

# Translator's Role in Advertising: Transcreation as a Localization Strategy

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SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU

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Odsjek za anglistiku

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**Translator's Role in Advertising: Transcreation as a Localization Strategy**

Diplomski rad

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores a translator's role in advertising by analyzing transcreation strategies in advertising in different cultures. The aim of this dissertation is to show that the translator's linguistic and cultural knowledge of both the source and target language and culture is needed in adaptation processes used in marketing, such as transcreation and localization. In order to determine the degree of adaptation in international advertising and how culture affects advertising adaptation, an analysis is conducted on advertising material and marketing campaigns from Renault, an automotive company with an international presence. The advertising material was analyzed using De Mooij's advertising styles, which are based on Hofstede's dimensions of culture. The analysis is based on Renault's advertising from Croatia, as well as Francophone and Anglophone countries to cover a wider range of cultural communities in which Renault's cars are sold. The analysis shows that, in marketing adaptation, attention is paid to culture-specific distinctions, which is achieved by localization, transcreation and copywriting methods.

Keywords: transcreation; translating advertising; localization; marketing

## **Sažetak**

U ovom se radu istražuje uloga prevoditelja u oglašavanju kroz analizu transkreacije u reklamama iz različitih kultura. Cilj je rada pokazati da je prevoditeljevo poznavanje izvornog i ciljanog jezika i kulture potrebno u procesima prilagodbe koji se koriste u marketingu, kao što su transkreacija i lokalizacija. Kako bi se utvrdio stupanj prilagodbe u međunarodnom oglašavanju i način na koji kultura utječe na prilagodbu oglašavanja, provodi se analiza reklamnog materijala i marketinških kampanja Renaulta, automobilske tvrtke s međunarodnom prisutnošću. Reklamni materijal analiziran je pomoću De Mooijinih reklamnih stilova koji se temelje na Hofstedeovim dimenzijama kulture. Analiza se bazira na Renaultovim reklamama iz Hrvatske te frankofonih i anglofonih zemalja, kako bi se obuhvatio širi raspon kultura u kojima se prodaju Renaultovi automobili. Analiza pokazuje da se u marketinškoj prilagodbi vodi računa o kulturološkim razlikama, što se postiže metodama lokalizacije, transkreacije i copywritinga.

Ključne riječi: transkreacija; prevođenje reklama; lokalizacija; marketing

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## **1. Introduction**

Over the last few decades, the manner in which translation activities are performed and the conditions in which they take place have changed. With the development of machine translation and increasing global interconnectedness, what is, in simple terms, considered translation, has become a noticeably more ambiguous practice. In terms of the translator's work, the notion that machine translation could entirely replace translators opens up a myriad of questions, most notably, what position translators should occupy as machine translation evolves and whether there are fields in which machine translation would never adequately do what humans can.

Due to globalization and higher competition in the global market, there has been a growing focus on creating marketing campaigns that would most successfully attract the attention of its target audience. Companies that wish to market their product internationally can opt for either a globalized or a more localized approach. For those whose products are aimed at a wider market, international advertising is the key element for success. Successful intercultural advertising depends on careful examination of consumers' wants, needs, lifestyles, and cultural values. To achieve that, knowledge of both the source and target countries' cultures and language is needed. Language and marketing professionals refer to this type of adaptation as transcreation.

This dissertation will explore the concepts of transcreation as a means of adapting advertising material for a specific market and examine the correlation between translating activities and advertising. International advertising strategies and trends throughout the years can be observed within the automotive industry. Hence, one of the biggest car manufacturers, Renault, has been chosen for a case study.

Our hypothesis is that international advertising and marketing campaigns rely on transcreation as a strategy for adapting advertising material and that incorporating culture-specific values, norms and beliefs is the key to successful advertising. We expect that advertising material from Renault will demonstrate the use of transcreation across different markets and highlight the need for a tailored, culture-specific approach. Ultimately, our goal is to find examples that show the importance of a culture-specific approach and to show that translators, with their linguistic and cultural knowledge, play an important role in bridging the gap in international advertising.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Source-oriented and target-oriented approaches to translation**

In translation theory, most notably in the work of translation scholar Toury, there have been debates on approaches to translation focused on determining whether translation should be source-oriented, that is, strive to retain source-text equivalence, or target-oriented, aiming to tailor the text to the linguistic and cultural nuances of the target-language (Toury 1995). The question was not whether any equivalence exists between the two texts, but rather what type and degree of equivalence can be observed in the process of translation.

This dichotomy led to several translation scholars discussing the purposes and advantages of prioritizing the context of culture. Nida was the first to explore in detail the importance of culture and context in translation, claiming that identical equivalence does not exist (1964), but that there should be a degree of equivalence that both source-text audience and target-text audience can recognize:

Dynamic equivalence is therefore to be defined in terms of the degree to which the receptors of the message in the receptor language respond to it in substantially the same manner as the receptors in the source language. This response can never be identical, for the cultural and historical settings are too different, but there should be a high degree of equivalence of response, or the translation will have failed to accomplish its purpose. (Nida & Taber, 1982: 24)

Dealing with the same subject of emphasizing or reducing cultural differences, House makes a distinction between overt and covert translation, claiming that a text can either be translated overtly, which allows the reader to become aware of the fact that the text is a translation or covertly, aiming to minimize or erase any evidence of the source text (House 1997). An overt translation, for example political speech, is intended to be openly recognized as a translation so there is no need to attempt to recreate a second original. The goal of a covert translation, on the other hand, is the production of a text whose function is equivalent to the source text. In this type of translation, the source text is not specifically addressed to the target text audience but has to be re-contextualized. A similar distinction can be seen in the two types of approaches to translation discussed by Venuti - foreignization and domestication (1995). In

foreignization the translator brings the foreign into the reader's world, maintaining as much of the original discourse as possible. In domestication, however, the translator changes the expressions that are foreign to the target culture into familiar ones to make the translated text easily understandable to the target audience. The goal is always to produce a text that will seem like a well-written original and not reveal itself as a translation.

The approach oriented to the target text gave rise to the functionalist theory or *skopos* theory. In opposition to the linguistic-based approaches, in which the source text determines the nature of the target text, functionalists generally believed that the function of the text, its intention or *skopos* in the target culture determines the method of translation. With function seen as the primary goal of translation, the focus was now increasingly on the translated text. Vermeer (1987: 29) stated that linguistics alone is not effective because translation itself is not merely nor primarily a linguistic process, and that linguistics "has not yet formulated the right questions to tackle our problems" (cited in Nord 1997: 10).

Nord also distinguished between two basic translation types: documentary translation and instrumental translation (1997). Documentary translation is more oriented toward the source context, while instrumental translation is a process that entails the creation of a new text in the target language so that it functions as an instrument of communication between the source text producer and the target audience. This instrumental translation presents a pragmatic view of translation, as "readers are not supposed to be aware they are reading a translation at all" (Nord 1997: 48). This implies that the translator has made the necessary changes to adapt the text so that the target audience believes it is an original text produced in the target culture.

Debates within translation studies have shown that languages are complex systems of meaning and that transferring that meaning is often challenging. It should be noted that translation has never been just a word-for-word rendition of the source text. Translation has always, in some capacity, depending on the type of text in question, had to take into account the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural difficulties. It, therefore, begs the question of why transcreation, a practice that is described as "more than translation" (Pedersen 2014: 62) due to its focus on cultural nuances, requires another name to describe its activities, and what are some complexities of transcreation that challenge the traditional view of translation. These are the questions we aim to explore in the following chapters.



## 2.2. Defining transcreation

Even though the concept of transcreation has existed for several decades, most notably in the works of Indian translator Purushottam Lal (Pedersen 2014: 58), the term has not been universally homogenously defined. The application of transcreation in various fields resulted in different definitions, each describing the purpose of transcreation within the respective field, but never providing an all-encompassing and universally applicable definition. Debates on whether or not transcreation is a part of translation or an entirely different practice led to several discussions about the scope of transcreation. Some authors do not consider transcreation a separate practice (Gambier 2019: 356, Timko 2021: 5), but rather a cultural-pragmatic adaptation of a text, which has been carried out by translators long before the term transcreation started being used to describe this type of activity. In Gambier's view, transcreation falls under the portmanteau of translation, along with other newly-coined practices such as localization and marketing translation. Conversely, Benetello argues that transcreation is not simply a type of translation, but a different practice entirely (2018). Her opinion stems from the observation that we are unable to judge a successful transcreation using the same error categories we can apply to a translated text. For instance, some lexical, morphological, grammatical or semantic errors in translation would not necessarily be considered errors in transcreation because transcreation is more focused on maintaining the desired effect rather than providing a word-for-word rendition of the original text. Examining differences between translation and transcreation led Pedersen to believe that the field of application is what most defines transcreation as a separate practice. He notes that transcreation is primarily used in marketing, where it entails the creative adaptation of marketing, sales and advertising content (2014: 57). The focus in transcreation is on how the message is received and the reaction it elicits from the target audience, which entails taking into consideration cultural nuances and maintaining the persuasive nature of the text rather than directing attention at producing a faithful translation. In distinguishing between translation and transcreation, Pedersen focuses on what is being transferred: "Translation is transferring words from one language to another. Transcreation is transferring brands and messages from one culture to another." (Pedersen 2014: 62). While a straightforward translation may not be as effective in reaching the target audience for commercial purposes, transcreation focuses primarily on the commercial and persuasive intent of the message with linguistic and cultural nuances in mind and uses elements such as wordplay, assonance and alliteration to retain the desired impact and ensure a better reception by the target audience.

Adding to the definition of transcreation, some authors outline the required skills that transcreation professionals should possess. Benetello, observes that transcreation, apart from language and copywriting skills, requires cultural sensitivity and local market understanding (Benetello 2018: 41). Similarly, Gaballo (2012) points out that transcreation requires fluency (the ability to generate ideas and meaningful responses), flexibility (the ability to repurpose ideas), originality (the capacity to produce rare and novel ideas) and elaboration (the capacity to develop ideas). Ultimately, Gaballo offers the following comprehensive definition of transcreation:

Transcreation is an intra-/interlingual re-interpretation of the original work suited to the readers/audience of the target language which requires the translator to come up with new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs to make up for the lack (or inadequacy) of existing ones. It can be looked at as a strategy to overcome the limits of ‘untranslatability’, but in fact it is a holistic approach in which all possible strategies, methods and techniques can be used. (Gaballo 2012: 111)

To conclude, translation and transcreation are often differentiated based on their end goal. Whilst translation is straightforwardly considered a process of finding the equivalent meaning of a text in the second language, transcreation is primarily concerned with transferring the intent, style, tone, and emotional salience of the message from the source language to that of the target culture. Transcreation is commonly applied in marketing, where the transcreated content has a persuasive role. Effective transcreation requires extensive knowledge of the market and target culture, excellent language skills, and the ability to creatively adapt messages for the target market. Seeing as localization, transcreation and, to some extent, copywriting are relatively new translation-related practices that deal with adapting content, the lines between them are often blurred and their definitions overlap. To more easily differentiate between these terms, we will briefly reflect on how localization and copywriting compare to transcreation.

### **2.3. Localization, copywriting and transcreation**

Localization is a term used more broadly than just within the scope of translation studies. It is often considered one of the processes in translation, but it can be regarded a standalone practice. It involves adapting elements such as words, phrases or symbols to a specific locale with respect to its culture, values and norms. In defining transcreation, Pedersen agrees that localization is most often associated with software programs, whereas transcreation is a term

most used in marketing, where it entails conceiving creative campaigns (Pedersen 2014: 66). While both processes aim to create texts that are locally relevant and take into account cultural nuances of a specific *locale*, Pedersen concludes that the main difference between localization and transcreation is their field of application: “Localization is primarily concerned with software programs, while marketing and advertisement transcreation mainly deal with creative campaigns” (Pedersen 2014: 66). Similarly, Mangiron and O’Hagan point out that localization, aside from the linguistic transfer, includes combining the translated text with software engineering (Mangiron and O’Hagan 2006: 11). Therefore, localization is most often linked to the adaptation of websites, applications and platforms, as well as game development.

Copywriting is “the process of creating texts in multiple languages from scratch, with reference to brand and campaign requirements” (TAUS 2019: 9). What distinguishes copywriting from transcreation is the absence of a source text, which means that copywriters do not produce their copies based on previously created content. Copywriting is most often found in the creation of marketing, the same as transcreation, where it can be technical or creative, depending on the purpose.

In our dissertation, we will consider transcreation as an activity that encompasses all the necessary procedures in adapting cross-cultural content and we will therefore be guided by a definition of transcreation offered by Ray and Kelly, that places transcreation somewhere between translation and copywriting:

The term may be applied when either a direct translation is adapted, or when content is completely rewritten in the local language to reflect the original message. Most often, transcreation includes a hybrid of new content, adapted content and imagery, and straightforward translation. (Ray and Kelly 2010: 2-3)

In practice, localization, copywriting and transcreation are creative linguistic services that are often used interchangeably, especially in the adaptation of marketing campaigns, depending on the level of adaptation that is needed. The following graphic in Figure 1 provided by TAUS in *Transcreation Best Practices and Guidelines* shows the differences between different levels of content localization. On the bottom of the pyramid is machine translation, which usually produces high volumes of content in comparison to transcreation or copywriting. The level of automation is high and there is little to no creativity involved. On the top of the pyramid is copywriting, whose goal is the production of high-value influencing content that

requires creativity and localization skills. This type of content has to be thoroughly reviewed to verify that cultural and linguistic nuances have been taken into consideration.

