

# Website Localization with Special Reference to the Case of Airbnb in Croatian

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J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Study Programme: Double Major MA Study Programme in English Language and  
Literature – English Translation and Interpreting Studies and Philosophy

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Supervisor: doc. dr. sc. Goran Schmidt

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Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti

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## Abstract

The evolution of technology has changed the way both business and translation are being carried out. Placing certain products and services on the international market requires the process of localization. One of the most important marketing strategies is to offer products and services on the Internet and make them approachable to the users, most efficiently by translating web content. The analysis of localized Airbnb website in the English and Croatian language shows which steps taken in the process of website localization have brought about an admirable success of Airbnb company.

Keywords: localization, translation, website localization, website content

## Sažetak

Razvoj tehnologije znatno je promijenio način na koji se obavljaju poslovanje i prevođenje. Određene proizvode i usluge potrebno je lokalizirati kako bi se mogli plasirati na međunarodno tržište. Ponuda proizvoda i usluga putem Interneta i prevođenje sadržaja web-stranica omogućava bolju dostupnost proizvoda korisnicima te predstavlja jednu od najvažnijih marketinških strategija. Analiza lokaliziranih web-stranica Airbnb-a na engleskom i hrvatskom jeziku pokazuje koje je korake tvrtka Airbnb poduzela pri lokalizaciji te time ostvarila zavidan uspjeh.

Ključne riječi: lokalizacija, prevođenje, lokalizacija web-stranica, sadržaj web-stranice

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## 1. Introduction

Over the last two decades, the rapid development of technology has contributed to the expansion of multimedia and various forms of contents, most of which are digitalized. A great variety of information is accessible on the Internet and it comes from different cultures and it is provided in different languages. If a company wants to present its products and services to a target group online, their marketing strategy should enable their users to have as little difficulties as possible to comprehend their website content. What they need to carry out their business as effectively as they can is the process of localization. Not only does website localization involve the translation of the website content, it also provides the overall adaptation of products, services and digital content to the target market.

The Master's Thesis is divided into two parts, the theoretical and the analytical part. The theoretical part includes the description of a number of processes connected to localization, the evolution and the definition of localization itself, and all the cultural and technical aspects of website localization and website elements. A number of companies has succeeded to make their websites more interactive and approachable to the users by localizing them, and one of those companies is the subject of the analytical part of the thesis. The websites analysed are the English and the Croatian version of Airbnb website. The analysis includes the description of website elements and the translation of website content for both versions, as well as the use of machine translation on the Croatian version of the website.

## 2. “GILT”

Before defining what localization is and which methods and procedures are used in the process of localizing certain products, it is important to define other relevant terms which are closely related to it. Those terms (and localization being one of them), which are abbreviated to the acronym GILT, are “globalization, internationalization, localization and translation” (Sandrini, 2008:1). Each of these terms represents a “set of processes and strategies involved in the design, development and rollout of products or services intended for the global marketplace” (Jóvena, 2015, n.p.).

However, defining each of these terms is not an easy task since many “language industry professionals” still cannot agree on “the exact definition and scope” of each of them due to “complex relationships and interdependencies that exist between” them (Jóvena, 2015, n.p.).

Table 1: Differences between internationalisation, localization, and globalisation (Anastasiou and Schäler, n.d., n.p.)

	<i><b>Internationalization</b></i>	<i><b>Localization</b></i>	<i><b>Globalization</b></i>
<i><b>Definition</b></i>	Functional in any language and content (linguistic and cultural data) separated from functionality	Adaptation of products, services, and digital content to a cultural-linguistic market	The strategy of bringing a product or service to the global market, involving sales and marketing
<i><b>People</b></i>	Software developers, producers and authors of digital content	Translators, proofreaders, software engineers, project managers, testers, publishers	Marketing and sales personnel
<i><b>Stage</b></i>	Development and design of a digital product (content) or service (pre-requisite for localisation)	Translation and adaptation of text, user interface, and cultural conventions	Bringing to the market the internationalised and localised product or service

## 2.1. Globalization

Globalization was initially a term mentioned in the business and economic aspect of the global market and it was later when it came to the attention of language industry professionals, when the need for offering products and services in a variety of languages occurred (Lakó, 2014). Lakó (2014) indicates that there are many definitions of the process of globalization, yet the majority of them cover the social and economic context of globalization, but do not include any references to languages, translation and communication. He suggests that the definition from the December 2011 issue of the online MultiLingual Magazine is more translation studies oriented and he uses it to explain that globalization is “... the process that addresses business issues associated with launching a product globally, such as integrating localization throughout a company after proper internationalization and product design” (Lakó, 2014:24, as cited in *Multilingual Magazine*, 2011).

Globalization is usually abbreviated to G11N, where “11” represents the number of letters between the initial letter “g” and the last letter “n”. It is the first step in the GILT process and it involves “deciding which markets (locales) are targeted first”, setting the budget, establishing deadlines and other managerial aspects (Lakó, 2014:24). Lakó (2014) concludes that a precisely and carefully designed product can enable additional market prospects, although in the initial phase usually only a certain number of markets are selected.

## 2.2. Internationalization

When it comes to translating specific source texts such as the content of websites, one should keep in mind that, except for the author, many other people have also “modified, expanded or optimized the source text” (Cappelli, 2007:10). Cappelli (2007:10) elaborated that, from the linguistic point of view, “web content is often written to be translated, and in the most specialized cases, the language used is simplified in order to make the job easier for the translator” and concluded that “this process is known as *internationalization*”. Internationalization is thus closely related to localization and enables a higher level of its efficiency.

The main objective of the process of internationalization is to prepare the basic version of the website source text in a way that many translation problems can be avoided before they even occur (Pym, 2010). The result of the process should be an internationalized website which has “as few culture-specific features as possible” allowing it to be regarded as neutral and functional,

and which is “constructed in such a way that the later localization teams can add elements (colours, images, references) that will make the site attractive to users in particular cultural locales” (Pym, 2010:3). Internationalization is usually abbreviated to I18N, where “18” represents the number of letters between the initial letter “i” and the last letter “n”.

Sandrini (2008:1, as cited in Lommel and Ray, 2007:17) presents another argument in his definition of internationalization to emphasize how closely it is linked to technology when he states that it is a “process of enabling a product at a technical level for localization” in a way “that it can be easily adapted for a specific market after the engineering phase”. He points out that localization is “a relatively new field of activity for language experts” and that it is possible to achieve the objective of the process of localization only through technical preparation and with the use of “digital media and computer products” (Sandrini, 2008:1).

## 2.3. Localization

### 2.3.1. *The evolution of localization*

To fully understand what language localization which is related to translation nowadays represents, one should first learn about its historical background and development. Since “desktop computers were introduced in the 1980s”, computer technology started to develop rapidly and not only did it “make its way” to users who “have a background in computer programming or engineering”, it made its way to the “normal users” as well (Esselink, n.d., 22). Therefore, desktop computer users needed software which would allow them to do their work efficiently, but would also make the needed information more approachable by adjusting them to the “local standards and habits, including local language” (Esselink, n.d., 22).

Due to “the international expansion of software and hardware developers” a need for localizing certain products for international markets has arisen (Esselink, n.d., 22). At the beginning, it was not yet specified which department or person should take full responsibility for the job so there was a number of most common possibilities. While some software vendors “established in-house teams of translators and language engineers to build international support into their products”, others decided “their international offices or distributors” will take over the task of localizing the products (Esselink, n.d., 22). The important thing was that localization was usually not conducted during the development of the original product.

That approach sometimes led to certain difficulties in the whole process. On the one hand, trying to locate the translatable text which was embedded in the “software source code” was itself quite

difficult, while on the other hand “the requirement for additional language versions of the code made update and version management increasingly complex” (Esselink, n.d., 23). Because of that the localizers had to turn to the original product development team so they could “first build in support for localization or international computing standards” and that is how the concept of internationalization, which is essential for localization for international markets, was eventually formed and developed (Esselink, n.d., 23).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, software publishers realized that it would be optimal to outsource localization tasks to other service providers, and one of the first companies to recognize that was INK, “a European translation services network established in 1980” (Esselink, n.d., 24). What INK offered, other than “translation into all languages required by software publishers”, was “localization engineering and desktop publishing and, most importantly, the project management of these multilingual localization projects” (Esselink, n.d., 24). At that time, the IT industry was developing rapidly, and so did the localization industry. Translation companies recognized the increasing need for localization services and eventually many localization services companies were established. According to Esselink, localization teams in localization services companies would usually be coordinated by a project manager whose job was to oversee schedules and budgets, a linguist who would monitor linguistic issues, an engineer who compiled and tested localized software and on-line help, and a desktop publisher who produced translated, printed or on-line manuals.

