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Language and Brand: Problems for Localization

Abstract

The language used in a product or service has an extraordinary impact on the creation of its brand and on its online success. As localization is a key aspect of a globalized business, attention should be given to the localization of brand language to ensure global consistency. This study explores brand language localization problems in an online help corpus. Specifically, it analyzes the problems posed by the localization of brand names and terms in the pre-translation phase, following Nord's pre-translation text analysis theory (2012). The main objective of the study is to understand the nature of identified brand language problems (professional purposes) and examine them (research purposes). The method implemented is a qualitative, interpretative analysis of a monolingual corpus in English comprising representative extracts from the Dropbox and Google Drive Online Help systems. The study is part of a wider research project exploring the concept of localization problems in online help localization.

Keywords

localization; language brand; brand names; brand terms; web apps; online help; translation problem

1.   Introduction

Websites have become an essential component of companies' marketing campaigns thanks to their impact on the online projection of the corporate image (Maroto/De Bortoli 2001: 6). As Constantinides (2002: 65) explains, "the prime mission of the Web Site is to attract traffic, establish contact with the online target markets and brand the online organisation". But the website is not the only digital channel of communication to have become an integral part of product marketing. Mobile apps, for example, are also often used to publicize brands and attract new customers (Wang et al. 2016). Apps used for this purpose include what are known as **branded apps**, defined by Bellman et al. (2011: 191) as "software downloadable to a mobile device which prominently displays a brand identity, often via the name of the app and the appearance of a brand logo or icon, throughout the user experience". It therefore appears logical to assume that the language used in this type of apps plays, or has the potential to play, an important role in the product's success, mainly because it is the language itself that forges the brand. For this reason, companies should not under-prioritize decisions regarding the language used in their campaigns and products, but instead consider language as just another marketing tool, both in the original design phase and when translating it or adapting it for other markets.

Since the **localization of brand language** has a series of major implications for a company's global image, a coherent strategy clearly needs to be followed at a global level (either internationalization or standardization) to minimize cultural differences, create an image that will be identifiable in different countries or in each different market (localization), and adapt the marketing to the preferences of the different markets. The localization of brand language will, in any case, involve certain translation problems, which may vary depending on text type: traditional advertising copy (advertisements, posters, leaflets, etc.) will pose different challenges than digital channels like those mentioned earlier (websites, mobile apps, web advertising, etc.). This study addresses the problem of brand language translation in online content localization, with particular reference to web applications.

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It is important to clarify that the term localization is used to refer to the process of "taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/ region and language) where it will be used and sold" (LISA 1998: 3). As Jiménez-Crespo (2009b: 187) states: "Localization represents a specific type of translation in which the intersection of technology and translation normally forces the translator to maintain the fixed super- and macro-structure—the underlying back-end coding structure and its screen presentation—of digital texts". A localization act in itself can therefore be considered a translation act.

The following section explains the theoretical concepts on which the work is grounded. Section 3 describes the methodological bases of the research carried out, and the results of the study are presented in Section 4. Section 5 then discusses the results obtained, and, finally, Section 6 presents some conclusions.

2. Theoretical Context

2.1 Brand Language

De Mooij (2013: 28) defines brand as follows:

> A brand is something made to appear unique. A brand is trust. A brand is not merely a product: It's the feeling a product evokes. A brand is why people will pay more for a product. A brand is the proprietary visual, emotional, rational image that people associate with a company or a product. The fact that you remember the brand name and have positive associations with that brand makes your product selection easier and enhances the value and satisfaction you get from the product.

