OVERCOMING LOCALIZATION CHALLENGES IN SOCIAL MEDIA TEXTS: STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TRANSLATION

Abstract. In an increasingly interconnected world, the localization of social media texts stands as a crucial bridge between cultures and languages. This article delves into the multifaceted challenges encountered during the process of localizing social media content and presents pragmatic strategies for adeptly overcoming these hurdles.

Cultural nuances, character limitations, hashtags, emojis, and platform-specific formatting emerge as primary obstacles, potentially hindering the seamless transition of content across languages. To address these concerns, cultural consultation emerges as a pivotal solution, enabling accurate adaptations that resonate with local audiences. Translation memory tools offer an innovative approach, ensuring consistency and expediency in the face of ever-evolving trends.

Contextual understanding serves as the bedrock, allowing translators to grasp the intricate fabric of social media conversations, thus crafting translations that not only convey meaning but capture cultural essence. Integrating localized content into social media campaigns demands a dynamic approach involving social media monitoring, testing, and iterative refinement based on audience feedback.

By amalgamating technological resources with human insight, organizations can navigate the labyrinthine pathways of localization in social media texts. This article serves as a compass, guiding practitioners toward effective translation...
strategies that transcend linguistic barriers and resonate with diverse audiences in the digital sphere.

**Keywords:** localization, media texts, translation, trends, linguistic and cultural aspect.

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ПОДОЛАННЯ ПРОБЛЕМ ІЗ ЛОКАЛІЗАЦІЄЮ ТЕКСТІВ У СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕДІА: СТРАТЕГІЇ ДЛЯ ЕФЕКТИВНОГО ПЕРЕКЛАДУ

Анотація. У світі, що стає все більш взаємопов’язаним, локалізація текстів у соціальних мережах є найважливішим мостом між культурами та мовами. У цій статті розглядаються багатогранні проблеми, які виникають під час процесу локалізації вмісту соціальних медіа, і представлені прагматичні стратегії для вмілого подолання цих перешкод.

Культурні нюанси, обмеження символів, хештеги, емодзі та специфічне для платформи форматування стають основними перешкодами, які потенційно перешкоджають плавному переходу вмісту між мовами. Щоб вирішити ці проблеми, культурні консультації постають як ключове рішення, що дозволяє точні адаптації, які резонують з місцевою аудиторією. Інструменти пам’яті перекладів пропонують інноваційний підхід, забезпечуючи послідовність і ефективність перед обличчям тенденцій, що постійно змінюються.

Контекстуальне розуміння служить основою, що дозволяє перекладачам осигтувати складну тканину розмов у соціальних мережах, таким чином
stressing cultural nuances, which are often steeped in cultural references, idioms, and humor that defy straightforward translation. Neglecting these intricate cultural nuances can result in misinterpretations and the dilution of intended impact. For instance, the English phrase "raining cats and dogs" loses its figurative meaning when directly translated to Ukrainian ("лиє як із відра"), missing the metaphor and humor [1].

Solution: A collaborative approach with native-speaking translators proficient in both the source and target cultures becomes indispensable. They can not only discern these cultural subtleties but also skillfully adapt the content to ensure the preservation of its tone and intent. For instance, in casual conversations, using first names is common. However, Ukrainian culture typically demands the use of last names, even in informal situations. Therefore, it is more appropriate to use last names or diminutive forms in informal contexts. Another case is that in English-speaking countries, using only first and last names is typical. However, in Ukrainian tradition, middle names derived from the father's name (patronymic names) are commonly used. Therefore, in English, it is customary to omit the use of patronymic names, as they are not a common practice [2].
Hashtags and Keywords: Translating hashtags and keywords while maintaining their effectiveness presents a conundrum. The cultural context and colloquialisms differ, affecting the visibility and resonance of posts [1].