### *2.3.2. The definition of localization*

Localization is usually abbreviated to L10N, where “10” represents the number of letters between the initial letter “l” and the last letter “n”. The definition of localization varies according to the context which is initially taken into consideration and the product, discipline or model which is being explored. Since “developers, management and business agents, industry experts, professional translators and localizers, translation scholars, computational linguistic researchers, researchers from a myriad of disciplines (international marketing, technical writing, usability, etc.)” are all participants in the process of localization, Jiménez-Crespo (2013:11) concludes that we can “review different conceptualizations and definitions of localization from its origin”.

The two most common perspectives are: the one which represents a more industrial point of view, and the one which is considered to be more academic and is represented by translation studies scholars. However, even language industry professionals cannot agree among themselves, so some of them believe localization is only connected to “translation-related

phenomena”, while others believe it “focuses on work descriptive of industrial practices” (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013:17). Therefore, Jiménez-Crespo suggests a definition carried out by Dunne which he finds could be the most complete and comprehensive:

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 language, (b), adaptation of non-textual 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. In sum, localization is not so much about specific tasks as much as it is about the processes by which products are adapted. Moreover, localization is but one of a number of interdependent processes and cannot be fully (or correctly) understood without being contextualized in reference to them. These processes are referred to collectively by the acronym GILT.

(2013:17, as cited in Dunne, 2006a:4)

According to Sandrini (2008), the objective of localization should be that people from a certain locale can use the localized product without any difficulties in their own language. The product mentioned could be anything that you want to sell to international consumers, so those products usually “take on a variety of different forms, e.g., software, help, printed and on-line documentation, web sites, e-mails, web-based applications, multimedia components (audio, video, graphics) and so on” (Maroto and de Bortoli, 2001:4). Bowker (2005:13) indicates that localization has grown into a big business, localization companies are trying to maximize their profits, and all of that “has resulted in a significant increase in the volume of material to be translated, which has been accompanied by an increase in pressure on translators to work more quickly while still maintaining high quality output”.

### 3. Website Localization

Both big and small businesses can benefit from having a successfully localized website, and so can their customers. According to Maroto and de Bortoli (2001:3), a website can be regarded as “a company’s premier marketing tool, a facilitator of direct sales, a technical support mechanism” or it can serve “for purposes of public relations”. When customers interact with a website, they form opinions both about the website and the company it represents, and having to read in a language they are familiar with might have a positive impact on the final outcome, which is beneficial for the image the company wants to create. Maroto and Bortoli (2001:3) confirm that by explaining that a research has shown that “users perceive a company more favourably (for example, more trustworthy, more likeable, etc.) when they see a version of the web site in their mother tongue, regardless of their English proficiency”.

When it comes to the terminology of the localization of websites, Sandrini explains that, in English language, “a website encompasses all web pages which are accessible under a common Web address (domain name)” and that it “consists of several documents, graphics, programs and so on, each of which is identified by a uniform resource identifier (URI)” (n.d., n.p.). The content of a website is composed of digital assets which contain localizable information:

1. “common content: texts, images, links which constitute the main structure of a website”
2. “multimedia assets: audio and video streaming, flash animations”
3. “application-bound assets: files and documents which are accessible only with special software applications”
4. “transactional assets: information about transactions (e.g. shopping baskets, sessions) in e-commerce”
5. “community assets: dynamic content of discussion forums and chat rooms created by Website visitors”

(Sandrini, 2008:9-10)

#### 3.1. Website localization strategies

Before a company decides to localize its website, certain factors regarding cost-efficiency should be taken into consideration since there are both pros and cons to the process of localization. According to Sandrini (2008:11), an international company should “choose languages on the basis of their involvement in a certain market, the market potential measured in GNP growth

rates, the number of active Internet users, costs, available staff for a particular language, etc.” The author of the website should also pay attention to the Return on Investment (ROI), which means he should avoid his costs for localization not being covered by the resulting advantages (Sandrini, 2008). The potential market should be explored beforehand in order to gather information about the cost-effectiveness and delivery of the products, customer support for a certain language, possible legal problems, terms of payment and whether the market actually needs those products or services (Sandrini, 2008).

According to Sandrini (2008:11-12), Rose Lockwood has named “three main strategies for the management of multilingual and multicultural content” on international companies’ websites: the monarchist, anarchist and federalist approach (as cited in Lockwood, 2000). The result of the monarchist approach is a website with translated, but seldom adapted, content which is “not sensitive to local markets” (Sandrini, 2008:12, as cited in Lockwood, 2000). The anarchist approach brings higher costs as there are “multiple local sites without coordination, each using a different design” (Sandrini, 2008:12, as cited in Lockwood, 2000). The federalist or subsidiary approach comes as a compromise between the monarchist and the anarchist approach. “Global content will be produced centrally, translated and used internationally; regional content is also translated and used in a regional context while local content will be produced locally in the local language without the need for translation” (Sandrini, 2008:12, as cited in Lockwood, 2000).

### 3.2. The process of website localization

The process of website localization consists of a series of steps which are performed by a great variety of professionals, depending on “the nature of the project (marketing website, web-based application, e-commerce site, etc.), the technologies involved, the resources available or even the type of translation procedure” (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013:29). Taking all of those conditions into consideration, it is possible to make a distinction between four main website localization processes: large, medium and small corporations, volunteer-crowdsourcing and individual localization (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013).

Jiménez-Crespo (2013:29-30-31) illustrates the subdivision of the most commonly described website localization process which can be found in the industry:

(a) The first step is the project preparation and project acceptance and is performed by localization managers and engineers:



1. Defining the scope of the project with clients, determining whether the site has been properly internationalized.
2. “Setting up the localization environment and managing the process.”
3. “Retrieving the site contents and architecture.”
4. Website analysis for problems regarding functions and operation.
5. “Analysis of third-party components.”
6. Determining target market related adaptations, overall project planning.
7. Dividing the website into different components.
8. Defining the architecture of the website.
9. “The content that will be translated is identified, processed and analysed for estimates. This is often done with automatic systems. Text can be extracted or translated directly on the HTML structure.”
10. Distributing tasks and time estimate.
11. Creation of localization pack which contains all the files, instructions and deliverables.
12. “A mirror or clone of the future website structure is created. Folders and files are set up for each new language, and the source files are transferred under their new (local) names.”
13. “Creating the global gateway. Links are readdressed into the HTML or JavaScript or other files.”
14. “Similar components are assembled into homogeneous packs consisting of: text, scripts, frames, bars, ‘pop- ups’ (which appear only in the source for the pages – as tool tips and legends), titles of web pages, sound files, images and images with embedded texts, and other types (runtimes, databases, etc.).”
15. Determining a testing plan for the website.
16. Setting up all components in order to send them to translators.

(b) The second step is performed by localization specialists or freelance translators:

17. Preparation of a glossary or termbase.
18. “The textual components of the websites are localized, including videos, presentations, etc. This represents the most significant component of localization. As LISA indicated, processing texts is ‘the bulk of the localization process’ (LISA 2007: 11).”

19. Creating and testing all the components which are not fully adapted or present in the source website.
20. Analysing, adapting and reprocessing all graphics.
21. “A new set of keywords and/or description might be prepared to allow for properly indexing the site in the target locale. This is often referred to as Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and requires a different set of agents.”

(c) The third step is QA (Quality Assurance) and Integration and is performed by QA specialists, engineers or localization specialists:

22. Proofreading the translation.
23. Reintegrating localized components into the website structure.
24. All the created or adapted components are integrated and tested.
25. “Functional quality tests are performed.”
26. “Cosmetic testing is performed.”
27. “Staged Quality Control. Websites are ‘staged’ for testing before they go live.”
28. Making necessary changes and documenting them.
29. Creating a Web-ready version of the website.
30. “Cultural acceptability and efficiency is tested.”
31. “Online Quality Control and validation are carried out.”
32. Posting the website online or delivering it to the client.

