Abstract: In the late nineteenth century, as new technologies, social needs and commercial opportunities emerged in industrialised societies, communication design evolved in line with them. The massive development of mass media and mass communication brought on by cultural globalisation created various levels of complexity for communication design. Understanding the different kinds of translation that take place between cultures, languages and systems will improve the comprehensiveness, quality and inclusivity of communication in multicultural contexts. This in turn demands new knowledge, competencies and skills that will allow designers to create inclusive intercultural communications to serve the current societal and cultural needs of audiences. This paper reports on a traffic awareness project initiated by the UAE Traffic Department to raise public awareness of road safety. The project was intended to explore the role of designers as cultural mediators through an iterative, research-based design process. Students were invited to create culturally relevant posters to communicate intended meanings in a multicultural community. Here, the resulting process of transmuting the visual into verbal and the verbal into visual within the communication design process is examined as intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959), an interactive process that creates connections between different cultures and media in visual communication. This paper highlights the role of such translation in mediating communication among individuals and communities of different cultures.

Keywords: communication design; intercultural communication; intersemiotic translation; multiculturalism; traffic awareness

1 Introduction

The United Arab Emirates has witnessed an increase in life-threatening traffic accidents in the last few years. In 2017, the road death index was 6.13 deaths per 100,000 people, higher than the 4.53 deaths per 100,000 people in 2016. The Ministry of the Interior annually sponsors Gulf Traffic Week as part of its traffic-accident-reduction programme. This event is used to engage local communities of citizens and residents throughout the seven emirates to raise awareness of traffic safety. The Sharjah Traffic Department (STD) has put a number of traffic safety initiatives into effect and has adopted a unique approach to involving the public in promoting traffic awareness. The purpose of these initiatives is to spread correct traffic culture, establish proper traffic behaviour, establish a unified community culture covering various aspects of traffic safety and serve the vision of police leaders of achieving the objectives set by the local and regional authorities.
One of the community engagement initiatives of the STD involved collaboration with educational institutions to engage students as active participants in society. Graphic design and multimedia students were invited to collaborate on integrated awareness campaigns planned by members of society who experience traffic issues on a daily basis. This promoted the campaigns' success through realistic, culturally relevant communication. Then, the outcome of the collaboration was taken to the public through various channels.

This initiative was developed in response to current discussions in the academic and research fields of communication design in relation to designers’ social and cultural responsibility and their role in creating inclusive visual communication for multicultural audiences by effectively constructing meaning in verbal and visual systems.

This was the origin of the traffic awareness project *Your Life is a Trust*, which introduced intercultural communication to third-year university design students. This was done in a real-life integrated design project intended to raise awareness of road safety, a global issue, in a multicultural society. The project was initiated by the Sharjah Police in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, who gave the project little specifications apart from the stipulation that it be accessible to a wide range of users and exhibit cultural sensitivity towards the societal context where its communication is mainly aimed at. The pedagogical purpose of the project was to explore the role of communication designers as cultural mediators, highlighting the importance of translation and construction of meaning in informing, warning and persuading individuals within the context of contemporary design thinking.

Students had been introduced to semiotics, communication theory and the application of these in communication design, with a specific reference to socio-culturally aware campaigns designed in response to various global issues (e.g. global warming, natural disasters or charity fundraising). Learners had already been trained earlier on typography, image-making and their uses in print and digital media. The main task was to illustrate the slogan *Your Life is a Trust, Hayatak amanah* in Arabic, into an intercultural design object that can communicate with the diverse demography of the UAE.

The participants were a group of 24 students, divided into six teams; the final products of each team were presented orally in class to their peers, the instructor and representatives of the STD. The primary products of the project were posters and short videos, in addition to various applications that could serve the purposes of the campaign, related to the vision of the different teams. This paper focuses on intersemiotic translation within poster design as a method of facilitating intercultural communication regarding a global phenomenon. The discussion of the design of the videos and other artefacts requires a perspective that is beyond the scope of this paper.

