



Book Review

Jiménez-Crespo, M.A. (2024) *Localization in translation*. Routledge. ISBN: 9781032357300

Masood Khoshsaligheh

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran | Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
khoshsaligheh@um.ac.ir

Amir Arsalan Zoraqi

Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran
amir.zoraqi@gmail.com

Manjet Kaur Mehar Singh

Universiti Sains Malaysia, Malaysia
manjeet@usm.my

DOI: 10.12807/ti.117201.2025.r01

Jiménez-Crespo's *Localization in translation* is an intriguing contribution that provides much food for thought to reflect on the omnipresent phenomenon of localization, as we know it today, which encompasses all forms of digital texts from software applications to websites to video games. The book is organized into five sections that address both the general points common to all types of localization activities, as well as the aspects that are specific to types of localization activities. The title of the book is a meticulous reflection on one of the oldest discussions on the position of translation and localization. While there is agreement as to where translation stands with regards to translation, it is generally argued that translation is only one of the stages to be conducted throughout the localization cycle of any given product to be released in a target locale (Esselink, 2000; O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013) as "localization brings some extra tasks along with those carried out as part of translation, such as testing, engineering, and updating accompanying documentation and support materials" (Rothwell et al., 2023, pp. 174-175). According to this view, localization is considered as "translation plus", which involves more than translating the textual elements transformed in the digital format (Altice, 2019, p. 222). However, by titling the book *Localization in translation*, Jiménez-Crespo (2024) conceptualizes localization "as a specific modality of 'Translation'" (p. 6).

Chapter 1, Introduction, starts with a brief note on how technological developments characterizing the modern digital world have necessitated a different approach to their translation, given the continuous emergence of new forms of digital texts in different interactive milieu. The author lays out the foundation for some of the terminological and conceptual debates with respect to localization in Translation Studies by highlighting some questions that will be answered throughout the book in their respective chapters. For instance, "are the adaptations required in localization different from those in other translation processes?" Some of the terminological confusions touched upon have to do

with concepts such as localization, locale, localizer, and quality assurance, which have their roots in the industry since the earliest endeavors into this matter, and the ilk were mostly from the side of industry practitioners who provided descriptive accounts of the various aspects of the industry; for instance, Dietz (2007) for game localization, and Dunne (2009) for software localization’.

Chapter 2, Defining localization: The main concepts, builds upon the question raised in the previous chapter and provides the ontological and epistemological outlooks that are crucial to understanding the phenomenon in question, that is, localization. The author begins by offering some words on the term ‘localization’ and an etymological analysis of the term, particularly in terms of how it is connected to the commercial ‘locale’ and the relevant regulations. The discussion then moves towards a holistic note on the history of localization as a practice and its distinguishing features from translation by focusing on the relevant stages in the process of localization (i.e., globalization, internationalization, and translation) as well as the distinctive features of the types of texts that are to be ‘localized’ as opposed to ‘translated’ (i.e., interactivity and digital configuration). This focus is complemented by providing industry insights into localization and the metaphors used to define and, thus, differentiate localization from translation. This discussion is solidified by examining the key features of localization and how it is viewed in the context of Translation Studies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of what Jiménez-Crespo calls ‘Localization Studies’ in terms of its interdisciplinary nature and how it could be contextualized in the turns and paradigms occurring in Translation Studies as a whole.

Chapter 3, Localization: Minding the process, focused on providing a generic and descriptive account of localization and internationalization processes. This discussion is enriched by providing an overview of localization levels across software, video games, and websites, and the commonalities of the localization process across all localization types along with the agents involved in the process. Additionally, this chapter introduces the workflow followed in the localization process and the notable technologies used for content management, terminology management, and quality assurance. An introduction to the standards used in localization and character encoding is provided. The chapter concludes with a brief, yet highly important note on one of the crucial questions frequently raised with respect to localizers’ competence and in localization training contexts: Should (future) localizers be proficient in programming languages?

