

Session Plan: Comparing Microsoft Guidelines for different languages

Learning outcomes

Textual: 2

This task raises students' awareness and sensitivity to lexical and syntactic level differences between different language versions of the same text and encourages them to ponder on the reasons for the differences.

Stage: I

Preparation needed

PCs with Internet access. Alternatively, printed copies of Microsoft Guidelines in different languages (not recommended as they are long documents.) Guidelines available here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/Language/en-US/StyleGuides.aspx>

Groups

Pairs in smaller classes; Groups of 4 in larger classes

Time (total suggested time)

90 minutes

Background for lecturer (bibliography, anticipated difficulties)

FOR EXAMPLE: Reinhard Schäler 2010: Localization and translation. In Handbook of Translation Studies, Volume 1, eds. Gambier, Yves and van Doorslaer, Luc. Pages 209-214

Activities

1. Lead-in: a brief introduction of the concept *localization* (if necessary), 5-10 minutes

A teacher-led activity.

2. Contrastive analysis of Style guides for different languages, 45-60 minutes

In pairs or in groups of 4, students open two style guides from

<http://www.microsoft.com/Language/en-US/StyleGuides.aspx> : one for their mother tongue and another for their first foreign language (or a language/languages they know well). For example, the guidelines for Windows Phone localization could be chosen for analysis. Students are asked to compare the guidelines and make notes of

- a) differences with regard to recommended use of lexis and syntactic formulations
- b) similarities in the guidelines.
(see the student worksheet)

3. Class discussion on findings, 20 minutes

During this discussion, each group introduces the most interesting findings to the class. The teacher leads the discussion, following the questions in the student worksheet. At this point, the discussion should focus on the intercultural aspects of recommended guidelines.

Adaptations for an integrated approach

This material can be used as such as a part of a translation course as well.

MICROSOFT GUIDELINES: Student worksheet

Groupwork

- 1. In a group, open two (or more) style guides from <http://www.microsoft.com/Language/en-USStyleGuides.aspx> :one for your mother tongue and another for your first foreign language (or a language(s) you know well). Compare the guidelines and make notes of

| differences with regard to the recommended use of lexis, syntactic formulations and style | similarities in the guidelines |
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| | |

2. Look at the box of differences and think about the reasons for differing recommendations. Are they caused by structural differences between languages or rather, by cultural differences that are reflected in the language use – or perhaps both? Discuss within a group and make notes below.

3. Look at the box of similarities. Do you agree with them; do you think similar guidelines are functional in the languages you were comparing, i.e. do you feel the level of localization is sufficient? Would you have given similar linguistic guidelines for your mother tongue? To what extent do the similarities reflect a shared “Microsoft culture”? Make notes below.