

Website Translation and Localisation for the Community

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Résumé: *La globalisation et la localisation sont deux facettes de la même réalité contemporaine où la traduction joue un rôle important. Composantes des stratégies de marketing des compagnies, organismes et institutions, les pages web contiennent en même temps des éléments d'homogénéisation (globalisants) et d'hétérogénéisation (localisants), observables au niveau de la forme et transmissibles par le langage – que le traducteur est tenu saisir et rendre dans la langue cible. Les institutions d'enseignement supérieur ne s'échappent pas à cette règle. Elles deviennent visibles par Internet et s'adressent à un public international à la recherche du spécifique local de même qu'à la communauté locale qui, de plus en plus fréquemment, a des attentes globales. L'étude de cas concerne la page web de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université "Dunarea de Jos" de Galati, Roumanie (<http://www.lit.ugal.ro/>). Vu qu'elle est à présent en construction et ne met en ligne que des renseignements en roumain, le but de la recherche ne consiste pas seulement à en analyser le contenu, mais aussi à en fournir une possible variante de traduction.*

Mots-clés: *stratégie, page web, globalisation, localisation, traduction*

1. Outline

Following a pattern established by multinational companies (whose strategies involve, on the one hand, setting targets within a global market sooner than along the lines of import-export activities and, on the other hand, meeting local customer demands), many other types of firms, organisations, institutions etc. are now adopting similar policies, addressing an international public while, at the same time, meeting the global expectations of the local community. For translators, this poses real challenges. They "should be proficient linguists, or rather text linguists, in two or more languages including their mother tongue, as well as cultural mediators, competent writers and editors." [Ulrych 1999: 27] Moreover, as has already been pointed out by the literature in the field of translation studies, the act of translating has taken on the characteristics of "reader-oriented writing" [Kingscot 1996: 295] and of "interlingual communication" [Sager 1994: 164], whereby additional skills and continuous training are

needed. These and other difficulties, to which ever changing aspects and numerous time constraints have been added, have either resulted in low quality translated products/ communication endeavours or have led to unacceptable delays in perfecting and disseminating them.

The most commonly used (and sometimes abused) form of marketing strategy is the digital one and it consists in website design. In websites, globalisation and localisation coexist and are supported by translation for communication purposes. "In the context of globalization, TMC (Translation Mediated Communication) has generally come to mean Receiver-oriented messaging in the form of localization and implies that both Content and Packaging normally undergo transformations." [O'Hagan and Ashworth 2002: 69]. In other words, like translation, localisation has come to signify adaptation and acculturation also. Localisation facilitates globalisation by crossing host cultural and linguistic borders, but simultaneously implies conformity to specific home cultural and linguistic norms.

Website translation and localisation are complementary, inscribed within the mechanisms of language management. They work towards adaptation, presupposing a more complex, three-level approach rather than the traditional single-level one of conversion from source language into target language. The first level (enabling) implies knowledge of the foreign language; the second (facilitation/ localisation) brings cultural awareness into play and adjusts the message to the target environment; the third (adaptation) provides a message that is perfectly efficient/ coherent in the target language and culture, yet carries the specificities of the source. [O'Hagan and Ashworth 2002: 74-76] The Receiver and the Sender ideally meet on the common ground of the (cultural) text in between, comprising homogenising elements (which induce globalisation) as well as heterogenising elements (which reinforce localisation), observable in form and transmissible through language – that the translator has to identify and render appropriately, thus professionally packaging the content.