### 1.1 Students’ Demographic Details

The 24 students who participated in the project belong to 10 nationalities (Figure 1). Two of the students were Emirati and eight were UAE residents (of these, five were of Arabic nationalities and three were not Arabic). The whole class was fluent in spoken and written English, and 21 students were native Arabic speakers. All the students had been residents of the UAE for more than five years. The diversity and local knowledge of the groups inspired the context and content of the projects, which were intended to communicate on a local level.
1.2 The Process
Each design team had four students with different backgrounds, skills and knowledge. Each was required to plan, design and execute an integrated awareness campaign, following an iterative process of research, synthesis and execution. Students were briefed at the beginning of each phase, that to move to the following step, they needed to accomplish specific tasks within a certain identified timeframe. The tasks were managed and distributed among team members in accordance with each team’s own plan.

2 Communication Design, Culture and Translation
The emergence of multiculturalism and the commonality of interactions with new cultural values that have been brought to us by globalisation have two central phenomena: “the loss of traditional meanings and the creation of new symbolic expressions” (Steger, 2003, p. 75). Cultural globalisation causes cultural multiplicity in the place of a previous homogeneity among cultural values and beliefs. Some cultural flows cause changes to important aspects of society, changing “traditional manifestations of national identity in the direction of a popular culture characterised by sameness; in others, they might foster new expressions of cultural particularism” (Steger, 2003, p. 76).

The growth of cross-cultural contact and the increasing dominance of global forms of communication have led to problems of intercultural communication. A central part of cultural globalisation is the spread of foreign languages, both nationally and internationally. Steger (2003, p. 82) explains this as follows:

One direct method of measuring and evaluating cultural changes brought about by globalisation is to study the shifting global patterns of language use. The globalisation of languages can be viewed as a process by which some languages are increasingly used in international communication while others lose their prominence and even disappear for lack of speakers.

The deployment of bilingualism is a defining characteristic of contemporary society all over the globe as a means of creating communications that are accessible to a wider range of users. Meaning is produced, shared and exchanged through language. Meaning is shared through common access to a given language. Consequently, language is “central to meaning and culture and has always been regarded as the key repository of cultural values and meanings” (Hall, 1997, p. 1). Language forms a part of the practice of communication design because it is represented to users through typographic conventions that communicate to users who may or may not belong to a given culture. These communications can include verbal and visual systems of representation. Language and visual images are major forms of symbolic expression, and they have a special significance in the sphere of culture (Steger, 2003, p. 69).

Culture is a “signifying system through which... a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1980, p. 13). This means that every culture has its own systems of signs constituted from linguistic and visual signs, in which its members communicate. To understand a culture, its sign systems should be learned and understood, which is a process of translation. Torop (2002, p. 593) explained this as follows:

The translational capacity of culture is an important criterion of culture’s specificity. Culture operates largely through translational activity, since only by the inclusion of new texts into culture can the culture undergo innovation as well as perceive its specificity.

This brings to light the relationships among communication, culture and translation as they came into play in the context of the practice of communication design. This relationship is manifested in the processes of production and exchange of meaning that occur within the creation of communication design. Graphic forms (including typefaces and images) are expressions of cultural values and habits that may refer to different places and time periods. These are means of communication and of social production (Williams, 1980). Fiske (1990) concludes that the study of culture must be integrated with the study of communication, a consideration that emphasises the role of intercultural translation in contemporary communication design.

Translation is considered to be linguistic interpretation that transports meaning from one language to another. Jakobson (1959) distinguishes three means of interpreting verbal signs:

1. Intralingual translation, or the interpretation of certain verbal signs by other verbal signs of the same language;
2. Interlingual translation, or the interpretation of verbal signs by verbal signs of another language; and
3. Intersemiotic translation, or the interpretation of verbal signs by nonverbal signs of another sign system.
In this paper, we focus on intersemiotic translation, the most relevant category of these to the practice of communication design, as it includes transmutation of meaning between sign systems, with the verbal referring to the visual and the visual referring to the verbal. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006, p. 39) explained:

This incessant process of translation, or transcoding–transduction—between a range of semiotic modes represents, we suggest, a better, more adequate understanding of representation and communication. [...].

