

*I. D. Volkova, T. B. Novikova***TEXT LOCALIZATION AS A TASK OF TRANSLATION**

22

Today, the term 'localization' is used in many studies of translations and adaptation of various Internet resources. Foreign translation agencies specialize both in translation services, and in the projects for the localization of various resources, and this fact emphasizes the practical importance of this process. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of localization in modern translation theory. To achieve this goal, we have reviewed Russian and foreign papers on localization, studied the relationship between the concepts of translation and localization as a part-to-whole issue, carried out the comparative analysis of the concepts of translation, adaptation and localization. The focus on the three key characteristics of the localization process and the analysis of localized texts placed on multilingual websites allow concluding that it is important to integrate localization concept in the theory of translation studies.

Сегодня термин «локализация» используется во многих исследованиях, посвященных проблемам перевода и адаптации различных интернет-ресурсов. Переводческие агентства зарубежных стран специализируются не только на услугах перевода, но и на проектах по локализации электронных ресурсов, что подчеркивает значимость данного процесса с практической точки зрения. Цель исследования – определение роли локализации в современной теории перевода. Для достижения данной цели проведен обзор отечественной и зарубежной литературы, посвященной названной проблеме, рассмотрено соотношение понятий перевода и локализации с точки зрения части и целого, выполнен сопоставительный анализ понятий перевода, адаптации и локализации. Выделение трех ключевых характеристик процесса локализации и анализ локализованных текстов, размещенных на многоязычных сайтах, позволяет сделать вывод о важности интеграции переводоведением понятия локализации.

Keywords: localization, translatology, translation, adaptation, pragmatics, linguoculturology.

Ключевые слова: локализация, транслатология, письменный перевод, адаптация, прагматика, лингвокультурология.

Introduction

The history of translation studies is rich in examples pointing out the importance of pragmatics in the process of translation. Back in the 15th century, Albrecht von Eyb, German translator, one of the first adherents of the liberal translation theory, adapted names, characters and scenery when translating fiction, so as to make the narration more “local” and to please the



audience. Since the time of the anthropocentric paradigm emergence in the 1980s, pragmalinguistics and linguacultural studies became the leading interdisciplinary areas of research into discourse practices. These new sub-disciplines put forward a number of new issues in the theory of translation, in particular those associated with the characteristics of recipients and their cultural background. Today, the search for productive ways of ensuring Internet-mediated intercultural communication at the unprecedented level, the communication which is, first of all, proceeds between a customer, on the one hand, and a company, on the other hand, necessitates the introduction of new concepts into academic use and the development of new customer-centered translation techniques.

Background

The emergence of the phenomenon of localization is associated with the technological revolution and the expansion of companies' activity up to the level of international and global corporations, which resulted in the need to develop technologies of software and manual adaptation in accordance with economic, linguistic and cultural parameters. These technologies have provided the customers from different countries with the access to goods and services presented on the world market, and in this direction of organized business activity, translation is only an element of the overall process of linguacultural adaptation (also including technical expertise, work in the field of terminology, programming, design, marketing, etc.) aimed at the realization of products in foreign markets. According to N. A. Batyukova, today the objects of localization are represented by various computer-mediated resources: software; websites (international portals, business cards, online shops, etc.); computer games; marketing and PR-materials (brochures, presentations of companies, leaflets etc.) and other multimedia products [1, p. 42].

Literature Review

E. Pym puts forward the issue on recognizing the phenomenon of localization the newest paradigm of translation studies, the main provisions of which give an idea of the extent to which translation practices have changed in the context of economic globalization of society [2, p. 182]. The researcher rather focuses on the traditional software case of localization and points out such innovation features of localization as one-to-many translation model, the need to translate from an internationalized version, as well as the automation of the translation process by means of modern technology [2]. The combination of these characteristics within a written form of intercultural transfer is actually an unprecedented one, however, being prototypic, such assumption of localization is quite narrow-dimensional, not reflecting a wide range of translator's techniques, which do not necessarily imply the



simultaneous adaptation of internationalized text to several languages. The researchers' arguments for applying the concept to different genres and contexts lead to introducing new definitions into the field. The localization is understood as:

- discourse process aimed at changing media content [3];
- extension of translation, a technology-based translation modality [4, p. 22];
- complex form of pragmatic adaptation [5, p. 347];
- new branch of technical translation [6, p. 83];
- adaptation of a “generalized” text to the whole variety of new purposes and application spheres arising in modern reality [7].

24

As we can see, these definitions testify to the ambiguity of the status of localization in translation studies. Some Russian researchers insist on introducing the concept into academic use by linguists. S. A. Kolosov and I. A. Matveev argue that the object of localization is represented by a creolized / polycode / multimedia text, and as a result, the process of its localization is supposed to transform both verbal and non-verbal elements [8, p. 111]. The theoretical overview of localization issues let A. V. Achkasov come to the conclusion that “the share of translation studies in localization research remains insignificant, and the attempts to map localization research into translation studies have not so far produced the desirable result” [9, p. 575]. The attempt of such mapping was undertaken by Spanish linguist M. A. Jiménez-Crespo, who conceptualized Localization Studies as a sub-branch of general Translation Studies [4, p. 133] and pointed out that “adaptation often appearing in localization was nothing new to translation studies, particularly since the emergence of target-oriented approaches in translation theory” [4, p. 31].