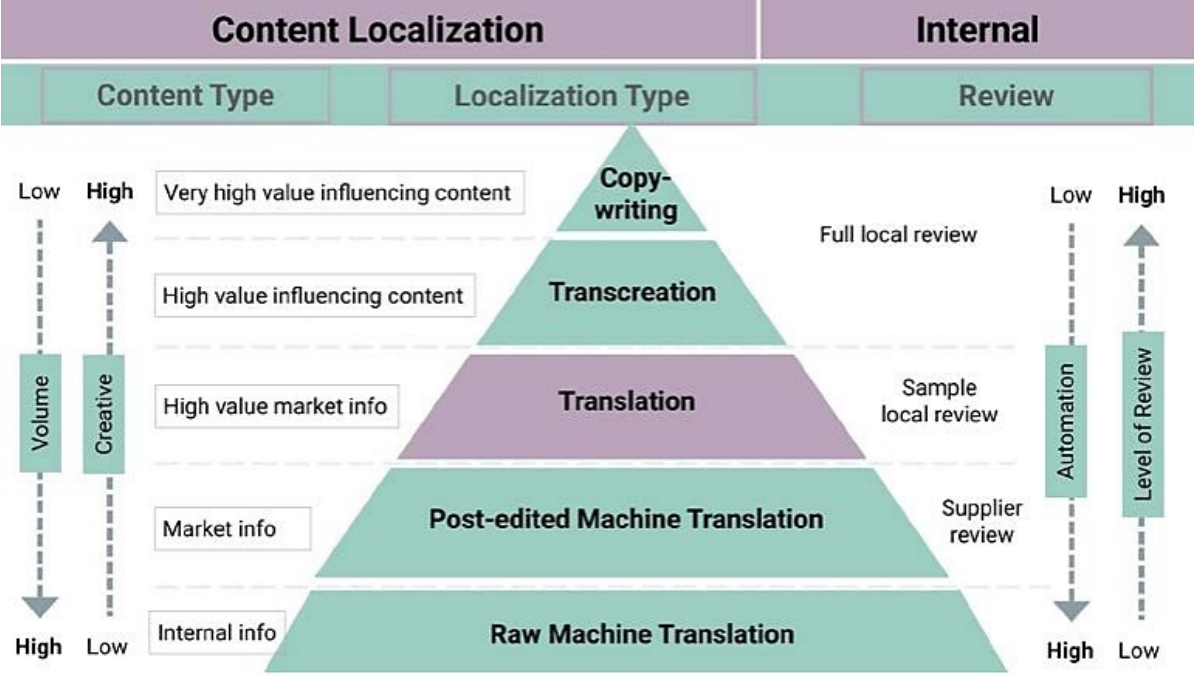


Figure 1. Content profiling (TAUS 2019: 7)

**2.3.1. Transcreation brief**

To produce a target text that serves the same purpose as the original transcreation professionals rely on transcreation briefs. A transcreation brief is a document that details the linguistic and business needs of the brand, product or campaign that is being adapted to a local market (Paglia in Carreira 2020: 26). It is a set of instructions that define the scope where a language professional carries out their job. Briefs are made to ensure that the core intent of the source text is adequately transferred into the target culture. A brief details the purpose of transcreation and the client’s marketing goal. It contains restrictions such as the number of words or paragraphs. A transcreation brief also has to clarify the brand’s current positioning in the market and who the target audience is, as well as what kind of reaction the campaign should elicit. Defining a transcreation brief is essential in establishing the distinction between translation and transcreation because a transcreation brief further highlights the persuasive goal of a transcreated text.

## 2.4. Advertising in Translation Theory

The translation of advertising and marketing adaptation has been somewhat disregarded by translation studies. Munday examines the existing common features that translation and advertising share: the focus on the target audience, the purpose of translation and adverts being a clear example of cross-cultural transfer.

Firstly, in both translation and advertising, a great amount of attention is paid to who the content is for. The main factor in the production of adverts is the target audience and “all translation decisions depend on the presupposition the translator has about the target consumer’s interpretation of the message” (Valdes 2000: 272). Munday claims that maintaining the persuasive effect must remain a central concern for translators of adverts, as well as translation theorists (2014: 206).

The emphasis on the persuasive effect corresponds with the second crucial point, the purpose or *skopos* of the translation. Reiss (1971/2000: 25) considers advertising translation as an example of different functions co-existing but claims that, in advertising, the persuasive function takes priority over depictive functions.

Finally, the third consideration is culture, that is, cultural context. We have discussed the source-oriented and target-oriented approaches in translation, where the focus is either on removing the cultural barrier and retaining the original message or accentuating the cultural differences. Katan distinguishes these approaches as “translating from cultures”, where differences should be explained, and “translation for cultures”, in which differences should either be reduced (domestication) or highlighted (foreignization) (Katan 2012: 1). From that perspective, translators are mediators between source and target text cultures whose role is to reconcile cross-cultural differences according to the readers’ tolerance for difference.

The focus on culture is often considered the most defining factor of transcreation (Pedersen 2014: 62). In terms of marketing and advertising, consumers are products of their culture and that culture includes shared beliefs, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a certain language in a specific geographical location living at the same time (De Mooij 2004: 181). It could be said that language, place and time are all elements of culture. These pre-established cultural patterns determine how an advertising message will be received. Possessing the knowledge of cultural values and norms makes it easier to convince target consumers that the product encompasses all those cultural values. Concepts and ideas in advertising are embedded in the culture in which they originate, therefore, words and sentences elaborated for

one culture are not necessarily meaningful in another culture. Language in advertising makes use of linguistic strategies that distract from or add to the literal meaning (Cook 1992/2001: 105). These include prosody and rhythm that make the language of advertising seem less rigid and contrived. Loan words, puns and neologisms are often used for entertainment purposes and to attract the reader's attention (Munday 2014: 203). The use of these strategies pushes advertising translation more in the direction of adaptation than standardization because puns and wordplay are extremely culture-specific.

Finally, Munday contends that translation theory still focuses on the conventional, progressively outdated, written translation, despite advertising being a clear example of "the new multimodal, multimedia world of communication" (Munday 2014: 216). Advertising often relies on the semiotic interaction between the written text and the audio-visual aspect of an advert. For instance, products are often depicted in an environment or a landscape that fits the target audience's region. Similarly, functional ordering of elements, using color as a semiotic device and substituting translation of words with icons and symbols are common advertising strategies. Advertising has evolved from a monomodal to a multimodal type of communication, which should be reflected in the study of the translation of advertising.

## **2.5. Standardization or adaptation in international marketing**

Launching international advertising campaigns often implies that companies have to choose either a more internationally uniform approach or a more targeted, localized approach to foreign markets. Proponents of global consumer culture and standardized advertising (Fatt, 1967; Buzzell, 1968; Levitt, 1983; Yip, 1996) argue that, in today's increasingly globalized world, consumers' needs and values are the same around the globe. Standardized advertising is also more cost-effective and maintains a more homogeneous impression of the brand (Vrontis & Thrassou 2007: 8). On the other hand, adapting advertising has its advantages and it is, in some cases, needed. Supporters of international adaptation argue that macro-environmental differences require tailoring advertising to fit the "unique dimensions" (Vrontis and Thrassou 2007: 478) of different international markets. Marketing a single product the same way across different cultures may result in the product being unregistered by the consumers because advertising does not cater to their needs and wants. A new market comes with a new set of macro-environmental factors and constraints such as language, occupations, education, different laws, cultures, and societies (Czinkota and Ronkainen 1998). The idea behind

adaptation is that, if done properly, adaptation for a particular market engages the target consumers more profoundly and can ultimately result in better sales and brand recognition.

Research on standardization and adaptation in marketing conducted on multinational companies in the United Kingdom has shown that the primary reason multinational companies choose adaptation as their marketing strategy is culture (Vrontis and Thrassou 2007). The research suggests that multinational companies, apart from identifying their unique brand voice that translates well in standardized advertising, should undertake market research and pay attention to cultural nuances of their current market to attract more consumers:

Heterogeneity among different countries does not allow standardisation in an absolute power. On the other hand, the huge costs involved in the adaptation approach and the benefits of standardisation fail to allow adaptation to be used extensively, as theoretically suggested. (Vrontis and Thrassou 2007: 8)

Vrontis and Thrassou suggest that multinational companies should not approach international advertising exclusively by standardization or adaptation. Instead, they claim that the question of adaptation or standardization is a matter of degree, is specific to every market and should take into consideration culture-specific factors:

(...) standardisation and adaptation is not an all-or nothing proposition, but a matter of degree. It identified that the huge costs involved in the international adaptive approach, together with the multinational companies' desire to reap the benefits of standardisation do not allow such adaptation to be used in an absolute manner. Similarly, organisational differences, heterogeneity among different countries, macro and micro environmental factors as well as companies' desire to satisfy consumer's diverse needs, do not allow standardisation to be practised extensively (Vrontis and Thrassou 2007: 15).

Their research ultimately confirms that culture is an essential component of an international marketing strategy and that investing in a properly adapted marketing campaign does pay off. However, creating campaigns for international audiences entails not only the adaptation of advertising but also the positioning of the brand in this new consumer culture, which is our next topic of discussion.

## **2.6. Consumer Culture Positioning**

Globalization has had an impact on advertising techniques and strategies that led to the emergence of terms such as global consumer culture. Consumer culture is defined as a densely woven network of global connections and extensions through which local cultures are increasingly interpenetrated by the forces of international capital, global information technology and global media (Arnould and Thompson 2005). The global consumer culture phenomenon developed from the belief that meanings, symbols, values and activities are globally shared and understood in this new globalized world, where local cultures collide and intertwine. In other words, global consumer culture is a “cultural entity not associated with a single country, but rather a larger group generally recognized as international and transcending individual national cultures” (Alden, Steenkamp, and Batra 1999: 80). Alden et al. examine how companies in the global marketplace tackle globalization and how global consumer culture is mirrored in advertising strategies.

The authors differentiate three types of approaches to the marketplace depending on its consumers. Global consumer culture positioning (GCCP) is a brand positioning strategy that associates the brand with a widely understood and recognized set of symbols and values believed to constitute global consumer culture (Alden et al. 1999: 75). On the other end of the spectrum is local consumer culture positioning (LCCP), a strategy in which the brand reflects the values and norms of the local culture; whatever is being sold or produced is designed to attract local consumers. Finally, foreign consumer culture positioning (FCCP) is a strategy that depicts the brand as identifiable with or symbolic of a specific foreign consumer culture (Alden et al. 1999). For instance, associating a product, brand or company with its country or culture of origin in other cultures is an example of FCCP. In our research, we will explore Renault’s consumer culture positioning in international advertising.

## **2.7. Consumer Behaviour and Cultural Values**

Attitudes towards standardized global advertising vary; some believe that global consumer culture is prevalent in recent decades and that advertising should reflect that (Alden et al. 1999), while others think that global consumer culture is non-existent in practice and rather a concept created as part of the corporate strategy: “There may be global products, but there are no global people. There may be global brands, but there are no global motivations for buying those brands.” (De Mooij 2014: 46)



De Mooij explores the correlation between consumer behavior and cultural values to show that a culturally appropriate advertising style is the key to successful advertising. She argues that we have to consider the pre-established notions of each culture because consumers themselves are products of their own culture and language (De Mooij 2004: 181). Not only do different languages have different symbolic references, but each person has their own set of meanings and values that reflect their consumer behavior. “Culture includes shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period” (De Mooij 2004: 181). This leads to the conclusion that cultures have specific dimensions or characteristics which allow them to be rated according to specific countries. In advertising, in particular, the focus is on communication.

One of the major considerations when discussing communication is context because the degree of context presence affects the level of directness in communication. De Mooij differentiates between low-context communication, which is explicit, direct and unambiguous, and high-context communication, which relies heavily on context and is characterized by indirect verbal expression and symbols (De Mooij 2004: 182). Low-context and high-context communication styles can be applied in advertising depending on the cultural characteristics of a certain nation that affect consumers’ emotions, motives and needs. For instance, the author compares American culture, in which the emphasis is on the persuasive function of language and direct approach, to Asian cultures, in which a more indirect approach is often favored. Establishing differences based on culture can ultimately be useful in recognizing and understanding different choices in marketing and advertising localization and transcreation across different cultures.

## **2.8. Hofstede’s Model of National Culture**

To substantiate her theory of cultural relevance, De Mooij uses dimensions of national culture established by social psychologist Hofstede. The model of national culture is a framework that is used to understand differences between cultures and helps in establishing cross-cultural communication. In the sphere of marketing, the model is used for understanding consumer behavior because it relies on the fact that consumer behavior can be explained by cultural dimensions. As of 2022, Hofstede established six dimensions: Power Distance Index, Collectivism versus Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Femininity versus Masculinity, Short-Term versus Long-Term Orientation and Restraint versus Indulgence. The

country scores were collected by IBM between 1967 and 1973. This was later extended to 50 countries and 3 regions. In the editions of Geert Hofstede's work since 2001, scores are listed for 76 countries and regions, partly based on replications and extensions of the IBM study on different international populations ("Hofstede Insights" 2022). Since culture changes slowly, the scores can be considered up to date. However, it is important to note that Hofstede's cultural dimensions show a rather generalized picture of the set of values prevailing in a particular society. The dimensions are determined in the context of business rather than cultural values, beliefs and differences on the individual level, therefore some of the data may be inconclusive.

De Mooij uses the country scores to illustrate that the needs and values of each country are determined by culture and that advertising should reflect that to resonate better with the target audience. For the purposes of our research, each dimension will be explained briefly. Since our research focuses primarily on five countries, the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Croatia and India, scores are provided for these countries specifically to illustrate similarities and differences that would be reflected in marketing.

### **2.8.1. Power Distance**

Power distance is defined as a cultural dimension that represents social inequality. It is "the extent to which less powerful members of a society accept that power is distributed unequally" (De Mooij 2004: 183). In large power-distance cultures, social hierarchy is emphasized, and there is a clear dependence relationship between parents and children as well as younger and older members of society. Hofstede's score shows that in countries such as India and Croatia there is a significant power distance. India is known for a strict class structure defined by birth, so social inequality is prominent. Demonstration of social position through ownership of status objects is important in cultures with a large power distance. Therefore, in order to maintain status, individuals may be drawn to consumables and brands that would help them present themselves in a way they want to be perceived. Advertising in these cultures might focus on marketing products as status symbols.

