TRANSLATION OF UNIVERSITY WEB SITES AS A STAGE OF WEB SITE LOCALIZATION

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Abstract

The term *Localization* is becoming very popular nowadays. In this article, the term is considered from the point of view of translating a University web site as the main component of web site localization. Localization of a website is not only an adaptation of the navigation structure, design, and multimedia, but also a translation of the text content to improve its functionality and cultural suitability for a new target audience. The research is based on a comparative analysis of Russian and foreign university websites (semantic aspect). Since the website is mostly text information distributed in different sections, it is quite obvious that translation is one of the most important and laborious stages of localization. The findings revealed that a University website performs two functions: academic and educational, informing users, and advertising, attracting new applicants, partners and employees. The research has shown that a translator should be very accurate while translating academic terms: the meaning of the international words can be quite different in the Russian and English languages. In translation process, some academic terms should be supplemented with information that is relevant to the target audience, since its absence may cause misunderstanding for a foreign site user. On the other hand, when translating a site, one should omit sections that are not relevant to the target audience, as this will facilitate navigation on the site and bring important sections to the main menu.

1. Introduction

Thirty years ago, information technologies entered schools and colleges to gradually change the entire learning process (Beshenkov & Trubina, 2017, p. 169). For the last several years, the cooperation of the post-Soviet states and the Commonwealth of the Independent States in education and culture has tended to increase (Marinosyan & Kurovskaya, 2017, p. 398). The information age, or the age of *The third wave society*, possesses a number of distinguishing features: change in energy sources, the reshaping of fundamental manufacturing principles, forms of business organization, communication, and information exchange, etc. (Toffler, 1984). The transformations in economy and society lead to the rise of educational needs and the centrality of science and research meeting the growing demand for intellectual technologies (Ladyzhets & Neborskiy, 2017, p. 417).

Nowadays, in the age of digital technologies, every educational institution has a web site that people from all over the world can access.

The website is not only an information resource, but it also plays an important role in promoting the University in the market of educational services. To successfully position its activities in the field of international education and attract applicants and partners, the University must have a version of the site not only in Russian, but also in the English language. However, as practice shows, the English-language version of the site is not always successful. Quite often translators of University web sites face difficulties looking for the correct variant of translation. Translation is, in practical terms, an on-going practice that never reaches completion or perfection (Creole, 2016). Translation shows the mentality of the source language with the comprehensible methods of the target language (Yucshenko, 2019). The authors intend to consider the difficulties in translating some of the most ambiguous terms in academic sphere.

2. Problem Statement

A site can be a source of information of different content, as well as a kind of *business card*, or even a trading platform. At the same time, in order to attract foreign visitors to the site who may later become clients or partners, it is necessary to create a version of the site that will be clear in content for a certain audience.

Russian universities are faced with the task of immense complexity – to integrate into the global education space while preserving traditions and the cultural code intrinsic to the national system of higher education (Boguslavskiy & Neborskiy, 2017, p. 183).

At the moment, the process of adapting a web page, or localization, depends to a large extent on the translator. Knowledge workers, who deal with complex and diverse information, are now in the forefront (Aristova et al., 2017, p. 97). This process is complex and painstaking, since localization must take into account not only linguistic, but also extra linguistic aspects.

The relevance of the research topic is quite evident due to the fact that localization of a University web site, and in particular the competent translation of academic terms, is currently a popular and little-explored issue.

3. Research Questions

- What are the features of Internet Discourse?

- What does a translator have to take into account while translating a University web site?

- How to deal with academic terms in translation?

- What does a translator have to do if the academic terms of the two languages do not coincide in their meanings?

4. Purpose of the Study

The research aims to perform a comparison of the academic terms that make up Russian and British/American university websites and to determine what factors affect the understanding of the text by a foreign site user.

5. Research Methods

The authors used the following research methods: analysis, generalization, comparative analysis, and interpretation.

6. Findings

Research on the content of an Internet page is based on the study of the nature of Internet discourse. Initially, the concept *Discourse* was applied in classical philosophy to the definition of discursive thinking – a sequence of concepts and judgments, which was opposed to intuitive thinking – a speculative grasp of the whole.

In linguistics, the term *Discourse* was first used by the American scholar Harris, in the article *Discourse Analysis* in 1952. In this paper, the question was raised about the definition of Text. Harris suggested that there may be a system that is at a level higher than syntax, and the concept of Text refers to this system. Discourse analysis, according to Harris (1952), examines the laws of language, its structure and composition, in more extensive than the sentence elements. Discourse itself has been defined as oral or written consecutive word turns that were uttered by a person, or group of people, in a situation.