As the author says, a brand is the feeling, or the image, a consumer remembers when considering buying one product or another. For the company in question, it is therefore extremely important for that impression to be positive. IKEA, which generally arouses a series of positive feelings among potential consumers, has been the object of numerous studies, including those of Edvardsson et al. (2006) and Tarnovskaya/de Chernatony (2011). According to Dahlvig (2011: 49), the former chairman of IKEA, one of the main strengths of this giant of the furniture and home improvement sector is that its products differentiate it from its competitors, above all thanks to their attractive, reasonably priced Scandinavian designs, the inspiration they transmit to their customers, the fact that everything can be found in the same store, and the overall 'day out' shopping experience. In short, IKEA sells an image of the home which stimulates consumers to travel to the store initially just to buy some inexpensive item of decoration, such as a vase or some candles, but ultimately to spend the day in the shop, having lunch and buying products that might make them feel excited about building a home that looks like the exhibitions at the store (SEMrushblog 2018). Its advertising campaigns and the language they use foster the image we ourselves want to convey in the way we decorate our homes. One of the brand's most iconic slogans in Spain, for example, has been 'Welcome to the Independent Republic of Your Home' (*Bienvenido a la República Independiente de tu casa*), again, transmitting the idea that home is something very much of our own which IKEA helps us to create.

In contrast, some marketing campaigns are resounding failures for not having taken into account cultural differences between countries. One example of is that of Nike, which in March 2012 (coinciding with St Patrick's Day) launched a campaign to advertise sports shoes with the slogan 'Nike Black and Tan Quickstrike'. 'Black and Tan' referred to a mix of dark and lager-type beers, but what Nike did not realize was that 'Black and Tans' was also the name given to a British paramilitary force responsible for violent attacks on Irish civilians in the 1920s (Williams 2012). Naturally, Nike was harshly criticized for this lack of sensitivity. According to Williams (2012: 66), marketing disasters like this happen because:

> (usually) American companies fail to do thorough market research, engage in focus groups or partner with a localization company to carry out international business awareness and brand testing. But most of all, they fail to understand the differences between cultures — including cultural history

and in particular how closely culture and language are intertwined — before mounting an expensive marketing campaign and product introduction.

As can be seen from the positive or negative impact on a company's success of a given slogan or advertisement, language is undoubtedly a powerful commercial tool. The language used in advertising campaigns shapes a brand's spirit and personality, and if the company in question is a multinational, the image created will spread to different markets. Some companies, like Apple, may prefer to unify their image in all the different markets where they sell their products by using standardized brand and product names: that is to say, using the same language everywhere. Others, however, may prefer to project a localized image in all or some of their target markets. In this case, it is necessary to research the culture of each country or region. The Lay's brand of crisps, for example, is called Walkers in the United Kingdom and Sabritas in Mexico. Regardless of the chosen alternative (global brand or localized brand), the decision should be consistent and well-grounded (Douglas et al. 2001: 97-98) if an effective marketing strategy is to be achieved.

Two elements of brand language are particularly important: the name of the brand and the terminology typically associated with it (De la Cova 2017). The brand name is the name of the product (for example, Amazon, Cabify, Dropbox, etc.). According to Francis et al. (2002: 98): "A brand name is the foundation of the product, an asset to the company, and an important consumer cue, and it is critical to the success of a new product". A **brand name** is designed to generate positive connotations, and its translation should likewise produce the same effect when the product enters new markets (Francis et al. 2002: 99). The other element of brand language addressed in this study is that of **brand terms**. These include terms which are typically associated with a product or which relate either to the product itself or to any of its functions (references, frequently used expressions or constructions, common usage of verbs and nouns, etc.) (De la Cova 2017: 291). Examples include 'story' (in Instagram) and 'to pin' in Pinterest. This terminology also affects the design of the brand and the recognition of the product by its user base, because it is all these linguistic elements that forge the spirit – i.e., the brand - of a given product. For translators to be able to create an appropriate image of a product and its features when they receive a project, it is crucial to be aware of the commercial importance of such brand names and terms.

