LANGUAGE LOCALIZATION, INTERNATIONALIZATION, TRANSCREATION

TANIA PETCOVICI, SILVIA LAURA MADINCEA PASCU
TIBISCUS UNIVERSITY, TIMISOARA
t.petcovici@tibiscus.ro, s.pascu@toplanguages.ro

Abstract:
The paper analyses several concepts related to translation, i.e., language localization, internationalization, transcreation – widely used by companies trading worldwide as one of the main tools for global business expansion.

Key words: language localization, internationalization, transcreation
JEL classification: F6

INTRODUCTION

Websites are the marketing platform used to promote products, services, education, ideas, entertainment and more. Businesses have to sustain in an increasingly competitive marketplace that is, thanks to the Internet, global. Speaking to a worldwide audience, in a language they understand, is the key to capitalizing on this huge market potential. If a business uses its website to market its products, they need to reach their customers where they live. Websites are an efficient way to appeal to and connect with the users. However, as the online presence of a business goes global, users are looking for websites that speak directly to them - in their own language.

When it comes to translation, there are several related concepts: localization, internationalization, transcreation. *Translation* strictly follows the source language text and message, so sometimes it fails to take into consideration any cultural preferences. Therefore, in some cases, a process of *localization* is essential. It makes a product linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country, region and language) where it will be used and sold, as defined by the former Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA: online). *Internationalization* is the process of preparing a software application or product to facilitate localization. Internationalization addresses issues that may arise from things like translating from a right-to-left language to a left-to-right language, language expansion and different alphabets and currencies, among many other things. This process is done so that content can easily adapt to target languages. Some people use the term globalization to refer to the same concept. *Transcreation* is a concept used in translation studies to describe the process of adapting a message from one language to another while maintaining its intent, style, tone, and context.

A successfully transcreated project evokes the same emotions and carries the same implications in the target language as it does in the source language.

Localization

Language is a powerful tool when it comes to earning customer loyalty and navigating new markets. When websites are designed in local languages, the international users feel that their needs are catered to. It proves that the business is open to understanding the nuances of their culture by making web content that is tailored to them. As Bussey[1] noted, by speaking their 'language' (through words, ideas, and imagery), new customers will identify with it, remember it, and ultimately learn to trust it. (online, 2019)

Website localization is the process of adapting an existing website in the local language and culture to the target market. This is the process of adapting a website in a different linguistic and cultural context that involves much more than just translating the text. This modification process must reflect the specific language and cultural preferences in the content, images and overall design, and the requirements of the site - maintaining all and at the same time the integrity of the site. Culturally adapted websites reduce the amount of cognitive effort required for site visitors to process information, which makes browsing easier, and more favorable attitudes toward the website. The site change must also take into account the stated purpose of the new site with a focus on the target audience / marketplace in the new localization. The purpose of the site is to personalize a website so that it looks "natural" to visitors despite the cultural differences between creators and the public. Two factors are involved - programming expertise and linguistic / cultural knowledge.

The success of the website is the result of the popularity of computer and Internet users. People around the world treat the Internet as their primary source of information and services. These people do not speak the same language. As a result, site localization has become one of the main tools for global business expansion.

As site localization involves mixed strategies, organizations tend to maintain a global image while using site localization to appeal to local users. The challenge of localizing the site has become even more important as websites have more and more potential to both supplement and replace their presence in foreign markets. The more web design becomes compatible with national culture, the more it will promote online shopping. Creators need to consider language, level of education, value systems, faith, traditions and customs of the target culture in order to optimize results.

Website localization is more than just a translation. Translation only partially solves language problems. Units of measurement must be converted; images and text are modified to appeal to the target culture.

The process of localizing the site is complex and it involves three different levels of adaptation. The translation is first and foremost process. The localization of the site involves adapting the text used in the language of the country. It is important that the translation of information is clear and easy to understand in order to avoid cultural misunderstandings or offenses. Second is the actual localization, which includes translation, but also involves all other efforts and activities to ensure linguistically and culturally appropriate adaptation of textual materials, visual displays, illustrations, and graphics for the target localization. Target localization is understood as the market segment defined by criteria, including language, currency, level of education, or income categories. Among the many technical elements that can be localized are: date and time format, currency, number format, address and phone number, units of measure, and even connection speed. To ensure effective communication during the localization process, it is important to consider the following elements: information architecture, themes and navigation, graphics, photos, audio and visuals. Third is

---

[1] S. Bussey, 2019, Websites Translation. Advantages of Website Localization, https://blog.andovar.com/advantages-website localization.

internationalization, which involves ensuring that the software used is fully compatible with the technology of the country concerned.
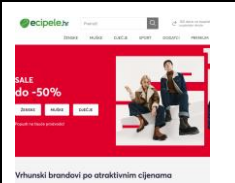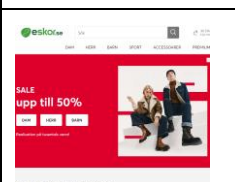
There are two important considerations during the site localization process. The first is to focus on user requirements. Readers of the localized version of the site must be able to read and understand the pages in a way that makes sense to them. A second aspect is considering the client's goals, whether it is a government institution or an individual one, for example.

