

ترجمة وتحديد موقع شركة تويوتا موتورز كدراسة حالة

Translation and Localization of Toyota Motors Website as A Case Study

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The present paper investigates the process of website localisation. Theoretically, in a broad sense localisation is the process of modifying a product for a specific locale. It should be implemented in a way to enable persons from a certain place or culture to be able to utilise the product in their native language without difficulty. The author takes the *toyota.ae*, the official dealer of Toyota Motors, as a case study, since this website is localised to address the Arabic language reader in order to market the company vehicles. The data collected in the paper are taken from *toyota.ae/en/* and *toyota.ae/ar/* to assess the English and Arabic versions of this website. The qualitative approach is adopted here to see to what extent the website localisers succeed in transferring the English content to the Arabic one. The author assesses the process of the website localisation from translation perspective by making a comparison between the English content and the Arabic content.

Keywords: *Localisation, Translation, Toyota, toyota.ae,*

Introduction

For linguistic specialists, localisation is a relatively recent topic of activity, with a strong correlation to computer products and other digital contents. It is

realised as a range of profoundly technology- involved activities, of course without extensive technological preparations would not be feasible.

One has to establish the most significant words before examining the localisation techniques and procedures: **Globalisation, Internationalisation, Localisation and Translation** abbreviated with the GILT acronym. There are two dimensions for globalisation: it refers in general to the globalised reach of the economy and industry. It refers also to commercial operations linked to selling a product or service across several regional markets within the localisation framework. Internationalisation is the "technical localisation process of enabling a product" (Lommel & Ray 2007, 17) in such a way that a specific market may be readily adapted following the engineering phase. Locale is a number of parameters or criteria used to recognise the user's language, country and other preferences, where mixing geography and language maintains all aspects of cultural consequences as in cities, states or countries. But, defining a locale as a culture is not valid since the latter is more comprehensive. The EU is a vital example; one might rearrange the EU market software solution, using all the cultural and legal necessary changes or required modification in English. A locale is not a language since language is an essential component of a place (Yule 2015, p.243). Locals may accommodate the same language as the original, but this requires an adaptation of the product to be successful, e.g. French in France and French in Canada. Localising products implies adjusting the cultural and language characteristics to a certain geographical or demographic locale of the material (texts, pictures, spoken sequences, etc.). This entails adjusting material for elements like "date and time formats, currencies, numbers, languages, colour-coding, cultural preferences and writing systems to the local standards" (Lommel & Ray 2007: 18). A locale specifies sorting algorithms and upper and lower case characters for data representation. Locals are technically expressed in combination with the conventional country codes by the two-letters code on language representation (ISO 639-1) and (ISO 3166-1) such as *de-BE* which refers to German spoken in Belgium, or *en-CA* meaning English in Canada.

It is possible to define localisation as "the provision of services and technologies for the management of multilinguality across the global information flow" (Schäler (1999), as cited in *Localisation Focus September 2002*: 21). Besides, it includes three elements, namely "the industry, the providers of tools as well as the localisation work itself" (ibid.). More practically, localisation is the "process of modifying a product for a specific locale"(Yunker 2002: 17). Localisation should be implemented in a way to

enable persons from a certain place or culture to be able to utilise the product in their native language without difficulty. Any product you can offer to an international customer group might be anything, but in practice the word "localisation" is used for software and websites.

The localisation of software refers to the process of adaptation and translation of software into a different language to make it suitable in linguistic and cultural terms for the local market. There are disparities between localising software and the conventional translation of documents. During translation, the localisation of software is "the translation and adaption of a software product and its documentation" (Pym, 2010: 1). Software translation initiatives are generally carried out while the source products are still being developed so that all language versions are simultaneously shipped. Therefore, translation is simply one activity "in a localisation project, activities include project management, software engineering, testing and desktop publishing" (Sandrini 2008, 2).

Online localisation, on the other hand, includes translation into another language, which will enable more globally accepted products to utilise the software's user interface or data on a web page. Therefore, the primary objective of the localisation is to improve product understandability and use so that it is utilised with optimal efficiency in different areas of the world. Surveys and statistical analyses by *Internet World Stats* in 2021 have affirmed that there were "an estimated 5 billion Internet users globally, of which Middle East comprised 3.4%, or a total of 265,587,661 Internet users" (www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm).