Although business terminology is usually employed to refer to the act of website translation and localisation as communication, mediation and adaptation, it is perfectly suitable to describe the case of services offered by public institutions to the local and global community also. Practically, the latter too are promoting themselves and "selling" products which, although not taking palpable shape, have similar functions and serve similar purposes. Higher education institutions, for instance, are actively involved in branding and promotion via personalised websites

intended to present core information, to increase student numbers and educational demand, to differentiate own products from those provided by competitors in the field. Propelled by the need to gain in visibility and to encourage internationalisation, universities, faculties, schools and colleges usually have multilingual websites which, naturally, implicate designing and translating efforts. These efforts have to comply with the difficulties of localisation, a necessity brought about by “the migration of information to other sites, where languages other than the language in which the material originated are used.” [Cronin 2006: 28-29] Translators are required to protect minority linguistic specificity and cultural difference, while working in a majority language, which might be described as working towards modifying the package but leaving the content unchanged.

2. Case Study

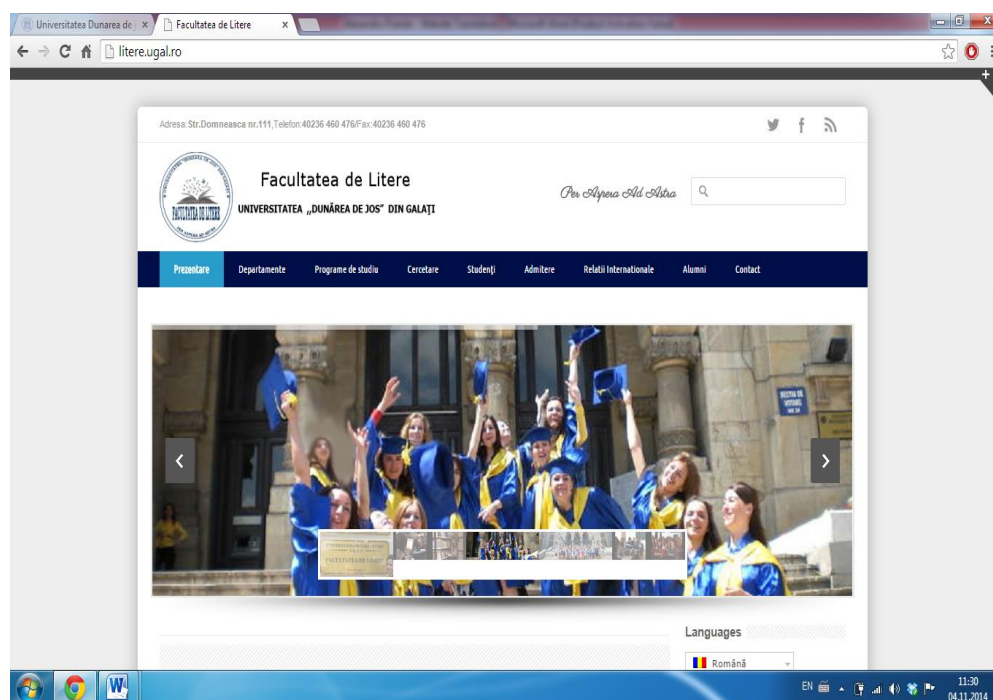
The case study chosen is that of the website of our home institution, the Faculty of Letters, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati, Romania [<http://www.lit.ugal.ro/>]. Since it is under construction for the time being and displays information in Romanian only, the present investigation focuses on its content, but also provides a possible translation of its main page. In so doing, it discusses options already made and enters the translating laboratory for future results.

From the point of view of interface design, the website in question is attractive, interactive and well structured. The predominant colour is blue, which universally symbolises writing, freedom, new beginnings and opportunities, and which may be related also to the Danube, defining the regional geographical space and giving the name of the institution. The image content brands the faculty, places it on the map of Galati and offers insight into the academic environment through a dynamic succession of snapshots and a presentation film produced in the faculty’s TV studio (also posted on YouTube). It includes links to various departments, study programmes, aspects of student life, to Facebook and Twitter likewise. In short, its interface design is internationally integrated (globalised, therefore); it matches expectations, is user-friendly and similar to others worldwide. Equally, it is determined by and adapted to source culture specificity, reflected in language (Romanian and Latin) and in local image content.