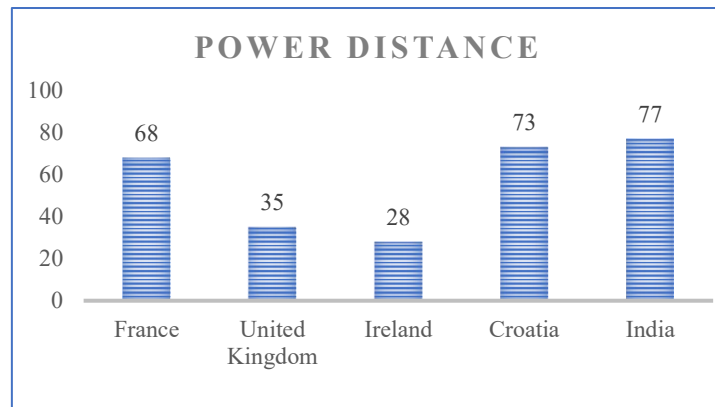


Figure 2. A graphical comparison of country scores for power distance

Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022,  
[www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

### 2.8.2. Individualism

Hofstede's second dimension focuses on the relationship between the individual and larger social groups. In individualistic cultures, there is a pronounced need for privacy and a need to differentiate oneself from others. Members of individualistic cultures look after themselves and their immediate families. Independence and autonomy are valued. On the other end of the spectrum, collectivistic societies are characterized by a sense of loyalty and belonging to a group that takes care of its members. Members of collectivistic cultures prefer to conform to norms instead of distinguishing themselves individually. Hofstede correlates high-context communication with collectivistic cultures because messages spread more easily in large groups so there is no need for explicit communication ("Hofstede Insights" 2022).

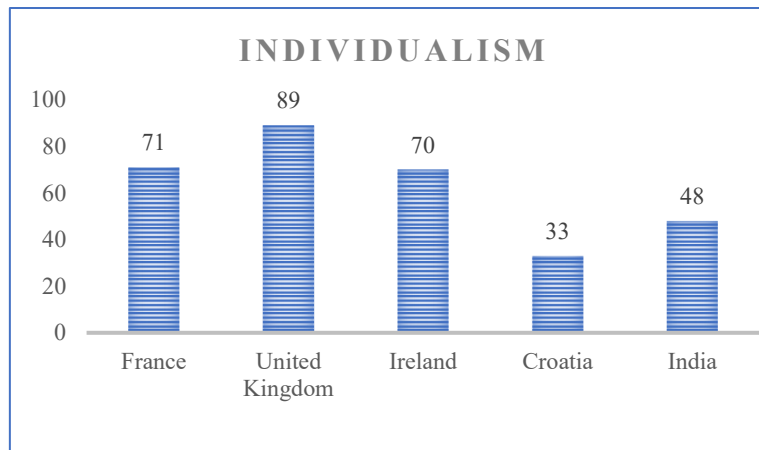


Figure 3. A graphical comparison of country scores for individualism

Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022, [www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

### 2.8.3. Masculinity

The fundamental difference between masculinity and femininity is whether a society is characterized by achieving goals or focused on quality of life (“Hofstede Insights” 2022). In masculine cultures, society cherishes success, heroism, achievement and assertiveness. Japan scores the highest on the masculinity scale, which is evident in the core Japanese values, such as competitiveness, drive for excellence and perfection, as well as a workaholic culture. Of the countries selected for this research, Ireland and the UK rank the highest on the masculinity scale. Hofstede indicates that, in masculine cultures, individuals live to work, instead of working to live. The need for success is instilled in school and continues throughout adulthood. Demonstrating success is important, hence status products and brands are more coveted. Prominent values in feminine countries are equality, solidarity and quality of life. Femininity in Hofstede’s view stands for a preference for consensus, compromise and negotiation. Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. The focus is on well-being and modesty while showing status is not important. Croatia and France score the lowest on the masculinity scale, which indicates that these are predominantly feminine cultures.

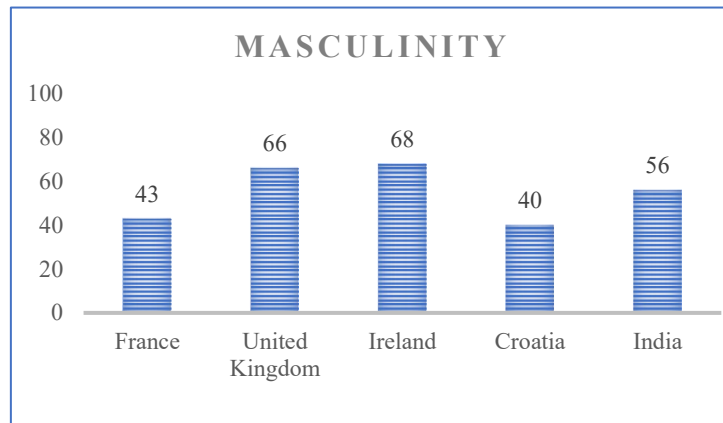


Figure 4. A graphical comparison of country scores for masculinity

Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022, [www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

#### 2.8.4. Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty Avoidance expresses the extent to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity (“Hofstede Insights” 2022). This dimension aims to show how different societies deal with the uncertainty of what the future brings and how it affects the way in which individuals approach life and form opinions. Cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance, such as France and Croatia, are characterized by the need for rules, rituals and structure. Cultures of weak uncertainty avoidance cherish innovation and are characterized by a more relaxed, less bureaucratic behavior. Members of societies with weak uncertainty avoidance are more flexible in face of changes and tend to “go with the flow”. Examples of such societies are the UK and Ireland, where businesses value imagination and creativity.

Interestingly, countries that score high on masculinity are also the ones with the weakest uncertainty avoidance. A high masculinity score suggests that the UK and Ireland are both goal-oriented nations, but low uncertainty avoidance points to a lack of a detail-oriented approach. This indicates that, for the British and the Irish, setting a goal is important, but how that goal is achieved is subject to change and experimentation. Likewise, Croatia and France show a correlation between femininity and strong uncertainty avoidance, indicating that these cultures rely more on facts and expert opinions while caring less about the brand image and more about personal well-being.

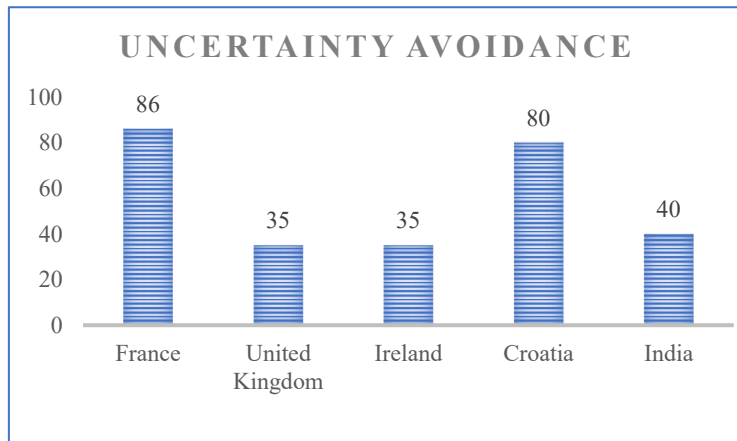


Figure 5. A graphical comparison of country scores for uncertainty avoidance

Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022, [www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

### 2.8.5. Long-term Orientation

Long-term orientation is a cultural dimension that focuses on the future. It demonstrates how willing society is to delay short-term gratification or success to focus on a long-term goal. Such perspective values perseverance, the ability to adapt and thrift. Short-term orientation prioritizes the present or the past instead of the future. Members of society value tradition, social hierarchy and fulfilling duties. Immediate gratification takes precedence over long-term goals and achievements. Feminine societies, such as France and Croatia, tend to be more oriented towards long-term goals.

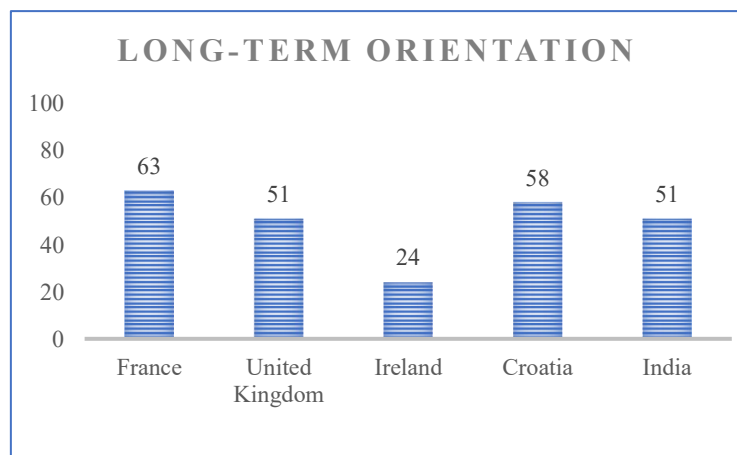


Figure 6. A graphical comparison of country scores for long-term orientation

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Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022,  
[www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

### 2.8.6. Indulgence

Indulgence reflects the extent to which society responds to human basic needs, based on the way they were raised. A high indulgence score stands for a relatively weaker control of feelings and primitive human needs. Members of an indulgent society are more likely to spend money on leisure and entertainment. Cultures with a relatively low indulgence score are considered restrained. Restrained societies have a stronger constraint of indulgence through strict social norms. The United States and Western European countries are mostly indulgent cultures, while Eastern European and Asian countries tend to be more restrained.

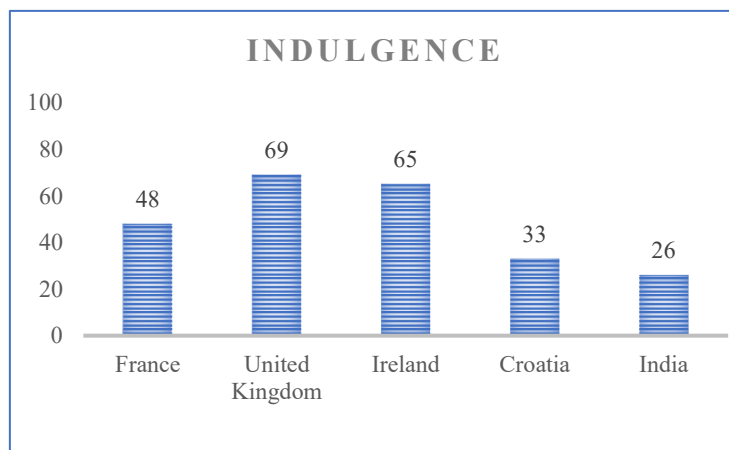


Figure 7. A graphical comparison of country scores for indulgence

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Source: "Compare countries." *Hofstede Insights*, 3 Dec. 2022,  
[www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/](http://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/).

## 2.9. Advertising styles

To illustrate the differences in approaches to advertising in different countries, we will base our research on De Mooij's advertising styles. Differences in cultures are most recognizable in communication styles (De Mooij 2004: 192). The prevailing advertising styles of cultures follow interpersonal communication styles. For instance, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey described the following differences between verbal personal style and verbal contextual style (1988).

Verbal personal style is person-oriented, centered around the individual and their identity. The focus is on emphasizing the uniqueness of a person or a brand. It is usually associated with individualism and low-context communication. English is a language commonly linked with individualism due to its need for retaining the "I" pronoun in first-person sentences (De Mooij 2004: 193), which accentuates the identity of an individual, as opposed to languages that allow for the omission of personal pronouns, such as Croatian. Verbal personal style is prominent in cultures of low power distance, where direct and explicit advertising is preferred. Such advertising is best observed in Anglophone countries, such as the United Kingdom and Ireland. The combination of low power distance and a more direct approach often leads to advertising that is characterized by humor.

Verbal contextual style, on the other hand, is highly dependent on context and is generally observed in collectivistic cultures. It is most often associated with high power distance and societies in which hierarchy plays an important role. Verbal contextual style favors elaborate flowery language, metaphors and symbolism, but succinct style is preferred in high-context cultures with strong uncertainty avoidance, such as Japan (De Mooij 2004: 194).

The following figure is a visual representation of these advertising styles based on interpersonal verbal communication styles (see fig. 8), followed by De Mooij's description of the differences between each quadrant.



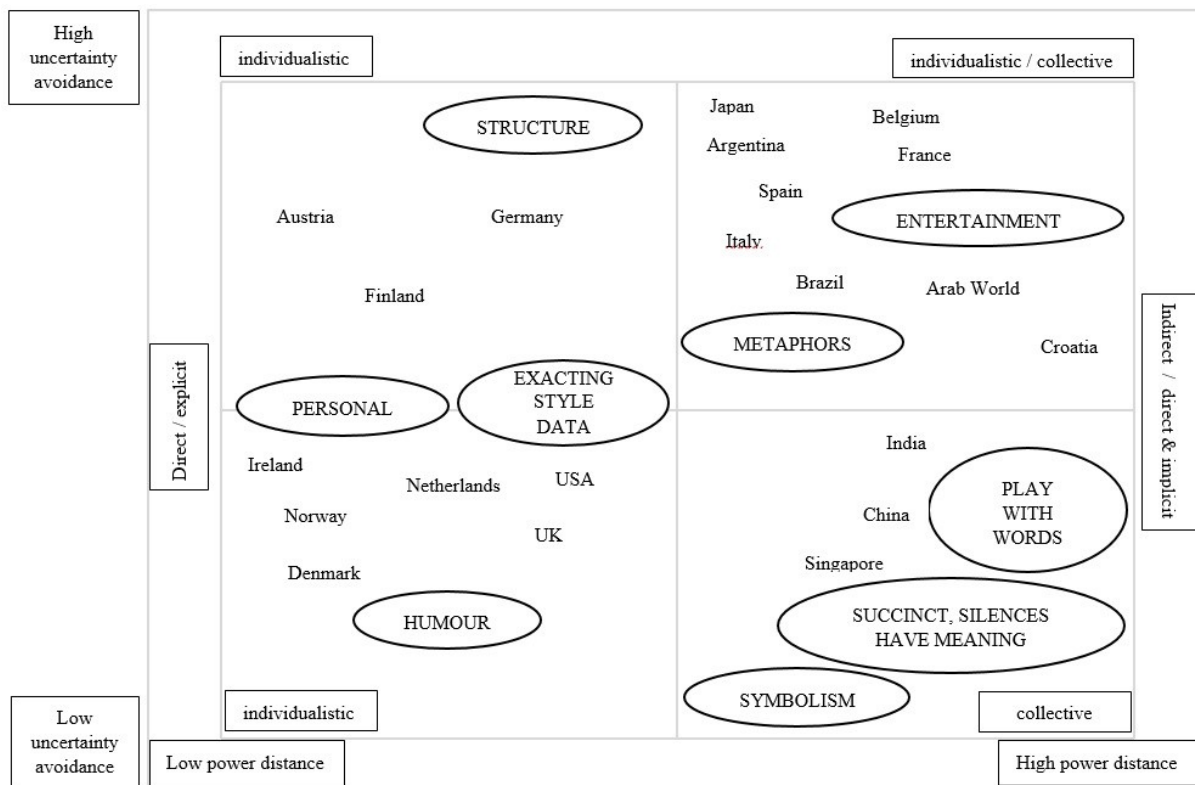


Figure 8. Advertising styles (adapted from De Mooij (2004: 193)).