### 3.3. The elements of a website

According to Lakó (2014), all the elements of a website are interconnected and organized in a way that the objectives of websites’ owners can be achieved. After taking the typical parts of a commercial website into consideration, he concluded that a website is usually composed of front-end and back-end elements, front-end being the website interface and back-end everything that cannot be seen by the website visitors (Lakó, 2014). However, there is one more element which is an integral part of the website structure and that is the human factor which represents all the professionals participating in the process of localization.

#### 3.3.1. *Front-end elements*

The first one of the front-end elements is the domain name because it is the first form of visitor-website interaction. What Lakó (2014) suggests is that the domain name should be short, easy to spell and easy to remember, and also, it might be beneficial if it contains some keywords or

popular search terms. What is also easy to spot on websites is the logo which is usually positioned in the same location on all pages, in the top-left corner (Lakó, 2014). “The logo bears a multitude of meanings and it is the most important non textual element” (Lakó, 2014:202). Another element which helps visitors find exactly what they need is the navigation structure. It helps the visitor to see main pages, subpages and sub-subpages, and enables moving from one page to another (Lakó, 2014). The page layout refers to the positioning of non-text and text elements on the webpage, usually one type of layout design for the main page and another one for all of the other pages (Lakó, 2014). The last important front-end element is called content and it consists of text and non-text elements. The text on the website should be written in a way that it contains keywords, popular search terms or its synonyms and antonyms, and sentences and constructions which elaborate all of the mentioned elements (Lakó, 2014). The graphic elements, on the other hand, are: “backgrounds, images, delimiting lines, navigation bars, buttons, animations, videos, etc.” (Lakó, 2014:203).

### *3.3.2. Back-end elements*

The purpose of back-end elements is to make the website more dynamic for the visitors by “providing more interactivity, quicker access to information (by adding a search box for instance), allowing retrieval of personalized information based on user input, allowing user to contribute content, etc.” (Lakó, 2014:203). One of the back-end elements is called Content Management Systems and is abbreviated to CMS. CMS is used for allowing “the administrator of the site to preview the updated content prior to pushing it live”, updating pages of the website, adding or creating new pages and removing the old ones (Lakó, 2014:203). The second important element are the newsletters. The localizer usually localizes “the content of the original newsletter” which allows us to get “novel information about the website or products on sale, discounts etc.” (Lakó, 2014:203). The third of the most important back-end elements is the website analytics software which is of great importance to the “economics of efficient website localization” (Lakó, 2014:203).

### *3.3.3. Additional website elements*

In addition, there are some other website components which can be pointed out in the process of localization. For example, e-commerce functionality is related to situations when “the CMS benefits from advanced features” in a way that the localizers do not have to change currency symbols or change dots and commas for prices manually (Lakó, 2014:203). The system determines the location of the visitor and automatically displays the appropriate currency symbol

which means that “all of the features specific to a certain locale will be already established in the database (DB) and specific information retrieved accordingly (information on VAT, custom taxes, delivery etc.)” (Lakó, 2014:204). Another element which is connected with CMS is the on-site search. Using the on-site search, only results relevant to the locale of the visitor will be displayed, for example, if a product is on sale in one specific country, it will not be displayed in other countries (Lakó, 2014). It is also possible to collect information through client support which is usually formed as a live chat room or email and then record and analyse the information to improve the localization process (Lakó, 2014). One of the ways to monitor the progress of the website as well as the efficiency of the localization process is through referral forms and social networks which are used for viral marketing (Lakó, 2014). Another important element are online databases which are used for storing large amount of information such as: “product information, comments, testimonials, feedback, specifics of a certain locale, stocks, pricing policies etc.” (Lakó, 2014:204). Some websites offer downloadable files which can be localized or specially designed for the target locale (Lakó, 2014). An extremely important element is the element of security since it contains confidential data such as “client credit card numbers, trade secrets, proprietary programming, etc.” (Lakó, 2014:204). The last element shows how important the website is, and those are the internal and external links on anchor text, so, according to Lakó (2014:204-205), “the more the internal and external links to a webpage, the more important the webpage”.

#### *3.3.4. The human factor*

One of the crucial elements in the process of localization is the human factor, and the two persons the whole process is revolving around are the website owner and the web-user. The people who are participating in the actual process of localization are usually referred to as translators or localizers, while usually there is an entire team of people involved in the process (Lakó, 2014). In order to explain how many people are usually involved and what their jobs are, Lakó (2014) decided to take a small team and one target market as examples.

The website owner is also known as the commissioner and his job is to determine the purpose of the project, the budget and administration tasks (Lakó, 2014). The project manager is the one who supervises the team of people. When it comes to a SEO (search engine optimization) oriented website localization, SEO engineer is considered to be the most important person in the process. His job is to do the keyword research, determine the content marketing strategy, carry out “link building and exchanging links”, guide “the programmer into making the localized

website load as rapidly as possible on all types of devices”, direct the designer and etc. (Lakó, 2014:206). The task of the designer, on the other hand, is to adjust “user experience (UX) and user interface (UI) to the ‘online habits’ of the target market” (Lakó, 2014:206). Therefore, he should be able to “find the balance between the requirements of the locale and branding requirements” (Lakó, 2014:206). What the programmer does is developing applications or widgets for a certain market, but Lakó (2014) points out that he does not have to be language or culture aware. “On the other hand, it is the programmer’s responsibility to facilitate the translation and localization processes in such a manner that the translations and localization changes can be accomplished in a contextualized scenario” (Lakó, 2014:206). The tasks of localization and translation can actually be done by the same person, so what Lakó (2014:207) suggests would be an appropriate name for that person is a “localization-aware translator”. In that process culture specific changes have to be made in a way that they are web-user oriented (Lakó, 2014). Also, that person has to implement keywords which are relevant to search engines in the website content (Lakó, 2014). The last person whose job is essential for the localization process is the quality assurance (QA) tester. “The QA tester needs to have a rather extensive set of skills: linguistic, cultural, detail oriented, plus verifying if content complies with both the company’s requests and users’ demands through keywords on search engines” (Lakó, 2014:207). Quality assessment can be observed through technical and content perspective. The technical part of the assessment can be done by using various webmaster tools, while statistics tools which generate reports considering user behaviour and traffic are used for the content part of the assessment (Lakó, 2014).

### 3.4. Website localization tools

There is a variety of tools used in website localization which can simplify jobs of certain professionals who participate in the process. When it comes to translation, those are “either aids to the translator, typically bilingual glossaries, or sometimes completely automated systems” (Maroto and de Bortoli, 2001:7). Bilingual glossaries are mostly used for translating technical terms, while large corporations use automated systems since there are more documents than translators can cope with (Maroto and de Bortoli, 2001). According to Pym (2010), some tools enable translations to be distributed across various communication media, some calculate the cost of the localization, while other tools improve the management of pages in a site.

In the case of translation, the most often mentioned terms are computer aided translation (CAT) tools and machine translation (MT) which “has been identified as one of the top three valuable

technologies for localization and arguably even for global economies” (Yanishevsky, n.d., n.p.). However, machine translation is not suitable for all kinds of texts. It is best suited for “language with a restricted or controlled vocabulary and grammar”, such as “technical documentation (online helps, manuals)” and similar (Yanishevsky, n.d., n.p.). Machine translations are usually far from perfect since “much of the language used on the Internet is colloquial, incoherent, ‘ungrammatical’, full of acronyms and abbreviations, allusions, puns, jokes, etc.” (Hutchins, n.d.,18). However, they do benefit the website visitors as they “enable users to understand what is happening in a foreign website, thus enabling them to locate passages or pages that can be sent for human translation” (Pym, 2010:9).

Since machine translations require post-editing, Sanchez-Torron and Koehn (n.d., 1) conducted a research in which they “assessed how different machine translation (MT) systems affect the post-editing (PE) process and product of professional English-Spanish translators”. The conclusion was that a poor quality machine translation led to bad quality translation after post-editing, with the emphasis on the English-Spanish language pair (Sanchez-Torron and Koehn, n.d.).