In terms of written text, the main page gives the expected type of information, particularised and adapted to the Romanian context and its

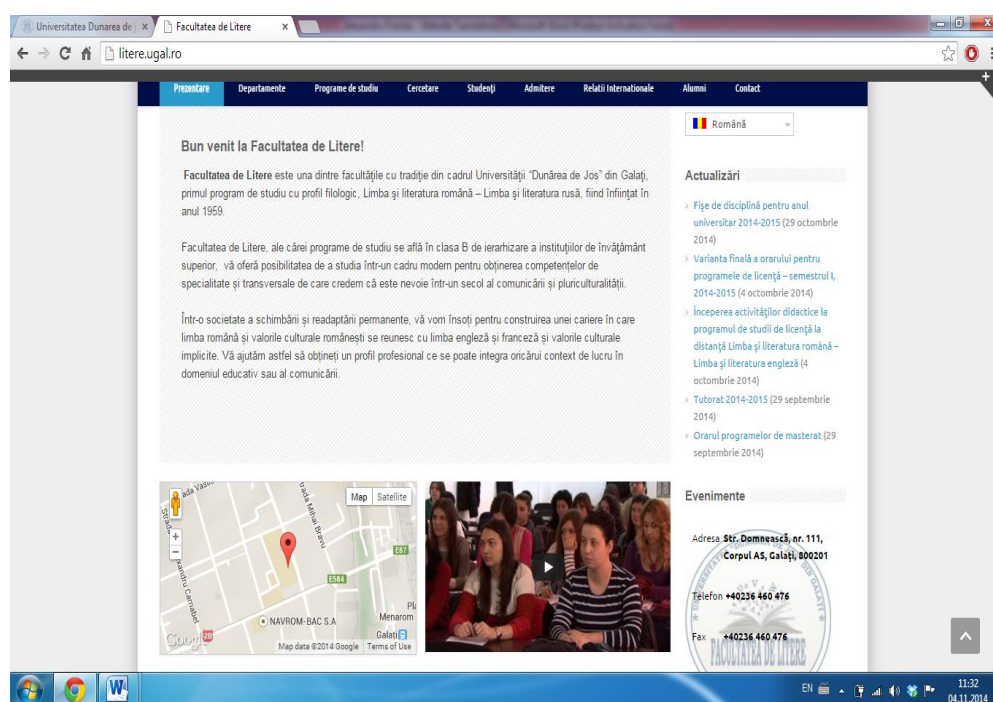
south-eastern educational offer. Though only signalled on the main page, the website details on the essential aspects of faculty life: the history, organisational chart, dean's office, faculty council etc; admission exam requirements, sample tests, fees, enrolment procedures; the BA, MA, PhD study programmes and the associated syllabi and curricula; foreign language centres, courses and certificates; student regulations, timetables, exams, scholarships, extracurricular activities, internships; research centres, programmes and events; international partnerships, joint research and development projects, staff and student mobilities.

The language used is mostly formal, with few informal exceptions. Besides Romanian, English and French are used, especially with regard to teaching and research activities carried out by the specialised departments. Not infrequently, the vocabulary is international, whether in Latin or English (*alumni*, *top*, *test*, *item* and so on). Neologisms are preserved, barbarisms are avoided. Editing norms are generally observed, formatting issues are still to be addressed.



The header includes the denomination of the institution [Faculty of Letters, “Dunarea de Jos” University of Galati], the address and contact details [Address: Str. Domneasca nr. 111, Telephone: 40236 460 476/ Fax:

40236 460 476] and the logo/ motto, in Latin [Per Aspera Ad Astra]. The main links provided are the following: *Prezentare* [About us], *Departamente* [Departments], *Programe de studiu* [Study Programmes], *Cercetare* [Research], *Studenti* [Students], *Admitere* [Admission], *Relatii internationale* [International Relations], *Alumni* and *Contact*. One comment to be made here is that, instead of *Despre noi*, the equivalent of *About us*, the more elegant *Prezentare* [Presentation] was chosen, in keeping with local standards.