Advertising styles in the lower and upper left-hand quadrants are associated with individualistic cultures of small power distance. The advertising style is straightforward, direct explicit, and personal. More attention is placed on emphasizing the uniqueness of the brand. These advertising styles are typical of the US and the countries of northwest Europe, which show a preference for direct and explicit forms of communication.

In the upper left-hand quadrant, cultures of strong uncertainty avoidance show a preference for more serious and structured advertising. This is the style of Germanic cultures. Advertising is marked by detailed visuals, often including a demonstration of how the product works. Usually, more information and data about the product are provided than in weak uncertainty avoidance cultures. On the other hand, weak uncertainty avoidance cultures of the lower left-hand quadrant tolerate more ambiguity. Advertising is therefore less exact and humor is often used.

The upper right-hand quadrant includes cultures that combine high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance with individualism (e.g., France and Belgium), as well as cultures that combine these two dimensions with collectivism (e.g., Spain, Brazil). De Mooij notes that France and Belgium show a mix of direct and indirect implicit communication styles that

express both uniqueness and inaccessibility, which is recognized in the frequent references in advertising to other forms of communication such as films, art or even advertising by others (2004: 195). The remaining countries in the upper right-hand quadrant are characterized by indirect and implicit communication that is less likely to offend: “Meaning is in the context. Visual metaphors and symbols are used to create context and to position the product or brand in its ‘proper place’, as one would expect in large power distance cultures” (De Mooij 2004: 195).

Finally, the advertising style in the lower right-hand quadrant of collectivistic cultures of medium to large power distance and weak to moderate uncertainty avoidance is characterized by visuals, wordplay and symbolism. De Mooij notes that these cultures prefer relatively direct modes of communication, which can be explained by low uncertainty avoidance (2004: 196). These advertising styles can be applied to various industries, where they provide a basis for understanding consumers' tendencies.

## **2.10. Marketing and advertising in the automotive industry**

Approaches to international advertising can be easily observed in the automotive industry since a large number of companies have a multinational presence, which means that they are often faced with having to decide on an appropriate marketing strategy. As the research by Vrontis and Thrassou suggests (2007), successful international advertising campaigns can be achieved by implementing a global creative strategy. The role of translators and transcreation professionals is to ensure that this cross-cultural transition is executed smoothly and that international campaigns retain the desired impact. This includes imagery, symbols, checking names and pronunciation in other languages and avoiding literal translation.

De Mooij's concept of advertising styles has been applied to the automotive industry, more specifically, to consumers' vehicle preferences. Motives for buying automobiles are presented according to two of Hofstede's dimensions, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance. These motives are recognized in the design of cars and in the appeals used by advertisers of successful car brands.

The lower left quadrant shows countries of low masculinity and weak uncertainty avoidance. Safety and the functional aspects of a car are more important than technology or design, which is why the Swedish Volvo, which is a brand well known for its safety claim, is

one of the more popular options. De Mooij notes that, in feminine cultures, people have little interest in the motor of their car, as opposed to those in masculine countries (2014: 221).

The lower right quadrant shows cultures of strong masculinity and weak uncertainty avoidance. Demonstrating status and success is important, therefore cars with big, powerful motors are preferred. This is the culture cluster where people will be most attracted to the sturdy SUV types of vehicles. The upper right quadrant shows the cluster of cultures with the configuration of masculinity and strong uncertainty avoidance. People in these cultures are aggressive drivers, and they prefer cars with rapid acceleration (De Mooij 2014: 221). Although this seems paradoxical, as one would expect to see risk aversion translated into a safety motive, De Mooij explains the phenomenon by claiming that people of strong uncertainty avoidance cultures build up stress, which they also want to release. This shows that uncertainty avoidance is not the same as risk avoidance. However, strong uncertainty avoidance indicates that cars must also be technologically advanced, well-designed, and well-tested. These are the cultures where people prefer German brands like Audi and BMW and the Italian Alfa Romeo.

In the upper left quadrant are cultures of low masculinity and strong uncertainty avoidance. In comparison to more masculine societies, the emphasis is on pleasure, enjoyment and fashionable design rather than a car being a powerful machine. Stylish brands like Renault and Citroën are preferred in these cultures.

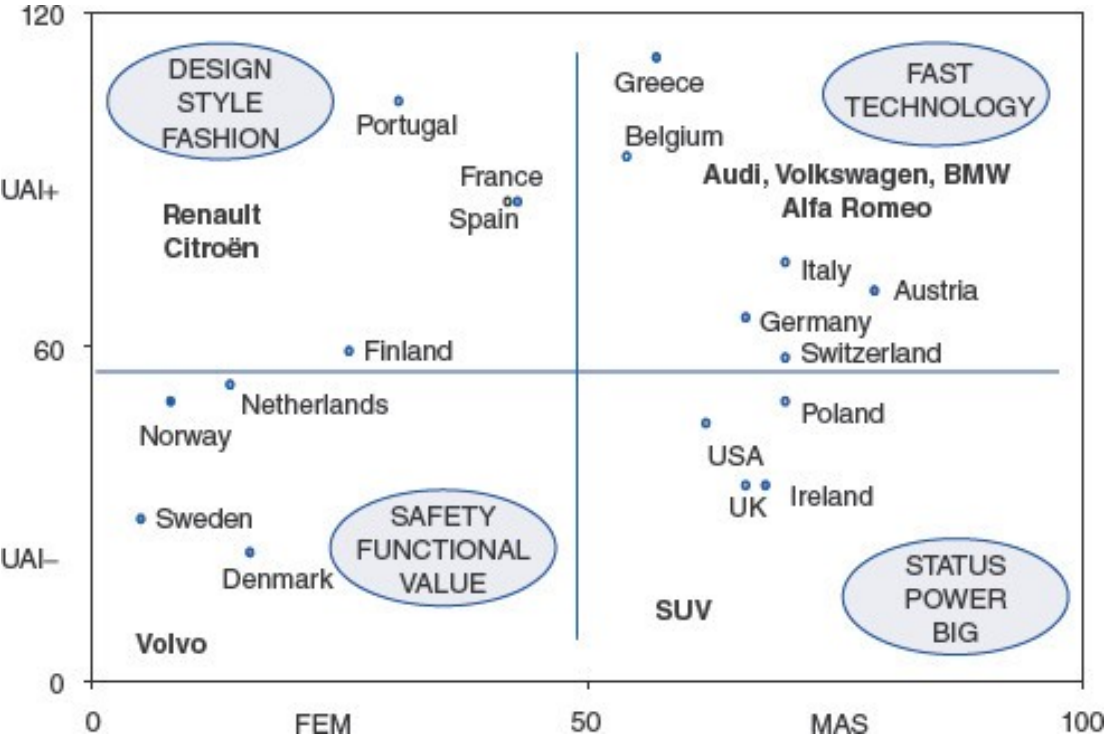


Figure 9. Advertising styles in the automotive industry (De Mooij 2014: 222)

## **2.11. Renault and Advertising**

To observe adaptation and standardization strategies, as well as brand positioning, we focused our research on a single company, Renault. Renault is one of the leading automotive brands in Europe that has expanded outside the region in the last decades, especially in Asia. In the 2021 annual financial report, Renault Groupe reported that Clio is the company's best-selling model, followed by Captur and Mégane. France is the group's biggest market, accounting for almost two-thirds of revenues. Renault is the best-selling brand in the domestic market, with the next biggest markets by volumes being Russia and Germany ("Universal Registration Document 2021" 2021: 23).

"Renault and the French: a passion story expressed through advertising" (2015) contends that "humour and a bold, creative approach are the hallmark of advertising at Renault". The history of Renault advertising shows that Renault is not afraid of innovative and, sometimes, controversial advertising. Since Renault is present not only across different European markets but also internationally, it provides plenty of material for the analysis of cross-cultural advertising.

## **3. Methodology and Corpus**

### **3.1. Methodology**

This dissertation aims to analyze Renault's slogans and advertisements in order to achieve a greater understanding of the challenges of transcreation and cross-cultural adaptation in marketing campaigns. The goal is to find elements of transcreation that show that adaptation in advertising has been made to achieve a more localized approach in a particular country. The research also aims to explore the dominant consumer culture positioning in Renault advertising to see how much of the brand's identity is linked to its country of origin and how it is reflected in the discourse of advertising. Focusing on a single international company allows us to see whether Renault's marketing strategy leans more toward standardization or adaptation and whether De Mooij's advertising styles accurately represent the prevailing advertising methods across different cultures. The research primarily focuses on the linguistic aspect of advertisements, such as slogans and accompanying promotional texts, but seeing as transcreation includes textual and audiovisual adaptation, it takes into consideration all the

elements of an advertisement. The research consists of advertising material from the United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Croatia and India. We focused on countries in which Renault's products have a big enough presence to observe advertising patterns, but that are different enough in terms of Hofstede's dimensions and De Mooij's advertising styles to be able to see whether these cultural differences affect advertising. Ultimately, the aim is to show that adapting advertising is a process of transferring meaning, cultural nuances, context and brand voice that requires experts with the knowledge of both source text and target text language and culture.

### **3.2. Corpus**

The corpus was collected from the official Renault Group marketing archive, official Renault websites, Youtube, Twitter and Instagram accounts for a specific market, online advertising archives, news articles as well as transcreation and copywriting portfolios. The corpus contains Renault's advertising material in English, French and Croatian. Apart from the five countries listed, the corpus includes advertising from other countries as well, the examples of which were used for the purposes of comparison. Naturally, the number of sources and advertising material differs depending on the size of the market, but the scores on Hofstede's dimensions for these countries are different enough to provide a basis for the analysis of cultural adaptation in advertising. These countries also cover three out of four quadrants in De Mooij's representation of advertising styles, which would suggest that the reoccurrence of certain themes, methods or visuals should be easily observed.

## **4. Analysis of Renault's Advertising**

### **4.1. Adaptation or Standardization in Renault's Campaigns**

Since both standardization and adaptation are used in international marketing by companies with a multinational presence, our goal was to see how those findings relate to Renault's advertising. In order to do that, we searched for advertising material in countries with a strong Renault presence that score differently in at least some dimensions on Hofstede's

model. For that reason, Renault Captur was chosen, as it is one of Renault's currently most widespread and best-selling models (Charman 2017; Car Sales Base 2022). The 2020 Renault Captur model was advertised in France, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Croatia. The campaign for Captur was focused on emphasizing the versatility of this compact SUV, suitable for city driving, as well as for the countryside. For the official Renault Captur 2020 TV commercial, the initial slogan in French is "Pour toutes vos vies" (eng. For all your lives). The commercial therefore includes clips of driving in the city, as well as the driver enjoying sports and hobbies, which is supposed to illustrate that Captur is a car fit for many scenarios. In the French version, the architecture is evocative of a French city and the emphasis is on city driving.



Figure 10. A screenshot of the French commercial for Renault Captur

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Source: "Nouveau Renault CAPTUR." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault France, 6 Jan. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dKSozUQhZI&ab\\_channel=RenaultFrance](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dKSozUQhZI&ab_channel=RenaultFrance).

In the UK, the car was advertised under the slogan "Your choice, your Captur", putting an even stronger emphasis on the individual consumer with the double use of the possessive adjective "your". This is in line with Hofstede's findings that the UK is predominantly an individualistic nation. The shots included in this commercial focus more on positioning Captur within the British-style landscape and brick-walled townhouses.



Figure 11. A screenshot of Renault Captur's commercial in the UK.

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Source: "The All-New Renault CAPTUR | Your choice, Your CAPTUR." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault UK, 2 Mar. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=71n5b7jWiEs&ab\\_channel=RenaultUK](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71n5b7jWiEs&ab_channel=RenaultUK).

On the same note, the Irish commercial contains clips that position the product more closely in an Irish countryside setting. The slogan, "A stylish car for all your lives", although slightly different, is a literal translation of the original slogan.



Figure 12. A screenshot of Renault Captur's commercial in Ireland

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Source: "All-New Renault CAPTUR." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Ireland Official, 6 Nov. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=71n5b7jWiEs&ab\\_channel=RenaultUK](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71n5b7jWiEs&ab_channel=RenaultUK).



In Croatia, the initial version also included a literal translation of the French slogan (“Za sve vaše živote”). In both the Irish and Croatian cases, this could be explained by the smaller size of the markets. However, the rest of the campaign consisted of several shorter and more focused video commercials with taglines starting with “Za one koji...”, the purpose of which was targeting different types of consumers. Ultimately, the slogan that was used for the rest of the campaign was “Živite život po svome”. Again, visual changes are present, as the commercial includes clips of Captur driving on cobblestones by the type of buildings one might find in Croatia.



Figure 13. A screenshot of Renault Captur’s commercial in Croatia

Source: "Živite život po svome. Novi Renault Captur." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 3 Jul. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE7dnPMQ0qg&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE7dnPMQ0qg&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

| France               | UK                       | Ireland                          | Croatia               |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pour toutes vos vies | Your Choice, Your Captur | A stylish car for all Your lives | Živite život po svome |

Table 1. Slogans from TV commercials for Renault Captur in 2020.

These examples show that, even though the international campaign for Captur is standardized, as there is little variation in slogans, adaptation is achieved by introducing clips that position the product in a setting that resembles more closely that of the target consumers. “Visuals have been used for standardizing print advertisements worldwide with the underlying



assumption that consumers from all around the world can ‘read’ a picture whereas the copy of the advertisement often needs to be translated (De Mooij 2014: 350). TV commercials seem to capitalize on the audiovisual aspect of a video advertisement, rather than focusing on creating and transcreating clever slogans in different cultures.