Chapter 4, Quality in localization, deals with one of the most important concepts in both academic and industrial settings: quality. The chapter is opened with the introduction of quality assurance in the context of localization and then proceeds to set forth the conceptualizations of quality in Translation Studies and the theoretical contributions made by translation scholars in theoretically contextualizing quality in the current localization quality assurance practices. The discussion is enriched by industry-based perspectives on localization quality and the factors that are emphasized in different industry models. In addition, the processes and stages involved in localization quality assurance and the various models used to test the quality of localized products (e.g., video games or websites) are provided by highlighting the reflection of error-based approaches in the evaluation of quality in both website and game localization.

Chapter 5, Culture in localization, is concerned with the importance of considering the cultural nuances involved in the localization of digital interactive products and the problems attached to defining the concept of quality

concretely in this context. To help alleviate this problem, Jiménez-Crespo provides some of the most useful cultural models used in localization research (particularly website localization). Upon theoretically discussing culture in localization, the author moves on to highlight the cultural issues that could arise in localization across all types of localization activities (e.g., websites, video games, mobile applications, etc.) and the general and specific approaches and solutions that could be adopted to ensure proper reception of localized products in terms of cultural aspects; hence, proper ‘culturalization.’ The chapter concludes with a note on the role of localizers as intercultural communicators as well as the political aspects affecting decisions regarding the localization process in terms of institutional policies, economic differences, and censorship.

Chapter 6, Localization and digital interaction: Interactivity, multimodality, usability, and accessibility, describes the interaction patterns between users and digital products with regard to their interactivity across all localization types and the “action possibilities” afforded by the digital milieu that come to fruition as a result of the multimodal configuration of digital texts and how this multimodality and interactivity come together to form users’ experiences while interacting with websites and video games. The chapter also includes a discussion of accessibility and how digital accessibility is realized in the context of websites and video games. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how accessibility considerations can be incorporated from the very early stages of development to ensure “universal design” and the importance of accessibility awareness.

Building upon the *ad hoc* features of interaction in digital contexts, Chapter 7, Localization: Texts and digital genres, addresses the notion of digital texts as types of text that are subject to localization rather than translation. Therefore, the author provides a conceptualization of ‘text’ in localization. This conceptualization involves a variety of linear texts as well as dynamic, nonlinear hypertexts that would go beyond traditional linear texts in several respects, including interactivity, among others. This comparative perspective with traditional linear texts allows the author to outline the basic structure of hypertexts. The author moves on to recontextualize traditional text-based features considering a new type of digital text (i.e., cohesion and coherence). Of particular use is the notion of “digital genre,” which can be considered as the digital incarnation of traditional text formats. This concept can help identify the conventional features of the types of text characterizing video games, websites, software, and mobile applications. The author provides a detailed note on how genres are formed a new or adapted from other genres. Genres are also broken down in terms of their macro- and micro-structures, and relevant useful concepts are introduced.

Chapter 8, Software localization, is the first of a series of chapters focused on each particular type of localization activity. Sequencing is logical both chronologically (in that the first instances of localization arose in the context of productivity software) and technically (in that they are less complex than other types of contexts, e.g., video games). This section successfully breaks down the components of software products. Thus, it begins with a brief note on the required skills and expertise for software localization (especially in terms of programming knowledge). The author then moves on to define software by highlighting the distinction between ‘codes’ and ‘resources.’ The description of software products is complemented by highlighting the assets (i.e., materials) included in software products, the common file formats associated with these assets, and the typical localization process for software products. The author addresses the challenging aspects of software localization, along with practical

examples of such challenges, with a particular focus on placeholders, variables, and pluralization. The chapter concludes with the provision of a list of software genres.

Like the previous chapter, Chapter 9, Web localization, and Chapter 10, Video game localization, highlight the same perspectives raised regarding software localization but redirected towards websites, and video games, respectively. This involves discussing the phenomena under study, the distinguishing features of each type of digital product, the assets included in each, and the stages involved in the localization of each product. Each chapter is closed with a discussion of website genres and video game genres that could provide insights into the study of each related product.

Chapter 11, Mobile app localization, deals with one of the less-developed areas of localization research: mobile applications. Upon defining mobile applications and the considerations involved in their localization from both the development and user perspectives, the author depicts the process of mobile app localization (both for Android and iOS). Similar to the previous three chapters, this chapter closes with the variety of existing app genres.

