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LOCALIZATION OF WEBSITE VERBAL CONTENT INTO ENGLISH AS A MARKETING STRATEGY

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Purpose. *Today, website localization is of utmost importance due to the global trend prevailing in modern Internet communication. Depending on the nature of products and services being promoted via web platforms, localization patterns vary in their scale and verbal means. In any case, localized versions provide customers with access to authentic sources of information about world brands. The present paper deals with the concept of localization within the scope of linguistics and verbal content management. We have made an attempt to prove the need of differentiating English-language content for each of the English-speaking countries included into the websites' structure of localized options and to reveal the verbal means and techniques of text localization.*

Methodology and research materials. *We have used the texts of four global multilingual websites, each of them promoting a certain type of brand. The methods applied include the contextual analysis, comparative analysis and pragmatic analysis.*

Results. *The main results of the present research consist in describing the mechanisms of localized content creation within one website and within the space of one language, i.e. English. We have made conclusion on the relevance of website and text in particular localization into English and on the need of differentiating between two levels on which localization can be performed – intratextual and intertextual.*

Practical implications. *The obtained results may be applied in large-scale projects of websites localization.*

Keywords: *localization; textual localization; website; translation; promotion of brand; adaptation.*

ЛОКАЛИЗАЦИЯ ВЕРБАЛЬНОГО КОНТЕНТА САЙТА НА АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК СТРАТЕГИЯ МАРКЕТИНГА

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Цель. На сегодняшний день необходимость локализации онлайн-ресурсов обусловлена глобализирующей тенденцией развития интернет-коммуникации. Стратегии локализации варьируются в зависимости от характера реализуемых посредством интернет-платформ продуктов и услуг, однако в любом случае локализованные версии предоставляют потенциальным клиентам доступ к достоверным источникам информации о мировых брендах. Целью настоящего исследования является изучение феномена локализации с лингвистической точки зрения применительно к вербальному контенту международных сайтов. В статье предпринимается попытка обоснования необходимости дифференциации англоязычного контента для каждой из англоязычных стран, включенных в структуру локализованных версий сайтов, и выявить вербальные средства, за счет которых осуществляется данный процесс.

Методология проведения работы. Основу исследования образуют методы контекстуального, сравнительного и прагматического анализа.

Результаты. В результате проведенного исследования были описаны механизмы создания локализованного контента в рамках одного сайта и в пространстве одного языка – английского. В статье делается вывод о значимости локализации сайта и текста, в частности, на английский язык и о необходимости дифференциации между двумя уровнями, на которых может осуществляться локализация – уровень текста и интертекстуальный уровень.

Область применения результатов. Результаты исследования могут быть применены в сфере осуществления масштабных проектов локализации различных видов международных сайтов.

Ключевые слова: локализация; локализация текста; сайт; перевод; продвижение бренда; адаптация.

Introduction

In 1980s the American company Microsoft faced the task of creating software for different countries and translating content from English into other national languages. In this period, the term 'localization' was introduced to refer to the process of products adaptation for different regions. To date, the objects of localization are often represented with websites as the platforms for promoting goods, services, places and other types of brands. Over the recent years, there has been a great demand for the services of companies that specialize in localization of Internet resources in the framework of integrated marketing projects. According to one of the largest foreign translation agencies Moravia, the customers of localization services include global corporations working in the fields of information technology, retail, tourism, legal and medical services, clinical research and other industries [8]. The present research aims at studying the concept of localization from the viewpoint of linguistics and revealing the peculiar features of localized English texts.