Intersemiotic translation involves translation with different semiotic resources, including visual images (e.g. illustration, photography and film) and typography (monolingual or bilingual); it works as a basis for intercultural communication. Furthermore, it implies multimodality as a key characteristic of contemporary communication design, as it uses “several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event” (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, p. 20). Multimodality assumes that semiotic resources are socially constructed and convey socially and culturally specific meanings, which centre the choice of resources in communication and meaning making. In this way, the ideas of meaning, interpretation and translation are linked, making culture a mechanism of translation (Torop, 2002, p. 598).

O’Halloran, Tan and Wignell note another aspect of intersemiotic translation: “in the same text meanings encoded by one semiotic resource are often re-encoded, or resemiotised, through another semiotic resource” (2016, p. 203). This means that a photograph can be re-encoded as a narrative or that information can be reconstructed into an illustration; both of these are common occurrences in the practice of communication design.

The design process of intercultural communication used in the design of awareness campaigns encompasses various semiotic resources obtained from multiple sign systems. This imposes the necessity of levels of translation: first, there must be intersemiotic translation from design brief into visual message; second, intersemiotic translation must occur from linguistic to visual message; and third, inter-lingual translation takes place between two linguistic messages where multiple languages are used.

3 The Pedagogical Project

Designing public graphic communications for multicultural users and creating intercultural communication requires designers to operate as cultural mediators. This results in their taking on the responsibility for the context and content of an intended message and the effectiveness of the communication. Where visual messages are being created, the designer/author, determines how the message can be interpreted. “The designer, as a form-giver or channel through which the message is passed, can play a key role in actually shaping the content of the message” (Bestley & Noble 2005, p. 64). Designers are able to determine the potential meanings and interpretations at an early stage of the process because communication through design includes encoding and decoding explicit and implicit meanings within visual forms.

Visual forms (including images and typography) are culturally specific, which opens the door to multiple interpretations of any given visual object, depending on the context where the communication is occurring. This implies that designers should set out to create visual messages that can guide their viewers towards a desired interpretation. Bestley and Noble discussed this as follows: “by understanding how the message might be received by a range of different readers, the designer can try to avoid unintentional ambiguities” (2005, p. 68). The communication model of Jakobson (1960) demonstrates that the construction of meaning does not only rely on the message itself. Rather, it is derived from the context, the code and the contact (Fiske, 1990, p. 35). This understanding is at the basis of this project, where learners must translate the slogan Your Life is a Trust into culturally relevant designed messages to be interpreted and understood by a wide-ranging audience.

3.1 Research-Based Design Methodology

The traffic awareness project Your Life is a Trust was designed to introduce design students to concepts in semiotics and communication theory and to follow a systematic approach in solving design problems. Furthermore, it was intended to encourage students to explore the relationships among form, content and context as cultural translators in a real-life project. This was to emphasise “the designer’s responsibilities in a social, cultural and economic sense, the role of the designer in communicating to audiences and the construction of meaning in verbal and visual languages” (Bestley & Noble, 2005, p. 27).

The design approach was adopted from Matt Cooke’s model design methodology for use with social issues (Cooke in Bennett, 2006, p. 133), shown in Figure 2; this methodology goes through four phases: definition, divergence, transformation and convergence.
The definition phase includes the identification of the target problem(s), aims, target audience and potential visual outcomes. These were identified through discussion with the Sharjah Police Department. The design brief identified laid out the problem clearly: recent years had seen an increase in road accidents and fatalities in the UAE, and the aim was to raise awareness in communities that have diverse, multicultural population. The multicultural characteristic of the intended audience underscored the importance of intercultural communication: students needed to play the part of cultural translators.
The divergence phase includes primary, secondary and tertiary research in which learners must build a solid understanding of the context within which the project is to communicate. This phase assisted students as they determined and developed the contents of their projects. At this point, the learners must explore various aspects of traffic awareness, including the following:

1. Facts and figures concerning traffic accidents in the UAE, including causes, costs and prevention.
2. Traffic laws and pedestrian requirements.
3. The results of surveys that explore public knowledge and awareness.
4. The results of case studies of previous awareness campaigns launched on the national, regional and international levels.

The gathering of information related to traffic awareness enabled teams to identify the contents of their campaigns and helped them communicate how their intended messages could be communicated, using the findings of research. Reviewing similar projects can help learners analyse visual languages that would be suitable to the project’s context and audience.