Web localisation, in short, is the translation of a website into a specific language, which is "an efficient and cost-effective means to expand market share and increase product sales" (Sandrini, 2008:2). The localisation of the web is in fact similar to that of the software localisation, which Pym puts properly (2010:1) as:

"The localisation of a website differs from non-hypertext translation with respect to the identification of translatable elements, the tools needed to render them, their non-linearity, the way in which the translation process is prepared and coordinated, and the extent of the changes that may be introduced".

As websites are amended and updated often or frequently, web localisation is also defined by the usage of translation memory in translating new and altered

material. The rapid expansion of the software and web location business shows the growing popularity. As the elements of localisation are essential to understand it, the localisation characteristics, the topic of the next section, are also important to tackle its procedures and techniques.

1- Characteristics of localisation

The relationship between web localisation and software can be tackled via five different aspects:

- (i) computational;
- (ii) linguistic;
- (iii) cultural;
- (iv) economic; and
- (v) legal.

The present paper tackles two of these aspects, namely linguistic and cultural aspects. Ashworth and O'Hagan (2002: 66) defined Localisation as

“a process to facilitate globalization by addressing linguistic and cultural barriers specific to the Receiver who does not share the same linguistic and cultural background of the Sender”.

Here, it is important to mention a number of linguistic localisation characteristics cited by Sandrini (2008:3-22):

- "Language of the locale": SL– TL process of translating a work creates “a fresh life by eliminating and renewing language boundaries on a foreign soil” (p.3). That is, location means giving a thing a life beyond a locale. This requires the identification of the locals where, for instance “the French and Italian scripts of Western Europe, Eastern European Greek and Russian script and Chinese and Japanese characters of the Asian language are employed” (ibid.).
- "Language varieties": varieties within a single language, in localisation of a software, also needs to be identified, as in the simplified and standard Chinese characters, American English and British English.

- "Directionality of language": written languages are poly-directional, "from left to right or from right to right or from right to left or left to right horizontally" (p.5). Languages like Arabic are written from right to left, while English numerals, which are from left to right, a text must be placed from right to left. The linguistic directionality therefore generates typographical issues that need to be rectified before the content can be localised.
- "Linguistic adjustments": due to the restricted screen space while localising software, linguistic modifications may be required. Some localisation tools, such as Visual Localise, can enable users to eliminate character limitations to make linguistic changes easier. You might compare the screen space issue to adding subtitles to a movie that is displayed on a small screen.
- "Typographical changes": When localising from one language into another, typographical or logographical adjustments may be required. This modification may be seen by the abbreviation used for various command buttons.
- "Terminological consistency": Concerning localisation applications for more than one product, terminological uniformity is essential. If terminological differences are required, localisation software may initiate a number of translations of the same term, of course depending on the context, as in the issue of localising a product for the MEANA people, where several terminological questions raised.
- "Fragment translation": In addition to document transfer, such as manuals, a decontextualized fragment of terms translation, relying primarily on predefined terminology and translation memory databases, is the majority of works on software and web localisations.
- "Punctuation marks": Languages are different in their punctuation systems; an issue should also be taken into consideration. Chinese uses characters, not letters or figures in its system.
- "Diacritics": Special characters, like Ŷ, ÿ, Đ, đ, ß, and þ, in some languages like Russian are difficult to be printed accurately on the computer; this in turn initiates another important problem in localisation.
- "Time and date formats": Sandrini (2008) talked about the various techniques used by languages to state time and place (i) Y-M-D in Chinese;

(ii) M-D-Y in American English; and (iii) D-M-Y in French, German, and Arabic.

- "Phone numbers": This issue is of direct importance since web localisation needs to mention the country phone code on the web page.
- "Units of measure": Basically, the imperial and metric measuring systems or the British and metric systems are in use. When it is utilised in Australia and Japan, software created in the USA with the miles, pounds, and gallons system to be converted to centimeters, kilograms, and liters, respectively.
- "Number formats": This issue is a reason for many financial problems since language like the USA and European countries use different formats for numbering big numbers.
- "Currency formats": Sandrini talked about the danger of having several ways for citing currencies, like (1) symbols (£, \$), (2) alphabetic characters (\$Fr), or (3) combinations (Cz\$). "Renminbi or RMB may have to be inserted in localising foreign-language software into a simplified Chinese system. For example, for a sum of 112233, it is French €112 233, US\$112,233, German €112.233, Japanese ¥112,233" (p.7).
 - "Address formats": Addresses, provinces, postal codes, and states are stated differently. Abbreviations used here are also problematic.

