuncts was not significant ($p = .3948$), and the chi-square test for problem/solution structure could not be conducted because there were fewer than five tokens for one of the categories (only 2 out of the 128 localized advertisements had a problem/solution structure).

Negative politeness allows consumers to stay unimpeded in their decision-making process because the status and distance between the advertiser and the consumer is preserved. As stated above, the Hofstede Cultural Dimensions model assigns Russia a score of 93 (out of 100) for the element of power distance, while the United States was only given a score of 40. Russian advertisement strategies—which contain considerably more examples of negative politeness than do the localized, international advertisements—correspond to this higher power distance score because negative politeness is a strategy that reflects power distance. In the codebook for this study, the use of an announcer or authority was one of the sub-categories that contributed to negative politeness. The aspect of using celebrity endorsements in Russian advertising was already discussed above in the previous section on high level of change, but it is important to note that this is a significant trend.
in Russian advertising. Using authorities and putting celebrities’ names in actual print reference (instead of just using their pictures) reflects the power differential that Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) found to be ingrained in Russian society. Out of the entire non-localized Russian sample, 38 different celebrities were used to endorse products. This number did not include other types of authorities, such as scientists or field experts, but if it had, the number would be much higher. The localized advertisements created by international companies used far fewer celebrities to endorse products, and, therefore, used less negative politeness and reason-based advertising. As such, it would seem that international companies do not realize how crucial celebrity endorsement and other forms of negative politeness are to selling their products in a Russian market, otherwise they likely would rethink how they go about trying to connect with their target consumers.

4.2 Tickle-based advertising

Chi-square tests of independence also were conducted for the features of tickle advertising: positive politeness, strong presupposition/implicature, and violation of Gricean maxims. Though positive politeness was not found to be significant \( p = 0.0857 \), both tests for strong presupposition/implicature and violation of Gricean maxims were significant.

Russian advertisers used strong presupposition/implicature significantly less than international advertisers: \( \chi^2 (2) = 5.544, p < .05 \), which raises the question of why Russian companies use weak implicature in advertising more than their international counterparts. Russia was given a score of 95 (out of 100) on another element of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimension model: uncertainty avoidance, or “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these” (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). This score indicates that Russians prefer to have a very thorough and complete understanding of the context of a situation before making a decision. When they lack that understanding, they feel threatened. From this point of view, it follows that Russian advertisements would use weak implicature over strong implicature in selling situations, because local businesses do not want to take the chance that a Russian might not have
heard of a cultural reference or similar feature of strong implicature. Using strong implicature would be taking the risk that a Russian would not buy a product because they are not “in” on the joke or reference used. Since Hofstede’s model predicts that Russians avoid ambiguity as much as possible, it is easy to imagine that, when Russian consumers do not fully understand an advertisement, they simply do not buy that product, or they buy a different brand over the one that used strong implicature in their advertising.

Americans, who scored a 46 in uncertainty avoidance, have a much higher tolerance for uncertainty and are willing to go to the effort to find out more information if they do not understand something, which explains why the localized advertisements contained more uses of strong implicature. This difference exhibits a need for increased localization of advertising strategies. International companies who continue to use strong implicature in their advertising are in danger of not selling as much product as their local Russian competition, since strong implicature may be off-putting to a Russian consumer base.

Russian advertisers also violated Gricean maxims significantly more than international advertisers: $\chi^2 (2) = 7.423, p < .05$. At first sight, this finding seems to contradict the notion from Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) that Russians try to avoid uncertainty and ambiguous situations. However, of the four possible violations of Gricean maxims, Russian advertisements primarily violated the maxims of quality, where the speaker strives to say only what is known to be true, and quantity, where the speaker strives to give just enough information for the situation to be understood, not the maxims of manner and relation. Where the Russian advertisements differed the most from the localized advertisements was in word count (an aspect of quantity). Many of the advertisements in the Russian non-localized sample included many more words than necessary to prove their points and sell their products. Instead of giving a list of two to three reasons to buy a product, some Russian advertisements would give four or five. In fact, when comparing the average number of words per advertisement, the Russian non-localized sample had an average of 82.9 words per advertisement. In comparison, the localized advertisements created by international companies had an average of only 32.7 words per advertisement, which was almost 50 fewer words per advertisement. As such, preliminary
findings suggest that Russians use much more prose in their advertisements, and the last dimension of Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions model, indulgence, could explain why.