Using hashtags in both Ukrainian and English involves understanding their nuances, as each language has its own conventions and trends. Here, we'll explore some key aspects of hashtag usage in both languages. Hashtags have become an integral part of our digital communication, especially on social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. While they may seem simple at first glance, there are several nuances to consider when using hashtags effectively:

Relevance: The most crucial aspect of using hashtags is relevance. Ensure that the hashtags you use are directly related to the content of your post. Irrelevant or misleading hashtags can irritate your audience and harm your online reputation.

Trending vs. Niche: There are two main types of hashtags: trending and niche. Trending hashtags are popular at a given moment and can help your content reach a broader audience. Niche hashtags are specific to a particular topic or community and can help you target a more engaged, smaller audience.

Number and Variety: Don't overdo it with hashtags. Using too many can make your post look spammy. On most platforms, a concise selection of 2-5 relevant hashtags works best. However, on platforms like Instagram, you can use up to 30, but it's better to focus on quality over quantity.

Research: Before using hashtags, research them to see how frequently they are used and the kind of content associated with them. This can help you choose the right ones for your post.

Branded Hashtags: Consider creating your own branded hashtag. This can help you build a community around your brand or campaign and encourage user-generated content.

Capitalization and Spacing: Hashtags are not case-sensitive, but using capitalization for multi-word hashtags (#ThisIsAnExample) can make them more readable. Avoid using spaces or special characters within hashtags, as they break the link.

Seasonal and Event-Based Hashtags: Capitalize on trending events, holidays, or seasons by using relevant hashtags. This can increase the visibility of your content.

Monitoring and Engagement: Keep an eye on the hashtags you use. Engage with other users who use the same hashtags to build connections and increase your visibility within specific communities.

Avoiding Controversial or Offensive Hashtags: Be mindful of the potential double meanings or controversies associated with hashtags. Using them unknowingly can lead to backlash.

Evolution of Hashtags: The popularity and meaning of hashtags can change over time. Stay updated with current trends and adapt your hashtag strategy accordingly.
Ukrainian Hashtags:

Language and Script: Ukrainian hashtags are typically written in the Cyrillic script. For example, #Україна (Ukraine) or #ЛюблюУкраїну (I love Ukraine).

Trending Topics: Ukrainian hashtags often revolve around current events, holidays, and cultural references. For instance, during Independence Day, you might see #ДеньНезалежності (Independence Day) trending.

Activism and Social Issues: Ukraine has a history of political activism, so hashtags are often used for social and political causes, such as #ЗмінимоСистему (Change the System) during protests.

Transliteration: Some users may include transliterations of Ukrainian words to cater to English-speaking audiences. For example, #Kyiv or #Lviv.

English Hashtags:

Brevity and Creativity: English hashtags are known for their brevity and creativity. They should be short and memorable. For example, #ThrowbackThursday or #SelfieSunday.

Trending Topics: English hashtags cover a wide range of topics, from pop culture (#GameOfThrones) to social issues (#ClimateChange). Trending hashtags often reflect current events and trends.

Branding and Promotion: In English, hashtags are extensively used for branding and marketing. Companies create unique hashtags to promote products or campaigns, like #JustDoIt for Nike.

Humor and Sarcasm: English hashtags are sometimes used humorously or sarcastically. For instance, #MondayMotivation is often accompanied by humorous or relatable content about the struggles of starting the week.

Cross-Cultural Appeal: English hashtags have global appeal, allowing users from diverse linguistic backgrounds to engage. For example, #Foodie is understood worldwide.

In summary, while both Ukrainian and English hashtags serve as tools for categorization and engagement on social media, they have distinct characteristics. Ukrainian hashtags often reflect national pride, activism, and cultural events, while English hashtags prioritize brevity, creativity, and a broad range of topics. Understanding these nuances is crucial for effective social media communication in each language.

