

Translation and The Language of Information Technology. A Corpus-based Study of the Vocabulary of Information Technology in English and its Translation into Arabic and Swedish

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the translation of the variety of English that is used in the field of information technology. The designation of *Language of Information Technology* (LIT) is proposed to refer to this variety which is manifested in computer manuals, online help for computer systems and software, and interfaces of software and web sites. Besides its special terminology, LIT is characterized by a special kind of linguistic usage encountered in programs and web sites in the form of menus, messages and dialog boxes. The translation of software and web sites is nowadays carried out within what is known as localization. Localization involves *inter alia* linguistic transference of on-line help, documentation, and interfaces of software and web sites into the target language (TL) as well as adapting them to the local culture.

Three corpora have been built specifically for this study for each language investigated here. The study provides a description of LIT in terms of lexical collocations, metaphoric use and acronymy. Then it proceeds to examine the translation into Arabic and Swedish, focusing on the strategies used by translators to render the vocabulary of LIT. The study identifies nine strategies that translators usually opt for when translating the lexical component of LIT into Arabic and Swedish. Translators also use a combination of more than one strategy to provide equivalents for LIT lexical items.

Literal and *loan translation* are used extensively, even to the extent of producing opaque and odd lexical items. These strategies result in novel collocations in both Arabic and Swedish. Generally, collocational restrictions are non-operational and thus TL words tend to combine with no difficulty. Some verb collocates, especially those of figurative character, are toned down. Metaphor is translated literally, but also normalized if there is collocational clash, or the concept or item is not found in the TL culture.

Explicitation is widely used in translating LIT to provide transparent renditions. Other strategies are *borrowing*, *deletion*, *expanding* and *cultural adaptation*. The latter is proposed here to describe the adaptation of lexical items, especially those of graphical user interfaces, to the TL culture. *Derivation* is widely used in translation into Arabic. Translators tend to take over abbreviations and acronyms in their Latin script into both TLs, or much less frequently borrow or expand them. Inconsistency of terminology is one negative outcome of the translation of LIT. The study provides recommendations to improve translation work within localization activities and to unify IT terminology in both TLs.

KEYWORDS: Arabic, Corpus-based Translation Studies, Localization, Swedish, Terminology.

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