In terms of linguistic adaptation, the original slogan is often translated literally or slightly adapted, while there is an intent to maintain the core message as uniform as possible. A standardized approach is preferred in these instances and the focus is on achieving an internationally consistent image of the brand and the product. As opposed to TV commercials, more creative advertising of Captur can be observed on billboards and on social media, where content is often more vibrant and engaging. Advertising for Captur largely consisted of figures of speech and neologisms coined from the verb *capture*, such as “Capture life. Capture style. Capture deals.”, “Capture your senses” or “Captureality”. This can be explained by the fact that such advertising is less costly and more macro-oriented, that is, more localized to better attract individual consumers of a particular area.

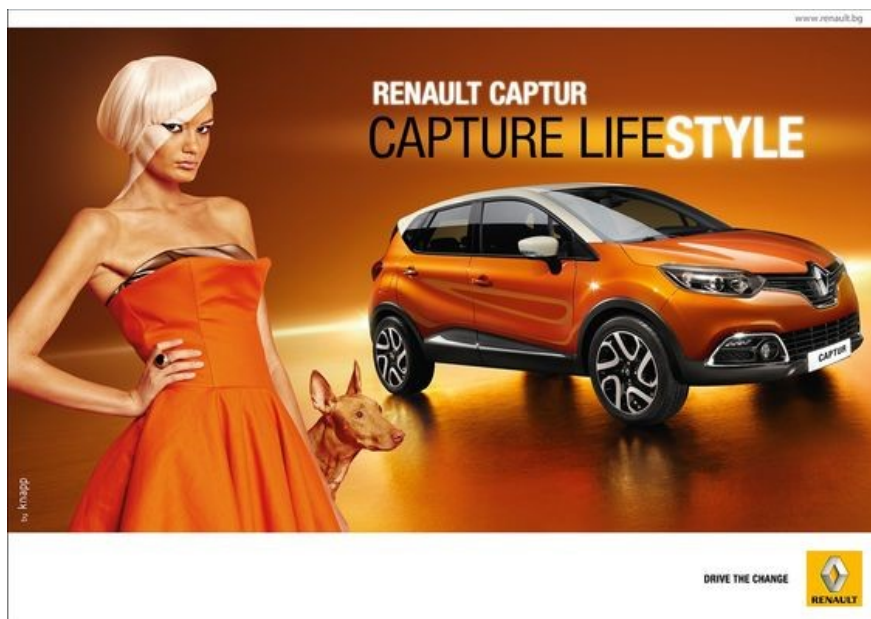


Figure 14. Renault Captur advertised in print in Bulgaria.

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Source: "Capture Lifestyle." *Ads of the World*, 1 Sept. 2014,  
[www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/capture-lifestyle](http://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/capture-lifestyle).

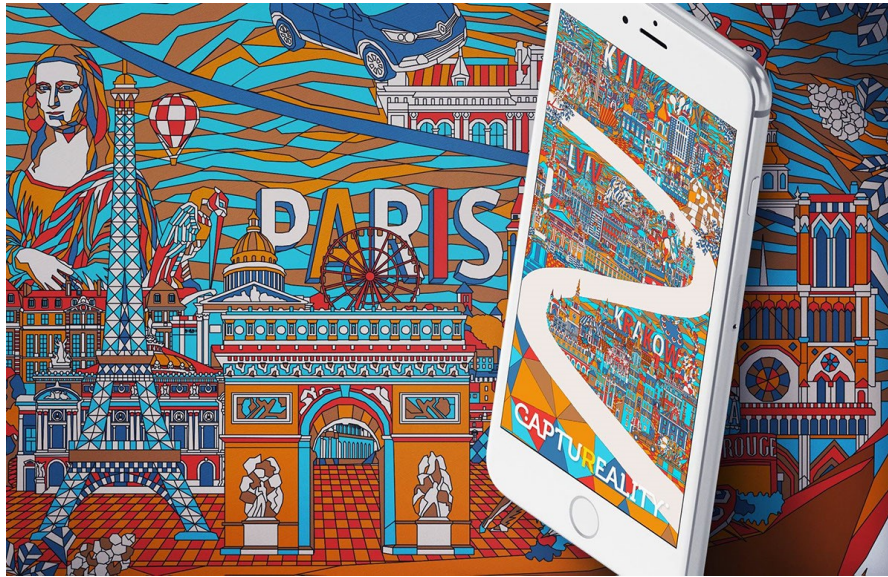


Figure 15. Renault Captur website design for Renault Ukraine.

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Source: Mishenko, Andrew. "Captureality." *Ads of the World*, 8 Jun. 2016, [www.behance.net/gallery/40453409/Renault-Ukraine-Captureality](http://www.behance.net/gallery/40453409/Renault-Ukraine-Captureality).

The following examples show the same post reproduced on three of Renault's official Twitter and Instagram accounts – Renault France, Renault UK and Renault Hrvatska (see table 2). In 2021, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August, Renault celebrated International Left-Handers Day on Twitter by reminding consumers that their reverse gear is situated on the left side. The French version "Toi même tu sais"<sup>1</sup> was adapted in English and Croatian. The French and Croatian<sup>2</sup> versions are more implicit, effectively implying a secret form of communication between Renault and its consumers, while the British version<sup>3</sup> is more direct and plays on humour. Similarly, in 2022, when Renault was the sponsor of Roland Garros, Renault France advertised the event with an Instagram post that reads "On monte au filet"<sup>4</sup>. The expression "monter au filet" can be taken both literally (eng. to come up to the net) and figuratively (eng. to engage vigorously in action).

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<sup>1</sup> Renault France [@renault\_fr]. "est-ce qu'on a vraiment besoin d'en dire plus ? Respect." *Twitter*, 13 Aug. 2021, [twitter.com/renault\\_fr/status/1426091152701202432/photo/1](https://twitter.com/renault_fr/status/1426091152701202432/photo/1).

<sup>2</sup> Renault Hrvatska [@RenaultHR]. "Što još dodati? Svaka čast." *Twitter*, 13 Aug. 2021, [twitter.com/RenaultHR/status/1426233588186447877/photo/1](https://twitter.com/RenaultHR/status/1426233588186447877/photo/1).

<sup>3</sup> RenaultUK [@renault\_uk]. "shout out to all the other lefties living in a right-handed world — you've got the upper hand here!" *Twitter*, 13 Aug. 2021, [twitter.com/renault\\_uk/status/1426150527793090560/photo/1](https://twitter.com/renault_uk/status/1426150527793090560/photo/1).

<sup>4</sup> Renault France [@renault\_france]. "en tennis, chaque let est une chance de faire mieux." *Instagram*, 25 May 2022, [www.instagram.com/p/Cd-vItvo8ii/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd-vItvo8ii/).

To maintain the sense of wordplay, the tagline was adapted in English as “Let there be tennis”<sup>5</sup>, which is a pun on the tennis term *let*. The Croatian version<sup>6</sup> seems to have been adapted from English. Replacing *let* with the Croatian term *nec* would not make sense with the existing English version, so the intention of preserving the wordplay element was lost, and the Croatian version ultimately fails to achieve the intended effect. In Croatia, the imperative “Neka bude tenis” may be more evocative of the famous saying by Marie Antoinette, “Neka jedu kolače”, which has nothing to do with tennis or the initial idea of the advertisement. A more suitable alternative could have been found that would be in line with the wordplay on the terminology of tennis while retaining the tone of the message, which illustrates the importance of both cultural and linguistic knowledge in transcreation.

|  | French version    | Literal translation         | English version                   | Croatian version |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>International Left-Handers Day 2021</b> | Toi même tu sais  | You know what I'm saying    | For once you're on the right side | Tko zna, zna     |
| <b>Roland Garros 2022</b>                  | On monte au filet | We move in close to the net | Let there be tennis               | Neka bude tenis  |

Table 2. Renault's advertising adaptation from French into English and Croatian.

This analysis leads to the conclusion that Renault opts for standardized uniformity in official TV commercials when presenting a new model, while a higher level of adaptation is present in social media, websites and local advertising.

<sup>5</sup> Renault UK [@renaultuk]. "in tennis, every let is a chance to do better. that's why this year #Renault is donating money to refurbish tennis courts in France for every let recorded during #RolandGarros as part of the #GiveMe5 initiative." *Instagram*, 25 May 2022, [www.instagram.com/p/Cd-1axTIIIM/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd-1axTIIIM/).

<sup>6</sup> Renault Hrvatska [@renault\_hr]. "Svaki "nec" u tenisu prilika je za još bolju izvedbu. Zato ove godine #Renault donira sredstva za obnovu teniskih terena u Francuskoj za svaki zabilježeni "nec" na #RolandGarros turniru u okviru inicijative #GiveMe5." *Instagram*, 25 May 2022, [www.instagram.com/p/Cd-vEfyKq14/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd-vEfyKq14/).

## 4.2. Renault's Advertising Styles in Different Cultures

### 4.2.1. France

France is a society characterized by a fairly high power distance, which means there is a certain amount of social inequality among the French, despite France historically being associated with equality. This is substantiated by the fact that French companies usually have more hierarchical levels than comparable companies in the UK. With a score of 71, France is also considered an individualistic society. A high power distance score in an individualist society is rather unique and counterintuitive. This combination resulted in France having a mix of direct and indirect implicit communication, which is characterized by inaccessibility, as implied communication often means making references to film, art, and advertising by others (De Mooij 2004: 195). These references can make advertising inaccessible because the references might be missed by consumers unacquainted with the phenomenon being referenced. Such advertising may alienate some but resonate more strongly with others.

Renault has been known to address their competitors through advertising, either by responding to their critiques or using stereotypes to provoke and antagonize other automobile companies. In 2010 and 2011, Opel aired their commercial for Meriva and Corsa models in France<sup>7</sup>. The commercial included a presenter speaking in German, with French subtitles. The focus was on emphasizing the significance of German quality, essentially stating that Germans are well-known for making high-quality cars. The tagline was “Pas besoin de parler allemand pour comprendre que cette Opel est une vraie voiture allemande” (eng. “You don’t have to speak German to understand that Opel is a real German car”). In the 2011 Renault Mégane commercial that aired in France, Renault parodied the Opel Meriva commercial. The video was shot to mimic the original; there was a car presenter, in this case, a French man speaking a combination of French and German and imitating a German accent, who highlighted the features of the new Mégane, addressing the same details on the vehicle that were addressed in the Opel commercial. The presenter concludes the demonstration of the car with “Ich bin eine berline, berline Renault Mégane”, a reference to J.F. Kennedy’s 1963 speech in West Berlin (“Ich bin ein berliner”) and *une berline*, a French term for a vehicle with 4-5 doors, which is the type of vehicle that Renault Mégane is. The characteristics of the French advertising style

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<sup>7</sup>"Quand Renault parodie les pubs allemandes d'Opel." *Vive La Pub*, 20 Oct. 2011, [www.vivelaclub.fr/quand-renault-parodie-les-pubs-allemandes-opel/](http://www.vivelaclub.fr/quand-renault-parodie-les-pubs-allemandes-opel/).

described by De Mooij can be observed in this example. The advertisement is inaccessible to consumers unfamiliar with the Opel commercial. It exemplifies a combination of direct and indirect implicit communication with the use of metaphors, wordplay and French music, all easily understandable by a consumer who is immersed in or familiar with the French culture, but might seem inaccessible to others.

Similar examples of advertising with references that show this inaccessibility are recurrent in Renault's advertising in France. During the successive oil crises that started in 1973, in 1976 the French government invented the slogan "En France, on n'a pas de pétrole, mais on a des idées!" (eng. "We don't have oil, but we have ideas")<sup>8</sup> to restore hope to the population of the country for whom rationing was followed by an increase in the price of oil products. In 2016, when France was faced with another fuel shortage, Renault Zoe, Renault's 100% electric car, humorously re-used the slogan in their advertising: "En France on n'a plus de pétrole, mais on a des Zoe" (eng. "In France, we don't have oil, but we have Zoe"), reminding drivers that electric cars require no fuel.



Figure 16. A 2016 Renault Zoe advert in France

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Source: "Renault s'amuse de la pénurie d'essence." *L'auto-journal*, 25 May 2016, [www.autojournal.fr/renault/zoe/renault-samuse-de-la-penurie-dessence-181360.html](http://www.autojournal.fr/renault/zoe/renault-samuse-de-la-penurie-dessence-181360.html).

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<sup>8</sup> de Saint Sauveur, Charles. "«On n'a pas de pétrole, mais on a des idées» : quand la France des années 1970 affrontait la hausse du prix de l'essence." *Le Parisien*, 24 Oct. 2021, [www.leparisien.fr/economie/on-na-pas-de-petrole-mais-on-a-des-idees-quand-la-france-des-annees-1970-affrontait-la-hausse-du-prix-de-lessence-24-10-2021-RGHTEKIUAZDODJTSULAKPES7LQ.php](http://www.leparisien.fr/economie/on-na-pas-de-petrole-mais-on-a-des-idees-quand-la-france-des-annees-1970-affrontait-la-hausse-du-prix-de-lessence-24-10-2021-RGHTEKIUAZDODJTSULAKPES7LQ.php).



Renault's advertising in France has a high occurrence of metaphorical slogans, which is in accordance with De Mooij's advertising styles. Advertising is marked by the frequent use of personification, metaphors and implicit communication, which is particularly noticeable in the advertising for Twingo. For instance, the 1993 advertisement "Twingo n'est pas du genre à broyer du noir" in which *broyer du noir* means "to be in the doldrums/to be depressed", which would effectively be translated as "Twingo is not the type to be depressed", referring to the available vivid colour options for that year's model. The 2001 slogan for Twingo was "Elle cache bien son jeu"<sup>9</sup>, formed using an idiomatic expression *bien cacher son jeu*, which means "to play your cards close to your chest". The intended message of the campaign was that one never knows what surprises Twingo brings, implying that the vehicle offers more than it seems at first glance. Similarly, in 2012, the Twingo model was advertised under the slogan "Claquez la porte à la grisaille." (eng. "Slam the door in the face of drabness"), referring to Twingo's colour options.



Figure 17. A 1992 Renault Twingo advert in France

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Source: "La Renault Twingo vue par Philippe Petit-Roulet." *Le Nouvel Automobiliste*, 8 Oct. 1992, [lenouvelautomobiliste.fr/205552/30-ans-renault-twingo-6-10-29-mars-1993-lancement-de-la-campagne-daffichage/](http://lenouvelautomobiliste.fr/205552/30-ans-renault-twingo-6-10-29-mars-1993-lancement-de-la-campagne-daffichage/).