Solution: Thorough research into localized hashtags and keywords is imperative. For instance, here are more examples of how hashtags and keywords might be localized from English into Ukrainian and vice versa for social media content. There is an original English keyword: "Sustainable fashion". A translator adapted a term to convey the same concept in Ukrainian using "Стійка мода" (Sustainable Fashion). There is an original English hashtag: #ThrowbackThursday, which is an internet trend used among social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. A translator replaced the English-specific phrase while retaining the concept using #Вечірспогадів (Localization Industry Standards Association).
**Emojis and Symbols:** Emojis and symbols transcend languages but can be interpreted differently across cultures, leading to misunderstandings or misinterpretations (Localization Industry Standards Association).

**Solution:** Meticulously selecting emojis that convey universal emotions can mitigate this challenge. For instance, a thumbs-up emoji serves as a gesture of approval in both English and Ukrainian cultures, fostering clarity (Localization Industry Standards Association).

**Platform-Specific Formatting:** In the dynamic realm of social media, the significance of tailoring content to the nuances of different platforms cannot be overstated. Social media giants like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn each come with their distinct formatting requisites, presenting an intricate challenge in the process of content localization. As a consequence, translated content, even when linguistically accurate, may not seamlessly align with the unique visual aesthetics and user experiences specific to each platform [4].

Platform-specific formatting refers to the practice of tailoring content or design to suit the unique characteristics and requirements of different digital platforms, operating systems, or devices. This approach is crucial for ensuring a seamless and user-friendly experience across various platforms. Here are some nuances of platform-specific formatting with examples:

- **Screen Size and Resolution:** Different devices have varying screen sizes and resolutions. Content must be formatted to fit these screens optimally. For instance, a responsive website design adjusts its layout to display properly on both desktop and mobile screens.

- **Typography:** Typography choices can vary across platforms. Fonts may render differently on iOS, Android, and web browsers. For example, the default system font on iOS, San Francisco, differs from Android's Roboto. To maintain consistency, app developers often use platform-specific fonts.

- **User Interface (UI) Elements:** Each platform has its set of UI guidelines. For example, iOS uses tab bars, while Android uses bottom navigation bars. App designers must adhere to these guidelines to ensure a familiar and intuitive user experience.

- **Navigation Patterns:** Navigation patterns differ between platforms. For instance, iOS typically uses a back button, while Android relies on a dedicated "back" gesture. Apps need to implement the appropriate navigation patterns for each platform to avoid confusion.

- **Gestures and Interactions:** Gestures like swiping or pinching may behave differently on various devices. Tailoring gesture responsiveness can enhance the user experience. For example, pinch-to-zoom may be more sensitive on a touchscreen tablet than on a desktop computer.

- **Color Schemes:** Platforms often have distinct color schemes. iOS favors a more vibrant and saturated color palette, while Android's Material Design emphasizes a flatter and more muted color scheme. Adhering to these color guidelines helps maintain visual consistency.
Accessibility: Different platforms have varying accessibility features and requirements. For instance, iOS offers VoiceOver for screen readers, while Android uses TalkBack. Developers must ensure content and UI elements are accessible on all platforms.

Performance Optimization: Each platform may require different performance optimizations. For example, an app might need to handle memory management differently on iOS compared to Android to ensure smooth performance.

In summary, platform-specific formatting is essential for creating a cohesive and user-friendly experience across various digital platforms. By considering screen sizes, typography, UI elements, navigation patterns, gestures, color schemes, accessibility, and performance optimization, designers and developers can tailor their content and design to meet the specific requirements of each platform, ultimately enhancing the user experience.

Solution: Adapting translations to align with the distinct formatting criteria of each platform emerges as a pivotal strategy. This strategic adaptation extends beyond the linguistic realm, encompassing the visual and structural dimensions that define a platform. By meticulously considering the intricacies of each platform, content can be rendered not only linguistically accessible but also visually appealing [5]. For instance, the limitations imposed by Instagram's character count are a testament to the need for this adaptability. In our example, the Ukrainian translation "Давай разом досліджувати" - while conveying the essence of "Let's explore together" - may exceed Instagram's character limit, truncating the message and potentially compromising its intended impact. By proactively adhering to Instagram's character constraints, the localized content retains its clarity and resonance without losing its intended meaning [4]. In essence, the solution to platform-specific formatting intricacies resides in the meticulous attention to detail and the recognition that successful localization transcends words alone. By adhering to the unique formatting requisites of each platform, content creators ensure that their localized messages maintain their linguistic accuracy, visual aesthetics, and ultimately deliver an enhanced user experience that resonates authentically across diverse social media platforms [5].