Another important feature of web localization tools is translation memory. Translation memory has proven to be cost-effective, it allows re-use of translated texts and thus saves time on translation and increases consistency (Sandrini, 2008). Not only does it rationalise the translation of repetitive texts, it also automatically detects “changes and updates in websites” (Sandrini, 2008:20). According to Sandrini (2008:20), “websites are constantly updated and the task of identifying new content can be very time consuming” so, “with a translation memory form the previously translated version of the website, the system matches the content of the new version against the translated content of the old version”.

Key words and key phrases are an essential part of search engine ranking so there is usually a higher number of them in web content than in printed material (Cappelli, 2007). Keywords should be “short, clear and current” and “concentrated at the beginning of the page, as the first paragraph of a web page content is valued more than the rest of the text” (Cappelli, 2007:9).

### 3.5. The cultural adaptation of a website

The cultural adaptation of a website depends on multiple factors in the localization process, so the final result might be a website which is as culturally neutral as possible, a website designed in a way that it seems as if it is a local production or a website which illustrates that the company is conscious and respectful of other cultures (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013). One of the examples which

illustrates the complexity of the cultural adaptation of websites is the one explained by Charalampidou (n.d., 5): “the website of a Greek wine company could not avoid making the Greek cultural elements evident, since the origin of the product is one of its qualitative characteristics which should be obvious even in the localised website”.

“According to the pragmatic-textual and cognitive perspective of Tercedor (2005: 153), four cultural elements are the subject of adaptation: linguistic-textual aspects (such as intertextuality, register or macrotext), visual-iconic aspects, technical aspects, cognitive aspects (such as navigation, metaphors, mental models or interaction)” (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013:32, as cited in Tercedor, 2005:153). Also, Jiménez-Crespo (2013:32) states that empirical studies have shown that “higher degrees of adaptation relate improvements in navigation, interaction and rating of websites” since a culturally adapted website allows the visitors to use it efficiently and with a lower cognitive effort.

However, culture specific elements should always be dealt with carefully. Sandrini (2008:13) points out that there are important things to consider in source texts in order to successfully obtain the process of localization: “use consistent terminology throughout the website, eliminate political, religious or specific references to individual countries, do not use slang or jargon, delete references to humour”. All of the elements mentioned are “deeply rooted in culture” and it is a challenging task to transfer the same meaning easily across languages (Sandrini, 2008:13). In addition, visual effects are also connected with cultural representations so elements such as “graphics, symbols, the use of colours” and similar might come across different receptions across languages and cultures (Sandrini, 2008:13).

## 4. Relevant Research Findings

### 4.1. International research

Besides the quality of the product, its price, the advertising and marketing campaigns, it is very important to adapt the product to the “linguistic and cultural environment of target markets” (Matović, 2017, n.p.). Out of 7.5 billion people in the world, it was estimated in 2016 that 3.5 billion of them use the Internet and 21% of them use it in English (Matović, 2017). Matović (2017, n.p.) explains the results of the 2016 CSA (Common Sense Advisory) Research report:

As it is clearly demonstrated by the CSA Research report, Digital Opportunity: Top 100 Online Languages for 2016, it takes three languages to reach 50% of online users (English, Chinese (Simplified) and German), nine to reach 80% (plus Japanese, Spanish, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian) and 14 languages to get to 90% of the global online population (plus Italian, Korean, Dutch, Chinese (Traditional) and Swedish).

The analysis of the report shows that if a company localizes their website it can improve their position on the global market. According to Matović (2017, n.p.), if the fact that almost “every research ever conducted shows that more than 50% of the customers value proximity over price” is taken into consideration, it is possible to see why “localization represents the road to global success”. Customers will more likely “opt for a more expensive product presented in their first language and in accordance with their culture than for a cheaper deal presented in the language they do not understand” (Matović, 2017, n.p.). Another argument presented by Matović (2017, n.p.) is that “several studies show that localization ROI is actually as high as 25 dollars for every dollar invested”, which means that, in most cases, the decision to localize your products or services will be cost-effective.

### 4.2. Website localization in Croatia

The results of the research conducted by Ciklopea, a language services provider, show that, when it comes to website localization, companies headquartered in Croatia do not follow the same trends as other international companies. Out of 241 companies in Croatia which have their own website, 146 of them translated it into a foreign language, while 95 of them did not do the same (Trstenjak, n.d.). In most cases those websites are available in Croatian and English language, with 65 companies translating the website content only into English and 14 companies into English and German language (Trstenjak, n.d.). Further findings show that 28 companies



translated their website into 3 to 5 languages, 9 companies into 6 to 10 languages and 25 companies into more than 10 languages (Trstenjak, n.d.). Ciklopea CEO Sandra Stojak indicates that international communication strategy can result in global success (Trstenjak, n.d.). The conclusion of the research is that companies which translated their website content into more than 10 languages have an adequate globalization and localization strategy and thus have a better chance of making an appearance in global search engines and social media which means that they can approach their customers in an easier way (Trstenjak, n.d.).

## 5. Case Study: Airbnb

Airbnb is a community marketplace which allows Internet users to “list, discover, and book unique accommodations around the world – online or from a mobile phone or tablet” (Airbnb.com). It was founded in August of 2008 in San Francisco, California, and in 9 years has expanded to more than 65,000 cities in 191 countries and is still expanding into new foreign markets (Airbnb.com). Apart from sleeping accommodations, it allows travellers to book experiences with locals (day trips, outings, walks around town) making it significantly different than booking traditional accommodations (Densmer, 2017). One of the things which caught worldwide attention in their efforts at global expansion is their localization strategy and how it enabled them to be so successful. The analysis of Airbnb website will concentrate on the linguistic, graphic and translational aspects of the company’s localization strategy, main focus being on the Croatian version of the website.

### 5.1. The analysis of front-end elements on Airbnb website

According to Neary (2017), Airbnb sees more than 75 million searches each day which makes their search page their highest traffic page, and that is the reason why, for almost ten years, engineers are constantly trying to enhance and optimize it.

#### 5.1.1. Domain name

As it has already been mentioned, the domain name represents the first visitor-website interaction. When it comes to Airbnb, the initial domain name was not the same as the current one. When Joe Gebbia and Brian Chesky first came up with the idea, they decided to call their new endeavour “Air Bed and Breakfast” which was a reference to the air mattresses the guests were staying on (Kayata, 2015). So the initial domain name ‘Airbedandbreakfast.com’ eventually became ‘Airbnb.com’ which is shorter and easier to spell and remember. This represented one of the steps towards having an efficient localization strategy and an internationalized and localized website.

#### 5.1.2. Logo

Taking into consideration the fact that logo is the most important non-textual element on a website, Airbnb has decided to redesign their own in 2014. The main focus of their new brand strategy was to rebrand Airbnb towards the idea of ‘belonging’ (Thebrandingjournal.com). Their new company logo is named Bélo and it represents four things: “people, place, love, and the ‘a’

of Airbnb” (Thebrandingjournal.com). What also grabbed the attention of the visitors was that Airbnb developed a section of their site called ‘Create Airbnb’ which allowed hosts to personalize the symbol and thus participate in its creation (Thebrandingjournal.com).

Another feature which has been changed for the new logo is its colour which is important because of the cultural impact it might have on the visitors of the website. Airbnb decided to change the colours from blue and white to a light red colour which reflects “passion, emotions and love, but without the aggression of a pure red” (Thebrandingjournal.com). “Airbnb chose a custom version of the font ‘circular’, which is used for the logo and across all print and digital communication supports” (Thebrandingjournal.com). On the Croatian version of the website, the logo is positioned in the top left corner, as well as in the bottom left corner of the website homepage.



Figure 1: Old and new Airbnb logo (Thebrandingjournal.com)

### *5.1.3. Navigation structure*

The navigation bar is located in the top right corner and its size is relatively small compared to the other elements on the website. It represents a guide for the users and allows them to look for something that is not immediately present on the page (Sofian, 2016). It is important to put only the most important items on the navigation bar to avoid the risk of the users encountering too many choices which is not always a good solution, and that is why the Airbnb website navigation bar has four items only (Sofian, 2016). Another reason why there should not be many buttons is that the navigation bar might look crowded visually (Sofian, 2016). The buttons on the English version of the website are “Become a Host”, “Help”, “Sign Up” and “Log In”, while the Croatian counterparts are “Postanite domaćin”, “Pomoć”, “Registracija” i “Prijava” (Airbnb.com).