As far as the cultural characteristics are concerned, it is an aspect of creating locally-adaptable pictures and conventional methods including the alteration of graphic components in order to suit local cultural standards (Schäler 2002: 21–23). This is feasible because of the lessening in the globalisation process of the cultural components. Therefore, culturalisation of website or software is a crucial project component of localisation. In localisation, what is culturally improper may need to be eliminated.

- "Intercultural communication": Sandrini (2008) believes that "translation is the transfer or transmission of culture; it is a type of intercultural interaction" (p.7). It is the broadening of the users in the localisation context of software for the benefit of a cross- cultural -and language - boundary products.

- "Cultural correctness": Political and religious influences and cultural perceptions as terms of the impact of cultural correctness have to be assessed in software and web localisation.
- "Ideological acceptability": Hatim & Mason (1997:119) states that translation is “the translation of ideology, involving the transfer of values, beliefs and ideas from one language to another by means of the written word”. Some ideologically- unacceptable expressions must to be ignored in the localisation process.
- "Colour conventions": Sandrini (2008) and many semioticians believe that translation must take consideration of the cultural associations of colour. “As colour is culture-bound, different colours have different associations. Red, for example, means danger in European cultures, but festivity in the Chinese culture” (p.9).
- "Cultural symbols": it should be noted that graphics with a specific cultural symbol, such as a sign of a landmark in a specific place, should be avoided in order not to cause any confusion.

2- Methodology and Discussion

The present paper takes the process of the Toyota website localisation adopted in toyota.ae, the Toyota dealer in the United Arab Emirates as a case study. As we have stated in the theoretical part of this paper, the purpose behind localisation is to present Toyota products to the Arab culture in conformity to the local language and environment.

The data collected in the paper are taken from toyota.ae/en/ and Toyota.ae/ar/ to assess the English and Arabic versions of this website. The qualitative approach is adopted here to see to what extent the website localisers succeed in transferring the English content to the Arabic one.

Due to the limits of the study, the author makes the scope of work restricted to the web pages of two well-known vehicles, namely *Land Cruiser* and *Avalon*. The pages review the vehicles specifications regarding reliability, safety, technology, exterior and interior appearance etc.

The following table covers the examples taken from toyota.ae elucidating the Land Cruiser specification in both English and Arabic.

No.	The English Content	The Arabic Content
1	<p>"Any Journey Anytime"</p> <p>"Since its launch in 1951, the Land Cruiser has continued to be selected by customers as a safe and secure vehicle symbolizing Toyota's quality, durability and reliability. Now, 70 years later Toyota has introduced the long-anticipated evolution, with ground-breaking enhancements to the platform and powertrain befitting the king of SUVs."</p> <p>"The Land Cruiser has long been known as one of the Middle East's best-loved vehicles, and a cumulative total of approximately 10.4 million Land Cruisers have been enjoyed by customers in 170 countries and regions all over the world."</p>	<p>"الخيار الدائم لمختلف الرحلات"</p> <p>منذ إطلاقها في شهر أغسطس عام ١٩٥١، حافظت لاند كروزر على مكانتها بين أبرز الخيارات المفضلة لدى العملاء بفضل ميزات السلامة والأمان ومستويات الجودة والمتانة والموثوقية العالية التي تعكس خبرة تويوتا الراسخة في القطاع. واليوم، وبعد مرور ٧٠ عاماً، تقدم تويوتا الجيل الجديد الذي طال انتظاره مع تحسينات غير مسبقة على الهيكل الأساسي للسيارة ومجموعة نقل الحركة في السيارة التي تتربع على عرش فئة السيارات الرياضية متعددة الاستعمالات."</p> <p>"ولطالما كانت لاند كروزر إحدى أكثر السيارات شهرة في الشرق الأوسط، إذ بلغ إجمالي مبيعاتها ١٠.٤ مليون سيارة في ١٧٠ دولة ومنطقة في أرجاء العالم."</p>
2	<p>"Bolder, Lighter, Stronger"</p> <p>"The exterior design offers an overwhelming presence and strength through a new overall design language, while the interior is appointed with luxury and" functionality that truly set this generation apart from any other vehicle in its class.</p> <p>Wide, powerful shapes run horizontally to create a distinctive and authoritative presence. While the striking silhouette is defined by sharply contrasting lines"</p>	<p>"تصميم جريء بهيكل أخف وزناً وأكثر متانة"</p> <p>تتميز السيارة بتصميم خارجي يلفت الأنظار ويعزز حضورها القوي من خلال منهجية تصميمها الجديدة والشاملة، في حين تجسد مقصورتها الداخلية أرقى مستويات الفخامة والكفاءة الوظيفية التي تميز هذا الطراز عن جميع السيارات الأخرى من فئته.</p> <p>خطوط عريضة توحى بالقوة وتنساب أفقياً لتمنح السيارة حضورها المميز والفريد، وإطلالة مهيبة تعززها الخطوط الحادة والمتباينة."</p>
3	<p>Flagship Technologies"</p> <p>As the flagship model of the Land Cruiser series, it has in every generation led the way in vehicle evolution while</p>	<p>تقنيات رائدة"</p> <p>بصفتها النموذج الرائد لسلسلة لاند كروزر، استثمرت السيارة بمختلف أجيالها أحدث التقنيات لقيادة مسيرة التطور في عالم السيارات. وأثمرت هذه التطويرات في</p>

