

Ying Ting Chuang¹

THE CHALLENGES OF NEW MEDIA TRANSLATION: A MULTIMODAL APPROACH TO WEBSITE TRANSLATION

1. Introduction

New media is a broad term in Media Studies that emerged in the latter part of the 20th century, and is used to make distinctions from traditional media. More specifically, the traditional media primarily depends on print and analog broadcasting, such as newspapers and television, while new media is based on digital technology and relies heavily on computers and the internet, which have gradually generated certain features, such as interactivity, virtuality, hypertextuality and simulations (Lister et al. 2003). Around the beginning of the 21st century Translation Studies started to pay more attention to new media translation, with the first significant book being *(Multi)Media Translation*, published in 2001, which was an early attempt to confront the changes driven by new communication technologies and to highlight the need for this discipline to reformulate certain questions and redefine certain con-

¹ Associate Professor in Translation, Department of English and Institute of Translation and Interpreting, National Kaohsiung First University of Science and Technology, Taiwan; email: ytchuang@nkfust.edu.tw.

cepts. However, the use of parentheses in the title of this book reveals the doubts that existed at the time about new media.

Although multimedia is the key term in this field, the two terms media and multimedia often seem ambiguous in the literature. Some scholars, such as Cattrysse (2001), consider that the two terms are different but related, and note that while media translation was developed earlier than multimedia translation, the former does not deal with interactivity, while the latter does. For instance, newspaper translation was developed earlier than electronic newspaper translation, and the latter includes interactive elements. For others, such as Remael (2001), the two terms are basically the same – with the support of new digital technologies, even printed media translation could become part of a multimedia product. Taking magazine translation as an example: it used to be a kind of printed media translation, but when a magazine is stored on a CD-ROM, it may be processed as a multimedia translation. We can see that while the line between the two terms has been blurred by advances in technology, the basic distinction is still there: media translation was developed earlier than multimedia translation, and in general, it is the broader term – with the latter being a kind of media translation integrated with multiple forms (such as audio and video). In addition, certain researchers use terms like computer-mediated translation or teletranslation (O'Hagan 1996; O'Hagan and Ashworth 2002) to discuss the changes brought about by new media.

We can see that Translation Studies has struggled, and perhaps is still struggling, with addressing the specific features of new media and coming up with appropriate terms to deal with them. It is obvious if we use one term to deal with a feature of new media (for instance, multimedia translation for the feature of multi-forms, hypermedia translation for the feature of hyperlinks), we may take the risk of producing confusing terms and losing sight of the connections among these features. As mentioned earlier, some authors think that interactivity is the key distinction between multimedia and media, and this is why this paper uses a broad term – new media translation – to discuss new developments in this area, in order to focus on the connections among the salient features.

2. The Impact of New Media on Translation

Since new media has evolved from the traditional media, we need to look at this process to understand the impact of new media on translation. In general, the process can be divided into three stages. The first stage is mainly concerned with the power of the mass media, which has a great impact due to the sheer volume of material produced. The second stage focuses on the in-

fluence of electronic media, which have an impact via the easy and cheap access to semiotic resources that they enable. The third stage highlights the links between electronic media and internet, which has had an impact on the links among media texts.

The term mass media was coined in the 1920s to refer to the mass-circulation of newspapers and magazines, and later also to radio and television broadcasts. When these nationwide markets were extended worldwide, the mass media required frequent and flexible translation support. The supporting role of translation is very complex, as pointed out by José Lambert (cited in Hermans 1999), due to its constant displacement, overlapping, unification and fragmentation of communication. In other words, this complexity is caused by the mass media's relentless penetration into our daily lives and its expanding coverage of receivers worldwide. Accordingly, Lambert observes that media translation, for commercial or other reasons, appears as something original in the target society. Hence, parts of any media translation could be created by the translator. This means that media translation allows partial translation and may occur in fragmented forms. This is the major impact in the first stage of the evolution from traditional to new media.