In the transformation phase, functional visual solutions are explored through visual experiments to find those that could suit the context of the project. Here choices of images and typography, colours and campaign specifications are made. The stage of transformation starts with conceptualisation and the development of ideas, ending with design synthesis.

Finally, in convergence, the conclusion of the results articulated in the previous stages appears; in our case, this moment led directly to the production of the prototypes of the final designs. The learners gathered their feedback from their peers, instructors and the STD at this point.

### 3.2 The Outcome

As planned, six teams worked on their projects through the above-mentioned phases. After completing the requirements of the definition and divergence phases, the students began the process of translation, which took place largely in the transformation phase. The identification of the art direction of the project required extensive visual research so that the most appropriate visual forms were created to raise traffic awareness for an Arab/multicultural community. The students performed the following iterative steps to produce their final products:

1. Identification of message content, including facts, causes, consequences and prevention.
2. Identification of message type, such as informative, warning, identifiable or persuasive.
3. Identification of the visual form of the message, which may be photography, illustration, typography based or mixed forms.
4. Identification of message languages, namely, Arabic, English or bilingual.

Table 1 summarises the teams’ decisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Message Content</th>
<th>Message Type</th>
<th>Visual Form</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team One</td>
<td>Causes</td>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Two</td>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Three</td>
<td>Causes + Facts</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>Photography + Illustration</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Four</td>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Five</td>
<td>Causes + Prevention</td>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>Typography + Photography</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Six</td>
<td>Consequences + Prevention</td>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During transformation (stage three), the teams attempted to use the knowledge gained from the research and exploration done during the definition (stage one) and divergence (stage two) phases to propose effective and solid visual translations of the brief requirements.

Each of the design choices was made in the light of each team’s own understanding of the slogan *Your Life is a Trust* as translated into a visual message to inform, warn or persuade the audience. The learners selected different approaches to communicate the intended messages, by highlighting facts, causes, consequences and means of prevention. The selected visual forms aimed to reflect the essence of the type and contents of the messages. In some cases, the typography translated the image, in others the two visual forms complemented each other.
Figure 3. Team 1 poster

Figure 4. Team 2 poster
Figure 5. Team 3 poster

Figure 6. Team 4 poster
During the design process, translation evolved at various stages. The first translation act took place during the interpretation of the brief, where learners had to translate the brief requirements into the research act that took place, mainly, in the divergence phase. Contextual, visual and field research results were translated to visual forms including mood boards, sketches and visual explorations and experimentations. Learners resemioticize the research findings into visual forms that communicate their design ideas and solutions before manifesting them in the final design artefacts. This was a spontaneous act where students explored the appropriate visual style that signifies *Your Life is a Trust*. Although ideation, sketching and selection of the visual style are essential steps of the design process, mapping the intersemiotic translation that takes place during divergence requires a deeper investigation and discussion that is broader than the scope of this paper.

Stage three (transformation) in particular, involves multiple layers of translation, and it did so in this case as well. Intersemiotic translation was included in the following ways:
1. Intersemiotic translation of the slogan Your Life is a Trust, which was made into a visual content, including a type and image,
2. Intersemiotic translation of the linguistic message to a visual form and vice versa within the poster,
3. Interlingual translation of a linguistic message from Arabic and English and vice versa.

Signs (verbal and visual) convey meaning in different ways relative to the relationship between the given sign and what it refers to. This is to be understood in relation to Peirce’s categories of the sign (Fiske, 1990, p. 46): the icon, where the sign resembles the object; the index, in which the sign and its object are connected; and the symbol, where there is no connection or resemblance between the sign and the object. The design of the traffic awareness posters enabled the students to explore various ways of conveying an intended meaning to the audience with an easily interpreted visual form. On some teams, the learners considered that the use of an index is the best solution for determining the content of a poster and interpreting it correctly. Other teams preferred to use icons or symbols as a means of stimulating the audience and avoiding boredom in the design, relying on the bilingual message to complement the visual form in the communication. Table 2 summarises the type of signs used by students’ teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Sign category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team One</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Two</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Three</td>
<td>Icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Four</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Five</td>
<td>Symbol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Six</td>
<td>Index</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The bilingual textual messages were articulated to explain and emphasise the visual messages. The Arabic messages are written in classical Arabic that are literally translated into English. The issue of interlingual translation was critical as the expression of connotative and denotative meanings in Arabic is largely different from English. All teams chose clear, condensed and straightforward messages that can be easily translated into English without confusion or misinterpretation. This suits the nature of the project as an awareness campaign that aims to inform, warn and persuade people which require direct, clear and short messages. The complexity of interlingual translation between bilingual (sometimes trilingual) messages varies based on the context and content of the design.