2.2   Brand Language in Localization

Localization, which has its roots in the technological boom of the 1980s and '90s (Esselink 2003), mainly refers to the translation and adaptation of technological products like software, mobile apps or videogames. Although several definitions exist of this concept and of the different localization modalities (videogame localization, web localization, etc.), for the purposes of this study, and based on the content being analyzed (online help), the one proposed by Dunne (2006: 4) seems perfectly appropriate:

> The processes by which digital content and products developed in one locale (defined in terms of geographical area, language and culture) are adapted for sale and use in another locale. Localization involves: (a) translation of textual content into the language and textual conventions of the target locale; and (b) adaptation of nontextual content (from colors, icons and bitmaps, to packaging, form factors, etc.) as well as input, output and delivery mechanisms to take into account the cultural, technical and regulatory requirements of that locale.

Dunne's definition (2006:4) emphasises the commercial objective of localization: 'for sale and use in another locale'. The localization industry is therefore based on the cultural adaptation of products and services to successfully access target markets (DePalma 2006; Schäler 2007).

In localization projects, the translation of product terminology (including both brand names and other lexical elements associated with products) take on great importance. This is reflected in company translation style guides, which usually include guidelines and specifications regarding how such elements are to be dealt with. For example, the Firefox translation style guide says: "Brand names, as well as copyright and trademarks should never be translated, nor transliterated into a non-Latin-based script" (Mozilla 2019). Similarly, Microsoft stresses in its Go Global guide

that "Product names and brand names are normally not translated", but that "Feature names can usually be translated" (Microsoft, 2018). Facebook, however, prescribes the following in its style guide: "Names of products and functions should be translated coherently. Some product and function names are translated and others are used in English, depending on strategic decisions" (Facebook 2019).

Regarding translation strategies for brand name translation, for Baruch (2012), there seem to be three main approaches: use the English name (or the name as it appears in its original language), transliterate the name using the local alphabet, or transcreate it. The transcreation option, which, according to Morón/Calvo (2018), first emerged as a popular subject of research in Translation Studies in 2014, is especially interesting. Pedersen (2015: ii) describes this new activity in the following terms:

> Transcreation can involve the creation of new text as well as the translation or adaptation of existing source text elements. Particularly the creation of new content can be argued to elicit the discussion of whether the scope of translation is wide enough to encompass the concept of transcreation.

Transcreation appears to go beyond the original text, taking the creative brief as a basis from which to design a new, localized image for different markets:

> A creative brief is a planning tool which includes an overview of the most important specifications by the client to be considered in the development of marketing and copywriting content. The creative brief explicitly describes what the client wants to achieve with the new copy (Morón/Calvo 2018: 130)

Other authors suggest different strategies for translating brand names and terms, which vary depending on the working languages. Wang (2012), for example, in relation to the translation of brand names from English into Chinese, suggests three strategies: transliteration, meaning-based translation (used when brand names include common words) and a combination of transliteration and free translation (1947-1948). And Kassawat (2020), regarding the localization of product names and industry terms from English into Arabic, identified hybrid approaches such as naming by translation and transliteration or naming by translation with explicitation.

To decide which strategy to adopt, it will in any case be necessary to research the target markets and consult specialists in the target culture. This process, known as brand validation, involves carrying out market analyses and evaluating the positive and/or negative consequences of adopting the different options (Baruch 2012: 42). In a similar vein, O'Hagan/Ashworth (2002: 73) also argue in favour of an in-depth study into the target market in question: "This type of work therefore requires expertise in the commercial field, such as international market research and multicultural advertising that can provide advice on wider issues than immediate translation problems". For translators to provide a well-translated brand name, they need to consider "such factors as language, local culture, history and consumer attitude and beliefs" (Dong/Helms 2001: 114).

In localization project quality evaluations, terminology also accounts for a significant part of a translation's overall quality. In the Multidimensional Quality Metrics (MQM) model, for example, product terminology (names, associated elements, etc.) appears as one of the eight main dimensions of the quality problems identified by the QT21[1] group. It is defined by Lommel et al. (2015: section 1.1.8) as follows:

> Terminology issues relate to the use of domain- or organization-specific terminology (i.e., the use of words to relate to specific concepts not considered part of general language). Adherence to specified terminology is widely considered an issue of central concern in both translation and content authoring.