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<sup>9</sup> "Pub Twingo 2001." *YouTube*, uploaded by Samfisher2008, 16 Dec. 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYV3bTAdM6k&ab\\_channel=Samfisher2008](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYV3bTAdM6k&ab_channel=Samfisher2008).



Figure 18. The 2012 Renault Twingo advert.

Source: "Renault, marque la plus citée sur le web." *Automotive Marketing*, 24 Jan. 2012, [www.automotive-marketing.fr/3981/renault-marque-la-plus-citee-sur-le-web](http://www.automotive-marketing.fr/3981/renault-marque-la-plus-citee-sur-le-web).

#### 4.2.2. The United Kingdom and Ireland

Advertising styles in the lower and upper left-hand quadrants are associated with individualistic cultures of small power distance, in which the style is direct, explicit, and personal. The uniqueness of the person or the brand and the importance of identity and personality are reflected in this style.

The United Kingdom and Ireland score nearly identically on all parameters of Hofstede's dimensions. Much of that similarity comes from shared history, culture and language. De Mooij notes that the English language is highly individualistic, which is reflected in the obligatory use of the first person in sentences with first-person subjects. Anglophone nations all score highly on the Individualism index: the UK scores 89, Ireland 70, Australia 90 and New Zealand 79. In Renault's advertising in the UK and Ireland, individualism is observed in the frequent addressing of a singular consumer emphasized by the use of possessive pronouns, such as "Your Choice, your Captur" or "A stylish car for all your lives". The focus is often on addressing individuals and highlighting the car's design, strength, uniqueness, and qualities that are more sought after in masculine cultures. A good example is the following campaign, produced by

Publicis, which involves Renault displaying a personalized message to consumers driving past Holland Park roundabout in West London and challenging them to a game of “I spy”. The billboard addresses the consumer directly, drawing their attention to the new Renault Mégane with the words “Hello, you in the silver hatchback. I spy something stylish beginning with Mmmm” (fig. 19).

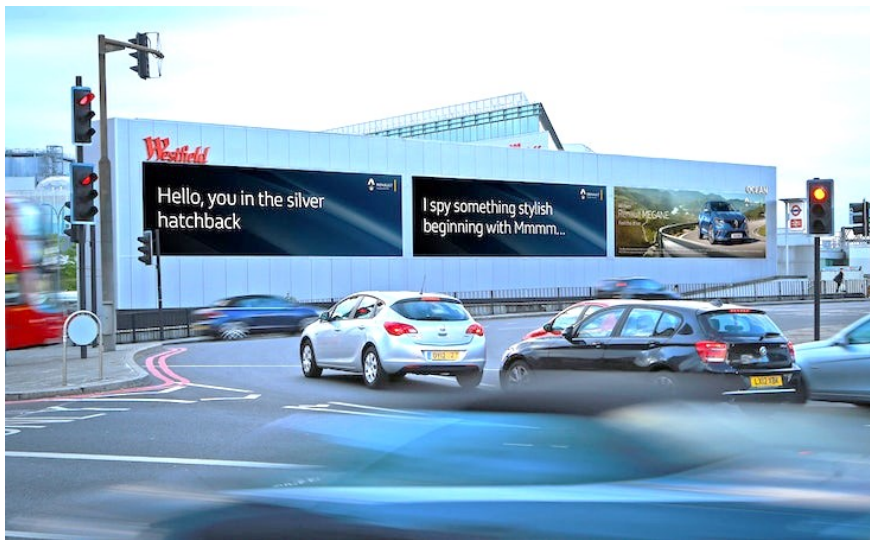


Figure 19. Renault Mégane billboard in West London

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Source: "Renault tries ‘not to be creepy’ as it uses vehicle-scanning tech to personalise outdoor ads." *MarketingWeek*, 13 Jul. 2016, [www.marketingweek.com/renault-on-trying-not-to-be-creepy-as-it-uses-vehicle-recognition-tech-for-campaign/](http://www.marketingweek.com/renault-on-trying-not-to-be-creepy-as-it-uses-vehicle-recognition-tech-for-campaign/).

Another characteristic of advertising in the UK and Ireland is humor. Out of the countries in which the advertising style was observed, Renault’s advertising in the UK had the highest amount of humorous content. Examples include the 1998 Renault Clio commercial with its connotative slogan “Size matters” or the 2013 campaign with the tagline “What’s frustrating is, once inside, you don’t see it anymore.” and “You’ll always remember your first time” (see fig. 20).



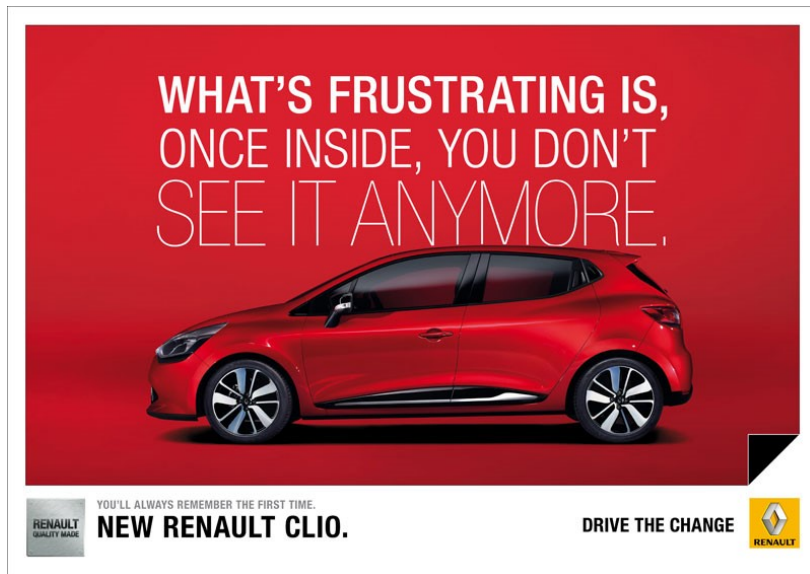


Figure 20. The 2012 Renault Clio campaign.

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Source: "Renault Clio 'unforgettable' by Publicis Conseil." *Campaign Live*, 25 Sept. 2012, [www.campaignlive.com/article/renault-clio-unforgettable-publicis-conseil/1151752](http://www.campaignlive.com/article/renault-clio-unforgettable-publicis-conseil/1151752).

Furthermore, Renault Twingo was marketed in the UK with billboards saying “You are now leaving Dullsville. Welcome to the bright place” (see fig. 21), associating Twingo with excitement and vivacity. Similarly, the 2015 campaign for Twingo, under the tagline “Twists don’t have to be so complicated”, was based on adapted tongue-twisters, such as “How much log of wood a groundhog would hack if it could hack some wood?” (see fig. 22) to convey that Twingo has the smallest turning circle of its class.



Figure 21. Renault Twingo advertised in the UK in 2012.

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Source: "Stupid car billboard adverts." *Pistonheads*, 29 Feb. 2012, [www.pistonheads.com/gassing/topic.asp?h=0&f=23&t=1119059](http://www.pistonheads.com/gassing/topic.asp?h=0&f=23&t=1119059).



Figure 22. The 2015 Renault Twingo campaign

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Source: "Twists don't have to be so complicated." *Campaigns of the World*, 29 Feb. 2012, [campaignsoftheworld.com/print/renault-twingo/](http://campaignsoftheworld.com/print/renault-twingo/).

These adverts depict the difference between the indirect, metaphorical style we have observed in French advertisements and the more direct and personal advertising style that is prevalent in countries such as the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The individual approach to consumers is best observed on social media. In 2020, a year marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, when people spent most of their days at home, Renault UK approached its customers on social media on a more personal level, with campaigns such as “Buy the Renault Clio the same way you binge-watch your series – stress-free, in your pyjamas” or “Buy the new Renault Zoe the same way you sing in the shower – stress-free and smelling like citrus”<sup>10</sup>, as Renault tried to boost online sales when car dealerships were closed. This type of approach to consumers correlates with de Mooij’s categorization of advertising styles. The tone is humorous, personal and aimed directly at a consumer.

Adaptation is also observed in the use of cultural references. The 2022 Renault Zoe was marketed on British social media under the tagline “Long live the queen of electric” (see fig. 23). The phrase “Long live the Queen/King” is a widely known proclamation often uttered as a salute to the new monarch and it is unmistakably British. The advertisement uses wordplay and visual reference to the monarchy in the form of the shadow of the crown. Therefore, the intention behind this post was to use traditional values inherently associated with the United Kingdom in the year of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in order for the advertisement to resonate more strongly with the target audience.

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<sup>10</sup> RenaultUK [@renault\_uk]. "With Renault's All-New Buy Online you can order your Renault ZOE from the comfort of your own home." *Twitter*, 16 Nov. 2020, [twitter.com/renault\\_uk/status/1328269960582471680?s=20](https://twitter.com/renault_uk/status/1328269960582471680?s=20).

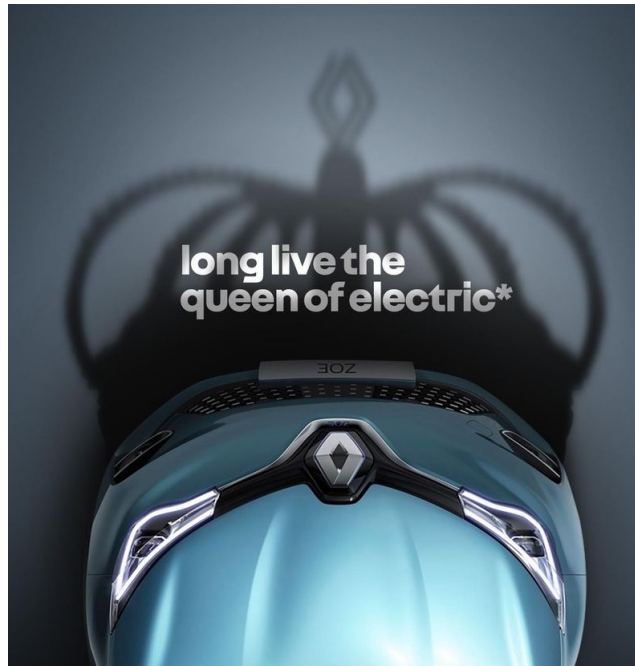


Figure 23. The 2022 Renault Zoe advert on the British Instagram page.

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Source: Renault UK [@renaultuk]. "we've got our own #PlatinumJubilee coming up in 2022, for our #Renault factory in Flins — the birthplace of a member of true Renault royalty with over 354k vehicles sold in Europe in the last 10 years." *Instagram*, 7 Feb. 2022, [www.instagram.com/p/CZq5b8eqjp-/](https://www.instagram.com/p/CZq5b8eqjp-/).

#### 4.2.3. India

The lower right quadrant, where India is situated, is comprised of collectivistic countries in which demonstrating status is important. Advertising is indirect and implicit, with the use of symbols and visual metaphors to position the brand in a large power distance culture. This is reflected in marketing with an emphasis on symbolism and succinct slogans. Cars are often presented as status symbols and advertised as luxurious products. The 2012 Renault Fluence campaign with the slogans "Status redefined" (fig. 24) and "Luxury is now affordable" (fig. 25) emphasizes both the affinity for succinct advertising and identifying the vehicle as a status symbol.



Figure 24. A Renault Fluence billboard in Mumbai

Source: Brett Cole. "A Billboard in Mumbai." *Brett Cole Photography*, 19 Mar. 2013, [www.brettcolephotography.com/media/5dbd6d62-3fdb-4ec5-bc5b-6f64aae60e9f-a-billboard-in-mumbai-india-for-a-renault-luxury-car-pushing](http://www.brettcolephotography.com/media/5dbd6d62-3fdb-4ec5-bc5b-6f64aae60e9f-a-billboard-in-mumbai-india-for-a-renault-luxury-car-pushing).



Figure 25. Renault Fluence advertised in India in 2012

Source: "Renault India launches a cheaper Fluence Advantage." *Indian Autos Blog*, 14 Apr. 2012, [indianautosblog.com/renault-fluence-advantage-p40420](http://indianautosblog.com/renault-fluence-advantage-p40420).

Similarly, Renault Kwid was advertised in India under the slogans “Get used to attention” (see fig. 26) and “All eyes on you” that focus on associating the car with the customer’s prestige. The implication is that, by buying this car, a consumer is essentially buying a status symbol, which comports with India being a predominantly masculine society in terms of visual display of success and power. There is a need for advertising

one's success through designer brand labels and the ostentatious look and feel of the vehicle.

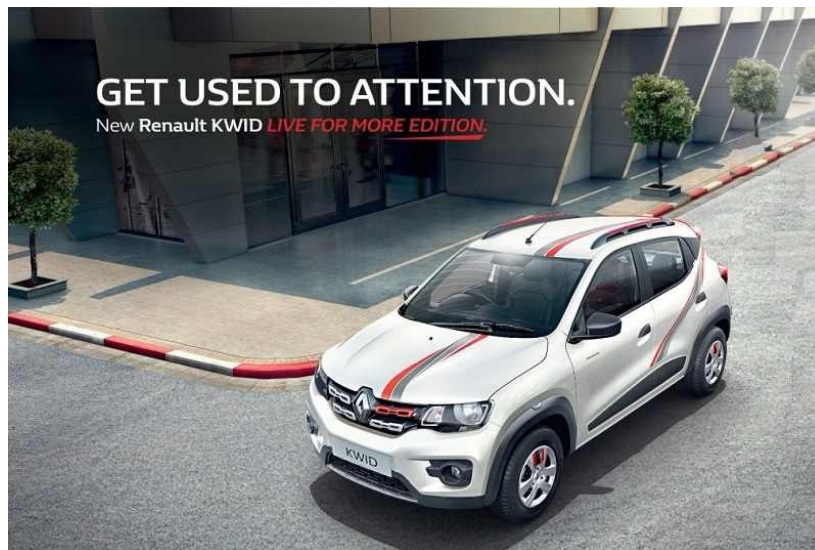


Figure 26. Renault Kwid advertised in India in 2017

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Source: "Get used to attention! new Renault Kwid "Live for more Edition" is out."  
*issuu.com*, 27 Jan. 2017,  
[issuu.com/renaultkarnavatiamedabad/docs/get\\_used\\_to\\_attention\\_\\_new\\_renault\\_](http://issuu.com/renaultkarnavatiamedabad/docs/get_used_to_attention__new_renault_).