Methodology

In their study of website localization, E.E. Sukhareva and O.V. Shurlina point out that this process consists of 4 stages: translation of verbal content; translation of software; sociocultural adaptation of structure and design; website optimization [10: p. 168]. In our research we consider localization as a process of websites' verbal content translation – the task faced by thousands of governmental and profit organizations all over the world under the pressure of overall globalization trends. Translation can rightly be considered as a key component of website localization, which results in making texts appropriate for the target audience. As for the language pairs typical of localization process, we should note the standard direction from the English language (the language of programming) to other languages. The opposite direction of text translation into English is traditionally referred to as internationalization [5: p. 2], since today English is a commonly recognized lingua franca of crosscultural communication. In the study of localization and globalization of tourism discourse [19], we have come to conclusion that localization may imply the

process of translation within any language pairs, while translation into English is the process of verbal content *globalization*, since there is no need of differentiating the texts of tourism for different English-speaking countries. The given prerequisites raise the questions on whether a localized text can be English and what are its peculiar features.

Modern realities of the world economy determine the importance of global corporations' presence in a certain number of target markets, the localized versions being created for each of them. These versions play the role of the only authentic Internet source of information about specific products and services. Website localization is obligatory since the prices, the range of goods and services, as well as the purchase conditions vary depending on the country of sale. The translation agency Epic Translations, specializing in localization services, emphasizes the importance of website localization taking into account the official status of English in more than 50 countries and the need for content differentiation for at least 4 countries (Great Britain, Australia, USA, New Zealand), where English is a *de facto* official language [20].

Results and discussion

We have carried out the analysis of English-language content of the website of insurance company American International Group (AIG), having branches in 80 countries and ranked in TOP-100 brands of America [17]. As can be seen from Fig. 1, the localized versions are marked with the names of territorial units – Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Middle East, Africa. Each of these options is further divided into the list of countries, where the company's services are available.

We should note that the versions for many countries (Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, Aruba, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, Grenada, St Lucia, Bahamas, Dominica, Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Virgin Islands, Malta, Leichtenstein, Uganda) are actually not localized and contain only contact information and the hyperlink to Global site, in particular to section Corporate news page. Besides, the English-language pages are created not only for inner-circle countries, but for expanding-circle countries (Russian, Finland, Sweden, Czech

Republic, Ukraine, etc.) as well. For example, the potential clients from Russia are offered two language options – Russian and English [4]. This peculiarity highlights the importance of geographical factor of website localization, i.e. the fact of different linguacultures representatives living in one country is taken into account in the process of content localization.

AIG Worldwide

Americas	Europe	Asia Pacific	Middle East	Africa
Americas				
Antigua & Barbuda	Aruba	Bahamas		
Barbados	Bermuda	Brazil		
Canada	Cayman Islands	Dominica		
Ecuador	Grenada	Haiti		
Jamaica	Mexico	Puerto Rico		
St Kitts & Nevis	St Lucia	Trinidad and Tobago		
United States	Venezuela	Virgin Islands		

Fig. 1. The fragment of localized versions' scheme on AIG website. Source: [21]

The analysis of English-language localized webpages for the target audience from two inner-circle countries (Australia and Canada) and two expanding-circle countries (Russia and Sweden) let reveal the verbal means and techniques of text localization.

Table 1.
Text fragments of AIG website localized versions for four countries –
Australia, Canada, Russia, Sweden

Country	Verbal means of localization
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>AIG Australia</u> is a general insurance company and is <u>regulated by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA)</u></i> • <i><u>Operating in Australia since 1957, we combine international experience with <u>local expertise</u>.</u></i> • <i><u>The first Australian office opened in Collins Street, Melbourne in 1957. Within just two years, a second office was established in <u>Sydney</u>.</u></i> • <i><u>We have offices, technical expertise and underwriting authority in <u>Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane</u>.</u></i> • <i><u>Travel Insurance Products (Domestic Travellers; Frequent Travelers; International Travellers; Travellers Aged Over 70) [1].</u></i>