The special attention is also paid to part-to-whole relations between translation and localization. LISA (Localization Industry Standards Association) researchers P. Cadieux and B. Esselink refer to localization as the adaptation of a product (film, computer game, website, etc.) aimed at making it appropriate for a given locale [10]. According to this interpretation, translation is only a part of the localization project. The elements that need to be localized and are not related to translation include time formats, dates, numbers, currency, legal, tax and environmental requirements, as well as some technical aspects of design (color, page size, keyboard layout, etc.), applicable to the products in different countries. Carrying out research into the localization of websites, E. E. Sukhareva and O. V. Shurlina point out that the given process consists of 4 stages:

- the translation of texts;
- the translation of software;
- the sociocultural adaptation of website structure and design;
- website SEO [11, p. 167].

In our investigation we define localization as the translation of a text. The widely quoted definition of localization as a cultural adaptation is, in our view, too broad, and its further development and assimilation in different academic fields seems to be relevant.



Translation, Localization, Adaptation

In the conditions of the dynamic global market, the widespread view that the text of translation is the original text rendered by means of the target language, is far from reality. Today, translators are often engaged in such activities, as creating a new text based on the original (so-called transcreation), cultural adaptation of advertising, websites and different multimedia resources. According to E. Prunch, German scholar, these boundary areas of translation should be properly described and integrated into theoretical issues [12, p. 25].

Since localization is a form of language and cultural mediation, this concept should be compared with the notions of translation and adaptation. Firstly, it is crucial to differentiate between localization and translation, as the mentioned ambiguity of the former often causes their mixing. A lot of research present the same examples of failed localization of advertising slogans. For instance, the slogan *Fly in leather* of American airline company implies the comfort of leather seats on board. In Mexico the slogan got the meaning *Fly in skin*. In a similar manner, the slogan of Pepsi company *Come alive with Pepsi* was rendered in Chinese with the phrase *Pepsi Brings Your Ancestors Back from the Dead*. In our view, the original phrases do not contain words, which need to be localized, and the obvious mistakes are associated with either translators' incompetence or the use of machine translation.

Translation, as the crosslingual and crosscultural transfer, is a key concept of translatology, the discipline uniting different types of translation activity. We suggest that the concept of localization, being used in translatology, should be defined as a type of translation, which implies the central role of the recipient and the task of creating such a text that would comply with their sociocultural and geographical characteristics, as well as the given communicative and pragmatic situation. An act of localization is in fact an act of translation [13, p. 360]. In this connection, we focus on the following features of localization:

- 1) the object of localization is a text performing the function of persuasion, i. e. containing a sort of appeal to the recipient;
- 2) the localized text is equivalent to the source text from the pragmatic viewpoint, that means the translator has the right to reject semantic equivalence and to create a new text based on the key goals and functions of the source text;
- 3) in the process of localization the translator should pay special attention to the adaptation of culture- and place-specific contexts and words, which may be relevant for recipients.

As for the object of localization, pointing out the function of persuasion as a dominant one in the localized text is based on the principle of creating a text that would "fit" the recipient – the recursion to A. von Eyb's urge to please the audience. However, at that period such motivation was associated with the aesthetic fashion, and the objects of translation were represented by fiction texts. Today, localization seems to be necessary in a variety of com-



munication contexts united by one common goal – economic profit in the market conditions, including the important task of promoting different types of brands across the world. The research have been carried out into the localization of tourism texts [5; 14; 15], film texts [16; 17], medicine texts [18], magazine articles [19]. Such dissemination marks the importance of localization for translation studies.

As for the lack of semantic symmetry between the source text and the localized text, A.V. Achkasov rightly notes that the localized text is not called on to represent any previous text; it is instead part of one and the same process of constant material distribution, which starts in one culture and may continue in many others [9, p. 569]. To illustrate this peculiarity, let's compare the source English text with its localized French version (see Table 1). Both texts belong to the advertising genre and are placed on the official website of the US insurance company American International Group (AIG), having branches in 80 countries around the world and included in the ranking of TOP-100 brands of America.

Table 1

English and French versions of AIG company advertising texts

AIG Worldwide [20] (source text)	AIG France [21] (localized text)
<p><i>For nearly one hundred years, our organization has faced and managed complex risks; and provided the risk expertise and financial strength that empowers clients in more than 80 countries and jurisdictions. Today, our organization is evolving to better meet our clients' needs</i></p>	<p><i><u>AIG en France</u> est une succursale d'AIG Europe Limited, membre de la FFSA. <u>L'autorité de régulation locale est l'ACPR. La France est le 4ème pays du groupe AIG</u> après les USA/Canada, le Japon et le Royaume-Uni.</i></p> <p><i>Nous sommes <u>présents depuis 70 ans sur le territoire français</u> où nous assurons tout type de risques d'entreprises et de risques spécialisés. A titre d'exemple, nous <u>couvrons plus de 400 000 mandataires en Responsabilité des Dirigeants et protégeons environ 10 millions de particuliers et leurs biens</u></i></p>

The underlined words and word combinations were adapted in the process of localization in accordance with the recipients' geographical location: *AIG en France*, *La France est le 4ème pays du groupe AIG*, *présents depuis 70 ans sur le territoire français*, etc. This principle is one of the key strategies undertaken by global corporations, since they work with a certain number of target markets, and it is urgent to create localized versions of websites for each one. Actually, these websites serve as the only authentic Internet source of information about brand products for customers.