The opening text at the centre of the main page, rendered below together with its translation into English, offers a brief presentation of the faculty and its past.

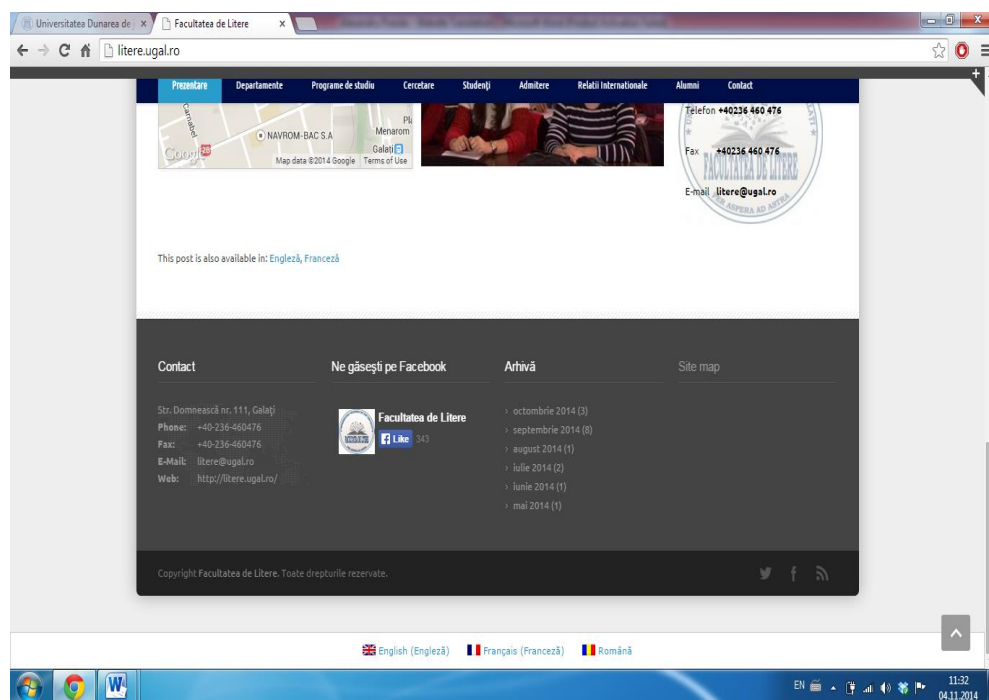
Bun venit la Facultatea de Litere!	Welcome to the Faculty of Letters!
Facultatea de Litere este una dintre facultățile cu tradiție din cadrul Universității "Dunărea de Jos" din Galați, primul program de studiu cu profil filologic, Limba și literatura	The Faculty of Letters is one of the traditional faculties within "Dunarea de Jos" University of Galati, the first study programme in philology, Romanian language and

<p>română – Limba și literatura rusă, fiind înființat în anul 1959.</p> <p>Facultatea de Litere, ale cărei programe de studiu se află în clasa B de ierarhizare a instituțiilor de învățământ superior, vă oferă posibilitatea de a studia într-un cadru modern pentru obținerea competențelor de specialitate și transversale de care credem că este nevoie <i>într-un secol</i> al comunicării și pluriculturalității.</p> <p>Într-o societate a schimbării și readaptării permanente, vă vom însoți pentru construirea unei cariere în care limba română și valorile culturale românești se reunesc cu limba engleză și franceză și valorile culturale <i>implicite</i>. Vă ajutăm astfel să obțineți un profil profesional <i>ce se poate integra oricărui context de lucru</i> în domeniul educativ sau al comunicării.</p>	<p>literature – Russian language and literature, having been set up in 1959.</p> <p>The Faculty of Letters, whose study programmes have been ranked B (<i>on a scale from A to E</i>) in the <i>national</i> hierarchy of higher education institutions, offers you the possibility of studying in a modern environment in view of obtaining the specialised and interdisciplinary competences we believe are necessary <i>in the present day era</i> of communication and multiculturalism.</p> <p>In a society involving permanent change and re-adaptation, we will support you in building a career which brings Romanian language and cultural values closer to English, French and the cultural values <i>of the Anglophone and Francophone spaces</i>. We hope thus that you will acquire a professional profile that <i>matches any competitive work context</i> related to education and communication.</p>
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As an act of interlingual communication, the proposed translation poses no real difficulties in orienting the writing towards the reader. Beyond the obvious enabling stage, the only interventions at the level of facilitation/ localisation and of adaptation respectively are the modifications in the original, highlighted in italics, half of which are homogenising, and half of which are heterogenising (indicating the equilibrium between globalisation and localisation):