Rapid Updates and Trends: in the ever-evolving landscape of social media, one constant remains: change. The dynamism of social media platforms is characterized by the swift emergence of trends, updates, and conversations that capture the attention of audiences in the blink of an eye. Consequently, the process of localizing content faces the formidable challenge of not only conveying accurate messages but also doing so in a manner that aligns with the current zeitgeist [6].

Solution: The solution to navigating this intricate challenge lies in establishing a translation process that mirrors the speed of social media itself. A streamlined and agile approach is essential, with a focus on rapid adaptation to changing trends and conversations. This demands a translation process that transcends the conventional and embraces a more fluid methodology, allowing content to seamlessly synchronize
with the pace of social media evolution [6]. Take, for instance, the concept of viral challenges that sweep through platforms. These trends surge into the spotlight, demanding prompt response and engagement. When localizing content related to such challenges, a delay in translation could render the content obsolete, missing the prime window of engagement. By infusing agility into the translation process, content can be swiftly localized to capture the momentum of these viral sensations [7]. Moreover, consider the real-time conversations that transpire on social media platforms, such as reactions to current events or breaking news. Effective localization demands not only linguistic accuracy but also contextual relevance. In these instances, an accelerated translation process ensures that the localized content remains pertinent and resonant within the context of ongoing discussions [8]. To effectively address the challenges posed by rapid updates and trends, organizations must embrace a translation process characterized by flexibility, swift turnarounds, and efficient collaboration. Regular updates, iterative feedback loops, and a proactive approach to adapting to emerging trends are essential components of this strategy. By doing so, brands can ensure that their localized content remains not only accurate but also timely, enabling them to actively participate in and shape the dynamic conversations that define the landscape of social media [7].

**Conclusion.** Localization in social media texts requires a delicate balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. Overcoming the obstacles presented by cultural nuances, character limitations, and evolving trends necessitates collaboration, technology, and a profound understanding of both the source and target audiences. By implementing the solutions discussed in this article, organizations can effectively navigate the challenges of localization and achieve global resonance in their social media campaigns [11].

When localizing social media content between English and Ukrainian, employing effective translation methods is crucial to ensure seamless communication and cultural resonance [12]. Two prominent methods stand out:

Transcreation goes beyond literal translation, focusing on adapting content to evoke the same emotional impact and cultural nuances. Given the unique cultural contexts of English and Ukrainian, transcreation is paramount for preserving the intended message and sentiment. It involves reimagining idioms, slogans, and colloquialisms to resonate with the target audience while retaining the core essence.

Cultural adaptation centers on understanding and incorporating cultural norms, customs, and references. Tailoring visual elements, such as images and emojis, to align with cultural preferences enhances relatability. Similarly, adjusting hashtags and keywords to fit local trends ensures content visibility [6].

In practice, a blend of these methods is ideal. Incorporating transcreation for creatively rich content and cultural adaptation for context-sensitive elements yields content that speaks authentically to the target audience, whether it's English-speaking or Ukrainian-speaking users, fostering engagement and establishing an enduring connection.
Localization in social media texts requires a delicate balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance. Overcoming the obstacles presented by cultural nuances, character limitations, and evolving trends necessitates collaboration, technology, and a profound understanding of both the source and target audiences. By implementing the solutions discussed in this article, organizations can effectively navigate the challenges of localization and achieve global resonance in their social media campaigns (Globalization and Localization Association).

References:

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