Online learning instruments as a way of cross-cultural communication

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Abstract: Massive open online courses have a significant impact on the cross-cultural communication. More and more online courses become a part of modern university curriculum. This creates a way to share knowledge not only between different scientific facilities but also provide an opportunity for students to take courses from top rated universities free of charge. Our research deals with the way to bring open online courses into cross-cultural educational field. The article deals with the translation’s editor work features in preparation for massive open online technical course to voice over and broadcasting on the example of the most popular programming course in the world “CS50 2019” (Harvard University). The main problems faced by the translation’s editor are highlighted. A step-by-step plan for the translation’s editor is suggested.

KEYWORDS: ADAPTATION, AUDIOVISUAL EDUCATIONAL PRODUCT, MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE, VOICE OVER, TRANSLATION, TRANSLATION’S EDITING.

1. Introduction

The modern world is globalized, digitalized, and innovative. New technologies not only implemented in all spheres of human life but also can create new communication and interrelations form for further development of our species. Massive open online courses’ development and introduction to the classical educational process has changed the way of educations’ representation. For centuries education was only for those who chosen by their role in society, money, or special talents. Now education is available to everyone despite social status, gender, health conditions, income, and so on.

Online courses in Ukraine appeared with the first Ukrainian platform Prometheus in 2014. It hosts over 120 online courses by Ukrainian scientists, lecturers, enterprises, international and local organizations. Localization and adaptation of Ukrainian language carried out during the week with the authors of the course.

Cross-cultural communication has become the most prominent way to spread knowledge. Now students do not have to go halfway across the world to get in touch with the specialist in their field or to have first-hand experience in the particular scientific field. Massive open inline courses have opened a new way to create a learning environment suited for everyone despite all the differences.

2. Preconditions and means for resolving the problem

Modern communicational studies are considering two ways in the cross-cultural communication process – direct and indirect [1]. Within the direct communication, the information is addressed to the recipient directly from the message producer and can be made both orally and in writing. When using the oral form, a greater communicative influence is achieved, because it allows you to use both verbal and nonverbal elements. In such an exchange of information between people of different cultural backgrounds, it is essential that one of them speaks a language that is native to the other or that the recipient and the producer choose to speak. Under the conditions of using written direct communication, the creation of an adequate secondary text is important, but under the conditions of using the oral version, non-verbal components become auxiliary – facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, etc. The use of nonverbal components can be considered both a positive and a negative phenomenon, as the recipient’s ignorance of the peculiarities of nonverbal communication inherent in the culture of a particular ethnic group can lead to distortions in the perception of information and its further processing.

In the case of indirect communication, which is almost always one-sided, works of literature, art, online publications, works of cinematography, etc. become carriers. This type of communication requires the direct participation of the translation’s editor, because the communication process takes place not simultaneously, but sequentially and under the conditions or knowledge of the recipient of the language in which the original text is created, or with the translator who acts as the recipient of the secondary message. In the process of creating a translated text, the translator due to lack of knowledge or with the involvement of other objective and subjective factors (personal attitude to the original text, stylistic features of the translated text, etc.) may make mistakes that will affect the further perception of the secondary text by the recipient and lead to catastrophic consequences in the case of, for example, medical texts, information from which will be used by future doctors in the treatment of a disease.

Indirect and direct types of cross-cultural communication are characterized by the presence and absence of a mediator. Such an intermediary can be both a person and a technical means. Technically mediated communication may remain direct (for example, by telephone, Internet, etc.), but such conditions exclude the use of non-verbal means of communication that are available in direct contact between participants in the communication process. In the case of indirect cross-communication with the help of another person or technical means, the participation of the translation editor is also extremely important, because the quality of the received message will depend on it. This is especially important in the online learning process. We can use both direct and indirect communication to conduct online courses. This way is the most unique to spread knowledge and information in education’s organization all over the world.

In 2016, Prometheus platform has been launching a pilot project to introduce blended learning technology during the online bachelor’s learning season [2]. Four top-rated national universities were involved in the project, including the National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute”, the Ivan Franko National University, Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukrainian Catholic University. Top-rated massive open online course in the programming field “CS50: Introduction to Computer Science 2019” by Professor David Malan at Harvard University was implemented in different university in the United States in a blended format. After successful implementation in 2019 Prometheus platform in cooperation with National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” has developed Ukrainian adaptation and further voice-over for video lectures, translation for all the texts and subtitles [3]. This course was introduced into the curriculum at 13 universities in Ukraine. This experiment is one of the first successful cross-cultural educational experiences that lead to new ways of teaching and further international connections in the future. This makes the Ukrainian educational system open for the best world practices and lecturers.

This study and experiment purpose is to create an algorithm for the communication’s organization and translation’s editing in preparation for the broadcast of a massive open online course. The aim is to analyze the available Ukrainian translations as a part of
cross-cultural communication introduction, which can be used as an example in creating future course’s translations; to identify the main processing steps by a translator and editor; to determine the action’s sequence during processing for translations.