	incorporating the latest technologies. These years of developments have resulted in vehicle weight reduction, lowering the center of gravity, the adoption of a new powertrain, and an unmatched off-road capability."	تخفيف وزن السيارة وخفض مركز ثقلها، إضافة إلى اعتماد مجموعة نقل حركة جديدة وتحقيق قدرات لا تُضاهى على الطرقات الوعرة."
4	<p>Safety is Standard"</p> <p>As with any other Toyota model, safety remains a top priority for the all-new Land Cruiser, which comes with an advanced safety system. This is complemented by Toyota Safety Sense 2.0, an innovative safety technology package that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS) that introduces new features including Emergency Steering Assist and Intersection Turn Assistance to help prevent collisions with vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. The package also includes Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC) with Full-Speed Range, Lane Tracing Assist (LTA), Lane Departure Alert (LDA), and Adaptive High Beam System (AHS)."</p>	<p>"تصميم يتمحور حول السلامة"</p> <p>كما في جميع سيارات تويوتا الأخرى، تُعد السلامة أولوية رئيسية في سيارة لاند كروزر الجديدة كلياً، إذ تم تزويدها بنظام سلامة متطور يتكامل مع نظام تويوتا للسلامة ٢.٠، وهو عبارة عن مجموعة متطورة من تقنيات السلامة، تتضمن نظام التنبيه قبل الاصطدام (PCS)، الذي تم تزويده بميزات جديدة، من بينها خاصية المساعدة في التوجيه في حالات الطوارئ وخاصية المساعدة في التوجيه عند التقاطعات، لمساعدة السائق على منع الاصطدام بالمركبات الأخرى وراكبي الدراجات والمشاة. كما يتضمن نظام تويوتا للسلامة نظام تثبيت السرعة الراداري الديناميكي (DRCC) على كامل نطاق السرعة، ونظام تتبع المسار (LTA)، ونظام الحفاظ على المسار (LDA)، ونظام الضوء العالي المتكيف (AHS)."</p>

Following the Arabic style, the translator in (1) uses more than one strategy (addition and explication) to produce a text attracting the Arabic language reader. For example, s/he added the words "بفضل ميزات" and "الخبرة الراسخة", and explicates the abbreviation "SUV" (Sport Utility Vehicle) to put the specifications mentioned in the source text in an attractive stylistic form.

In (2), the translator uses lexical shifts in rendering the desired meaning and esthetic form. The punctuation has an esthetic shape in the title "Bolder, Lighter, Stronger", but in the Arabic version the esthetic shape is fulfilled by a complete explicate sentence "تصميم جريء بهيكل أخف وزناً وأكثر متانة". Moreover, the translator feels free in shifting nouns into verbs and vice versa.

deletion is used by the translator as a strategy to exclude unimportant information and to elucidate just those attracting the target reader attention. Accordingly, a whole segment "while incorporating the latest technologies" is omitted from the source text and remained untranslated.

The translator in (٤) adopts the literal translation approach except with the title. S/he renders "standard" in the source text into "تصميم". S/he adopts the literal translation since the content tackles technical terms. As far as using English abbreviations in the target Arabic text is concerned, I believe that this is an unnecessary step since the full Arabic equivalent exists and the full English term is absent.