Discourse analytical approaches are central to translator training and translation analysis (Munday & Zhang, 2017). Modern discourse analysis focuses on the forms, functions, distribution, and the translation equivalents in parallel and comparable corpora (House, 2017).

Based on the development of digital ways of communication, a new type of discourse has emerged – Internet discourse, which is based on the exchange of information in electronic form. Internet discourse refers to a text that has been immersed in a communication situation that occurs in a virtual space.

It is also worth mentioning that the Internet is a special field of discourse, which includes not only information but also socially-oriented areas that show socially and culturally significant values through communication in electronic form.

Cultural translation theories encourage us to think of translation as a special case of cross-cultural communication. Pym (2016) thinks that we should abandon the term 'translation' altogether and simply replace it with 'mediation' / 'translanguaging' / 'localization' in technological context.

A web site is the most important means of ensuring a fast and effective communication process for the target audience of an educational institution. To attract potential students, scientists, and convey information about the latest achievements in the field of education and science the discourse of a University web site has a clearly expressed pragmatic component.

The website of a higher education institution is an effective tool for promoting educational services at the international level. The quality of web site translation plays a significant role in this. Nowadays, when it comes to evaluating the quality of translation, you can find many models and theoretical approaches.

There are a large number of international standards for translation quality assessment. They can be based on the translation process, and norms of text-matching and maximum compliance of the translation with the requirements. Nida and Taber (1982), for example, proposed a definition of *dynamic equivalence*, highlighting the reaction of the recipient to the text of the translation as the main criterion for translation quality assessment. According to Nida and Taber (1982), the translation should cause a similar reaction to the original text, being a full-fledged replacement of the original in the communicative aspect.

Reiss and Vermeer (2014) proposed the *Scopos theory*, according to which the quality of translation consists in achieving the goal of communication set by the author of the source text. Scopos (goal), based on the opinion of the researchers, determines the strategy and method of translation.

Recently, a new direction has appeared in translation*, Localization*, which came to this discipline from the sphere of business and international technical cooperation. Since this phenomenon is relatively new and not fully defined, the exact term *Localization* has not yet been presented. Meanwhile, the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA) provides the following definition: *Localization is a set of processes for linguistic and cultural adaptation of a software product intended for use by the user of a particular locale.* Locale in this case means *a special system of parameters and presets (character set, user language, time zone, etc.) specific to a particular country/region and language.*

Localization today is used in conjunction with the term *Internationalization*, which means the preparation of a product to make it suitable for efficient localization, and globalization signifies the global design of a product. *Website localization* is thus defined as the *process of modifying a website for a specific locale* (Yunker, 2003, p. 17).

The process of Localization is closely connected with the process of translation: Localization is the adaptation of a product, software, application or document so that it meets the requirements of the specific target market or locale. The localization process revolves around translation of the content.

User demands bring us back to the definition of web site localization in which a web site should be made linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale. The readers want to read the web page

in their own language and expect clear and understandable information and not be culturally offended by language, images, colors, and so on (Sandrini, 2005, p. 133).

A successful response to the web site content directly depends on the quality of the site localization. Sites by the nature of their content are focused entirely on a particular audience. Translation is considered as a type of language mediation, in which a text is created in another language, intended to fully replace the original, having the same communicative function as the source language text.

At the first stage, the source text goes through the internationalization process, since for successful localization, the appropriate text changes are necessary. Sites that are subject to the localization process are stripped of cultural idioms, jargon, personality references, jokes, and so on.

At the next stage, a text devoid of national specifics is presented in a standardized language, i.e. the text should be understandable to everyone, regardless of what cultural or national affiliation it is. English is used as the global means of communication in international practice. However, a translator performing localization should take into account the fact that when internationalizing a site, it can be difficult to avoid using national-specific language units that they perceive as neutral or well-known.

At the third stage, the source internationalized text is directly localized, which includes not only translation, but also adaptation of the source to the culture where this product will function (Galichkina, 2001).

Considering linguistic aspects one can highlight the following:

- -translators are often faced with the problem of lack of context. Translating coherent texts or sentences is unlikely to cause difficulties in translation, while window names, tooltips, and screensavers are often made up of pre-defined phrases and polysemantic words, thus it can be difficult for the translator to understand the context in which a particular word or phrase should be used. In cases where the same term can be translated into Russian in different ways (*texture: picture or frame; line: line or string*), and the context is missing or insufficient, the localizer can only contact the customer for clarification.
- -working with word forms can also cause certain difficulties. The predicate can depend not only on the number (*structure of the frame was updated/frames were updated: kadr/kadry (rus.)*), but also on the gender of the subject (*structure of the frame was deleted/library was deleted: kadr byl udalyon /biblioteka byla udalena (rus.)*). For numerals in English, only two cases are distinguished: singular and plural (*1 page is printed, X pages are printed*), while in Russian there are more than two possible variants – (*raspechatano / raspechatana / raspechatany (rus.)*).
- translation of terms is also extremely important.

