

## Localized or Globalized: Assessing the Localization Level of IKEA Egypt 2023 English and Arabic Websites

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to explore the localization quality of IKEA Egypt 2023 English website to identify its customization level and to gauge the translation quality of its Arabic mirror website. The methodology adopted in the present paper is based on Singh's (2012) model of web localization quality assessment as the main model of analysis, which proves to be quite functional. Besides, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) Onion Model is the cultural frame employed to assess cultural customization. Cruz García's (2013) micro strategies of translation are used as parameters to probe the web translation quality criteria. Singh and Pereira (2005) division of localization level is used as the continuum along which IKEA Egypt English and Arabic websites are categorized. The study proves that, IKEA Egypt 2023 websites exhibit high localization levels in their contents and gateways and notable cultural customization level in cover pages, marketing campaigns, and the content pertinent to the core cultural circle of values. The translation quality exhibited in the Arabic mirror website is a functional, communicative, explicative one, actualized by *explicitation*, *equivalence* and *partial adaptation* as the most employed micro translational strategies explored. As for the localization strategy adopted by IKEA, it can be said to be a glocalized one, retaining the glories of the global branding combined with adapting the market locale specificities. Accordingly, IKEA Egypt 2023 websites can be considered culturally customized, yet with a distinctive Swedish hue. The paper is a step on the road of localization in translation studies, yet further researches are still needed.

**Keywords:** GILT Process, Web Localization, Cultural Customization, Translation Quality, Advertising.

## متوطن أم معولم: تقييم مستوى التوطين لموقعى ايكيا مصر 2023 الإلكترونيين باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية

### الملخص:

هذه الورقة البحثية تعد استكشافاً لجودة توطين مواقع ايكيا مصر 2023 باللغة الإنجليزية، وتحديد مستوى تكيفها الثقافى وقياس جودة الترجمة لموقعها الإلكتروني المقابل باللغة العربية. تعتمد المنهجية التي تم تبنيها في هذه الورقة على نموذج سينج (2012) لتقييم جودة التوطين للمواقع الإلكترونية كنموذج رئيسى للتحليل، والذي أثبت فاعليته بشكل ملحوظ. إلى جانب ذلك، يعتبر نموذج هوفستيد وآخرين (2010) الإطار الثقافى المستخدم لتقييم مستوى التكيف الثقافى. تُستخدم استراتيجيات الترجمة الدقيقة لغارسيا (2013) كمحددات لمعايير جودة ترجمة الموقع. كما تستخدم تقسيمات سينج وبيريرا (2005) لتحديد مستوى التوطين باعتباره القياس الذى يتم من خلاله تصنيف موقعى ايكيا مصر باللغتين الإنجليزية والعربية. تثبت الدراسة أن موقعى ايكيا مصر 2023 يتبنيان مستويات عالية من التوطين فيما يتعلق بالمحتوى وبوابة الدخول ومستوى تكيف ثقافى ملحوظ بالنسبة لصفحات الغلاف والحملات التسويقية، والمحتوى المتعلق بالدائرة الثقافية الأساسية ألا وهى القيم. إن جودة ترجمة الموقع العربى تعد جودة وظيفية تواصلية توضيحية تتحقق من خلال استراتيجيات التوضيح والتكافؤ والتكيف الجزئى باعتبارها أكثر استراتيجيات الترجمة الدقيقة استخداماً فى الموقع. أما بالنسبة لاستراتيجية التوطين التي تتبناها ايكيا، فيمكن القول بأنها مزيج من التوطين والعولمة، تحتفظ بفخامة العلامة التجارية العالمية مع محاولة التكيف مع خصوصية السوق المحلى. وبناءً عليه، يمكن اعتبار موقعى ايكيا مصر 2023 متكيفين ثقافياً، ولكن مع وجود صبغة سويدية مميزة. تعتبر هذه الورقة البحثية خطوة على طريق التوطين في دراسات الترجمة، ولكن لا تزال هناك حاجة إلى مزيد من الأبحاث.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** عملية *GILT* ، توطين المواقع الإلكترونية ، التكيف الثقافى ، جودة الترجمة ، الإعلان.