The end of a table

Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>AIG Canada is one of the country's leading property and casualty insurance companies</u></i> • <i><u>With a staff complement of approximately 425 members, AIG Canada is dedicated to providing innovative insurance products</u></i> • <i><u>We handled 25,000 claims and paid out \$670 million in 2016</u></i> • <i><u>In 2016 AIG celebrates 50 years in Canada</u></i> • <i><u>With its headquarters in Toronto, AIG Canada has branches in Vancouver and Montreal</u></i> • <i><u>Travel Guard provides travel insurance products for all types of travellers (Trip Cancellation Package; All Inclusive Package) [2].</u></i>
Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>One of the company's unique advantages is that it combines deep knowledge of the Russian market with international practices and service standards</u></i> • <i><u>Total claims paid amounted to more than 5.5B rubles for the 20 years of operation in Russia</u></i> • <i><u>Member of top 50 Insurance companies in gross premium written in Russian Federation</u></i> • <i><u>Offices worldwide to serve the interests of Russian companies abroad</u></i> • <i><u>Travel Insurance (the Insured Trips) [4].</u></i>
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>AIG began its Swedish operation in Stockholm over 30 years ago</u></i> • <i><u>AIG is proud to include a number of the top Swedish businesses and companies</u></i> • <i><u>Group Plus Business Travel Insurance (Medical expenses; Rehabilitation costs following an accident; Invalidity and death benefits; Assault; Crisis therapy; Property / baggage; Delay; Deductible protection; Liability and legal expenses; Cancellation; Interrupted travel; Kidnapping, hijacking and the taking of hostages; Search and rescue; Assistance through SOS International [3].</u></i>

The text fragments presented in Table 1 illustrate the differences among the localized versions. First of all, they are associated with the differentiated use of toponyms depending on the country (*Australia, Collins Street, Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Brisbane; Canada, Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal; Russia, Russian Federation; Swedish, Stockholm*) and the company's age or the year of foundation in each of the countries (<...*Operating in Australia since 1957...*>; <...*In 2016 AIG celebrates 50 years in Canada...*>; <...*for the 20 years of operation in Russia...*>; <...*AIG began its Swedish operation in Stockholm over 30 years ago...*>). Other verbal means of localization include the additional information on branches' activities – regulating authorities (*Australian Prudential Regulation Authority*), staff (*staff complement of approxi-*

mately 425 members), financial activity and currencies (<...*We handled 25,000 claims and paid out \$670 million in 2016...>*; *Total claims paid amounted to more than 5.5B rubles*), as well as some advertising phrases (see Table 1).

Another variable in the hypertext structure of localized versions is represented by the range of services provided by the company. We exemplify the differentiation in Table 1 using the case of traveler insurance product. For example, at least 4 options in this category are available for Australian citizens (*Domestic Travellers; Frequent Travellers; International Travellers; Travellers Aged Over 70*), while in Canada, Russia and Sweden the insurance for tourists has a more general character and includes a single package of services for all groups of population.

Thus, the differentiation of localized versions' verbal content on the website under investigation is conditioned by the geographical factor of linguacultural adaptation, i.e. the geographical names and specific information about the company's branches vary depending on the country.

The website of the British daily newspaper *The Guardian*, one of the most famous media brands in the world, is also of much academic interest from the viewpoint of localization phenomenon. The online edition offers 4 options – *International edition, UK edition, US edition, Australia edition* (see Fig. 2). We cannot refer to these options as language ones, since they are all English. The differentiation is rather based on the geographical factor, which is observed in the very names of editions.

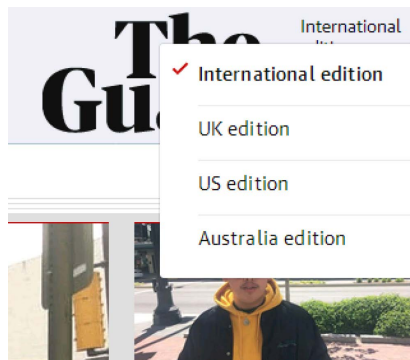


Fig. 2. Country options of *The Guardian* website. Source: [12]