Place branding being the tool for developing the tourism sector is one more sphere, which needs proper translation and localization services. For example, the content analysis of the brochure *Top 10 Tourism Destinations in Latvia*, placed on the official travel website of Latvia let us reveal the case of making the text "local" in the process of translation into Russian. The source text emphasizes the concepts of cultural diversity and uniqueness:



Latvia is a multi-cultured state, where the traditions of all these countries have merged, creating a unique environment, the like of which is not to be found anywhere in the world [22].

When translating / localizing this text for the Russian audience, one should focus on the past union of two countries. The Russian text contains the following information:

У Латвии глубокая историческая связь с Россией, поэтому в ее культуре и традициях много славянского, например, старообрядческие деревни [23].

The focus on 'deep historical connection' and 'common Slavonic traditions' contributes to performing the function of persuasion and to forming the positive attitude to the destination.

The differentiation between the concepts of localization and adaptation is also important, since the traditional use of the latter and its rootedness in translatology put in question the need of new localization techniques. The fact is that text adaptation does not necessarily mean making it "local" and translating it. According to V.N. Komissarov, prominent Russian linguist, who described in detail the characteristics of pragmatic adaptation [24], this is the process of adaptive transcreation aimed at changing text content while translating it. The scholar refers the translation of proper names, toponyms, culture-specific words, as well as the task of creating a new text on the basis of the source text, to the tasks of pragmatic adaptation. These are the common tasks for localization and pragmatic adaptation. However, localization is a much narrower concept, since the pragmatic adaptation is also aimed at solving a wide range of tasks, such as simplification of text (today known as internationalization, or globalization), modernization of the source text, changing text content depending on the translator's or customer's personal goals, etc. Besides, pragmatic adaptation is often intralingual, while localization is primarily the interlingual transfer.

Table 2 illustrates the use of explication techniques in the process of localizing the article *Soda Or Pop? It's Teeth Trouble By Any Name* into Russian.

Table 2

English and Russian versions of the article on soda drinks

English version (source text) [25]	Russian version (localized text) [26]
<p><i>Soda Or Pop? It's Teeth Trouble By Any Name</i> <i>It's called "pop" in the Midwest and most of Canada. It's "soda" in the Northeast. And it goes by a well-known brand name in much of the South.</i></p>	<p><i>Газировка: напитки, опасные для здоровья зубов</i> <i>На востоке США и в Канаде эти напитки называются «содовая». В России они называются «газировка». На юге США для его названия используется хорошо известная торговая марка.</i></p>

As mentioned above, in the process of localization the translator should pay special attention to the adaptation of culture- and place-specific words.



Here we can see the translator's decision to adapt the toponyms *Midwest* and *South* by indicating the country they refer to – the USA, since they perform the function of reference. At the same time, the inclusion of additional information in the conversational register about the name of soda drinks in Russia – *gazirovka* – plays the role of a linguacultural implication, which points out the focus on specific linguacultural audience.

Conclusion

The research into localization carried out from the viewpoint of translation studies let us draw the conclusion on the necessity of introducing this concept into linguistic use with the meaning of a special type of translation activities. Despite some obvious differences between translation processes and linguistic localization, it seems difficult to clearly differentiate them, since the latter is called on to solve the issues that have always been peculiar of the theory of translation. The conducted literature review and correlation of localization with the concepts of translation and pragmatic adaptation allow suggesting that the localization process has the following characteristics: 1) the object of localization is a text performing the function of persuasion; 2) the source text and the localized text are characterized by the lack of semantic equivalence; 3) in the process of localization the translator should pay special attention to the adaptation of culture- and place-specific contexts and words, which may be relevant for recipients. We've analyzed the examples of localized texts, thus illustrating the given characteristics and determining common patterns, which should be followed by translators working on localization projects.

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The authors

Dr Irina D. Volkova, Assistant Professor, Volgograd State University, Russia.
E-mail: romadina-irina@mail.ru

Dr Tatyana B. Novikova, Associate Professor, Volgograd State University, Russia.
E-mail: tbnov@mail.ru

Об авторах

Ирина Дмитриевна Волкова — канд. филол. наук, ассист., Волгоградский государственный университет, Россия.
E-mail: romadina-irina@mail.ru

Татьяна Борисовна Новикова — канд. филол. наук, доц., Волгоградский государственный университет, Россия.
E-mail: tbnov@mail.ru