### *5.1.4. Page layout*

Since Airbnb is a travel website, everything on their website is designed for the purpose of helping travellers find places to visit and places to stay (Sofian, 2016). They want to emphasise

that, by using Airbnb for finding accommodation or booking experiences, travellers can feel as if they were locals in any part of the world. That is why the first thing the visitor can see on their website is one of their slogans: “Book unique homes and experience a city like a local” (Airbnb.com). The localized Croatian version of the website provides a translated slogan which conveys the same meaning: “Rezervirajte jedinstvene smještaje i iskusite grad kao lokalni stanovnik” (Airbnb.com).

Right under the slogan is the booking details bar which is located in the centre of the front page. The location of the booking details bar is very important since most commonly used functions of a website should be the most easily accessible (Sofian, 2016). The search button on the bar is “colored pink-red to stand out, and a black transparent bar crosses the background behind the call to action to emphasize the call to action element” (Sofian, 2016, n.p.).

The non-text elements are an important element for a travel website. They allow the users to see photos of the places they will stay at or to visualise all the things they can see when they arrive to their destination. Every element on Airbnb website is highly visual which means that all the house listings and suggestions prioritize images over text (Sofian, 2016). “The picture frames take up most of the space, leaving a couple of bold words and a button aside for the user to act on” (Sofian, 2016, n.p.). The whole structure of the front page looks very neat and organized, the background behind the visual and text elements is white and there are no advertisements on the side.

#### *5.1.5. The comparison of English and Croatian Airbnb website content*

The first element analysed is the booking details bar since it is usually one of the first items travellers will pay attention to. The first button on the bar represents the location as it says “Where” and “Anywhere”, or “Gdje” and “Bilo gdje” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). Once you click the button other options which allow you to write more specific information about your accommodation will appear: “Destination, city, address” translated to Croatian as “Odredište, grad, adresa” (Airbnb.com).

The second button allows the users to determine the time span of their staying: “When” and “Anytime” in English translated to “Kada” and “Bilo kada” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). Clicking this button offers more specific information as well, so “Check In - Check Out” are replaced by “Dolazak - Odlazak” on the Croatian website (Airbnb.com). What is usually meant by “dolazak” and “odlazak” in Croatian is “arrival” and “departure” in English, when it comes to

transportation at least, but since “check in” and “check out” convey a different meaning when accommodation is taken into consideration, “prijava” and “odjava” might be appropriate solutions for that aspect as well. The calendar where users choose the dates of their check ins and check outs has also been localized. The days of the week and the months are given in the adequate language for both versions of the website. What proves the localizers were detail-oriented is that even the orthography is in accordance with the two languages as the full stop is used when writing years in Croatian, and it is not used when writing them in English.

The third button stands for the number of people staying at the selected rental. Before the user clicks the button to choose more detailed information about who will be staying at the rental, there is already “1 guest” or “1 gost” selected (Airbnb.com). Further selection allows the user to choose the number of “Adults”, “Children (Ages 2 – 12)” and “Infants (Under 2)” (Airbnb.com). The Croatian website offers a choice between “Odrasli”, “Djeca (Dob: 2 – 12)” and “Bebe (Mlađi od 2)” (Airbnb.com). Once the user makes his choice, he can confirm it by clicking “Apply” or “Primijeni”, or go back and click “Cancel” or “Otkazi” (Airbnb.com). All the Croatian translations used in the booking details bar are clear, easy to comprehend and they do not cause confusion.

Since the emphasis is put on the visual elements of the website, photos of everything Airbnb offers are located right under the booking details bar and take up most of the main page. What they offer on the main page are various events and listings which are constantly being updated in order to keep up with the trends. The users can choose between “Homes”, “Experiences” and “Places” on the English version of the website, and “Smještaji”, “Doživljaji” and “Mjesta” on the Croatian version of the website, or have all of them combined on the main page by clicking “For You” or “Za Vas” (Airbnb.com). Each photo represents one home, experience or place. On the Croatian Airbnb website the title under the photo has not been translated, i.e. it is written in English. However, the currency and the reviews are localized so kuna is used for the price and “review” is translated to “recenzija” (Airbnb.com).

Figure 2 shows the September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017 version of the Croatian Airbnb website, precisely the first row of the “Experiences” listing. Other categories are listed below, all the way to the bottom of the main page, where other important web content elements are placed.

## Doživljaji

Vidi sve >

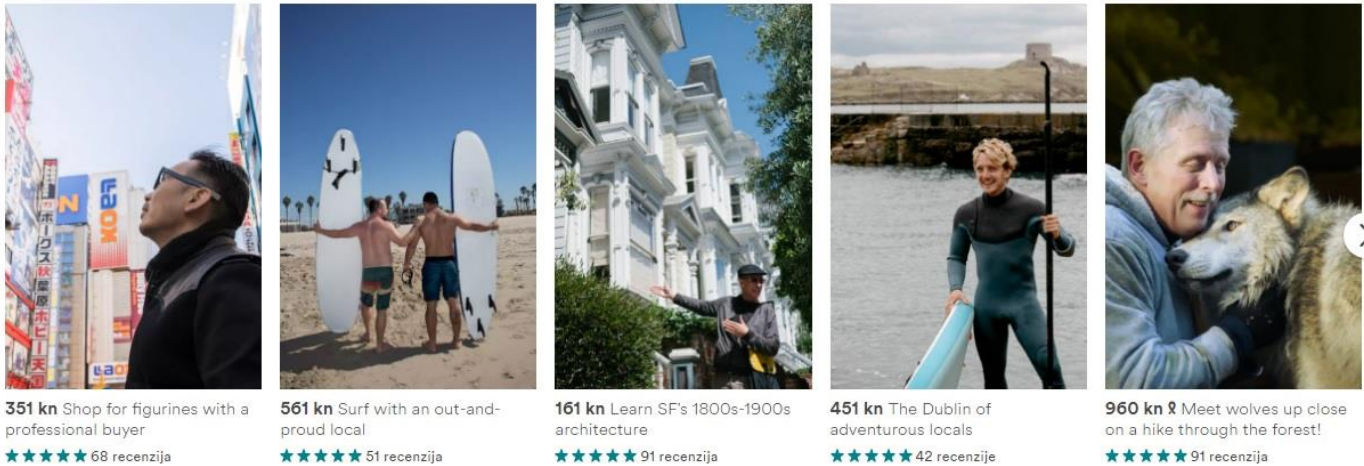


Figure 2: Croatian Airbnb website main page (Airbnb.com)

The elements located in the bottom of the website show to which extent Airbnb localized its website content. First of all, users can choose between twenty-seven languages, with English and Croatian being part of them. The names of all the languages listed are also localized, so Croatian is listed as “Hrvatski” (Airbnb.com). Right under the language button is the button which allows users to choose currency they would like to see and use on Airbnb website. There are forty-four currencies listed, HRK (Hrvatska kuna) being one of them (Airbnb.com).

Next to the languages and currencies in the bottom left corner, there are three other categories in the bottom right corner. These categories contain important information about the Airbnb community and allow the user to find answers about all of their services. The first category is named “Airbnb” and its subcategories are “About us”, “Careers”, “Press”, “Policies”, “Help” and “Diversity & Belonging”, most of which are the most common categories to be found on websites (Airbnb.com). They were translated in Croatian as “O nama”, “Poslovi”, “Objave za medije”, “Pravila”, “Pomoć” i “Različitost i osjećaj pripadanja” (Airbnb.com). In the second category, which is named “Discover” or “Otkrijte više”, “Trust & Safety”, “Travel Credit”, “Gift Cards”, “Business Travel” and “Guidebooks” are translated into “Povjerenje i sigurnost”, “Popust na putovanja”, “Darovne kartice”, “Poslovno putovanje” and “Vodiči”, while “Airbnb Citizen” and “Airbnbmag” stay the same in both languages (Airbnb.com). The third category is called “Hosting” or “Ugošćivanje” and it contains four subcategories on the English website and three subcategories on the Croatian website (Airbnb.com). The three equivalent subcategories

are “Why Host”, “Hospitality” and “Responsible Hosting” in English, and “Zašto biti domaćin”, “Gostoprimstvo” and “Odgovorno ugošćivanje” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). The additional subcategory on the English website is “Community Center” (Airbnb.com).