The following table reviews the Avalon specifications in the English and Arabic versions as listed in the toyota.ae

No.	The English Content	The Arabic Content
1	<p>ADMIRER CONFIDENCE</p> <p>Exhilarating design meets cutting edge technology for a new chapter in premium. The Avalon embodies dynamic luxury at its finest."</p>	<p>"ثقة جديرة بالإعجاب</p> <p>تجسد أفالون الفخامة والديناميكية بأبهى حالاتها. فهي تقدم لك تصميمًا فريدًا مع تكنولوجيا متطورة جاهزة لتنتقلك إلى عالم جديد من الرفاهية."</p>
2	<p>"LUXURIOUS FROM EVERY ANGLE"</p> <p>"Luxurious design and refinement give you the best driving experience from Avalon. With improved dynamics and a responsive ride like never before", along with a premium "interior that's smart and comfortable, you can go wherever you want to in style."</p>	<p>"تفاصيل فاخرة"</p> <p>يمنحك التصميم الفاخر من أفالون أفضل تجربة للقيادة. حيث تضمن الديناميكية والتكنولوجيا المتطورة قيادة سلسة فريدة من نوعها، إلى جانب التصميم الداخلي فائق الراحة والذكاء، لتنتقل إلى وجهتك بكل أناقة وثقة."</p>
3	<p>A WAVE FROM THE FUTURE"</p>	<p>"المستقبل بين يديك"</p> <p>صممت أفالون لتمنحك القيادة الأكثر راحة، بفضل التقنيات الرائعة كشاشة العرض على الزجاج الأمامي</p>

	<p>With intuitive technology like Head-up Display, a 7-inch Multi Information Display, surround sound JBL 14-speaker sound, and a host of safety features, the Avalon is built to make your ride the most comfortable yet."</p>	<p>وشاشة المعلومات المتعددة بقياس ٧ بوصات، إضافة إلى نظام الصوت المحيطي المكون من ١٤ مكبر صوت ومجموعة من ميزات السلامة، لتتمتع بقيادة أكثر سلاسة وأناقة."</p>
4	<p>STYLISHLY SAFE"</p> <p>With an advanced suite of active and passive safety features, Avalon is designed to help keep driver and passengers safe in the event of an accident. Standard features on the Avalon include Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection, Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist, Automatic High Beams, and Dynamic Radar Cruise Control."</p>	<p>"الأمان بكل أناقة"</p> <p>تقدم لك أفالون مجموعة متطورة من ميزات السلامة الفعالة والوقائية لتحافظ على سلامة السائق والركاب معا في حالة وقوع حادث. تتضمن هذه الميزات القياسية لأفالون نظام ما قبل الاصطدام مع الكشف عن المشاة، وإنذار مغادرة المسار مع نظام التوجيه المساعد ونظام الضوء العالي الأوتوماتيكي بالإضافة لمثبت السرعة الراداري الديناميكي"</p>

In (1), the translator adopts a functional approach in rendering the source text into the target text. S/he uses the source text as just a "source of information" and reproduces it in such a way that attract the target reader by means of a beautiful style.

In (2), the translator uses explicitation, deletion, and addition procedures in the translation process. In the title, s/he condense the source expression "from every angle" into just the Arabic word "تفاصيل". Though the importance and potential effect of the word "refinement", it is not translated in the target text. Applying the addition procedure, the translator adds the Arabic word "ثقة" though it is not existed in the source text.

The translator in (3) applies simplification and addition procedures. In the title, s/he renders the idiomatic expression "a wave from the future" into unidiomatic expression "المستقبل بين يديك". In addition, s/he transfers the source text "to make your ride the most comfortable yet" into Arabic twice; in the beginning "لتمنحك" لتتمتع بقيادة أكثر سلاسة وأناقة", and at the end "القيادة الأكثر راحة".

The literal translation is adopted by the translator in (4). In rendering technical terms and in scientific translation in general, the literal translation is the most preferable one.

Conclusions

The business component is of vital importance for the location. It is commonly recognized that the key objective of localisation is the marketing of software and websites via globalisation. Consequently, localisation is often seen as an important method of generating new translation marketplaces. This will continue to be a topic to be explored by those specialised in translation. Linguistically, localisation requires the usage of controlled language, which is described as a particular type of natural languages, with characteristics like specific domains of use, controlled lexicon, stylistic rule for avoiding complexities and ambiguities, and simplified grammar. These characteristics make these processes of localisation "easier to be understood by users and non-native speakers and processed by machine translation systems" (Chan 2004: 44). Theoretically, in a broader sense, localisation is realized as translation. An act of localisation is in fact an act of translation. Translatability of cultural terms is, therefore, of considerable concern to translation theorists. Translation in its perfect sense is impossible since SL and TL are not characterized by similar phonology, morphology, lexicon, structures, the literary history, culture and prosody.

As for the process of localising the toyota.ae website, the translator in general successfully render the English content into an impressive and attractive Arabic content.

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