With the spread of electronic media, translation is now used to support all kinds of information composed of multiple semiotic materials, because information can be coded, stored and processed in digital formats. Thus the complexity of new media translation is related to the interpretation and representation of the combination of multiple modes. Many scholars (e.g., Chuang 2006, 2009; Díaz Cintas 2009; Díaz Cintas and Remael 2007; Gottlieb 1994; 2001; Gottlieb and Gambier 2001; Gambier 2006; Linde and Kay 1999; Remael 2001; Taylor 2003, 2004, 2009; Thibault 2000) have highlighted the changes of textual organization in new media and the challenges of translating multimodal texts, noting that the role of language is not as significant in a multimedia environment as in printed media, and that visual modes, in particular images, play a more dominant role in making meaning in translation. This is the major impact in the second stage of the development from traditional to new media.

With the aid of hyperlinks, electronic media allow the non-linear and interactive reading paths that underlie intertextuality, using texts within the same medium or between different media. In short, since non-linear texts are composed of fragments of texts, translation has to manage the consistency of texts (O'Hagan and Ashworth 2002). The hypermedia network is tightly connected with multicultural and multilingual interaction, which requires a consistency of texts across linguistic and cultural boundaries in the translation, because this network is mostly constructed on a global scale. In this context, new media translation needs to work out new aesthetics and new regulations to organize information and represent meanings in a network of texts rather

than in a single one (Martinez 2001). This is the major impact of the third stage of the evolution from traditional to new media.

These three major impacts of the emergence of new media are reflected in translation as the following three features: partial translation, multiple semiotic representation and consistency across texts. The literature review presented above shows that the second feature has so far been the most discussed topic, and the one that has attracted the most practical attention. This reason is self-evident: the other two features are related to the multiple semiotic representation in the text: partial translation is selecting segments of semiotic representation in the text, while consistency is working to make the meaning of selected segments of semiotic representation consistent across texts via hyperlinks. As a result, this paper adopts a multimodal perspective to investigate these three features and the challenges they raise.

A multimodal perspective, as developed from the social semiotic approach presented in Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), focuses on the aspect of materiality in making meaning. Underlying this perspective, the concept of mode is perceived as a material aspect, referring to a “culturally and socially fashioned resource for representation and communication” (Kress 2003: 45). The representational and communicational affordances of each mode make certain meaning potentials possible, which are referred to as forms of “functional specialization” (Kress 2003: 46.). However, it takes some time to develop the affordances of each mode in a certain socio-cultural context and in a specialized field. Hence, modal resources are used to cover the materials that are not yet developed fully enough to make sense of, as well as the materials that are made available for making meaning. For instance, color in the written system is a modal resource, while it is a mode in traffic sign system, because it affords to represent specific meanings in the latter context. When more than one mode is put together in order to design any semiotic product or event, it is referred to as “multimodality” (Kress and van Leeuwen 2001). Hence, theoretically speaking, a multimodal perspective helps to discuss how meaning is represented, and thus translated, collectively and individually via the composite entity of different selected semiotic modes and resources (Baldry and Thibault 2006).

In this paper, the concept of semiotic modes and resources is used as an analytical tool for two reasons. First, this concept could be used to divide a new media text into segments, so that we can see how such segments are formed, and how partial translation is carried out. Next, this concept could show the distribution of meanings, so that we can see how translators make use of such resources to produce consistency among texts.

3. A Case Study: Website Translation

To investigate new media translation, this paper collects and analyzes data from website translation. This paper selects the homepages of an international Japanese cosmetics company in six markets (Australia, Singapore, United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Taiwan and China) and in two languages, namely, English and Chinese. This selection is for two reasons: one is to show how consistency is maintained by certain semiotic resources with the same language through comparing three Chinese and three English translations, and the other is between two languages by comparing the English translations with the Chinese ones. In this paper the term ‘source text’ is used to refer to the homepage for the home market of the international company, rather than ‘the original text’ in the traditional sense of translation. This is because there is the possibility that the websites for other markets are translated from websites of a certain language that is not the ‘original’ one – in this case, Japanese.