Renault first entered the Indian market by offering Logan, a mid-sized sedan launched in 2007 (Dubay 2017). After not having achieved great sales numbers, Renault turned to the consumers to find out what their needs and preferences are regarding vehicles. Renault identified a gap in the market and used the customer voice to develop an appealing product. Market research showed that cars in India are bought more for their image and looks than only for their functionality (Dubay 2017). Indian consumers seemed to prefer SUVs over models like Clio. Objectively, an SUV might not be a good choice, except when the terrain demands it, since SUVs are big, less suitable for city driving, high on maintenance and less fuel-efficient. However, Hofstede's dimensions show that consumer preferences are not always rational:

It is psychology and not economics that drives SUV buying. SUVs do provide functional benefits such as more space, off-roading capabilities, more power,



and flexibility of use. But many customers never go off-road. Renault has understood this consumer psychology. (Dubey 2017)

Renault's marketing adaptation in India confirms De Mooij's claim that, while a car generally satisfies a functional need, the type of car one chooses is influenced by a social need (De Mooij 2004: 190), which is often reflected and used in advertising. Renault Duster was advertised in 2012 with the words "Big. Beautiful. Efficient."

Succinct, but flowery language, with a combination of direct approach (referencing the consumers in imperative form) and indirect communication is observed in the advertisements of Renault India. Similarly, in the 2022 advert for Kiger, the assonantal "Sporty, smart, stunning" tagline was used. Both examples show the use of indirect communication and preference for adjectives, in contrast to the more personal and direct advertising style of the Western world.



Figure 27. The 2012 Renault Duster campaign in India.

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Source: "Renault India Launches A Facebook Campaign For Renault Duster."

*Business 2 Community*, 25 Jul. 2012,

[www.business2community.com/facebook/renault-india-launches-a-facebook-campaign-for-renault-duster-0227751](http://www.business2community.com/facebook/renault-india-launches-a-facebook-campaign-for-renault-duster-0227751).



Figure 28. The 2021 Renault Kiger advert on Twitter

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Source: Renault India [[@RenaultIndia](#)]. "Stand out anywhere you go. The stunning #RENAULTKIGER keeps you looking great as you drive to new experiences." *Twitter*, 25 Jun. 2021, [twitter.com/RenaultIndia/status/1408439844175368199](https://twitter.com/RenaultIndia/status/1408439844175368199).

Finally, a frequently observed characteristic of advertising style in collectivistic countries is the use of visual metaphors and symbols to position the brand in a high power distance culture. The 2011 marketing campaign that served as an introduction of Renault in India focused on emphasizing the company's heritage and core values while positioning the brand in the Indian context. The adverts showed Renault's car models in front of iconic Indian backdrops, including Taj Mahal, Harmandir Sahib and Hambi (see fig. 29).





Figure 29. Renault's first brand campaign in India.

Source: "Law & Kenneth creates Renault India's first brand campaign." *Campaign India*, 30 May 2011, [www.campaignindia.in/article/law-kenneth-creates-renault-indias-first-brand-campaign/414303](http://www.campaignindia.in/article/law-kenneth-creates-renault-indias-first-brand-campaign/414303).

The campaign introduced the Indian market to Renault's rich history in the automotive industry by informing consumers of their biggest achievements throughout the years, while simultaneously positioning their products in front of Indian landmarks.

#### 4.2.4. Croatia

Companies often deem adaptation in smaller markets a waste of resources, which can be noticed in Renault's advertising in Croatia. Cost-effective adaptations from French and English advertising and marketing campaigns are therefore more frequent than committing to an entirely new campaign.

With a score of 73, Croatia is considered a society with high power distance. This means that people generally accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has their place and subordinates expect to be told what to do. Income distribution in such societies is generally very uneven (Hofstede 2011: 9). Hofstede's dimension of Indulgence vs. Restraint can also be linked to disposable income, as consumers in poorer countries are less likely to be indulgent. Seeing as Croatia is a restrained and predominantly feminine society, affordable models such as Clio and Twingo are advertised more and are more popular.

Croatia is also a relatively feminine society, where people value free time and flexibility and are not as work-oriented as some Western, more masculine societies are. This is reflected in advertising that focuses more on quality of life rather than presenting the product as a status symbol. Slogans containing metaphors or wordplay, such as “Furaj ljubav svaki dan”<sup>11</sup> (2018), “Inspiriran tvojim životom”<sup>12</sup> (2019) or “Probudi svoje srce”<sup>13</sup> (2015) focus more on emphasizing how the product directly benefits the consumer, rather than how the product would be perceived by others. In this regard, Renault’s advertising in Croatia is the closest to Renault’s advertising in France, which shows a preference for metaphors in slogans and visual advertising.

Croatia has a high preference for avoiding uncertainty, which comes with adhering to certain codes of belief and behaviour. People tend to be pragmatic and pessimistic and prefer long-term solutions rather than short-term gratifications. High uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation lead to marketing campaigns that focus more on longevity and the future. Such was the 2019 Renault Clio campaign “Odvezi se u svoju budućnost”<sup>14</sup>, prompted by the question “Kako izgleda moja budućnost za pet godina?”. The implication was, even if the future is uncertain, Clio will still be there for you in five years. The campaign markets Clio as a safe and reliable choice for consumers that are looking for a long-term investment. Similarly, the 2020 campaign for Renault Zoe, whose goal was to address common misconceptions about electric cars in Croatia, included Youtube comments from presumed consumers who listed some of the reasons that keep them from buying electric cars, such as not being able to drive long-distance, the lack of charging stations or the high cost of electric vehicles. This campaign, too, was focused on high uncertainty avoidance in Croatian consumers regarding electric cars by directly addressing their questions (see fig. 30).

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<sup>11</sup> "Renault CLIO: #FurajLjubavSvakiDan." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 7 Feb. 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyHo3rBgoyg&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyHo3rBgoyg&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

<sup>12</sup> "Novi Renault CLIO predstavlja: Prostranu budućnost." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 15 Nov. 2019, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWTC3GIDpT8&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWTC3GIDpT8&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

<sup>13</sup> "Renault CLIO - Probudi svoje srce." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 21 Dec. 2015, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifat46cdzVc&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifat46cdzVc&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

<sup>14</sup> "Odvezi se u svoju budućnost." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 29 Sept. 2019, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=btZ5vErePYc&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btZ5vErePYc&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

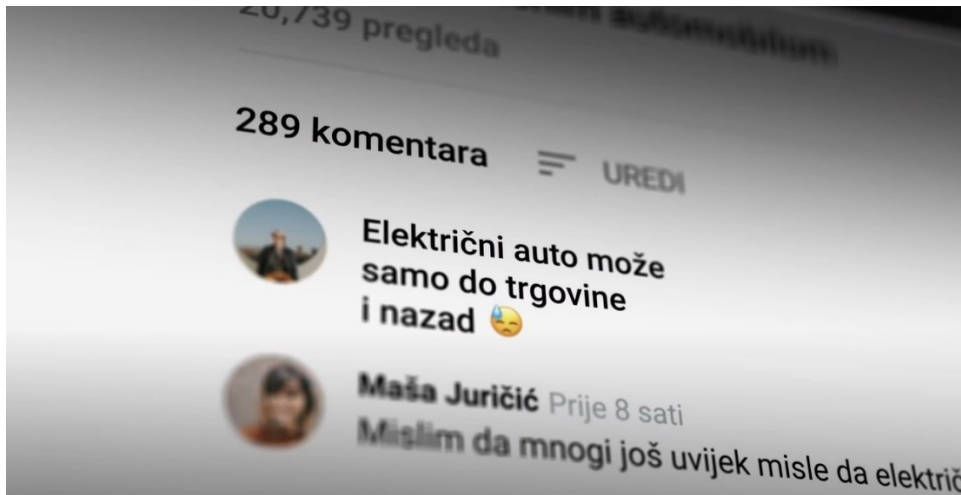


Figure 30. Renault Zoe campaign addresses consumers' concerns

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Source: "Električna mobilnost za vas." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 17 Nov. 2020, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC4X-R89R1c&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iC4X-R89R1c&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

Celebrities are frequently used in advertising to present the product as more desirable for consumers. Renault's advertising in Croatia is no exception. In 2014, Renault created a campaign for the new Twingo using the clever neologism "Twingospođice", which included women from the Croatian media, such as Korana Gvozdić and Lorena Nosić, going on a road trip with Twingo and visiting some of Croatia's tourist locations like Gorski kotar and Plitvička jezera<sup>15</sup>. Thus, greater customer attention was ensured by placing the product in the local environment. Even though masculinity and femininity as dimensions are not applied in terms of male and female-oriented advertising, there seem to be some correlations. Masculine cultures value power and status more, notions usually associated with men, which could be the reason behind the choice of male or female celebrities in advertising. For instance, the advertising of Twingo in general is predominantly geared toward female drivers, as commercials almost exclusively show female drivers. For comparison, in 2015 Kevin Spacey filmed a commercial for Renault Fluence, for the UK market. This shows that Hofstede's dimensions of culture can provide insight into customer demand in a particular area. The availability of vehicles in that market is dictated by customer demand, based on their wants, needs and values. Advertising

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<sup>15</sup> Renault. "Twingo Roadtrip s Koranom Gvozdić." *Facebook*, 26 Aug. 2015, [www.facebook.com/RenaultHrvatska/videos/1035166346502557/](https://www.facebook.com/RenaultHrvatska/videos/1035166346502557/).

then presents selected car models, bearing in mind these cultural dimensions and the importance of localization, to attract as many customers as possible.

### **4.3. Renault Clio: Sentimentality and familiarity as a marketing incentive**

Observing advertising of the same model throughout the years has shown that there are specific notions and values commonly associated with a particular product. The same themes appear to be continuously reused. This is best observed in Renault's flagship model, Clio.

Renault Clio was introduced to the public in 1990. Since the early days, the car was advertised as a trustful companion, a compact, affordable, mid-range car. In that regard, Clio has taken over the role that Renault 4 used to have and has soon become one of the most recognizable vehicles made by Renault. Similar to Renault 4, the company's older flagship model, early advertising focused on insisting that the car's smaller size does not imply a lack of space. The 1993 French commercial "Elle a tout d'une grande" aimed to convince the consumers that Clio has everything that bigger cars have, but in a smaller, more convenient and practical package. Another advantage that early Clio advertising wanted to highlight was that Clio is an affordable option. The aforementioned commercial also refers to Clio as not expensive enough (fr. "Pas assez cher, mon fils") for the son of a sheik and in comparison to other, more luxurious cars. The son choosing Clio among limousines should imply that Clio offers the same luxury at a lower price.

Thirty years of the model's existence have provided a plethora of advertising material from which certain archetypes of Clio marketing can be observed. The advertisements were often created to evoke nostalgia, which was the intention of the 2012 Renault Clio 4 campaign with the slogan "On se souvient toujours de la première fois où l'on a vu la nouvelle Renault Clio" (eng. You always remember seeing the new Clio for the first time). In the UK, the campaign gained a more implicit meaning with "You'll always remember your first time". The campaign included several advertisements with slogans such as "Some men struggle to express their emotions. Not our designers."



Figure 30. Renault Clio campaign in 2012.

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Source: "Renault Clio 'unforgettable' by Publicis Conseil." *Campaign UK*, 25 Sept. 2012, [www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-clio-unforgettable-publicis-conseil/1151752](http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-clio-unforgettable-publicis-conseil/1151752).

In 2013, Renault France advertised the new Clio under the slogan “Et votre cœur bat plus fort” (eng. “And your heart beats stronger”), while in Britain, the slogan was adapted to “Restart your heart”, maintaining the same connection between Clio and the heart, thus implying a sentimental bond. The intention was further emphasized with the continual use of the color red in all advertising.

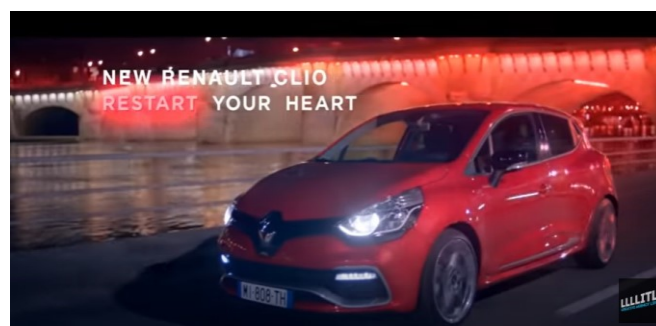


Figure 31. Renault Clio commercial in 2013.

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Source: "Renault Clio IV - Restart Your Heart." *Youtube*, 25 May 2013, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvbxSA2pwRk&ab\\_channel=LLLLITL](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvbxSA2pwRk&ab_channel=LLLLITL).

Renault evokes sentimentality by using Clio as the model that is frequently advertised in Valentine’s Day promotions. In 2018, the tagline Renault used for Valentine’s Day in Croatia was “Furaj ljubav svaki dan”. In the UK “Share the love” was used.



Figure 32. Renault Clio promotion for Valentine’s Day in Croatia

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Source: "Renault CLIO: #FurajLjubavSvakiDan." *Youtube*, 7 Feb. 2018, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyHo3rBgoyg&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyHo3rBgoyg&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

The 2020 marked 30 years of Clio and Renault paid tribute by creating a sentimental short story of two women, childhood friends, who, having lost touch over the years, reunite and marry, with Clio being ever-present in their lives. Renault France captured the video with “Le nouveau chapitre d’une grande histoire”, or “Novo poglavlje velike priče” in Croatia. In the UK, the video wrapped up with the words “30 years in the making”, while the Irish used “Continue a thirty-year love affair”. Social media posts further instigated nostalgia, with posts such as “Do you remember your first Renault Clio?” or “Sjećaš li se kako je bilo prije 30 godina?”

Finally, the 2022 Father’s Day Clio commercial in the UK, “The story lives on”, relies heavily on nostalgia and sentimentality by remembering the iconic characters from the 90s Clio commercials in the UK – Papa and Nicole – and playing the same soundtrack, “Johnny and Mary” originally by Robert Palmer that became synonymous with the car.