The element of *indulgence* is defined by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov as “the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses” (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). Russians earned a score of just 20 (out of 100) on the indulgence scale, while Americans in comparison scored a much higher 68. Russia’s score was so low on the *Indulgence* scale that it was classified by Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov as a “restrained” culture with a tendency toward cynicism, pessimism, and helplessness. Advertisers in Russia have to overcome that restraint, and one of the strategies they use involves providing extra reasons and information to buy a product. For example, 17 of the non-localized Russian advertisements gave coupons or other special sale offers to consumers at the bottom of their already reason-filled advertisements. These coupons and sale announcements represent an additional reason for Russians to buy a product that might have sounded good before, but, with a 50% discount, sounds even better. The number of localized advertisements created by international advertisers that mentioned any sort of sale/discount/coupon was zero. Accordingly, Russian advertisements violate the Gricean maxim of quantity with the addition of extra reasons to buy a product in order to overcome a wall of cynicism among the Russian people, but international advertisers are not using this strategy in their advertisements.

5. Implications
Since localization is a relatively new industry, little research has considered the extent to which localization occurs in real-world language situations. This study not only offers insight into how many international advertisements are being localized, but it also provides data on the degree to which the text of an advertisement is changed. Over 80% of international advertisers chose either not to change, or to minimally change the content of their advertisements to sell products in Russia, even though the consumer base these companies are targeting differs significantly from Americans (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov 2010). This study found that barely 10% of advertisements changed their overall persuasive techniques to fit in with the cultural ideals of the
target market. These findings suggest the need for more localization among international companies.

While several researchers have applied Simpson’s (2001) reason and tickle framework to other languages besides English, scholars have not previously applied this framework to the Russian language (Pop 2009; Politis and Kakavoulia 2010; Martínez-Camino and Pérez-Saiz 2012). Through a statistical analysis, certain pragmatic features within the reason and tickle framework were found to be significantly characteristic of Russian advertising. Findings show that the non-localized Russian advertisements overwhelmingly used reason-based strategies to sell products within Russia. Specifically, Russian advertisements contained much more negative politeness, weak presupposition/implicature, and violations of Gricean maxims than localized advertisements created by international companies. By thus describing and categorizing the types of advertising strategies found in Russian beauty magazines, this study can guide international businesses in future marketing decisions.

5.1 Limitations/future research
Since this study was focused on localization, product categories were not taken into account when analyzing the data. However, several interesting trends occurred in the data that are worth further exploration. For example, hair products invariably were classified as reason advertisements in this study. Other product categories, such as clothing and purses, tended to be classified as tickle—over 90% of clothing advertisements in this study were classified as tickle. Future research with larger sample sizes could specifically look at the pragmatic features of product categories. Additionally, expanding the sample to include men’s magazine advertisements or advertisements for children would be an interesting avenue for future research. This would allow researchers to see if changing the advertisements’ target demographic would yield the same results. The same recommendation for future research holds true for investigating varying industries of magazines (health and wellness, parenting, cars, weddings, etc.), and the circulation of the magazines (do magazines with smaller circulation numbers have different types of advertising strategies?).
5.2 Conclusion
By pinpointing the specific pragmatic features that are characteristic of Russian advertising, this study makes an important contribution to the field of localization. Many international companies hire localization experts to aid in the translation and distribution of marketing materials worldwide. Now that the main pragmatic features of Russian advertising have been identified, localization practitioners can use this data to create better advertisements, or modify existing advertisements in more culturally appropriate ways. The practical application of this data can be used to boost profits and create better brand images of international companies that previously had misunderstood Russian culture and advertising strategies.

Interestingly, these results confirm the cultural differences that Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010) identified in their Cultural Dimensions research that contrasts Russia with the United States, thus providing further evidence as to why international companies stand to profit from designing advertisements for a Russian consumer base that reflect Russian ideals. Doing so will enhance their ability to adapt to the Russian advertising climate and, as a result, increase profits and improve overall growth outlook.

Appendix A: Advertisements with Low/No Degree of Change

Piaget Jewelry
English: taken from Elle, April 2016, p. 163.
Russian: taken from Vogue, April 2016, p. 79
La Perla Clothing

English: taken from Vogue, January 2016, p. 14

Russian: taken from Vogue, February 2016, p. 50
Appendix B: Advertisements with Mid-Level Changes

Sally Hansen Nail Polish

English: taken from *Glamour*, February 2016, p. 27

![Sally Hansen Nail Polish English Advert](image)

Russian: taken from *Glamour*, March 2016, p. 143

![Sally Hansen Nail Polish Russian Advert](image)

Always Feminine Products

English: taken from *Elle*, July 2016, p. 57

![Always Feminine Products English Advert](image)

Russian: taken from *Glamour*, March 2016, p. 193

![Always Feminine Products Russian Advert](image)
Appendix C: Advertisements with a High Level of Change

**Lexus RX Car**

English: taken from *Vogue*, March 2016, p. 218

Russian: taken from *Vogue*, March 2016, p. 158
Head and Shoulders Shampoo

English: taken from Elle, May 2016, p. 173

Russian: taken from Vogue, January 2016, p. 107

References


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EMILY FURNER