- (*on a scale from A to E*) – inserted to bring information about the Romanian academic hierarchy and to position the faculty second; heterogenising;
- *national* – added to show recognition within the borders of the Romanian state; heterogenising;
- *in the present day era* – replaces *in a century* in the original, as the latter was not considered specific to English; homogenising;
- *of the Anglophone and Francophone spaces* – used so as to avoid the repetition (which, in Romanian was solved by *implicite* [implied] and not to refer restrictively to the English and French geographical spaces (as emphasis is on language); homogenising;
- *matches any competitive work context* – brings changes to the initial *ce se poate integra oricărui context de lucru* [which may be integrated within any work context], considered over developed and missing the essential point of competitiveness; homogenising.

The right hand side of the main page features three main entries: *Languages* (one of the few words in English which appear), *Actualizări* [Updates] and *Evenimente* [Events]. While the first and the last are inactive, the second allows access to a number of documents on academic administration: *Fișe de disciplină pentru anul universitar 2014-2015* [Curricula for the 2014-2015 academic year], *Varianta finală a orarului pentru programele de licență – semestrul I, 2014-2015*, [Final version of the timetable for BA study programmes – 1st semester, 2014-2015], *Începerea activităților didactice la programul de studii de licență la distanță Limba și literatura română – Limba și literatura engleză* [Teaching activities begin for the BA Distance Learning study programme Romanian language and literature – English language and literature], *Tutorat 2014-2015* [Tutorials 2014-2015], and *Orarul programelor de masterat* [Timetable for MA study programmes]. Here, two observations need to be made: the active, dynamic *Teaching activities begin* was preferred to the static noun phrase *Începerea activităților didactice* [Beginning of teaching activities]; the plural *Tutorials* was used instead of the singular in the original, *Tutorat*, for the simple reason that, in contrast with Romanian, English uses plurals to convey a general meaning.



The bottom of the page has a notice on the languages of the site (itself half in English, half in Romanian though): *This post is also available in: Engleză, Franceză*. It also repeats contact information, this time also mentioning the exact building on campus (*Corp AS*) and the faculty's email address. The last four entries are: *Contact* [Contact], *Ne găsești pe Facebook* [You can find us on Facebook], *Arhivă* [Archive] and *Site map* (no Romanian equivalent found).

3. Concluding lines

Resuming the core features of the locality in language and design, then communicating them across cultural frontiers, against ready-made assumptions on otherness, is no easy task. Neither is that of packaging your own products/ interests and having them carried forth in search of potential buyers. As results from the case study presented – in which local specificity is preserved, educational offers are marketed and connections are sought – the demanding task of making the local part of the global (not inadvertently or deliberately of allowing the latter to contaminate and modify the former) is that of the translator as interlingual communicator and intercultural mediator. Indeed, “one of the ways in which we connect

with others from different languages and cultures is through translation, so commitment to appropriate, culturally sensitive models of translation would appear to be central to any concept of global citizenship in the twenty-first century." (Cronin 2006: 30) If website translation is performed along the lines of enabling, facilitating or localising and lastly of adapting, if the homogenising and the heterogenising elements are brought together and made to work in consonance, the final product that emerges is well balanced, communicates efficiently and ultimately attains its goal.

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Sites

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