The International edition was launched in 2015 ‘for over 40 million readers beyond the three target countries – UK, USA and Australia’ [7]. The US edition and Australia edition have been published since 2011 and 2013, correspondingly, so as to localize content for readers from these two countries as a major readership after the UK. Such differentiation is a particular case of international news localization described by Anthony Pym and consisting in the two-stage process: 1) the publication of internationalized reports by global news agencies; and 2) their further translation / adaptation by local newspapers, radio, websites and other media [9]. First of all, we’ve revealed differences in section names on different website versions: UK edition has the following sections – *UK, World, Business, Football, UK politics, Environment, Education, Science, Tech, Global development, Cities, Obituaries* [13]; US edition – *US, World, Environment, Soccer, US politics, Business, Tech, Science, Homelessness* [14]; and Australia edition – *Australia, World, AU politics, Environment, Football, Indigenous Australia, Immigration, Media, Business, Science, Tech* [12]. These hyperlinks show that each online edition is characterized by a set of country-specific topics along with such general headings as *World, Business, Environment, Science, Tech*. Firstly, localization reveals itself in indication of country names as primary options of each edition – *UK, US, Australia*. Secondly, we can observe the use of absolute synonyms ‘Football’ and ‘Soccer’, the latter being the American English word and the example of content localization for the U.S. citizens. Thirdly, the section *Politics* is also localized for each of three countries – *US politics, UK politics, AU politics*. According to the results of content analysis of 8 June 2018, the texts of *US politics* section are up-to-date articles about presidential reforms and political events in the USA; the *UK politics* section includes news reports on current decisions on the Brexit issue; and the *AU politics* section also includes relevant for Australian readership news. Besides, each edition has peculiar sections representing interest for the countries’ citizens: *UK edition (Education, Global development, Cities, Obituaries)*; *US edition (Homelessness)*; *Australia edition (Indigenous Australia, Immigration, Media)*.

The given example illustrates the process of verbal content localization of *The Guardian* online edition, which is carried out by including different news and articles into the website hyper-structure and making the editions interesting for readerships of three countries – the UK, the USA and Australia. In this case, localization is performed on the level of website content in a more wide sense as opposed to localization on the text level. The content analysis of the three online editions let reveal significant differences in the published materials, as well as an example of British and American English variants differentiation, which allows us talking about the process of localization being performed in the space of one language – English.

Branding in the tourism sector as one of the most prospective areas of economic activity includes the task of high-quality information logistics of international tourism websites. It should be noted that tourism products, such as places, destinations and objects do not belong to a certain tour operator. Besides, the range of potential travellers is not limited as in the case of brand goods which are available at specific target markets. In this connection, information presented on a travel website is not unique – various agencies organize similar tours and excursions. In such conditions of competitiveness and target audience vagueness, content localization is less obligatory, and, as a consequence, the number of language options on travel websites varies a lot. For example, the travel portal of Norway has 15 language options including *International edition* (see Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. The scheme of language options on the travel portal of Norway. Source: [18]

Along with the texts presenting different regions as unique objects of tourism and describing their geographical and cultural distinctions, travel portals often contain important practical information about organization of trips, flights, staying in a foreign country, etc. This sort of information needs to be adapted in the process of website localization. For example, we can observe the differentiation of localized content for *United Kingdom* and *USA* in section *Getting Here* of Norwegian travel portal (see Table 2).

Table 2.

Differences in localized content for *United Kingdom* and *USA*. Source: [6]