Generally speaking, a brand (or product) name is easily identifiable in a localization project (e.g., Google or Ikea). As explained earlier, however, there may be a choice of different ways to localize

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1   The QT21 group refers to the different stakeholders in the QT21 project, a "machine translation project which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme" (QT21 Quality Translation, online).

it: should it be adapted, kept in its original language, or transcribed? The decision is dependent on different factors, like company policy, the spirit of the product, customer preferences, etc. In contrast, brand terms (product-specific terminology) are not so easily identifiable, especially in the field of the new technologies, because they invariably include lexical elements (nouns, verbs) habitually found in this field. Words like 'app' and 'smartphone', for example, are usually understood by consumers of technology, but may have a series of implications for brand identification in the target language (De la Cova 2015) when they actually form part of the product's brand name. The main difference between these elements and common language lies in the fact that brand terms are subject to the client's preferences, so it is paramount first to identify them as brand elements and then to adhere to the client's requirements and not translate them freely.

In the light of all the above, considerations regarding how to address brand language should constitute part of a company's global marketing strategy. As Wang states: "…building up good brand image lies in the qualified translation of brand names. […] Because the translation of brand names is the re-entitlement of the commodity, it is very important for the sales of the goods" (2012: 1945). This is especially true today, when the content which defines a brand is so varied. In the case of digital products, for example, this could, as Baruch points out, include non-written text: "These considerations affect not only written localized text for web, user interface (UI) and documentation, but also audio recordings in localized multimedia for multicultural offerings" (2012: 40).

3.   Methodology

The present study follows a qualitative method to carry out a descriptive, interpretative analysis of data (source content). The objective is to analyze **brand language localization problems** during the pre-translation phase, evaluating their nature and potential causes of constraint in the localization process.

The corpus used as source content is a closed, synchronized, specialized monolingual English corpus (Bowker/Pearson, 2002) of 230,000 words previously designed by De la Cova (2017). Denominated the ONHELP corpus, it was compiled manually from the help centres of two cloud storage applications, Google Drive and Dropbox, and then fine-tuned in accordance with content transferability criteria to ensure, for example, that the extracts included from both help centres were similar in terms of content type (basic features, similar features). The corpus is used as source content.

This paper has its origin in a broader previous study exploring the concept of **translation problem** in the context of localization (De la Cova 2017). That study categorized eleven types of localization problems identified in the ONHELP corpus. Specifically, the categories induced from the corpus were: product features, technical content, user interface elements, help centre structure, hyperlinks, images, technology terms, brand language, operating system elements, international variables, and visual elements references (De la Cova 2017). To identify such categories, the ONHELP corpus was analyzed qualitatively in accordance with the principles of **Grounded Theory** (Glaser/Strauss 1967). With the exception of work like Wehrmeyer (2014) and Hubscher-Davidson (2011), Grounded Theory (GT) has not been widely exploited in Translation Studies, but it has been extensively used in other disciplines such as Sociology, which require the qualitative treatment of corpora. Unlike other qualitative methods of corpus analysis, GT is based on induction. Content analysis and discourse analysis, for example, are deductive processes that use known, operational categories found in a given corpus (text), but what happens when what we are looking at has not yet been studied? In these cases, GT and inductive processes are useful. GT offers a solid methodological basis for bottom-up studies, especially to avoid biases when the subject and the researcher are the same person (Classical introspection, in the words of Grotjahn 1987: 55 and Rojo 2013: 74). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990: 23): "A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and

analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon". GT establishes a cyclical process which implies "a constant comparative analysis, hence this approach is referred to as the *constant comparative method*" (Glaser/Strauss 1967: 7). In Grounded Theory, the process of coding plays an essential role: "Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data" (Strauss/ Corbin 1990: 57). In GT methods, analysis is carried out in three stages: "1. find conceptual categories in the data; 2. find relationships between these categories; 3. conceptualise and account for these relationships through finding core categories" (Robson 2002: 492). This approach is linked, therefore, to *corpus-driven*, inductive studies such as the present work. Inductive and deductive processes are not incompatible, but complementary. In deductive studies we look for elements/aspects that we know, but, in inductive studies, we analyze something not previously known. Some studies may, however, combine both types of process (Saldanha/O'Brien 2013).

