

## **STATEMENT OF OPINION**

**by Assoc. Prof. Boryana Koleva Bratanova, PhD**

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St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo

on a doctoral thesis for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Translation Theory and Practice (English) Doctoral Programme, Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

Title of the doctoral thesis: Translation Problems in Digital Service Product Localization from English into Bulgarian

Self-study PhD student: Maria Ivanova Todorova

Academic advisors: Prof. Alexandra Bozhidarova Bagasheva, PhD and Prof. Petya Nacheva Osenova, PhD

### **1. Particulars of the PhD candidate**

Maria Todorova is a graduate of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. She holds a bachelor's degree in English Studies (2015) and a master's degree in Translation (English) (2017). She has been an Assistant Professor at the Department of English and American Studies at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski since 2019 where she teaches undergraduate courses in translation (English – Bulgarian) and Translation Software postgraduate course in the Master's Programme in Translation. She also works as a freelance translator and localization specialist having gained experience by working as a project manager in a translation agency. Ms Todorova has also completed an Erasmus+ traineeship as an assistant English language teacher in Madrid, Spain. She has participated in a number of conferences at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv and St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. Her scholarly research is in the field of translation and localization. She is interested in the issue of teaching localization at European universities which are members of the European Master's in Translation Network (EMT).

## **2. Particulars of the doctoral studies**

Asst. Prof. Maria Todorova enrolled as a self-study PhD student in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Translation Theory and Practice (English) Doctoral Programme. The doctoral thesis was approved for public defence at a meeting of the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Classical and Modern Philology, Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski dated 02.10.2023. In view of the above, the administrative requirements of the procedure have been complied with.

## **3. Particulars of the dissertation and the abstract**

The dissertation consists of 166 pages. The study features clear structure being organized in five chapters – an introductory chapter, three main chapters, a final chapter containing succinct answers to the research questions of the study and conclusions, references, and three appendices. The translation issues in digital service product localization from English into Bulgarian discussed in the study are visualized by 51 figures and 19 tables.

The dissertation demonstrates in-depth innovative research on key issues of localization, which is largely unexplored area of studies especially as far as translation from English into Bulgarian is concerned. When applied to the digital services sector, the subject matter of the study is particularly relevant as, due mostly to the use of automatic translation, language units of the textual content of websites can often remain unlocalized. In such cases the units are not in accordance with the peculiarities of the Bulgarian language regarding mostly semantics, grammar and orthography, as a result of which instances of interference from the source language English are observed. Such discrepancies are largely due to the insufficient training of machine translation tools for localization in cases of translation into Bulgarian in view of the fact that on the global online market the digital service products offered in Bulgarian have a relatively small market share. In such context, the dissertation meets the demands of translation industry and of the market as a whole since the study focuses on current digital service product localization issues offering their possible solutions.

The introductory Chapter One of the dissertation provides motivation for the choice of topic and highlights the subject, object and objectives of the study. The four research questions to be addressed in the study are clearly formulated. It is explicitly stated that “there is enough evidence that the products included in the study have not been localized by machine translation, or at least not exclusively so. [...] It is still impossible to completely eliminate the option of machine

translation usage as it is now deeply integrated in almost all translation tools” (pp. 11–12). Some of the issues discussed in the study can be accounted for by the alleged use of machine translation, such as the incorrect use of capital letters, word-for-word translation, discrepancy in the translation of specialized vocabulary, misuse of loanwords, agreement errors, etc. Such issues are largely due to instances of interference from the English language and lack of localization with reference to the Bulgarian language.

Chapter Two presents literature review with focus on current localization studies that are relevant for the issues discussed in the dissertation. The role of localization in relation to the place of the Bulgarian language in the digital service market is discussed at length. A comprehensive definition of the multifaceted process of localization is provided encompassing its major features specified in scholarly research (p. 19). Various perspectives on the relationship between translation and localization are discussed in detail (Section 2.3). Ms Todorova adheres to the point of view that “translation for localization is considered a type of specialized translation” (p. 22), which narrows the research focus towards analyzing the empirical material collected for the purposes of the study. Special emphasis is laid on localization as a prerequisite for improving the quality of translation. The role of professional translators and their key competences for successful localization are highlighted in the study. The functions of localization in today’s translation industry as stipulated in the EMT Competence Framework are also dwelled on (Section 2.4.4). Major localization issues identified so far in scholarly research are listed in Section 2.5. The focus on the globalization – internationalization – localization – translation (GILT) paradigm, which is fundamental for translation industry, is highly useful for the study (p. 39). The linguistic aspects of localization are also taken into consideration, which creates the theoretical framework necessary for the analysis of the empirical material collected for the study.