United Kingdom	USA
<p data-bbox="277 639 412 663">Getting Here</p> <p data-bbox="154 667 535 794"><i>Oslo Airport is where most of the international traffic arrives. Other international airports are located in the cities of Bergen, Kristiansand, Moss, Sandeffjord, Stavanger, Tromsø and Trondheim.</i></p> <p data-bbox="154 802 535 1090"><i>Norway is closer to the UK than you might think – only two hours by air, and with numerous flight departures every day, it couldn't be easier to get here. Or if you have the time, make the journey part of your holiday and travel by ferry, train, or car. From the United Kingdom there are direct services to Oslo Airport from Manchester, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London Heathrow, London Stansted and London Gatwick.</i></p> <p data-bbox="154 1098 535 1193"><i>From Oslo Airport you can reach Oslo city centre in 20 minutes by Flytoget Airport Express Train. Express buses and local trains are also available.</i></p>	<p data-bbox="686 639 820 663">Getting Here</p> <p data-bbox="546 667 966 794"><i>Oslo Airport is where most of the international traffic arrives. Other international airports are located close to the cities of Bergen, Kristiansand, Moss, Sandeffjord, Stavanger, Tromsø, and Trondheim.</i></p> <p data-bbox="546 802 966 1090"><i>In recent years several direct routes to/from the US have been launched, making it easier than ever to travel between the two countries. Today there are direct services to Oslo Airport from Boston, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles, New York JFK, New York Newark, San Francisco (Oakland), Orlando and San Juan. On September 29, 2016, SAS is launching a new nonstop service from Miami to Oslo – in addition to their existing daily nonstop service from Newark, NJ.</i></p> <p data-bbox="546 1098 966 1193"><i>From Oslo Airport you can reach Oslo city centre in 20 minutes by Flytoget Airport Express Train. Express buses and local trains are also available.</i></p>

As can be seen from Table 2, the highlighted text fragments are localized for each of the target audiences through the use of geographical markers – country names (*the UK; the US*), cities and airports (*Manchester, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, London Heathrow, London Stansted and London Gatwick, Boston, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles, New York JFK, New York Newark, San Francisco (Oakland), Orlando and San Juan, Miami*), and other information about air travel to Norway (*only*

two hours by air; numerous flight departures every day; on September 29, 2016, SAS is launching a new nonstop service, etc.). In this case, we are dealing with localization of one and the same text, i.e. intratextual localization as opposed to the abovementioned examples.

The travel portal of Poland also demonstrates the performed localization of text about getting to the destination (see Table 3).

Table 3.

Differences in the localized text for UK & Ireland as opposed to the text in Global English

Global English [16]	UK & Ireland [15]
<p><i>Flying to Poland is easy! Over 30 different airlines fly to Poland – from Emirates to Ryanair, so prices vary considerably. It pays to take your time when shopping around for a flight. You can start with flight search websites, the major airlines or your local Polish specialist travel agent. Poland's international airports include Warsaw Chopin, Warsaw Modlin, Krakow, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Poznan, Katowice, Lodz, Bydgoszcz, Szczecin, Lublin and the newest one in Olsztyn.</i></p>	<p><i>Flying to Poland has become a lot easier recently due to a large number of airports across the country and airlines running busy flight schedules.</i></p> <p><i>Seven airlines now regularly operate to 11 Polish cities from 17 airports in the United Kingdom and ROI.</i></p> <p><i>FLIGHTS BETWEEN THE UK AND POLAND</i></p> <p><i>There are no direct ferry services between the UK / Ireland and Poland.</i></p>

The comparative analysis of *Global English* version and *UK & Ireland* localized version let reveal significant changes in presented texts, which are associated with the latter's orientation at the UK citizens. Along with the indication of available transport links between the UK and Poland, section *Flights between The UK and Poland* also contains the detailed table of flights from cities of the UK & Ireland. There are no matching phrases in these two texts, so the localized text is not an adapted one but rather a newly made up for the specific audience.

Conclusion

Thus, the content analysis shows that in some cases there is need to localize websites and texts in particular from English to English. Such cases include the task of differentiating between several English-language countries when creating informational online resources which promote brands. The research results let us making conclusion on the

key role of geographic factor in the process of websites' verbal content localization into the English language. This factor implies the need to adapt texts and / or the whole website's hyperstructure depending on the country which citizens are addressed. The main peculiar features of localized English texts are represented with geographical markers playing significant role in implementing the informative function of texts, which promote service, media and place brands. The content analysis has also demonstrated the need to differentiate between localization of text and localization of website's textual content in general, i.e. intratextual and intertextual localization, since in the first case we adapt fragments of one and the same text and in the second case we deal with transcreation – making up new texts for target audiences from different countries.

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