The first course’s translation and adaptation, its editing, voice-overing and mixing for the Ukrainian audience were made by volunteers, which raised questions about the created product’s quality [4, 5]. In particular, the course did not have a terminological apparatus, translations’ technical editing, and analysis of the cited technologies, which caused confusion during teaching, especially when it came to lectures for junior students who do not yet have their own required knowledge for learning terminology. In the latest course’s version, which was first presented at Harvard and Yale during the fall semester of 2018, the author is made many changes against 2014. First of all, the course has 10 weeks (in 2014 it was 12 weeks), Malan introduced a new and very popular Python programming language, he also included a lecture on databases and completely changed his approach to explaining the basic paradigms of computer science (for example, binary system, search types, web technologies, etc.). The new version required the translator’s team involvement and a translation editor, who would quickly and efficiently cope with the task of launching a course for teaching in a blended format in the spring semester of the 2018-2019 academic years.

3. The solution of the examined problem

It took almost 5 months to translate, adapt, and voice-over the online course. The course’s latest version contains 18 hours of main lectures, 15 hours of additional videos, 2 hours of step-by-step videos, 6 hours of seminars with the most prominent figures in the computer science world, presentations, abstracts, a set of tasks, and source code for all tasks [3].

The translation’s editor for voice-over project should take into account all the requirements for audiovisual translated products and pay attention to the educational component [5]. The massive open online course’s materials should be understandable to the average viewer without prior training. Technical courses require consultations with dictionaries, reference books, industry experts’ involvement. During the course’s adaptation, the technical editing process of the translation was made by programmers and computer science lecturers, graduate students. The greatest difficulty was the establishment of the terminological apparatus, as there is currently no academic dictionary on programming and computer science terms for modern Ukrainian literary language, so all the terms used by the industry are an agreement between experts, which leads to differences, synonyms in terms and polysemantic in determining the basic paradigms, and this phenomena is unacceptable for further term formation.

Within this process as a way to create cross-cultural transition the translation’s editor’s part became crucial in the process. Among the key competence for the translation editor are:

- Development of properties and opportunities to reflect one’s own and other people’s cultural traditions, which allows to create a basis for a tolerant attitude to another culture and to provide links between the multicultural producer and the message’s recipient.
- Continuous knowledge updating on a foreign language culture for a deep understanding of the diachronic and synchronous connections between one’s own cultural tradition and the traditions of other cultures. Only under the conditions of constant replenishment of knowledge about the cultural traditions of another ethnic group is it possible to create a message without distortions and check the information product created by the translator. Cultural traditions are constantly updated and replenished with the changing social environment, the development of science and technology, the replenishment of the artistic layers, and such relentless development pushes the participants of communication to the constant expansion of acquired knowledge.
- Obtaining knowledge about the conditions of socialization and inculturation in one’s own and another’s culture, about socio-cultural forms of interaction that are inherent in both cultures.
- Comprehensive elaboration of available sources of information to replenish not only knowledge about the traditions of foreign language culture, but also to understand the processes taking place in the world and affect all participants in the global communication process with error in understanding different situations by different cultures according to social, artistic, linguistic, religious, etc. traditions.
- Expansion of the verbal-linguistic thesaurus is an integral part of the translation editor’s work, as the constant development of the recipient’s language requires the use of certain language signs when creating an adequate secondary text, and the development of the producer’s language, the emergence of new meanings in words other languages, the creation of neologisms and the emergence of archaisms affect the further perception of the message and can cause distortions in the exchange of information between multicultural participants in communication.

4. Results

The course went through the following elaboration stages by a translation’s editor, who in this particular case combined the responsibilities of a project coordinator, ie did not take on managerial functions. This approach allowed to ensure the control of the editor at all stages of creating the finished product and minimize errors:

1. The original course’s analysis, terminology apparatus creation, including terms, proper names, etc.
2. Distribution of translation by adaptation methods:
   - translation for further voice-over;
   - translation for further subtitling;
   - translation of text materials;
   - translation of presentation and visual materials;
   - translation of graphics;
   - translation and adaptation of tasks with subsequent verification of the code.
3. Translation’s distribution among translators, setting deadlines.
4. Technical translation’s editing.
5. Literary translation’s editing.
6. Composing text for voice-over, technical processing of subtitles.
7. Narration in the studio, further compilation of the finished material, verification by the translation editor, and the editor-compiler.
8. Translated materials installation: video editing, subtitle connection, uploading materials to the platform, verification, and testing.
9. Final check by the translation editor, elimination of shortcomings and errors.
10. Approval of the finished translation by the author of the original and the copyright holders of the original product.

5. Conclusions

The massive open online course “CS50: Introduction to Computer Science 2019” can be used as a model for further guidance for the translation editor as it contains all the components of a massive open online course (video lectures, abstracts, presentations, graphics, code tests) and it is on the example of this course created most of the modern massive open online courses of leading universities, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, etc. Among the main features are the specifics of processing the terminological apparatus and other realities present in the texts, the preparation of the translation of the audiovisual educational work for the further voice-over. The translation developed stages processing by the editor can be further used for other massive open online courses during adaptation and for methodical instructions creation for editors of translations of educational audiovisual products.
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