Examples of localization

Many elements of a website that are different depending on the customer's localization require only minor changes to the localization manual, or none at all. For example, the system on which the site is created should automatically produce the correct currency symbol depending on the country in which the customer is localized. Using site localization is vital for any business that wants to grow in international markets. More and more companies want to reach these profitable markets, so the localization of the site has become quite profitable. There is also a secondary business that involves global and local coordination; production and operations, including finance; sales and marketing; translations, including technology and language coordination; software engineering as well as design. The greater the technological capabilities of the target culture, the more likely it is that the site localization will be effectively implemented and used.

In the table below there is an example of a Polish footwear retailer's site which has been localized for 22 languages. They have even localized their site for the speakers of the three languages in Switzerland, i.e., German, Italian and French (eshuhe.ch/de, eshuhe.ch/it, eshuhe.ch/fr).

Table 1. Examples of the Polish footwear retailer's site which has been localized for 22 languages.

Web site localization is a service on the market that appeals to customers who have web pages of products, possibly sold directly from the site or by customers with presentation sites (for example law firms, notary offices, professional photographers, designers, architects, etc.). For a growing business, locating a company's website is a strategy to increase sales if it is complemented by a well-developed online marketing campaign.

The concept of web localization is a process by which the translation of a website is adapted, highlighting the cultural and linguistic particularities of the target country, taking into account of course the commercial, technical and IT aspects. Translating a website and then adapting it to the target country's audience involves in-depth linguistic

and cultural knowledge, a thorough knowledge of typical or "fashionable" expressions, addressing style or scope.

The translator in charge of localizing websites is called a localizer and is not necessarily a translator authorized by the Ministry of Justice, as it is the case in Romania. This translator-localizer has skills that go far beyond the skills of a simple certified translator who translates only written documents. First of all, they must be native speakers of the language they are translating and adapting. However, even if they are native speakers, they must also have specialized language skills to adapt the translation correctly and completely to the culture and language of the country and, in particular, be open and proactive because they will most likely need to work with the IT, marketing or sales department.
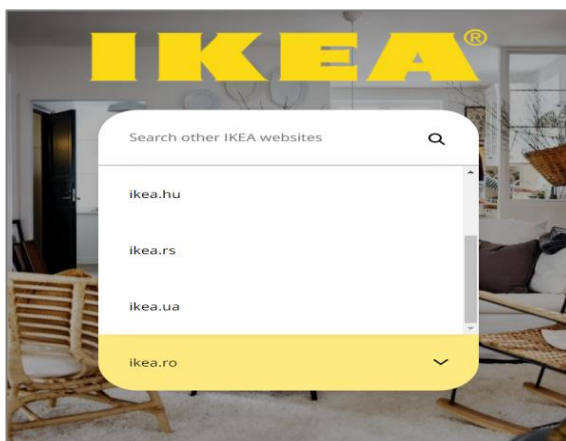
The process of localizing a website must meet certain parameters: correct translation and adaptation of web page content, image and design adaptation, adapted translation of standard wording or phrases, adapting the way data or units are transcribed (in the case of technical translations), approaching style (for example, in Western Europe the business style is more relaxed, it is preferable to use the second person singular, while in Eastern Europe, especially in Romania, non-compliance with the business protocol can be considered a lack of respect).

There are definite benefits of translating a website as customers are willing to pay more for services or products on sites that are translated into their native language and they spend more time on a site that is translated into their native language or at least in English. A website with English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese translations is available to most EU or US citizens. It becomes undeniably important when expanding the business to another market as customers will better understand the services and products.

Internationalization

IKEA Group, otherwise known as Ingka Holding, which technically operates as a franchise for Inter IKEA Holding gives its customers the opportunity to choose the IKEA website in the language where they are located as well as the websites of the neighbouring countries. In the example below the website has been accessed from Romania, thus the offered choice was ikea.ro, ikea.bg and ikea.hu, ikea.rs and ikea.ua. Of course, the customer is given the opportunity to search further for other available Ikea websites.

Table 2. Print screen of IKEA website.