Campaigns for Clio illustrate how some products have become associated with a certain type of feeling and convey a certain type of message. The reintroduction of old iconic characters and the focus on nostalgia inspire loyalty to the brand. Sentimentality is being continually reused in the advertising of Clio across different cultures. The advertising of Renault Clio retains the original message and effect it achieves with all its familiar sentiments while adapting

the actual content of the advertisement to the target culture. Therefore, the tradition of the advertised product and the way in which it has been presented in the past also play an important role in advertising adaptation.

**4.4.Foreign Consumer Culture Positioning: Retention of the “Frenchness” in campaigns outside of francophone countries**

We have discussed how consumer culture positioning is relevant in creating marketing strategies. In the case of Renault, foreign consumer culture positioning is apparent and used for the purposes of brand recognition. The brand’s identity is closely linked to its country of origin, culture and language. This is evident from Renault’s international marketing campaigns throughout the decades. In the 1970s, Renault 5 was advertised in the United States as “Le car”, thus retaining the French masculine article. The campaign was expanded to include variations such as “Le weekend car”, “Le police car”<sup>16</sup> and “Le gas goes slowly. The car doesn’t.” This retention of the French article is an example of emphasizing national identity through language. The advertising was adapted through foreign consumer culture positioning since advertising uses distinctly French linguistic features to signal the brand’s country of origin.



Figure 33. Renault's advertising in the US in 1981

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Source: Martin, Murilee. "1981: Renault Le Car burns Le Gas." *Autoweek*, 25 Jun. 2018, [www.autoweek.com/car-life/classic-cars/a1700736/1981-renault-le-car-burns-le-gas/](http://www.autoweek.com/car-life/classic-cars/a1700736/1981-renault-le-car-burns-le-gas/).

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<sup>16</sup> "Renault 5 advertising." *Renault 5*, 4 Dec. 2022, [www.renault-5.net/usaadvertising.htm](http://www.renault-5.net/usaadvertising.htm).



More recently, foreign consumer culture positioning is present in Renault's TV commercials. In 2013, Renault launched a campaign named “French touch”<sup>17</sup>. The aim was to show that Renault cars have a certain French quality, a *je ne sais quoi*. The commercials made fun of various countries and their language through stereotypes. For example, the presenter mocked the German car brand Volkswagen, with its widely known tagline “Das auto”, by referring to their newest Mégane model as “Das voiture” (eng. “the car”) and praised its qualities imitating a German accent. The same commercial aimed at the Italian market made references to Formula 1, Gran Turismo and movie The Godfather. The English version also included the car presenter imitating the British accent and referencing the Queen and their right-wheel cars by saying “Ce volant à gauche, il fallait y penser” (eng. “The steering wheel on the left side? We should have thought of that!”). Cultural references are often implicit in French advertising, meaning that some degree of background knowledge is often needed to make sense of the message. In this campaign, other than for humorous effect, these references were used to emphasize that their vehicles, just as French culture in general, are unique and possess qualities that cannot be found elsewhere.

Renault commercials in the United Kingdom are often humorously antagonizing. In 2005, Renault advertised the new Clio in the United Kingdom with a commercial that emphasizes the competitive relationship between the French and the British. The commercial pits Ben, from England, against Sophie, from France, as they each drive their Clios and tease each other about some of the best things about their country, comparing Shakespeare to Baudelaire or sandwiches to *haute cuisine*. The campaign was organized around the slogan “Twice the Va Va Voom”, referencing that the car is French, but designed by the British.



Figure 34. Renault’s “France vs. Britain” campaign in 2005.

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Source: "Renault 'France versus Britain' by Publicis." *Campaign UK*, 13 Oct. 2005, [www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-france-versus-britain-publicis/884877](http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-france-versus-britain-publicis/884877).

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<sup>17</sup> "Comment Renault s’est joué du french bashing." *La Réclame*, 31 Mar. 2016, [lareclame.fr/publicisdialog-bilan-saga-renault-french-touch-149620](http://lareclame.fr/publicisdialog-bilan-saga-renault-french-touch-149620).



Likewise, the 2011 Twingo Gordini commercial that was shot in London, emphasizes Twingo's Frenchness. Amid double-deckers and black cabs, a young and lost driver wanders through upscale neighborhoods in her blue Twingo with white stripes. The driver asks two British women for directions and one of them gives deliberately complicated directions in French with a very distinct British accent. The women demonstrate a certain animosity toward the newcomer. The message of the video is that "the new fashionable car is French", emphasizing the centuries-old rivalry between France and the UK and, in this case specifically, referring to the British and the French both being known for their influence in the fashion industry.



Figure 35. The 2011 Renault Twingo commercial in the UK

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Source: "Publicité Twingo Gordini R.S." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Clio Series, 31 May 2011, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQrVasgcieI&ab\\_channel=RenaultClioSeries](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQrVasgcieI&ab_channel=RenaultClioSeries).

In 2011, as mentioned earlier, Renault launched its first campaign in India that focused on emphasizing the company's heritage and the brand's core values. The campaign consisted of several advertisements that showed the history of innovation at Renault. The tagline for each advertisement was "Bonjour India. We are Renault" (see figure 36). Deputy managing director, Sudhir Rao, said that the purpose was to establish the French connection with style, elegance and luxury, but also to position Renault in an Indian context, which is why the campaign includes the iconic Indian backdrops (Rao 2011).



Figure 36. Renault’s first campaign in India

Source: Rao, Arati. "Law & Kenneth creates Renault India's first brand campaign." *Campaign India*, 30 May 2011, [www.campaignindia.in/article/law-kenneth-creates-renault-indias-first-brand-campaign/414303](http://www.campaignindia.in/article/law-kenneth-creates-renault-indias-first-brand-campaign/414303).

Similarly, the 2020 Renault commercial titled “Make the move” that launched in Australia also focused on presenting the brand’s voice and vision that are directly linked to the company’s country of origin. It emphasizes the company’s love for innovation, creation and the joy of living:

At Renault, we have a different mindset; one that is born out of French spirit. (...) Our French design sets us apart. To be sensual, to stimulate, and create...the unexpected. Racing is in our DNA. (...)We innovate, challenge, and create to bring people an easy life, where every day is lived with 'Joie de Vivre'. (“Make the Move.”)

The commercial reminds the consumers of notions inherently associated with the French and essentially implies that Renault’s products embody these positive connotations about the French and France as a country. Paris is perceived as the capital of fashion. French designers are some of the most famous in the world. Innovation, creation, sense of style and *joie de vivre* are key elements that create the notion that, with Renault, a consumer is getting a uniquely French product that epitomizes all those values.

Emphasizing the country of origin, the French style, uniqueness and innovation remain one of Renault’s most recognizable international marketing strategies to this day. Celebrating 60 years of Renault 4 in 2021, a popular model in Croatia often called “Četvorka” or “Katrice”, Renault once again affirms that the company’s products are characterized by a unique and iconic French style that lives on for decades. The message incorporates both the emphasis on

the country of origin and the implication that the Croatian consumers recognize the iconic status of this model: “Jedinstven stil nadahnut francuskim šikom. Draga Četvorko, sretan ti 60. rođendan!”.



Figure 37. Renault Hrvatska celebrating 60 years of Renault 4 in 2021

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Source: "Renault 4 slavi rođendan." *YouTube*, uploaded by Renault Hrvatska, 25 Mar. 2021, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBYOXN-MVE&ab\\_channel=RenaultHrvatska](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OBYOXN-MVE&ab_channel=RenaultHrvatska).

The examples show that French culture plays an important role in Renault’s identity and international presence. The brand is synonymous with the qualities commonly associated with French culture. France is widely known for arts, fashion and elegance, as well as the buoyant enjoyment of life. These advertisements were tailored in a way that the target consumers associate the product with the elements of French culture. The goal is, ultimately, to create the notion that the brand and the country of origin are mutually inseparable and make consumers think that they are not just buying a car, but a feeling and a way of living. Therefore, international marketing adaptation aims to present these qualities as desirable while simultaneously paying attention that the product resonates with the consumers in their respective cultures.

#### 4.5. Controversial advertising

While Renault is usually praised for their creative and bold marketing, there are instances in which Renault's advertising was not received well by the target audience. Such instances are usually the result of improper market analysis in which cultural nuances are disregarded. The following campaigns did not resonate with the consumers the way it was initially intended, because the advertisements themselves have taken the spotlight in place of the advertised car models.

The 2003 Renault Mégane commercial<sup>18</sup>, with its soundtrack I See You Baby (Shakin' That Ass) by Groove Armada, prompted complaints about wiggling bottoms and the word "ass" being used in the advertisement after many complained that children were copying suggestive dance moves seen in the commercial. A similar, and equally controversial, commercial for Mégane aired in Australia the same year, featuring the soundtrack Baby Got Back by Sir Mix-A-Lot<sup>19</sup>. The anglophone consumers seem to have recognized these commercials as too vulgar.

Furthermore, in November 2007, a Renault advertisement was designed to promote a limited-period promotion where Renault dealers were supposedly not allowed to say "no" to customers. The promotion included the tagline "For ten days, we can't use the 'n word'" (see fig. 38). The marketing team failed to recognize possible negative cultural connotations since the "n-word" implies a derogatory term for African Americans or Afro-Europeans. The promotion was pulled after the backlash due to racial insensitivity.

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<sup>18</sup> "Renault ad shifted after children copy 'shaking that ass'." *Campaign UK*, 27 May 2003, [www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-ad-shifted-children-copy-shaking-ass/181181](http://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/renault-ad-shifted-children-copy-shaking-ass/181181).

<sup>19</sup> "Renault Megane TV ad - "Baby Got Back" (2003)." *YouTube*, uploaded by CheesyTV, 24 Sept. 2012, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=im4mbxXQMBY&ab\\_channel=CheesyTV](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=im4mbxXQMBY&ab_channel=CheesyTV).



Figure 38. The 2007 controversial promotional tagline for Renault in the UK.

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Source: Sweney, Mark. "Renault pulls 'N-word' ad." *The Guardian*, 22 Nov. 2007, [www.theguardian.com/media/2007/nov/22/advertising](http://www.theguardian.com/media/2007/nov/22/advertising).

Furthermore, the 2013 Renault Clio commercial featuring burlesque dancers was banned in the UK after complaints that it objectified women<sup>20</sup>. The commercial shows a salesman taking the car for a test drive with a customer. The salesman encourages the driver to press the car's "Va Va Voom" button, which manifests French stereotypes and cultural symbols with burlesque dancers, a Paris backdrop, baguettes and roses. Although the commercial uses foreign consumer culture positioning, which, as we have seen previously, is Renault's staple marketing strategy, the UK consumers felt that the campaign created by Publicis went too far with the inclusion of seductive burlesque dancers.

Similarly, in 2014, a Renault Twingo commercial was accused of sexism in Belgium (Nussbaum 2017). The video shows a young woman parking on a roundabout, taking out of her bag a sanitary napkin writing "Sorry" and her phone number on it with lipstick. Renault also offered business cards with predefined apologies: "Please don't tow my car, I am wearing high heels" or "Sorry, since I am a real danger behind the wheel, I prefer to leave my car here". The Twingo controversy continued in 2017, when Renault launched a nail polish range that could also touch up minor bodywork scratches on Twingo. The polish "for lady drivers" is offered in colors that match the colors available for the Twingo minicars. Both marketing campaigns were

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<sup>20</sup> Sweney, Mark. "Renault's YouTube ad banned for 'portraying women as sexual objects!'" *The Guardian*, 17 Jul. 2013, [www.theguardian.com/media/2013/jul/17/renault-youtube-ad-banned](http://www.theguardian.com/media/2013/jul/17/renault-youtube-ad-banned).

criticized by some social media users and women's rights campaigners for reducing women to their beauty concerns and their inability to drive.



Figure 39. Renault's nail polish sold in Twingo body colors

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Source: Sigal, Peter. "Renault's nail polish promotion for Twingo called 'sexist'." *Automotive News Europe*, 15 Jul. 2017, [europe.autonews.com/article/20170615/ANE/170619871/renault-s-nail-polish-promotion-for-twingo-called-sexist](http://europe.autonews.com/article/20170615/ANE/170619871/renault-s-nail-polish-promotion-for-twingo-called-sexist).

These examples show why market research is crucial in advertising. Some cultures may be more sensitive to certain themes. Consumers in certain countries may be more liberal than consumers from the brand's country of origin. Certain words or symbols may have different cultural connotations. The examples only show Renault's marketing campaigns in the Western world, but the discrepancies would probably be even more pronounced between widely different cultures.

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis has shown that Renault's advertising indeed is a mix of standardization and adaptation, as Vrontis and Thrassou found to be the case with multinational companies. Standardized, more generic, advertising is prevalent in TV commercials when launching a new model, presumably to save resources and maintain brand recognition, while a more localized approach is observed in billboards and shorter campaigns, often related to a certain event, holiday or collaboration. In the instances of more localized advertising, De Mooij's advertising styles and Hofstede's models of culture are useful tools in discerning why advertising slogans are transcreated in a certain way. The effects of individualism are particularly noticeable in

advertising in the United Kingdom and Ireland, where messages are more personal, focused on the individual, and less serious in tone. These countries are also characterized by low uncertainty avoidance and low power distance, which is reflected in marketing campaigns that are less focused on presenting the functional capabilities of a vehicle. In more collectivistic societies where power distance is larger, such as India, brand status is emphasized and language is more succinct.

Standardization and adaptation are also reflected in consumer culture positioning. We observed GCCP in international marketing campaigns, however, Renault's marketing strategy shows strong FCCP by emphasizing its French origins through language and imagery. Elements of the French language and culture are often retained in adaptation.

Advertising campaigns shed light on the complexity of transcreation and show that transcreation involves both localization and copywriting skills. Researching Renault's marketing campaigns in several countries that score differently on Hofstede's cultural dimensions and are positioned differently in De Mooij's overview of advertising styles shows that advertising is often tailored to adhere to culture-specific aspects of a country and takes into account their values, norms and history. Concepts, ideas and visuals are not equally relevant on a global scale. Culture and advertising are therefore intertwined in a way that straightforward translation cannot transfer.

Seeing as culture is reflected in language and language is an essential part of advertising, creating or adapting advertising campaigns requires language service providers who are capable of reimagining content in a different context. As machine translation takes over much of the role of translators, shifting the focus on practices in which cultural and linguistic knowledge can hardly be replaced by machine translation might be beneficial for newer generations of translators.



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