Table 1: Websites Selected for the Case Study

English Websites	Chinese Websites
UK	Taiwan
Australia	China
Singapore	Hong Kong
From the Japanese website of SKII	

A website can be divided in terms of semiotic modes/resources into several general segments: color, format, images, moving images, music, graphics, writing, and so on. Depending on the textual organization of the selected websites in this paper, four semiotic modes/resources – color, format, images and writing – are selected for analysis, due to their carrying the majority of the meanings.

4. Color in the Website Translation

As claimed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2002), color is a semiotic mode in visual communication, which can also fulfill Halliday’s three metafunctions. In terms of ideational function, color can refer to specific people, places and things, such as the Netherlands’ orange, Tiffany blue, and Ferrari red. It can also represent ideas or actions. For instance, red is for danger or stopping, while green is for the environment or moving forward. In terms of interpersonal function, color can also do things, such as in a dress

code. In addition, bright colors seem to be more powerful with regard to impressing or even intimidating others. In terms of textual metafunction, different colors can be used to compose a text, such as the colors in flags.

In the data, the source text is in red, and all six website translations are in the same kind of red, with roughly the same degree of brightness, saturation, and so on. This is obviously because this company tries to ensure that its brand can be recognized worldwide through the use of this color, and this color coordination helps to build textual cohesion in and between the source and other websites. However, the percentage of the area covered in red is different on the various websites: the Japanese and Taiwanese websites are about 90 percent red, while the Australian, Singaporean, Chinese and Hong Kong websites are about 50 percent red; finally, the UK website is only 20 percent red. In other words, partial translation is represented through the size of the area that is red on each website. In this case, as long as the translator uses the same kind of red, regardless of the size of the area it is used in, consistency is produced across these websites. It seems that in terms of the mode of color, the size of the area in a particular color helps to form segments in the text, and controlling other features of color could make the meanings across texts consistent.

Table 2: The selected homepages of SKII (retrieved on September 23, 2010)

<p>Japan</p>	
<p>UK</p>	
<p>Australia</p>	
<p>Singapore</p>	

<p>Taiwan</p>	 <p>SK-II 隱私聲明</p> <p>即刻体现 美肌の力究極提升</p> <p>傳能全效活膚露 SK-II 傳能深效潤透修護露</p> <p>SK-II Beauty Pitera Products Skin Ritual SK-II Club Service Event</p>
<p>China</p>	 <p>SK-II 中国</p> <p>年轻改变，眼见为实。</p> <p>每一天·看见更年轻的自己</p> <p>最新优惠 SK-II年轻轮廓重塑霜组 令人惊叹，立现年轻轮廓。每天让你更年轻一些。</p> <p>SK-II北京国贸门店周年庆感恩大开幕</p> <p>SK-II中友百货开张礼遇</p> <p>还不了解SK-II?</p> <p>SK-II明星彩妆</p> <p>按此了解SK-II Star名媛坊的特色与会员优惠</p>
<p>Hong Kong</p>	 <p>SK-II HONG KONG</p> <p>SKIN POWER</p> <p>解開 100% 肌齡逆轉之謎</p> <p>HOME ABOUT SK-II PRODUCTS PROMOTIONS & EVENTS SK-II CLUB STORE LOC</p> <p>Pitera 28日的奇蹟</p> <p>每天含超過90% Pitera的SK-II「神仙水」，能將 Pitera輸送至肌膚深層，從深層肌膚擊穿每個細胞的肌膚問題，在約14天強生期內幫助肌膚修復健康新細胞，尤如為肌膚打好底子。同時有助提升肌膚的新陳代謝效率，從肌膚細胞維持約28天的理想更新週期，達到滋潤肌膚的實質，逆轉肌齡。</p> <p>NEW TO SK-II?</p> <p>請加入 SK-II 通訊，隨時接收最新消息、優惠資訊、活動詳情，從此刻開始多資訊。</p> <p>SK-II CLUB</p> <p>按此瞭解 SK-II CLUB 的特色與會員優惠。</p> <p>加入SK-II facebook HONG KONG 見證奇蹟誕生</p> <p>4星期見證淨白奇蹟 No.1Whitening 從根本淡斑</p>