The typographic choices were determined to be in synergy with the contents of the poster: they do not only indicate the given linguistic meaning but also carry a semiotic meaning themselves that impacts the target audience. All teams decided to use bilingual typography to support Arabic as an official language of the UAE and English as an international language, communicating meaning to multicultural readers. The used English and Arabic typefaces are sans serif, modern, simple and bold, making the written messages clearly readable. The use of a given particular typographic style within a particular context in relation to a certain visual content contributes to the construction of meaning. This means that the modern bilingual typography choices suit the created imagery to raise traffic awareness in a contemporary multicultural society.

### 3.3 Discussion

Intersemiotic translation took place at various stages of the design process. Students resemiotised Your Life is a Trust via visual and verbal signs that were organised into printed posters, which aim to communicate to a multicultural audience. Learners explored audience contribution in the creation of messages as source and as destination (Fiske, 1990). Learners had to consider the common cultural codes shared with the multicultural audience to create functional messages. The designers, as audience, know the encoded messages that are composed of a message type and image from their cultural experiences and inspirations. This was evident in the use of bilingual messages comprising Arabic as the main spoken language of the local community and its English translation as a lingua franca to ensure wider interpretation of the message. In other words, Arabic language symbolises the Arabic identity of the country and English symbolises the internationalist belief of the audience. Using images that include signs directly connected to road accidents and traffic safety such as blood, damaged cars, and injured individual as common signs of damage and life-threatening consequences enhance the signs’ international recognisability.

Although different typefaces hold various connotations derived from their visual styles and compositions, all teams chose to use modern and simple English and Arabic typefaces that are visually well-matched. This approach ensured the clarity of the message to multicultural audience, giving it an international approachability and simultaneously communicating culturally-specific meanings.
The heterogeneous nature of the intended audience’s culture required using general cultural codes to communicate the multicultural audience. The use of index visuals in four teams reflects designers’ intention to use independently defined visual signs as well as their visual and perceptual encoders. These codes constitute the shared values of the multicultural Arabian society wherein they communicate, enabling learners and audience to locate themselves within their culture. Fiske (1990, p. 82) argued that “a culture is an active, dynamic, living organism only because of the active participation of its members in its codes of communication”. This is directly linked to the adopted design methodology wherein learners had to actively participate in the process as translators and addressees. As messages’ encoders, students facilitate intercultural communication in traffic awareness posters where they communicated the cultural identity of UAE through the use of Arabic language and reached international audience by including English translation and highly persuasive visual signs.

### 3.4 Qualitative Feedback

#### 3.4.1 Students

When the project was complete, qualitative feedback was gathered from the learners through a short questionnaire. This questionnaire qualitatively assessed the achievement of the project’s learning goals and outcomes based on students’ qualitative answers. The questions were designed to evaluate the students’ in their roles as cultural translators and the relationship of those roles with their design skills and competences, the role that the research they undertook played in developing their design thinking and the results of working within a diverse design team in creating and implementing the final design direction of the project.

The findings indicate that assigning students to the role of cultural translators in a collaborative real-life project enabled them to establish a deeper understanding of the influence of culture on their design practice. The students valued the teamwork and the diversity of the members of their teams, stating that the cultural and academic differences among the members encouraged critical reflection and enhanced the work dynamics.

Regarding the research-based design methodology, the learners acknowledged the value of dividing a project into clear progressive phases with well-defined aims. The overall responses showed students’ admiration for the *divergence* phase, where they needed to perform extensive visual and literary research, using various methods. They noted that performing research broadened their perspective and helped them create functional and creative visual forms to suit the context of their projects. In all the responses, there was general agreement that visual research enhances visual analytical skills. This enabled them to predict their audiences’ interpretation of design artefacts.

