R E V I E W

of the dissertation

TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN DIGITAL SERVICE PRODUCT LOCALIZATION FROM ENGLISH INTO BULGARIAN

submitted for the award of a PhD degree by Maria Ivanova Todorova, Department of English and American studies, Sofia University

Reviewer: Prof. Diana Yankova, PhD, Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, New

Bulgarian University,

Details about the PhD student:

Maria Todorova has a Bachelor's degree in English Philology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" (2015) and a Master's degree in Translation in 2017. Since 2022, she has been a PhD student at the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Languages, Sofia University, working in the area of Translation Theory and Practice.

Publications on the topic of the dissertation:

M. Todorova has 6 publications on the topic (2 in print), all but one of which are published in English and focus on different aspects of the inextricably linked processes of translation and language localization, the most common problems, as well as possible strategies and the necessary competences for their solution. In the period 2020 - 2023, Maria Todorova participated in six conferences, probably with papers, but this is not mentioned in the submitted documentation.

The abstract faithfully reflects the structure and content of the dissertation and includes a detailed account of the contributions of the research. I agree with the stated contributions of the dissertation.

According to the information provided by Maria Todorova, she fulfils the minimum national requirements under Article 2b of the RRDA.

Relevance of the thesis:

Maria Todorova's dissertation - 166 pages, five chapters, a list of references and three appendices - is dedicated to the problems that arise in translation and strategies for dealing with them in the localization of digital service products from English into Bulgarian. This represents a highly topical problem in the field of translation theory and practice due to the still numerous unresolved issues related to this process, especially for a lesser used language such as Bulgarian. One of the reasons why many users who are proficient in e.g. English read instructions in the original

language or leave the menu on their phone in a foreign language is precisely the problematic translation in the localization process. The results of such a study will serve the purposes of both translation theory and practice. Therefore, the choice of topic is determined by the relevance of the issue at hand in theoretical and practical terms, as well as by the lack of such in-depth comparative English-Bulgarian studies of the difficulties in this type of translation, the strategies that can be applied, and the necessary linguistic competences.

Knowledge of the state of the problem and relevance of the literature used:

Maria Todorova is a freelance translator and localization specialist at the translation agency SOFITA. She is also an assistant professor, lecturing in translation (English to Bulgarian), and software and translation. The dissertation is not only a thorough study of the research problem, but is written in clear, persuasive and easy to read style. She demonstrates an excellent command of English academic language. Maria provides an overview of a large range of contemporary scholarly literature and demonstrates a good knowledge of the problems under study. The sources cited are directly relevant to the research topic.

Correspondence between the chosen research methodology and the set aims and objectives of the dissertation:

The object of study is clearly stated and the aim of the dissertation is to develop a typology of translation problems in localization from English to Bulgarian and to propose solutions arising from cross-linguistic asymmetries between the two languages. The problems under study are divided into three groups: genre, technological (macrostructural), and contextual. A corpus of translation errors in digital products is analyzed. The research questions are very clearly formulated. To achieve the objectives, M. Todorova successfully applies a hybrid approach, with the working model based on a modification of Man Hin Wu's (2017) approach focusing on linguistic errors, complemented by De la Cova's (2016) classification.

The corpus of the study was collected over a period of one and a half years from commonly used digital service products such as Facebook, Booking, Instagram, Google, etc., and consists of 150 errors found in 42 products, distributed as follows: 37% genre, 41% macrostructural and 22% contextual. It can be confidently said that the set goals and objectives were fully achieved and properly justified as a result of the research methodology used.

It should be noted that the dissertation has a very clear structure in which the topics and arguments logically follow. There are no general, commonplace, trite propositions and fuzzy statements.

Scientific and applied contributions of the thesis:

The dissertation contains both academic and applied results that represent original contributions to the theory and practice of translation. The study and typology of translation errors from English to Bulgarian in the localization of digital service products and the resulting in-depth analysis of recommendations for dealing with some of them undoubtedly constitute a worthy subject of academic interest.

After compiling her own corpus of authentic examples, Maria Todorova conducts an analysis that leads to important results related to the identification of a number of factors that influence the translation process in English to Bulgarian localization with a focus on the type of language problems, the reasons for their occurrence and possible ways to deal with them.

As a result of the research Maria Todorova reaches a number of significant conclusions and formulates several main contributions that can be groped in two categories:

1. Contributions to the theory and practice of translation: the results of the study contribute to the development of a typology for the analysis of translation problems in the process of localization, which can be applied in future research and not only between English and Bulgarian. The corpus can be used as a basis for further research. In practical terms, the results will be useful in compiling reference books, glossaries for students, translation agencies and those employed in or using localization services.

2. Contributions to translation training: the findings and conclusions of the study, and more precisely the translation strategies, can be directly implemented in the lectures for students who specialize in translation to achieve linguistic and communicative competence, with an emphasis on the importance of being made aware of the linguistic asymmetries between the specific pair of languages.

M. Todorova also provides perspectives for further research that could be a continuation of the topic she has investigated: this is an important element in the development of a dissertation, but one that is quite often overlooked.

Recommendations and comments:

The errors described by M. Todorova, related to the gender of adjectives, pronouns and nouns referring to the anonymous individual user (e.g. You will be redirected. cf. Ще бъдете пренасочени. instead of Ще бъдете пренасочен/а, Гладни ли сте? instead of Гладна/гладен ли сте? on p. 62) are not so much a problem arising from the process of localization, but rather a common error in the use of the Bulgarian language, as the PhD student herself points out as a possibility. The misspelling of pronouns in the polite form of Bulgarian (with a small c) on p. 68 can be interpreted in the same way.

In relation to some elements of the structure of the text, I would like to suggest that, for clarity, the corpus of the study be briefly described with the object of study, aims, etc. In the current text, the corpus is described as late as page 53. Also, it is appropriate that the research methodology is set out at the beginning.

Technical problems are also noted, such as starting a new sentence with a figure (31 products...on p. 64).

There are inaccuracies in the sources cited in the text, with some authors given with a first name and a surname (e.g. Palma Zlateva, Vladinir Gak on p. 52), and later on the same page with only a surname (Zlateva, Kmetova, etc.). This can be observed throughout the text (e.g. Nikolay Paskalev p. 61).

All of these inaccuracies are few in number and easily avoidable. The thesis is undoubtedly mature and represents a good beginning to the academic career of the researcher.

I recommend that the text be published in Bulgarian, so that it can be read by fellow Bulgarian scholars, since sometimes Bulgarian linguistics sometimes remains aloof from world linguistic trends and issues, and it is often specialists in English, German, French who describe the Bulgarian language from a comparative perspective.

Conclusion:

My critical remarks and recommendations in no way detract from the undoubtedly enormous work of the PhD student in the treatment of the research material and the results achieved. I can categorically state that the submitted dissertation "Translation Problems in Digital Service Product Localization from English into Bulgarian" contains theoretical generalizations and solutions to academic and applied problems that are consistent with current advances and represent an original contribution. I confidently give my positive assessment of Maria Ivanova Todorova's dissertation and recommend that she be awarded the degree of Doctor of Education and Science. I confidently give my positive assessment of the dissertation and propose that the esteemed jury award the PhD degree to Maria Todorova.

01.03.2024