5. Format in Website Translation

Format is a kind of semiotic resource in the textual aspect of visual communication, which is concerned with the visual space in relation to meaning making. In general, format can deliver three kinds of meaning – information value, salience and framing (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996). Information value is expressed by the placement of elements, such as left and right, top and bottom, center and margin. Salience is achieved by attracting the viewer’s attention to different degrees by using elements such as relative size, differences in sharpness, and so on. Framing refers to the connection or

disconnection of different segments, signifying that they belong or do not belong together.

The format of the selected websites can be discussed in several ways. It can roughly be divided into vertical and horizontal composition in terms of the position of menu. In the Japanese website, the menu is positioned on the left, so the format of this website is basically vertical, while on the other websites, including the English and Chinese ones, the menu is placed either at the top or the bottom, so the format of these is basically horizontal. In terms of color, the format of the Japanese website is vertical, while the others are represented in both vertical and horizontal ways.

Table 3: The formats of the selected homepages (retrieved on September 23, 2010)

Websites	Format in terms of menu	Format in terms of color
Australia	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
UK	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
Singapore	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
China	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
Hong Kong	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
Taiwan	horizontal	horizontal & vertical
Japan	vertical	vertical

This case shows that a textual cohesion is produced through format between the six website for global markets, except the home market. It is interesting to note that Chinese, like Japanese, can also be written vertically, but the format of the three Chinese websites is not arranged in the same way, so it seems that format is used to organize visual modes rather than written ones. In addition, as a textual resource, format can be used to form segments with the aid of other modes or resources. Hence, it only contributes a part of meaning in forming segments by organizing other semiotic modes and resources, and it is not a means for partial translation, but instead a resource for producing consistency.

6. Images in Website Translation

When screens replace the printed page as the major medium for communication, images become a predominant semiotic mode (Kress, 2003). In other words, presenting images is more affordable and widely available with screen-based media, and thus is more important for meaning making. Images can fulfill Halliday's three metafunctions simultaneously. In terms of

ideational metafunction, an image shows certain things, people, and places that can carry meanings. In terms of interpersonal function, images act out meanings via the things shown. For instance, a celebrity, holding a mobile phone, makes eye contact with the viewer and smiles, which shows an inviting attitude that tries to increase the involvement of the viewer. In terms of textual metafunction, different images can be used to compose a text.

The images can be divided into two kinds in the selected websites – the cosmetics products and the celebrities. In the Japanese website, the images feature some celebrities, such as the actress Koyuki. In the British and Australian websites, the celebrity is an Australia actress, Kate Blanchett. In the Singaporean website, the celebrity is a Hong Kong model, Qi Qi. In the Chinese website, the celebrity is a Chinese actress, Tang Wei. In the websites for Hong Kong and Taiwan, Qi Qi and Koyuki are shown in the images, along with other celebrities, such as Lee Sinje (a Malaysian singer and actress), Lim Soo Jung (a Korean actress) and Kate Blanchett.

Table 4: The images in the selected websites (retrieved on April 23, 2011)

Websites	The Mode of Image
Australia	Kate Blanchett (an Australian actress)
UK	Kate Blanchett (an Australian actress)
Singapore	Qi Qi (a Hong Kong model)
China	Tang Wei (a Chinese actress)
Hong Kong	Qi Qi (a Hong Kong model) Lee Sinje (a Malaysian singer and actress) Koyuki (a Japanese actress) Kate Blanchett (an Australian actress)
Taiwan	Qi Qi (a Hong Kong model) Lee Sinje (a Malaysian singer and actress) Koyuki (a Japanese actress) Lim Soo Jung (a Korean actress)
Japan	Koyuki (a Japanese actress) and other Japanese celebrities