Products intended for use by speakers of multiple languages typically undergo an internationalization process. For example, IKEA internationalizes the assembly instructions for its furniture by using only diagrams and illustrations, without including any text that would need to be translated.

However, there are companies as for example Nike, an American-based multinational company that is involved in the design, development, production, and global marketing of sportswear, apparel, and sports equipment and services, which has localized its website for many countries, but there are still a few of them, probably less important when it comes to the amount of sold products for which the websites have not been localized. Thus, countries like Finland, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, as shown in the table below, as well as a few countries from the Middle East and Asia Pacific can access the website in English.

Table 3. Print screen for Nike website https://www.nike.com/ro

Transcreation

Transcreation is the next step of localization. As suggested by the term, it is the combining of translation and creative writing. This mode adds to the consistency of the message and the adaptation of content the emotional element, working on local style, idioms, and phrasing.

The person in charge of transcreation works closely with the marketing team in order to understand the goals of the campaign, contributing to its success. Transcreation,

according to Biagini,[2] (online: 2021) is the best option for businesses wanting to create emotions that resonate with the local public, create engagement and are pleasant to read.

It means adapting and recreating marketing and other creative content to different languages to serve specific target audiences. When transcreating, translators and copywriters look to preserve the original message, context, emotion, and tone. The objective of transcreation is to recreate the original message in another language, while maintaining the same emotional experience as the source text. Transcreated content is customized to fit the culture, slang and dialect of the target audience.

Transcreation can be required in a number of different channels of content. Anything that necessitates creative translations and adaptations is bound to need transcreations. Some content samples include: taglines, slogans, promotional materials, advertisements, marketing emails, global branding campaigns, brochures, signs and posters, presentations, product names, character names, etc.

The following famous examples illustrate the importance of successful transcreation. Pepsi got it badly wrong when their slogan "Come alive with the Pepsi generation" was rendered in Chinese as "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the grave". Kentucky Fried Chicken gave an example of how a slogan went wrong in Mandarin. It is also an example of why literal translation does not necessarily work in other cultures and languages. KFC's famous "Finger lickin' good" slogan became "Eat your fingers off". Obviously, it did not have quite the desired effect. Williams[3] (online: 2021) Mitsubishi had to rebrand its newly launched Pajero. Named for the Pampas Cat of Argentina (Leopardus pajeros), it was sexual slang in Spanish. The car was eventually launched on the Spanish market as the Montero.

Another successful transcreation example is from Intel. The computer-chip manufacturer changed its successful slogan "Intel: Sponsors of Tomorrow" for the Brazilian market because research showed that in Portuguese, "Sponsors of Tomorrow" implied Intel would not deliver on its promises immediately. In Brazil, the slogan became "Intel: In Love with the Future".

In computer science, internationalization and localization are the ways of adapting computer software for different languages, regional differences and technical requirements of a target market. Internationalization is the process of designing a software application so that it can be adapted to different languages and regions without engineering changes. Localization is the process of adapting software internationally for a particular region or language by adding specific local elements and translating text.

Understanding the differences between the types of translation terms (translation, localization, transcreation) can be confusing. Sufficient planning, awareness and an experienced language service provider are crucial for localization success. When localizing, a professional language service provider will create a linguistic equivalent by adapting the message to meet the audience's requirements. The end result of localization is a product that is appropriate for the target locale and keeps the original intended meaning.

---

[2] Biagini, D. (2021). Localization and Transcreation: Language Services for Digital Marketing (https://www.azimuth-gulf.com/digital-trasformation/localization-and-transcreation-language-services-for-digital-marketing/).
[3] L. Williams. (2021). Transcreation Examples: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, https://translatorstudio.co.uk/transcreation-examples-good-bad.

REFERENCES

a. Books and articles

1. Benjamins, John. Samson, R. (2005). "Computer-assisted translation" in Training for the new millennium: pedagogies for translation and interpreting. Ed. Martha Tennent. pp. 101-126.

b. Electronic publications on the Internet

2. Biagini, D. (2021). Localization and Transcreation: Language Services for Digital Marketing, Available on: https://www.azimuth-gulf.com/digital-trasformation/localization-and-transcreation-language-services-for-digital-marketing/), Retrieved in December, 2021.
3. Bussey, S. (2019). Websites Translation. Advantages of Website Localization, Available on: https://blog.andovar.com/advantages-website-localization, Retrieved in December, 2021.
4. M' Bengue, C. (2019). 5 Inspiring Transcreation Examples, Available on: https://www.k-international.com/blog/transcreation-examples/, Retrieved in December, 2021.
5. Williams, L. (2021). Transcreation Examples: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly, Available on: https://translatorstudio.co.uk/transcreation-examples-good-bad/, Retrieved in December, 2021.