Moreover, the problem with translation is that some misconceptions about the language realia of foreign education systems are so ingrained in the Russian University community that even highly qualified specialists sometimes make mistakes when translating certain academic terms.

Translating the names of educational institutions is difficult for many translators, as the naming traditions of higher education institutions vary from country to country. In particular, the term *Institute*

(rus.) is still used to refer to both *a Research Institute*, *a higher educational institution*, and *an Administrative and Managerial Institution*. In English-speaking countries, the word *Institute* is only used to refer to *a Research Institute (Research Institute, Scientific Research Institute)*. Most often, the names of educational institutions are subject to partial or complete semantic translation. For example, *Moscow State University/ Lomonosov Moscow State University*. Quite often translators of University web sites make the following mistake*: Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov.*

In the American education system, the term *School* is widely used to refer to a number of educational institutions, for example, *High School* literally means *High School of the highest level*, *School of Law* is translated as *Higher School of Law or Law Institute, Graduate School*, respectively, will have the meaning of *Graduate School*.

The translation of the Russian word *Facultet* (rus.) into English is one of the most controversial issues. The fact is that the English word *Faculty* is polysemantic. One of its main meanings is *professors and teachers (University staff)* (in American English). For this reason, sometimes Russian teachers and University administrators avoid translating the word *Facultet* (rus.) as *Faculty*, referring to the fact that their American colleagues may misunderstand the meaning of this word, which means that there is a tendency to translate the word *Faculty* also as *Department*.

Yale University also has the academic term *College* for undergraduate students, and the term *Schools* for professional training programs (for example, *Yale Law School*), which are entered after receiving a bachelor's degree. In addition to these administrative structures, there are also *Departments* that specialize in a specific field, such as *Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures*.

By signing the Bologna agreement Russia has allowed to simplify the translation of educational degrees: *bacalavr (rus.) - bachelor's degree*, *magistr (rus.) - master's degree*; *bacalavriat (rus.) - bachelor's studies*, *magistratura (rus.) - master's studies*. For example, the definition of the term *specialist (rus.)* can be translated as *Specialist*, but in this case additional explanations of the term will be required for foreign recipients who are not familiar with the Russian system. When translating the degrees of *kandidat nauk / doctor nauk (rus.)* another problem arises. Word for word translation of the terms is quite common: *Candidate of Science(s)* and *Doctor of Science(s).* In addition, it is quite common to translate the term *kandidat nauk (rus.)* as *PhD* (*Doctor of Philosophy*), which is to some extent equivalent. However, this translation is not completely equivalent, since in British/American universities, the degree of PhD is also the highest degree, except for honorary doctorates, the so-called *High Doctorates*, awarded to a scholar without making a thesis.

The concepts of *doctorantura / aspirantura (rus.)* also need to be interpreted in more detail when translating. In English, there is the concept of *Postgraduate Studies* (British English) or *Graduate Studies* (American version), which includes both *Master's Studies* and *Doctoral Studies (PhD)*, but at the same time the term *Undergraduate Studies* means receiving *Higher Education Degree of the First Stage*, i.e. *Bachelor's degree*. It follows that the translation of the term *aspirantura (rus.)* as *Graduate Studies* or *Postgraduate Studies* in some cases may not be adequate, if you refer to a *Master's Degree or PhD*. In addition, when translating the term *Postgraduate studies* as *Doctoral Studies*, applicants familiar with Russian realia may think that we are talking about *PhD*.

In the English high school there is a term *Postdoctoral Research* (in-depth research after obtaining a PhD), which can be translated into the Russian language as *doctorantura (rus.)*, but this is not an adequate translation, as *Postdoctoral Research* does not imply the award of any academic degree.

7. Conclusion

It should be noted that for adequate translation and interpretation in general, it is required to understand both terms in the Russian and English languages. Such terms can often have a similar meaning. The discrepancies that can be identified by comparing some academic terms are most often correlated with extra linguistic information. The systems of higher education in different countries, such as USA, Great Britain, Russia and others, differ greatly, as a result, the names of certain academic realia will differ. This phenomenon is widely found in the entire spectrum of terms of academic orientation: in the lexical and grammatical structure of terms in English and Russian languages, in the lexical composition, in the morphological and syntactic structure.

Localizing the website of a higher education institution is a challenge. In addition to adapting to the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the region, the translator must act within the framework of the rules for writing academic, and often advertising texts.

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