Chapter 12, Perspectives in localization: From MT to AI, provides an up-to-date account of the micro- and macro-level impacts of technological evolution (particularly regarding generative large language models (LLMs), augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and machine translation (MT)). After thoroughly discussing the implications of each technological development, the author addresses the variety of web affordances provided by technological developments for user participation, and the realization of collective localization agendas and initiatives in the form of crowdsourcing, volunteer translation, and localization. The discussion is wrapped up by a note on “green localization” and the importance of achieving efficient means of going about the localization of digital products.

The final chapter, Researching localization, is concerned with highlighting the position of localization research within Translation Studies and the areas of localization research that have already been addressed, as well as the potential future avenues of research. The chapter also includes a discussion on research methodology and the methods, designs, instruments, and analysis procedures that could be adopted in localization research, as well as the challenges involved in researching localization across all types.

Now that we have provided a general note on the content covered in the book, it is only appropriate to discuss what the conglomeration of all the content covered in the book would bring about. First, it must be noted that the book successfully achieves its aim of improving “localization literacy.” The pedagogical implications of this book are myriad. Although the book deals with a subject that would involve some level of specialization, it is marked by a striking usage of non-specialized language, primarily drawing upon common terminology in Translation Studies. The confusion is expected to arise because bringing together academic and industry-based terminology is properly tackled. Furthermore, the discussion points presented at the end of each chapter make this book a desirable course book for localization courses. In addition, the useful, relevant, and up-to-date references provided at the end of each chapter for further reading will provide students and early career researchers with invaluable directions for building up on the knowledge acquired in the book.

Finally, as a recommendation for improvement, the inclusion of a companion website that could provide students with online exercises, more frequent concrete examples of the concepts discussed (especially given the practice-oriented nature of the task of localization), and other complementary

materials could be a welcome addition to this already invaluable and timely contribution to the canon of localization research. Furthermore, the author's focus on providing "techno-centric practical knowledge" can, at times, enable readers to smoothly follow the flow of information (although such information is generally provided in separate boxes), potentially causing (student) readers to lose track of the information. This is particularly of significance in this age that "the advances in technology, especially the emergence of AI and LLMs, highlight the need to explore MT in connection with these technologies" (Puppel & Borg, 2025, p. 7).

Overall, Jiménez-Crespo's *Localization in Translation* is an immense and timely contribution to Localization Studies, which can contribute to training more competent localization researchers and practitioners. Indeed, the merits of the book are by no means limited to early career researchers. The discussions and outlooks adopted in the book could help refine many of the vague and elusive conceptualizations related to localization. It also provides much fodder for discussion and reflection on other aspects of localization, especially by juxtaposing the varied types of interactive digital milieus in which localization could be conducted.

References

- Altice, N. (2019). Technology and game localization: Translation behind the screens. In M. O'Hagan (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and technology*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315311258>
- Dietz, F. (2007). "How difficult can that be?" – The work of computer and video game localization. *Revista Tradumàtica* (5), 1-6. <https://www.raco.cat/index.php/Tradumatica/article/download/75763/96193>
- Dunne, K. J. (2009). Assessing software localization: For a valid approach. In C. V. Angelelli & H. E. Jacobson (Eds.), *Testing and assessment in translation and interpreting studies* (pp. 185-222). John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ata.xiv>
- Esselink, B. (2000). *A practical guide to localization*. John Benjamins. <https://doi.org/10.1075/liwd.4>
- Jiménez-Crespo, M. (2024). *Localization in translation*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003340904>
- O'Hagan, M., & Mangiron, C. (2013). *Game localization: Translating for the global digital entertainment industry*. John Benjamins.
- Puppel, M. and Borg, C. (2025). Evaluating ChatGPT's performance in creative text translation for communication: A case study from English into German. *Media and Intercultural Communication: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 1-27. <https://doi.org/10.22034/mic.2024.480506.1023>
- Rothwell, A., Moorkens, J., Fernández-Parra, M., Drugan, J., & Austerluehl, F. (2023). *Translation tools and technologies*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003160793>