Figure 3: Croatian Airbnb website main page bottom categories (Airbnb.com)

Moving on to Airbnb website subpages enables the users to see more details about their homes, experiences and places. When selecting homes, additional options appear. The users can choose which “Room type” they want, precisely whether they want an “Entire home”, a “Private room” or a “Shared room” (Airbnb.com). The definition of each type of room is given under the corresponding button. When it comes to the Croatian translation, the category “Vrsta prostora” contains “Cijeli prostor”, “Privatna soba” and “Zajednička soba” subcategories (Airbnb.com). The definitions are provided in Croatian as well. The following category listed is “Price range” in English or “Raspon cijena” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). Users can set the price range voluntarily starting from a minimum of £8, \$10 or 63 kn when GBP, USD or HRK are the selected currencies (Airbnb.com). Moreover, the users can see the average price for one night for any of the destinations they choose, on the English website regarded as “the average nightly price” and on the Croatian website as “prosječna cijena noćenja” (Airbnb.com). The following option for users is to choose whether they want to search rentals with “Instant Book” or “Instant rezervacija” only, those being “listings you can book without waiting for host approval” or “smještaji koje možete rezervirati bez čekanja potvrde domaćina”, or search both instant book and regular booking rentals.



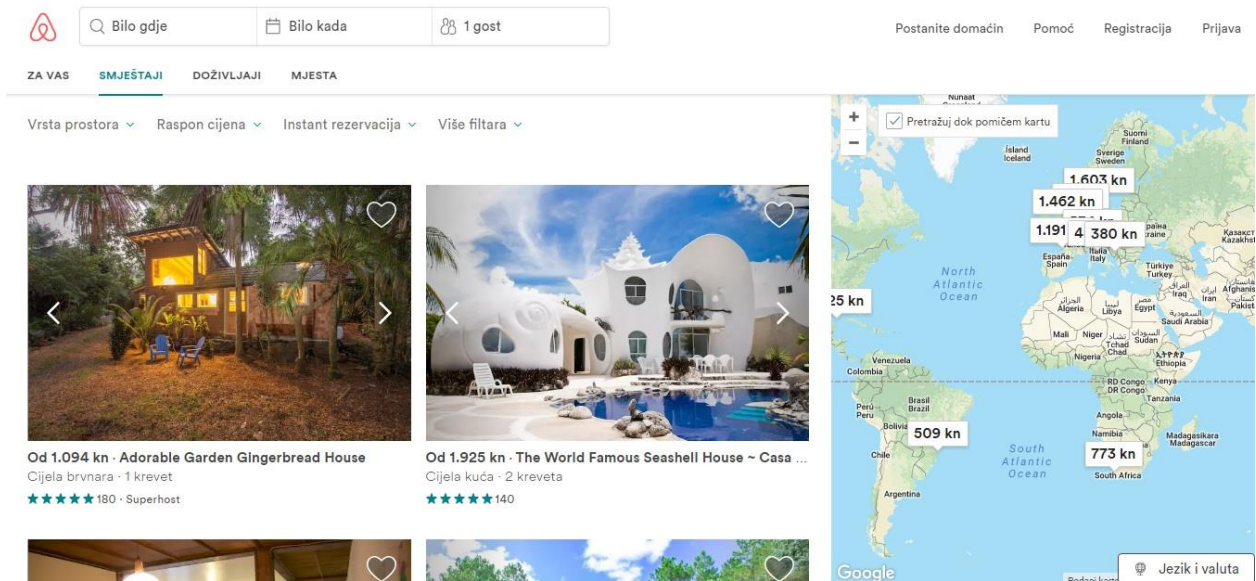


Figure 4: Croatian Airbnb website “Homes” subpage (Airbnb.com)

Before analysing the last category, it is important to pay attention to the world map located on the right. The map shows locations of some of the popular rentals listed. It is possible to change the currency to any of the forty-four listed. By narrowing down the search and choosing a specific destination, the map shows rentals in that area based on your preferences. On the Croatian version of the website, the names of the countries are written in English as well as in the original language of each country. However, once a specific place is chosen, the map narrows down to that area and it is completely localized. All the roads, streets, avenues, important places and similar, are translated into Croatian.

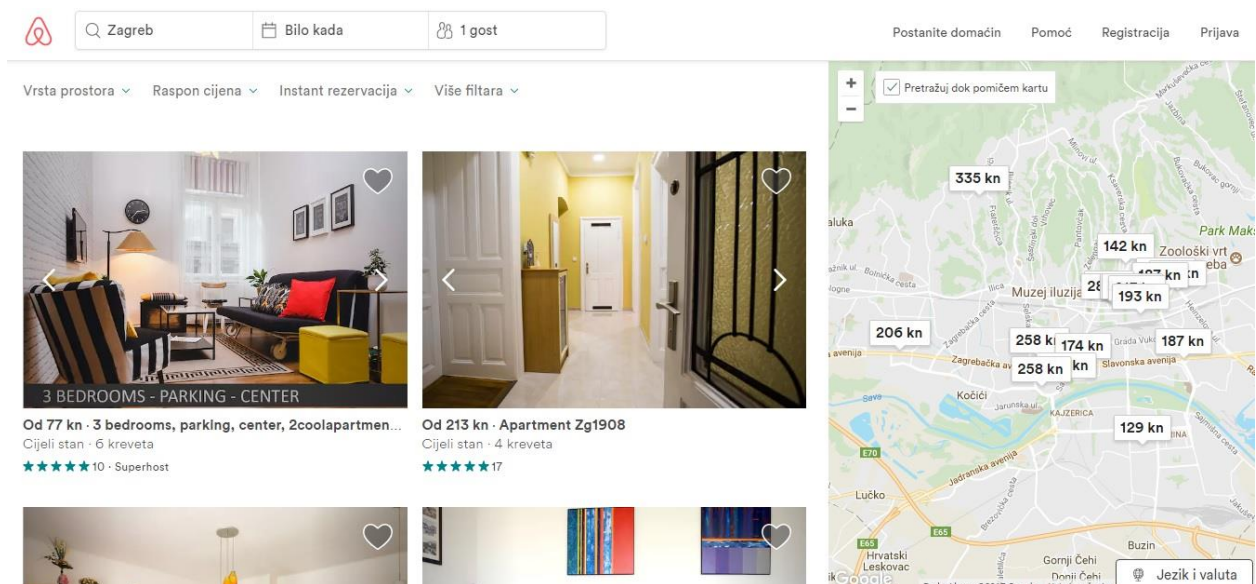


Figure 5: Croatian Airbnb website localized map (Airbnb.com)



The fourth category on the “Homes” subpage is called “More filters” or “Više filtara” which allows users to go through some other rental options and choose their preferences (Airbnb.com). First of them is choosing the number of “Bedrooms”, “Beds” and “Bathrooms” or “Spavaće sobe”, “Kreveti” and “Kupaonice” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). The following one refers to choosing to stay with “recognized hosts”, or “iskusni domaćini”, and it belongs to “Other options” or “Druge opcije” (Airbnb.com). There is also a variety of “Amenities” offered: “Heating”, “TV”, “Air conditioning”, “Buzzer/wireless intercom”, “Dryer”, “Hair dryer”, “Indoor fireplace”, “Laptop friendly workspace”, “Self Check-In”, “Washer”, “Kitchen”, “Wireless Internet”, “Breakfast”, “Doorman”, “Family/kid friendly”, “Hangers”, “Iron”, “Lock on bedroom door”, “Shampoo” (Airbnb.com). The Croatian website provides a good translation, although the amenities are not listed in the same order as on the English version of the website. The amenities are translated to “Sadržaji” and those listed are: “Bežični internet”, “Kuhinja”, “Doručak”, “Klima-uređaj”, “Prikladno za obitelji/djecu”, “Samostalni dolazak”, “Sušilica”, “Unutarnji kamin”, “Vratar”, “Šampon”, “Grijanje”, “TV”, “Glačalo”, “Perilica”, “Prostor za rad na prijenosnom računalu”, “Spavaća soba se može zaključati”, “Sušilo za kosu”, “Vješalice”, “Zvono/bežični interfon” (Airbnb.com). Another option which contains multiple choices is called “Facilities” and those offered are: “Elevator”, “Pool”, “Gym”, “Free parking on premises”, “Wheelchair accessible”, “Hot tub” (Airbnb.com). The same option is translated into “Sadržaji u sklopu objekta” in Croatian language and in the selection the facilities offered are: “Bazen”, “Dizalo”, “Masazna kada”, “Besplatan parking u sklopu smještaja”, “Prilagođen pristup osobama u invalidskim kolicima”, “Teretana” (Airbnb.com). Airbnb hosts can determine “House rules” which should be obtained by the users, so they can define what they allow or forbid in accordance with three options offered: “Pets allowed”, “Suitable for events”, “Smoking allowed” (Airbnb.com). The Croatian version of house rules is named “Kućni red” and the three options are: “Dozvoljeno pušenje”, “Prikladno za događaje”, “Kućni ljubimci dobrodošli” (Airbnb.com). For the penultimate category, a specific destination should be chosen in order to see whether it is applicable or not. The reason why that category is not the same for all language variants is that it represents “Neighborhoods”, so not all destinations are well-known or big enough to offer that kind of an option. After choosing Zagreb as the capital city of Croatia, it is evident that “Neighborhoods” category is not applicable. However, choosing London in the booking details bar allows the user to choose from a lengthy list of its neighbourhoods. In that case, the option “Neighborhoods” is translated into “Gradske četvrti” on the Croatian website (Airbnb.com). The remaining option in the “More filters” category is “Host language” in English or “Jezik koje domaćin govori” in Croatian (Airbnb.com). Both English and Croatian version of