The present study analyzes a translatable text product (the corpus) helping us focus on and study one specific phase of the translation process (in accordance with Nord's notion (2012) that the translation process must be guided by a pre-translation analysis, taking into account both intra and textual factors).

To place this study in its correct context, it is necessary to take a closer look at what we understand by **localization problem**. De la Cova (2017: 149) defines it as:

> (…) any element which, in the specific context of localization, and despite its subjective, interpretable nature, manifestly overlaps with the (textual or extratextual) context and displays a degree of complexity in its translatability which constitutes or may potentially constitute an obstacle to the translator, regardless of their experience and ability to solve problems automatically, the types of resources available, etc.

Whether an element or a group of elements constitute a localization problem is thus determined by two interrelated parameters: the complex **translatability** attribute, meaning the lack (for whatever reason) of a clear, straightforward translation of the element in question; and the (textual and extratextual) **contextualisation** attribute, which directly affects its translatability. Textual context refers to a given element's linguistic context, meaning both the source text where the element appears and other related content referring to or linked to the source text— for example software components (graphical interface, online help, marketing material, etc.)— where linguistic consistency is required. In Translation Studies this is usually referred to as intratextuality (See Nord 2010 and Sharifi 2016) and requires textual and extratextual cohesion/ coherence. In practice, extratextual or functional contextualization is particularly relevant in localization because a project is harnessed to its context, with all the idiosyncrasies of the target cultures, the prototypical localization project requirements, and the translator's own situation: an overlap manifest in the importance of functionalist approaches to professional translation and localization practice (Nord 1997; Jiménez-Crespo 2013; Alonso/Calvo 2015). As Jiménez-Crespo (2013: 70) states: "(…) it can be argued that functionalism provides one of the best theoretical frameworks for contextualizing localization: in this interactive environment fulfilling the communicative intention of the sender remains a key factor". Functionalism, then, focusses on the intention of a text and its translation (Nord 1997/2001: 1). This is central to the subject of this work—brand language localization—where the intentions of a brand's creators (almost always to attract consumers or build brand awareness) must be reflected in the brand's different versions around the world.

In this study, a **brand language localization problem** is understood as an obstacle to localization which occurs when the source text contains references, characteristic expressions or names of a given product brand that are affected by their functional contextualisation (De la Cova 2017: 291). In this type of localization problem, functional contextualisation (purpose) is so important precisely because brand names and their associated vocabulary shape a product's very identity.

4.   Results and Analysis

As stated in the previous section, the aim of this paper is to explore brand language localization problems within the context of an online help corpus, to evaluate why the identified brand language names and terms constitute a problem, and to determine what factors cause constraints or limit the localization of such elements.

Of the 2,559 localization problems identified in the analyzed ONHELP corpus, 486 were identified as potential brand language problems (De la Cova 2017). This was the second most frequent type of problem found in the corpus, with technology terminology being the most frequent (not surprisingly in an online help corpus mainly made up of help articles related to the usage of a web application). Whereas there are studies focused on technology terminology in Translation and Specialized Languages studies (Aguado de Cea 2006, Belda 2003, Jiménez-Crespo 2011, etc.), little attention has so far been paid to brand language in these fields. Hence our decision to look more closely at brand language problems, focusing on the attributes that constitute and help identify a problem, according to the operational notion of *localization problem*, and explaining how those attributes constrain the localization of the identified elements.

