

Specialised Translation and Conference Interpretation - 2025-26

Scientific-Technical Translation from Italian into English II

Lesson 1: 17 February 2026

- Definitions of Localization

Localization (Localisation)

Term developed in the IT Industry, applied to:

- Software
- Operating systems
- Applications
- Games

- Websites and Web content

GILT

- Globalization
- Internationalization
- Localization
- Translation

Internationalization

Internationalization is the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. Internationalization takes place at the level of program design and document development.

Pym, Anthony, Localization: On its nature, virtues and dangers, 2005

Globalization

Globalization addresses the business issues associated with taking a product global. In the globalization of high-tech products this involves integrating localization throughout a company, after proper internationalization and product design, as well as marketing, sales, and support in the world market.

Pym, Anthony, Localization: On its nature, virtues and dangers, 2005

Translation/1

In industry terms, translation is basically the minimalist replacement of natural-language strings, i.e. it is a word- (possibly sentence-) level replacement of content expressed using one language system with the same content expressed using another system.

However, in translation studies over the last 30 years, this simplistic view of translation has been radically modified.

Translation/2

With developments in text linguistics, discourse analysis and greater attention to cultural determinants, interpersonal dynamics and cultural specificity are now seen as playing a major role in resolving translation problems.

There has been a move beyond simple 'equivalence', towards concerns regarding function, objective and audience reception

Localization/1

Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be sold.

Localization Industry Standard Association (LISA), 2003

Localization/2

The 'goal is to provide a product with the look and feel of having been created for the target to eliminate or minimize local sensitivities'.

Globalization and Localization Association (GALA), 2011

Localization/3

[Localization is] the linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content to the requirements and locale of a foreign market, and the provision of services and technologies for the management of multilingualism across the digital global information flow.

Schäler, R., "Localization", in: Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, Baker, M. and Saldanha, G. (Eds.), 2007

Localization/4

A general mode of thought informing cross-cultural text adaptation in the fields of software, product documentation, web technology, and some international news services.

Pym, Anthony, Localization: On its nature, virtues and dangers, 2005

Localization/5

Without doubt, the 'adaptation' metaphor is the most pervasive in both TS and industry definitions. Adaptations are seen as the additional component that localization provides, as opposed to the textual or wordly nature of 'translation'. The term 'adaptation' is typically used to indicate the performative action of the localization process. Normally, it is the process of adapting a program for a local market (Microsoft Corporation 2003), the 'linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content' (Schäler 2010: 209), or the 'the adaptation of any good or service' (Sprung 2000: xviii). The object of the adaptations is normally the product itself (Schäler 2001; Müller 2005; Gibb and Matthaiakis 2007; GALA 2011) or the linguistic and cultural elements within it (ÖNORM 1200 2000).

Jimenez-Crespo, Miguel, Translation and Web Localization, 2013

Translation and Localization

We might (recognize that) translation and localization as two aspects of cross-cultural communication. Within this frame, localization brings in specific key elements like internationalization and, as a consequence, considerable technological mediation and teamwork. Translation, for its part, concerns multiple features of inter-lingual processes that are overlooked in most models of localization.

Pym, Anthony, Localization, training and the treatment of fragmentation, 2006

Localization, Internationalization and Globalization

	<i>Internationalisation</i>	<i>Localisation</i>	<i>Globalisation</i>
<i>Definition</i>	Functional in any language and content (linguistic and cultural data) separated from functionality	Adaptation of products, services, and digital content to a cultural-linguistic market	The strategy of bringing a product or service to the global market, involving sales and marketing
<i>People</i>	Software developers, producers and authors of digital content	Translators, proofreaders, software engineers, project managers, testers, publishers	Marketing and sales personnel
<i>Stage</i>	Development and design of a digital product (content) or service (pre-requisite for localisation)	Translation and adaptation of text, user interface, and cultural conventions	Bringing to the market the internationalised and localised product or service

Table 1. Differences between internationalisation, localization, and globalisation

Dimitra Anastasiou, Reinhard Schäler, Translating Vital Information: Localisation, Internationalisation, and Globalisation

Need for Localization

Mainstream: often determined by marketing and economic objectives

Alternative: healthcare, bridging the digital divide, overcoming information poverty

Elements of Localization/1

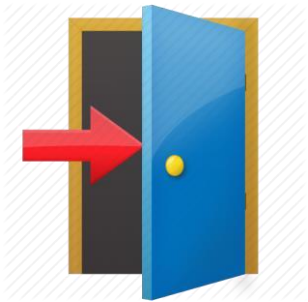
- Date and time formats, as well as calendar settings
- Currency formats and other monetary-related information (taxes)
- Number formats (decimal separator, thousand separator)
- Address formats, such as postal codes, provinces, states

Elements of Localization/2

- Name format, e.g. in Spanish-speaking countries there are two surnames.
- Telephone number formats
- Units of measure
- Colour conventions, e.g. red means danger in European cultures, but good fortune in Chinese cultures

Elements of Localization/3

Iconic conventions:



a door might mean 'exit' in European cultures, but might be misunderstood in others



a mortar-and-pestle signifies good cooking in some cultures but tends to be associated with a chemist's in English-language culture

Elements of Localization/4

Images of people, the environment, recognizable landmarks



Elements of Localization/5

- Sound files: songs, music, warning sounds, accents etc. may have to be adapted
- Content: adding locale-specific content on to that locale

Elements of Localization/6

- Connection speeds: with slow connection speeds, a highly sophisticated website will be difficult to use, so content may need to be amended
- Legal conventions: copyright and personal data protection differ from country to country

Degrees of Localization

- ‘Standardized’ (one website for all countries)
- ‘Semi-localized’ (one site gives information for some countries)
- ‘Localized’ (a whole translated site for different countries)
- ‘Highly localized’ (translations plus country-specific adaptations)
- ‘Culturally customized’ (a new site completely immersed in the target culture)

Singh, Nitish & Arun Pereira, The Culturally Customized Web Site: Customizing Web Sites for the Global Marketplace, 2005