the website offer a list of thirty-one languages, each of which is written in the original language. It is also interesting to note that “Sign Language” is one of them, and it is written in English on both the English and Croatian version of the website (Airbnb.com). Although it is not common, all the bullets in Croatian are capitalized which illustrates that there is a kind of an English influence.

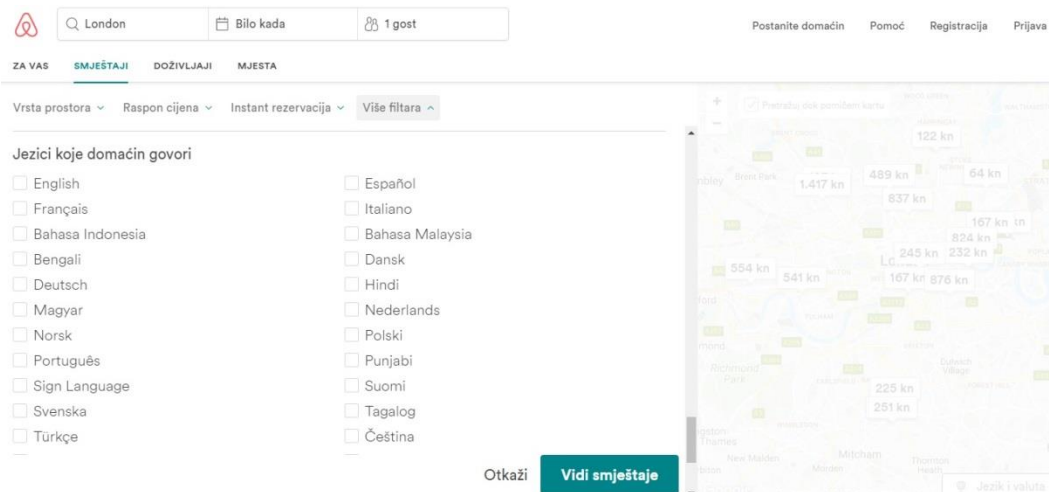


Figure 6: Croatian Airbnb website “Host language” subcategory (Airbnb.com)

Other than homes, Airbnb offers organized experiences for travellers. There are not as many categories as there are when homes are being selected, but there is enough to help the travellers find what they are interested in. Clicking “Experiences” allows the users to open a new subpage and start searching. The subpage is once again highly visual as photos take up most of the space. There are two options to choose from, “Types” and “Categories”. “Types”, or “Vrste” in Croatian, includes two subcategories, “Immersions” which “happen over multiple days”, and “Experiences” which “last 2 or more hours” (Airbnb.com). The first subcategory is referred to as “Višednevni doživljaji” in Croatian, and defined as “aktivnosti traju nekoliko dana”, while the second one is referred to as “Doživljaji”, and is defined as “traje 2 ili više sati” (Airbnb.com). The following option includes fourteen categories to choose from: “Arts”, “Entertainment”, “Food & Drink”, “Lifestyle”, “Nature”, “Social impact”, “Technology”, “Business”, “Fashion”, “History”, “Music”, “Nightlife”, “Sports”, “Wellness” (Airbnb.com). The Croatian translation of the mentioned categories, which belong to “Kategorije” option, is provided as follows: “Društveno korisno”, “Hrana i piće”, “Noćni život”, “Povijest”, “Sport”, “Tehnologija”, “Wellness”, “Glazba”, “Moda”, “Posao”, “Priroda”, “Stil života”, “Umjetnost”, “Zabava” (Airbnb.com).

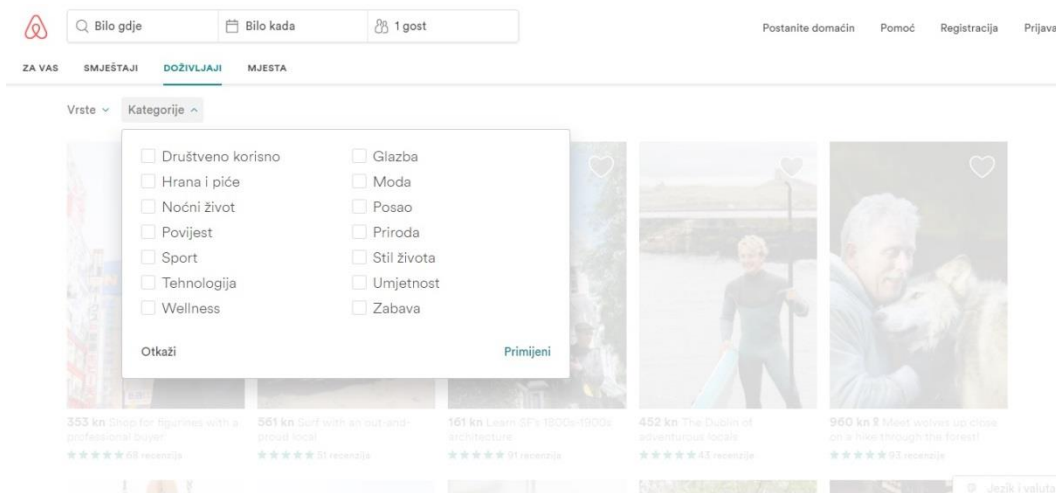


Figure 7: Croatian Airbnb website “Experiences” category (Airbnb.com)

The “Places” subpage is visually the same as the previously analysed subpage. However, there is only one option to choose and those are the “Categories”. The categories listed are: “Arts & culture”, “Entertainment & activities”, “Parks & nature”, “Sightseeing”, “Drinks & nightlife”, “Food scene”, “Shopping”, “Wellness” (Airbnb.com). The Croatian website version has “Kategorije”, namely “Barovi i noćni život”, “Kultura i umjetnost”, “Parkovi i priroda”, “Wellness”, “Gastronomska scena”, “Kupovina”, “Razgledavanje”, “Zabavni sadržaji i aktivnosti” (Airbnb.com).