To illustrate the types of brand language problem detected, four representative cases are described below. For some types, their localization into Spanish has been used as a reference to contextualize the translation process and the implication of translation decisions, although, as stated in the previous section, only the source text (monolingual corpus) was analyzed as part of the study (pre-translation phase). Here, the translation phase (analysis of quality, error, etc.) was ignored because, to be able later to study translation quality, strategies, errors, quantitative factors, experiments, etc., we first need to study and understand the source text. In each case, the element deemed to be a localization problem is written in italics.

Case 1 - Dropbox:

> If you've connected your *personal and work accounts, unlimited version history* will only apply to your *Dropbox for Business* account.

In this extract, three localization problems were found associated with brand language:

a) Personal and work accounts:

When this corpus was designed, Dropbox used to have personal accounts, which could be free or premium, and work accounts corresponding to the Dropbox Business plan for companies. Now, however, personal accounts can be free or premium (Plus and Family version) and there are also three kinds of Business plans (Professional, Standard and Advanced). Account types are still, however, categorized as personal or work accounts. In the product content (web, applications) in English, there are therefore references to personal v. work. This structure is always used in the English versions, so the lexical consistency of the brand terminology should also be reflected in Spanish. Otherwise, if a translator were to render that structure using synonyms - translating 'work account' as *cuenta laboral* or *cuenta professional*, for example, instead of as *cuenta de trabajo*, which is the published Spanish translation – they would be committing a brand terminology error.

This is therefore a problem dependent on the translatability of this product-specific terminology, because not all semantically possible equivalences are functionally acceptable. If this terminology were not already translated, the translator would also be facing a problem mainly related to the functional contextualization of the product, because it would be necessary to find out exactly what those different account types involve and how important their different functions are for the product and its brand. (They will undoubtedly be very important, because they determine a major source of income for the company).

b) Unlimited version history:

This feature allows unlimited file versioning. Here the translator has to translate the name of a brand-specific feature, which should be in the product glossary or in the project translation

memory, to which the translator may or may not have access. In the latter case, it would be necessary to consult information in the online content or contact the customer. One obstacle when localizing such terms is that they do not appear to be written consistently in English; sometimes they are capitalized and sometimes they are not. Capitalization of the target translation would therefore need to be confirmed, or a decision taken about it. As it might be written in lower case, the translator may also question whether the term really is a feature name, and this would require certain translation decisions regarding naming. If, however, the term referred simply to some function of the Dropbox account, the translator would have more flexibility. This case would therefore be a problem to do with the textual and functional contextualization of the element in question.

c) Dropbox for Business:

This is the old name of the service Dropbox offers companies, allowing different departments to work using one shared Dropbox account with, among other things, special administrative features, and more storage space. This product has changed names several times over the last few years and is currently called Dropbox Business. The extracted corpus, however, contains the obsolete name (with the word 'for'). This could represent an additional translatability problem for the translator, who would need to decide whether to adhere to the original text or reflect the updating of the brand. The localization of this product name is in any case very important because Dropbox Business is one of the company's most profitable products. In the past, the company used a localized name, *Dropbox para empresas*, in the Spanish market, but eventually they opted to use the standardized global form Dropbox Business.

Case 2 - Google Drive:

"My Drive" is the section of Google Drive that automatically syncs files, folders, *Google Docs*, *Sheets*, and *Slides* directly to your Google Drive folder on your Mac/PC.

This extract reveals potential problems regarding the names of certain products which are very popular among Google users. First it refers to Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides. The names for these functions are already localized into Spanish in the published version of the product, so the translator will have to ensure consistency with those terms. In this case, dependence on existing published terminology (textual context) is an observable attribute of the translation problem. This also reflects the importance of functional contextualization in any typical localization project where adherence to glossaries and published content is a requirement. Translating these names involves an additional difficulty. The translator may assume that they should remain in English, like the product name Google Drive. This would be an error. Google has no unified strategy regarding the localization of its product names. Sometimes they are localized, as in the case of Google Scholar/Google Académico, and sometimes they remain in English, as in the case of Google Ads. And even if the translator knows that these function names are to be translated into Spanish, a decision will have to be taken whether to capitalize them as brand-specific names or lowercase them as common nouns. In this case, the terms actually refer to file types, not product names, so they should be written in the lower case.