The discussion and table above shows that the images of the product and celebrities are purposefully bound together. In other words, the cosmetic company tries to use these images to represent its products or even the company itself. The images of its products are maintained across the selected websites, but those of celebrities are changed to appeal to different target markets, so that images can be a choice for partial translation. As the data demonstrates, the image of the Australian actress is used to create a new identity for the English-speaking market, while the image of a Chinese actress is used for the main Chinese market. This means the images in the

source website, which features several Japanese celebrities, is not an ideal choice to represent the identity of an international company, and they need to be translated into other local or international celebrities. In other words, the translation of images in websites is constrained by the international nature of the company and by the culture of the target market, rather than the source website. Two factors thus determine whether an image should be replaced by another one, which are how the partial translation is carried out and whether there is a need to create a new identity in the market. In addition, the case examined in this study suggests that the mode of images can be used to maintain a kind of consistency among the web pages, such as the use of middle aged female celebrities in this case.

7. Writing in Website Translation

Written modes are still essential for the translator to deal with in website translation. Writing on paper is different from writing on a screen, for the latter is display-oriented, and is a kind of visual semiotic resource that should take into account various visual elements, such as color, size, font and other graphic features, along with other linguistic elements.

In the visual aspect, the selection of written modes will be considered here, because each written mode has its own graphic features. The Japanese website is visually complex in terms of writing: the main options in the menu are in English, and the sub-options are in Japanese, represented horizontally. Along with the main image, there is a slogan in Japanese, represented vertically, so it is the most salient piece of writing. On the websites for the Australia, UK and Singapore markets, only English is employed as the written mode, and it is presented horizontally. However, on the Taiwanese website, three written modes are selected: English is used in the menu, the slogan along with the main image is in Japanese, and Chinese is used in the rest of the web pages. On the Hong Kong website, English is used in the menu, the slogan along with the main images is in Chinese and English, and the rest of the web page is in Chinese. On the China website, Chinese is the only written mode in the entire web page, with the slogan is represented vertically and other written messages horizontally.

Table 5: The written modes in the selected websites (retrieved on April 23, 2011)

Websites	The Written Mode
Australia	English
UK	English
Singapore	English
China	Chinese
Hong Kong	Chinese, English
Taiwan	Chinese, English, Japanese
Japan	Japanese, English

The visual features of written modes, like other visual resources, contribute to the aesthetic design of websites, and they also carry different weights with regard to making meaning. In the data, the vertical written representation carries more weight than the horizontal one, because it looks more salient in the horizontal format of the selected homepages. In addition, the feature of font size also helps highlight certain written messages. In this case, the slogans along with the main images are in a bigger font than others in all the selected web pages, so it is the most salient part in the text, which causes some coherence among these websites.

In the linguistic aspect, the selection of written modes is also significant, which partly reflects the linguistic plurality and diversity in a certain society and partly reflects the target audience and market in the virtual reality context. Theoretically speaking, the more written modes that are adopted, the more linguistic variety is engaged, and the wider audience and market that can be reached. With regard to SKII, in the websites for China, Australia and the UK, the use of a single written mode indicates the level of linguistic diversity in these three areas is relatively low in comparison with the other three websites in the data. In contrast, although Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong are also monolingual, the selection of English is indicative of its status as a lingua franca. If Caminal (2009) is right when claiming in his paper “Markets and Linguistic Diversity” that gains in the market are associated with the use of a lingua franca, it is safe to assume that the choice of English helps to expand the audience and market, or in other words, to globalize a certain brand or company. However, the Singapore website is an exception – only English is selected but Singapore is definitely not a country with low linguistic diversity (as a matter of fact, it has four official languages). The selection of single written mode in the Singapore website is more likely relevant to the following reason.