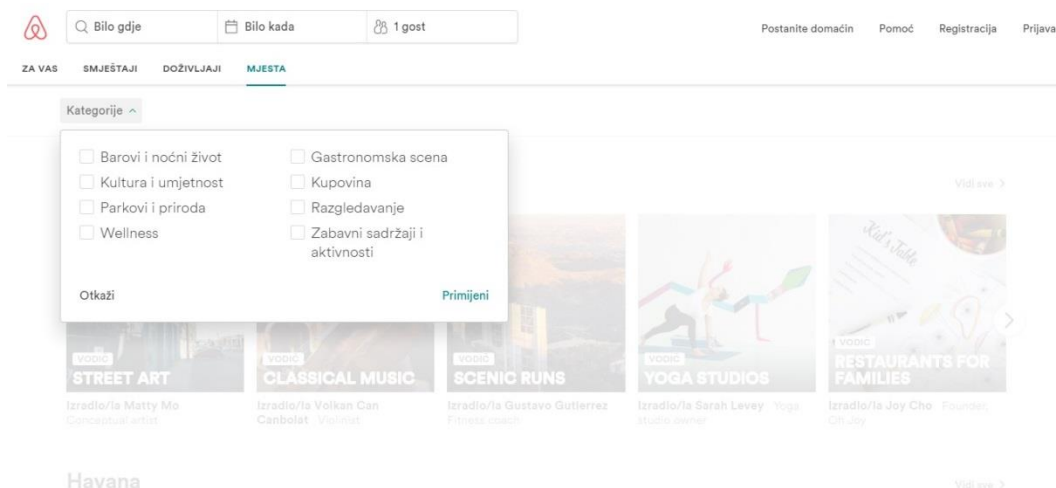


Figure 8: Croatian Airbnb website “Places” category (Airbnb.com)

## 5. 2. Airbnb website machine translation

Apart from all the localized and translated content on Airbnb website, there are still some elements which have not been translated. Since a lot of Airbnb’s content is constantly being

updated, it is impossible to keep track of all the rental listings and translate them at the same time. The descriptions of all the rentals are written by hosts themselves so users might come across languages they do not understand. To make the process of booking rentals, experiences and places easier for the travellers, Airbnb has decided to offer them the option of machine translation. By clicking one button, i.e. the one that says “Prevedi ovaj opis na Hrvatski” (which is also possibly machine translated since “h” should not be capitalized), the users can translate what hosts have written about their homes (Airbnb.com). Since hosts’ descriptions might not be grammatically correct, machine translation will not always provide a quality translation. However, they can be of great help if the user does not understand most of the words in the description. The analysis of the machine translation of a quite well written Airbnb home description in English illustrates that it can provide useful translations:

- Apartment Savska is a modern and charming newly renovated apartment (2017) of 55 m<sup>2</sup> located on the 4th floor of a smaller residential building with elevator, for max. 4 persons. It is located on Savska Street, one of the main streets, just 20 minutes walk to the city center (cafes, restaurants, clubs) and tourist attractions (Upper Town, museums, galleries, parks). The tram station leading to the city center is located across the street.
- Apartman Savska je moderan i šarmantan novouređeni apartman (2017) od 55 m<sup>2</sup> koji se nalazi na 4. katu manje stambene zgrade s liftom, za max. 4 osobe. Smještena je na ulici Savska, jedna od glavnih ulica, samo 20 minuta hoda do centra grada (kafići, restorani, klubovi) i turističke atrakcije (Gornji grad, muzeji, galerije, parkovi). Tramvajska stanica koja vodi do centra grada nalazi se preko puta.

(Airbnb.com)

By clicking the button one more time, which now says “Prikaži originalni opis”, the users can go back to the original description (Airbnb.com). Also, there is a notice on the right side which says “omogućuje Google” which means that the machine translation system used is Google Translate (Airbnb.com).

Another element that can be machine translated on Airbnb website are user's reviews. The button "Prevedi recenzije na Hrvatski" will translate all the reviews written in various languages into Croatian language (Airbnb.com). The analysis of the reviews has proven that the outcome regarding quality translation has not been the same as in the previous case mentioned. Although the analysis of the first case of machine translation has shown effective results, there are some examples of the translated reviews which have, on the contrary, shown that machine translation can sometimes provide incorrect, ambiguous, humorous and low quality translation.

- Perfect place in Zagreb after going through Croatia from Dubrovnik i came back to Nikola's place again it can't be better!
- Savršeno mjesto u Zagrebu nakon što smo prošli kroz Hrvatsku iz Dubrovnika vratio sam se na Nikolino mjesto opet ne može biti bolje!
- great host and great place!
- veliki domaćin i veliko mjesto!
- Thanks Nikola! We had a good time at your apartment and it could not be nicer in any way. It has everything you need and is even decorated very nicely. We enjoyed our stay and would definitely come back there when visiting zagreb another time.
- Hvala Nikoli! Dobro smo se zabavili u vašem stanu i na bilo koji način ne bi bilo lijepo. Ima sve što vam treba i čak je vrlo lijepo uređen. Uživali smo u našem boravku i definitivno se vratili tamo kada bi posjetili zagreb drugi put.
- I would highly recommend everybody who is planning a trip to Zagreb to stay in Nikola's cosy and conveniently located apartment. The flat is beautifully furnished with a great taste and immediately as you enter the main door to the flat you feel charmed and comfortable. The flat is within walking distance to the centre (around half an hour) but just in front of the house there is a tram stop which takes you there in ten

minutes. I would also like to thank you Nikola for your prompt replies and a really smooth check in. Best, Kristina

- Preporučujem svima koji planiraju putovanje u Zagreb kako bi ostali u udobnom i povoljno smještenom apartmanu Nikole. Staj je lijepo uređen s izvrsnim okusom i odmah ulazi u glavna vrata u stanu za koje se osjećate čaroban i udoban. Stan se nalazi na pješačkoj udaljenosti od centra (oko pola sata), ali samo ispred kuće nalazi se tramvajska stanica koja vas vodi za desetak minuta. Zahvaljujem vam i Nikoli za brze odgovore i zaista glatku prijavu. Najbolje, Kristina

(Airbnb.com)

Although these translations can change the meaning, not convey the same message as the original and sound very humorous at the same time, they can still help those users who do not understand certain foreign languages to understand the content to a certain extent. Also, Airbnb has warned its users that the translation provided might not be equivalent to the original by pointing out a notice which says: “Budući da je ovaj opis automatski preveden pomoću Google prevoditelja, postoji mogućnost da se engleski izvornik razlikuje od prijevoda” (Airbnb.com).

The screenshot shows an Airbnb listing for 'Apartman u Savskoj ulici 144' in Zagreb. The listing is for a whole apartment with a 4-star rating and 13 reviews. It features 4 guests, 1 bedroom, 2 beds, and 1 kitchen. A prominent notice in a white box states: 'Budući da je ovaj opis automatski preveden pomoću Google prevoditelja, postoji mogućnost da se engleski izvornik razlikuje od prijevoda.' Below this, the listing description is provided in Croatian. On the right side, there is a booking widget with fields for arrival and departure dates, the number of guests (1), and a red 'Rezerviraj' button. A note below the button says 'Kreditna kartica neće se još teretiti'.

Figure 9: Croatian Airbnb website machine translation example (Airbnb.com)

### 5. 3. Case study analysis conclusion

What the analysis of the Airbnb website both in English and Croatian language shows is that the process of website localization has been conducted at a high quality level and has resulted in a variety of well localized Airbnb websites in foreign languages. Apart from the well translated web content, Airbnb has adjusted its design and graphics in order to make the website more interactive and approachable for the users.

Taking the Croatian version of the website into consideration, it is evident that even the smallest details have been translated and localized in a way that any Croatian native can understand them without difficulties. What is even more convenient, the users are allowed to choose and pay in local or preferred currency.

Another element analysed which is very important when it comes to translating website content and translation in general is machine translation. What users usually expect on travel websites is simple language which mostly can be effectively translated using machine translation. However, there are some cases which have proven that machine translation provides faulty translations and that is why Airbnb has made an effort to announce to its users that machine translations do not provide completely reliable solutions, although they can be of great help in some cases.

## 6. Conclusion

Website localization is a process which includes a great variety of experts, so when it comes to the business and marketing aspect of localization, it has proven to be cost-effective to localize products and services for the international market, provided that the localization has been carried out properly. Airbnb has decided to seize the full potential of adapting its websites culturally and linguistically and that led to impressive and effective results since it operates in almost all of the countries in the world. Translating web content has made Airbnb websites more approachable to users who speak one language only, but has also enabled the hosts to write their listings in more than one language and broaden their sales potential.

Another element which has contributed to their efficiency is machine translation since it enabled the users to translate all the content which has not been translated previously, such as hosts' descriptions of rentals and reviews. Airbnb provided the users with a localized website and translated important website content, while giving them a chance to understand even the content in the original language (although with low quality translation in some cases).

The process of localization is certainly an important marketing and translation strategy in the digital world of websites and business. It has become complex to the extent that experts cannot agree on the fact who should carry it out, translators or computer engineers, or maybe some other experts. However, it is safe to say that a variety of skilled professionals is required to successfully carry out the process of website localization.



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