Chapter Three presents the methodology of collecting and processing the corpus compiled for the purposes of the study in order to draw a taxonomy of the major types of errors in digital service product localization. It is worth noting that the typology of errors discussed in the study is based on the major interlingual asymmetries in translation from English into Bulgarian outlined in contrastive analysis research. This is a prerequisite for conducting in-depth analysis in view of the existing dissimilarities between English and Bulgarian. A typology of translation issues related to localization is presented in Fig. 6 on p. 51, which is applied to the analysis of the empirical material. The corpus consists of 150 errors found in the localization of 42 products within a year and a half.

Both the volume of the empirical material and the time interval for probing into the relevant errors are sufficient to offer adequate solutions to the problems identified.

The true analysis of the issues related to digital service product localization from English into Bulgarian has been conducted in Chapter Four of the dissertation. The identification of the main types of errors and their analysis is carried out in a consistent and thorough manner, as a result of which the complete paradigm of the most common issues is presented in search of their relevant translation and localization solutions. In the course of the analysis major types of errors have been identified such as errors related to: the polite form of address in Bulgarian, the choice between formal and informal language units, the choice between a form of the verb and the corresponding noun, neutral linguistic expression, the use of abbreviations, unfinished language units due to character limitation, the use of terms and neologisms, etc. The major morphological, syntactic and semantic errors found in the corpus have been identified such as errors related to: incorrect use of prepositions, incorrect use of the numeral plural, incorrect use of articles, word order, incorrect agreement, polysemy and ambiguity, orthography, etc. Ms Todorova offers solutions to all translation problems outlined above related to digital service product localization, which is highly beneficial to language industry as a whole and translation, localization and quality assurance technology in particular (p. 69, 79, 93, 98).

The final Chapter Five of the dissertation provides detailed and comprehensive answers to the main research questions formulated in the introduction. That is how the objectives set in the introductory chapter of the dissertation have been achieved. The main guidelines for future research on the issues of exploration in the study have been outlined. The references section contains 158 up-to-date titles in the field of translation studies, general and contrastive linguistics, translation and localization, translation technology, etc. The abstract of the dissertation available in Bulgarian and English consists of 40 pages. It presents a precise synopsis of the structure and content of the dissertation with the respective visualizations and references.

#### **4. Scholarly contributions**

The dissertation has marked contributions of significance to research studies in translation, localization and the place of smaller languages in the global international market of translation services. Concerning their practical applications, the findings of the study are relevant to translation industry and translation technology. The following major contributions of the study can be pointed out: the dissertation is a pilot study of localization issues related to the English – Bulgarian


language pair; the potential application of the empirical material as a training parallel corpus for translation technology tools; the identification of the major issues and types of errors in digital service product localization and their possible solutions. The findings and conclusions of the study can be beneficial both to professional translators and translator trainers.

## **5. Conclusion**

Maria Ivanova Todorova's dissertation and scholarly publications meet the scientific metric requirements of the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* and its accompanying regulations. Ms Todorova has accomplished the tasks and objectives set at the beginning of the study. The analysis has been carried out consistently demonstrating scholarly contributions, which are indicative of the results achieved in the dissertation. I give my positive evaluation of the dissertation and would recommend that the members of the esteemed Scientific Jury vote positively for awarding the educational and scientific degree of Doctor to Maria Ivanova Todorova in the field of higher education 2. Humanities, professional field 2.1. Philology, Translation Theory and Practice (English).

3 January 2024

Veliko Tarnovo

Signature: 

/Assoc. Prof. Boryana Bratanova, PhD/