Students found that the real-life nature of the project emphasised the importance of their engagement in the design process as active participants, allowing them to adopt the role of the audience as well as the designer because they too were part of the target community.

The learners noted a number of weaknesses and obstacles they faced as they worked on this project, namely:

- Although the exercise of translation stimulated their imagination, the students believed that the slogan *Your Life is a Trust* was vague, stating that it could hold a variety of meanings that do not relate to road safety.
- The information provided by the STD was limited to the slogan alone.
- The timeframe was not sufficient for conducting a focus group or research public opinion.
- Despite the benefits of working within diverse teams, on-time delivery was a challenge throughout the entire project.

#### 3.4.2 The Sharjah Traffic Department

The STD highlighted the importance of student involvement in raising public awareness of road safety. They emphasised the benefits of collaborating with academic institutions to serve the local community, including young designers in real-life projects. This expanded the outreach of the department and gave students the opportunity to gain exposure and promote themselves to the community as young designers.

The representatives of the STD expressed their admiration and positive impression of the variety of visual communications produced by the students. They acknowledged that the communication strategies used to raise public awareness of a serious issue that is usually confined to discussions of traffic law was creative. It was noted that bilingualism was considered by these designers to be a means of reaching a wider range of the multicultural community.
The STD decided to adopt some of the works to be rolled out in phases. The first one to be implemented is Group 2’s poster because it used the most culturally specific visual form, namely, a desert scene.

4 Concluding Thoughts

In this study, the design of a traffic awareness poster is a signifying practice wherein meaning was produced and consumed at various stages. The key concept involved in this paper is that of intersemiotic translation form: first, the design brief was translated into tangible artefacts and second, there was translation between different sign systems embedded in the artefacts produced. The concept of intersemiotic translations that take place during an iterative design process shall be investigated deeply, focusing on the translation of research data into design solutions. This may lead to the enhancement and development of critical practices in Communication Design.

Although bilingual communication has been widely used to serve individuals’ societal and cultural needs, there is a lack of rigorous research on interlingual translations across different languages in communication design practice. Interlingual translation holds various levels of complexity due to the differences between languages semantically and syntactically. Moreover, translation is directly linked to typography practice as a visual representation of a language, making it an indispensable topic to be further investigated within interdisciplinary research. This study recommends considering it as part of typography pedagogy due to the increased communication across cultures with these skills growing in demand.

The involvement of the students in community related projects to create culturally relevant artefacts that communicate multicultural audience brought them awareness of their critical role as cultural translators. This raised the question of their identities as individual designers and members of a multicultural Arabic society where they needed to reflect the essence of local identities while attempting to reach a broader group, a global audience. Additionally, the project enabled students to be active participants in the design process through playing the roles of both the designer and the user at the same time.

Students highlighted two challenges that they faced in this project: the first was the task of translating the slogan Your Life is a Trust, meant to promote traffic awareness, into a poster that could communicate meaning to a multicultural audience; the second was dealing with a real-life problem that they themselves experience on daily basis as pedestrians and drivers. The learners claimed that traffic safety is a critical, life-threatening topic to be raised and communicated visually in a creative manner to the local community.

Understanding intersemiotic and cultural translation is essential for communication design. It is recommended that semiotics, communication and modality be incorporated as key theoretical concepts in the design of a communication curriculum. This project may encourage future real-life projects, including intercultural translation processes with a variety of artefacts (e.g. illustrated books, information design and motion graphics) as fundamental exercises in studio classes where students can develop an advanced understanding of the connections and interactions among the semiotic resources used in different applications.

Adopting a research-based design methodology allowed reflection and interpretation. It enabled students to develop a better understanding of the context and goals of the project. This emphasised the intrinsic role of research in communication design practice, particularly when intercultural communications are being developed in response to the needs of intended users.

This study can be followed up by engaging the public in the process of design in a participatory action–research process. This can happen through the collection of stories, experiences and opinions from community members on the subject of traffic safety in the UAE; some of these resources can, then, be translated into new cultural artefacts. This will explore the complexity of intercultural translation where designers communicate audiences’ speculations as part of their construction of meaning, which will turn them into concurrent translators.

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References


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