Case 3 - Google Drive:

Sign-in to a *Google Account* required?

This extract from the corpus contains two elements of brand language which may be problematic for translators. 'Sign in' is a verb habitually used with most cloud-based products and services and in social media. It usually appears as a link on product home pages that lets visitors create an account and enter their ID information (usernames and passwords) to access a given service whenever they want.

A professional translator will usually know that this kind of lexical item is typically translated consistently in all the product's different components (application interface, documentation, advertising, online help, etc.) and that the customers will almost certainly have their own specific term choice of preference among the many possible translation alternatives. In this case, we see an example of a localization problem where translatability is an observable attribute ('sign in' can be translated in many different ways) dependent on functional contextualization (client requirements).

The text also features the name of a product, Google Account, a name localized into Spanish as Google Cuenta. As in Case 2, since Google has no unified strategy for localizing the names of its products, the translator must check whether the product name has been standardized or localized, and not assume that it is to be left in English as is otherwise common practice in technology companies.

Case 4 – Dropbox:

> Dropbox Pro and Dropbox for Business users: As the owner of the folder, you can decide who in the folder is an *editor* and who is a *viewer*.

In this last case, there is a potential problem in the terminology used to talk about Dropbox's folder sharing function. When a folder is set up as being shared, its owner can decide whether the person invited to share can just see the content of the folder or modify it as well. As mentioned in the other cases, the translator faces a problem of translatability due to the textual (and extratextual) contextualization of the language items in question. Firstly, they have to be identified as brand-specific terms (in English, the words used are always 'editor' and 'viewer') and, as explained earlier, common names can be difficult to identify as a brand term because they are subject to the customer's previously expressed preferences and cannot be translated freely. Secondly, the translator needs to know how those terms are systematically translated in the target language version of the product (for example, *editor* and *lector* in Spanish). If the feature in question is a new one, the translator will have to come to an agreement with the customer about whether any type of preference or guidelines need to be taken into account with regard to the feel of the brand (or to any differentiation that may be required to distinguish it from competitors, for example).

5.   Discussion

As previously stated, the categories for the different localisation problems have their origin in De la Cova (2017), a broader study the main objective of which was to render localization problems operational. This operationalisation (the objective categorisation of problems for study purposes) revolves around two main attributes: the potential translatability of an element (as already explained); and its textual or extratextual (technological, cultural, functional, etc.) contextualization. These attributes are sufficiently observable factors independent of more subjective considerations like the difficulty a given element may pose for a given translator (due to their previous level of experience, access to resources, etc.). This focus study had as its objective to analyze four cases of potential localization problems associated with brand language in the specific context of online help localization.

The results obtained in the present study show that some of the elements identified may constitute localization problems because the brand does not implement a unified strategy for dealing with the names of products or functions. For example, Google sometimes uses standardized (English) terms like Google Drive and sometimes localizes them, as is the case with Google Account/ Cuenta Google. This is not necessarily negative for the company's global image: it merely means that the translator must be aware of it when translating such terms.

The study also identified other feature names and examples of product-specific terminology which, due to their functional context, may give rise to localization problems. One example

is 'unlimited version history', which might not be recognized as the name of a function if the translator is not familiar with the product. This term, and others like 'viewer', 'editor', and 'work account', are elements which contribute to the making of the brand and product image. A similar case is the term 'tablet', the localization of which has many connotations due to the cultural overtones and contextual considerations (regarding both source and target cultures) governing its translation. In Spanish, the standardized form 'tablet', for example, which is very common on technology websites, may be more appropriate for a young user base or in informal contexts, and the localized Spanish form *tableta* for a more traditional or business-oriented product (*tableta* is the term accepted by the Royal Spanish Academy) (De la Cova 2015: 5).