The selection of the written mode also indicates the formation of the intended identity of a certain brand or company. Due to its current status as lingua franca, the use of English forms an international or Western identity,

while the use of Japanese forms a regional or Asian one. In addition, historical and cultural reasons may be also behind the selection of the written modes. The fact that Japanese is used on the Taiwanese website can perhaps be attributed to the 50 years that the Japanese colonized the island. Moreover, Japanese “kanji” characters) are not difficult to understand for people who read Chinese to understand, although the meaning of certain items may sometimes differ.

Table 6. The slogans in the selected websites (retrieved on April 23, 2011)

Websites	The Slogans	My back translation
Australia	Power up your curves.	<u>Power up</u> your curves.
UK	Soar beyond to aura - bright.	<u>Soar</u> beyond to aura-bright.
Singapore	Power up your curves.	<u>Power up</u> your curves.
China	年轻改变 眼见为实	Get <u>younger</u> , see it yourself.
Hong Kong	解開100%肌膚逆轉之謎	Decode the entire puzzle of <u>reversing</u> the aging skin.
Taiwan	即刻体现~美肌の力 究極提升	See the difference immediately, <u>power up</u> your skin
Japan	肌力に着目 曲線美あらわる	Enhance your skin <u>power</u> , shape better <u>curves</u>

For example, consider the translation of the slogan, the most salient message in the selected websites. The linguistic transference is mostly conducted into the target language. However, in the Taiwanese website, the slogan is rendered into Japanese, not Chinese or English. This shows the translator considers that Japanese brings a special cultural discourse to the product, reflecting the historical and cultural connections between Japan and Taiwan, – and the fact that associating a brands with Japanese culture may very likely add to its value.

In addition, linguistic transference remains the major task for a translator. In the virtual environment, the translator can make decisions with regard to the extent of partial translation. In the minimal case, such as the translation of the slogans shown in Table 6, most of the selected websites are translated in different ways – with different word choices and sentence structures generating different meanings. However, they deliver one idea – to make the user younger, as shown in the underlined words. Consequently, even when translators deal with partial translation, they create a kind of consistency among these websites.

8. Discussion and Conclusion

Through the analysis of website translation carried out in this work, we can see that modal resources in new media translation are organized in a specific system of representation and motivate a certain way of textual interpretation. The material aspects embedded in semiotic modes or resources can influence how the translator deals with partial translation and maintains consistency across texts via semiotic representation. For instance, color and format are used differently to form segments and represent consistent meanings between different websites on the basis of their features of materiality. The translator could thus decide which segments or modal resources should be selected to form a certain way of textual interpretation. The selection means that certain parts of the source text that are retained in the translation are used to produce coherence, so that a consistency through hyperlinks and across texts can be produced. On the other hand, certain parts of the source text that are changed, removed, and created in the translation are used to produce a new identity in the target society, in order to reflect the target reality and respect intercultural sensitivities.

This paper is an attempt to deal with the connection of the challenges in new media translation from a multimodal perspective, rather than to account for the historical, cultural and psychological reasons behind any meaning making. Certainly any communication, including translation, cannot be isolated from these factors, and in future work it would of interest to examine how they influence the challenges of new media translation. However, within the scope of this paper, I have focused on one issue: to see how the three features of new media translation are interconnected and how they work together, as they are gradually becoming more integrated by increased technological support.

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ABSTRACT

The challenges of new media translation: a multimodal approach to website translation

Key words: new media translation, website translation, multimodal approach

This paper deals with the challenges of new media translation from a multimodal perspective. Through reviewing the relevant literature, this paper identifies three major features that new media have had upon translation: partial translation, multiple semiotic representation and consistency.

Based on a case study of website translation, this paper aims at exploring the connections among these three features by examining the cross-cultural and cross-modal representation of web pages. That is, this paper attempts to show how the translator uses modal resources to form segments, produce partial translation and maintain consistency between texts. It is found that new media translation produces its own systems of multimodal representation and method of textual interpretation; furthermore, the multimodal system of new media translation is based on reflecting of social reality and intercultural sensitivity.