Even though the clumsy localization of a product name may have a greater effect on brand image than the erroneous, inconsistent translation of brand terms like 'editor' and 'tablet', it should not be forgotten that these terms too form part of the brand language, and that sufficient attention needs to be paid to this language to ensure that the brand is identifiable by its user base and distinguishable from rival brands, and, above all, that its content is usable.

6. Conclusion

The contribution of this study is twofold. On the one hand, it explores brand language, which has to date received relatively little attention in Translation Studies. On the other, by using GT to identify categories, it makes it possible to explore how the translatability and contextualization attributes, as explained in the paper, affect the translation process, thus providing a theoretical base from which to identify the complexity of these elements.

Brand language plays a crucial role in the global image of a product or service. As observed in the introduction to this paper, it therefore seems useful to think about how its different elements (mainly brand names and brand-specific terminology) should be dealt with: is it preferable to adopt a strategy of standardization (a single global image for all markets) or to localize (into the specific culture of each target market). The option chosen will depend on the global marketing strategy implemented by the company in question, which will have various implications in terms of project management.

In both cases, the localization or adaptation of brand names, key product names and other terminology or phraseology used to shape a company's image and corporate spirit should follow an exhaustive process of brand validation and consultation with specialists in the cultures of the target markets (either marketing experts or the translators/linguists themselves). This would avoid embarrassing failures resulting from the use of inappropriate product names and slogans, while maximising the success of marketing campaigns.

The analysis of brand language problems carried out in the present work showed that both product names and their associated terminology may represent a problem for localization. This is mainly because they are elements subsidiary to cultural considerations, but more significantly to the functional constraints of this type of project (brand or customer preferences, the connotations of possible translations in the target culture, whether or not those connotations concur with the company's product philosophy, consistency between different content components (intertextuality), etc.). As seen in the study, one potential problem for the localization of brand terms (product-specific terminology) is actually distinguishing them as brand elements, since many of them are common lexical elements, such as 'editor' or 'sign-in'. In order to be able to identify these terms as elements that configure the brand of a product, translators need to be familiar with the product in question, with its terminology and with the jargon of a given field (in this case, web apps). If the brand language is culturally acceptable, attractive, and capable of stirring the emotions of the brand's user base, then it has a very good chance of commercial success while satisfying clients' expectations.

A qualitatively representative corpus analysis based on systematic GT methodology makes operationalisation of the construct *localization problem* possible/applicable for research. The

resulting definition of *localisation problem* and its different categories (e.g.: Brand language as problem category) as proposed by De la Cova (2017) are potentially extrapolatable to other contexts and studies, as reported in later studies such as Szymyślik (2019), who used the same methodology and operationalisation of *problem* to analyze and theorise about a completely different field, i.e., creative literature.

This methodology was also successfully tested as a pre-translation analysis method for training purposes as part of an educational innovation project in the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University Pablo de Olavide (De la Cova 2020).

The present case study (brand language in online help content) illustrates the potential of the GT method for the qualitative analysis of complex constructs which have not been sufficiently explored and are not ripe for other deductive methods of content, text or discourse analysis. This is the case with translation problems. Although the concept of *translation problems* is recurrent in Translation Studies (Wilss 1977; Krings 1986; Nord 1988/2005; Toury 2010, among others), few studies adopt a systematic approach to analysing this elusive concept. This research shows that GT offers a valid guide for this kind of qualitative research. As explained earlier, this method's repetitive phases of coding and constant comparison generate categories of great theoretical value that help us understand a phenomenon that is not widely studied (brand language problems in localization). The theories induced by GT methods open up future lines of experimental and quantitative research.

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