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### 1. Introduction

The web is a mega platform for product display, global marketing and diverse e-commerce. This web digital revolution has created a medium for global online businesses, which has in turn led to the emergence of novel digital genres, e.g. websites of all kinds (Jiménez-Crespo & Ángel, 2022, p. 6). Thus, these websites have become cosmic, well-established window shops for global brands to attract worldwide customers and thus increase sales and profits. Therefore, websites help carry out business exchange and satisfy the market new changes (Abuljadail & Badghish, 2021, p. 406).

Such globalized atmosphere has led to the emergence of a multilingual marketing process, namely website localization. A process which entails more than mere translation, involving adaptive changes in both language and culture of the target market region (Kassawat, 2021, p. 93). Such adaptive process should address target users' needs and expectations, as if originally made for them (Alharbi et al., 2023, p. 43). Since website localization is now an imperative for any business to go global, it is a prolific technical, cultural, marketing and linguistic area of research, to be probed.

Being a global, furniture giant, IKEA has many localized website versions. Egypt is the 41st largest e-commerce market with a predicted revenue of US \$ 6,622.3 million by the beginning of 2023 (*CT policy review: National e-commerce strategy for Egypt*, 2017). Therefore, IKEA is keen to have two website domains in such a key Arab, Middle Eastern market; an English website and its mirror Arabic version. The present paper aims to explore IKEA 2023 websites in Egypt, to identify the localization policy, levels and strategies applied.

### 2. Theoretical Background

#### 2.1 GILT Process

Localization is a part of a bigger chain process of Globalization, Internationalization, Localization and Translation, abbreviated by the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA, 2007) as GILT process. It is represented as follows:



(Jiménez-Crespo, 2013, p.15)

### 2.1.1 Globalization

Globalization, to which LISA (2007) gives the acronym G11N, “refers to the business activities related to marketing a product or service in multiple regional markets” (Sandrini, 2005, p. 167). Such business activities work together to prepare all the resources so that the company products could transcend to a globalized scale. They involve technicalities of optimizing the company's multilingual search engines to be easily spotted online by different publics. Globalization is thus an encompassing process, which integrates the two other phases in the GILT cycle: internationalization and localization.

### 2.1.2 Internationalization

“(I)nternationalisation is mainly understood as a technical stage in which a product is enabled for localisation” (LISA, 2007, p. 17). As a functional preparatory stage, internationalization; i18n seeks to devoid the product or its website from any cultural hues or local specificities. The i18n abstracting steps create a unified neutral website with a global brand stamp, and the back end technicalities prepare the website to be an extendable, central, delocalized template, “containing common elements, a similar structure and a platform which allows technical adaptations to the target culture” (Valdés, 2016, p. 141). Such adaptations can be later tinted with local distinctions.

Nevertheless, a completely cultureless text is rather unrealistic and necessitates a subsequent process of linguistic and cultural adaption, as culture specific items (CSIs) cannot be totally eradicated. Therefore, “cultures and cultural differences remain relevant in the context of global markets” (Adomavičiūtė, 2020, p. 13). Strangely enough, internationalization guarantees subsequent rendering of the intermediary, hybrid text into localized multilingual versions.

### 2.1.3 Localization

Internationalization is followed by a reverse process; i.e. localization (L10n). Undergoing the two juxtaposed processes successively ensures successful globalization expansion. Eliminating every cultural specificity from the website is followed by a modifying process of cultural tinting fit for certain customers' preferences presented in their mother language and market locale.

The concept of locale, is explicated as “the combination of a language and a geo graphical region with all the cultural implications involved” (Sandrini, 2005, p. 168). Such intricate socio-cultural, regional implications take the “website in its current form and making it accessible, as well as more “desirable” to more regions and, by extension, people” (Kasiouras, 2022, n.p.). Thus the key target in this process is prioritizing the end user.

As a functional marketing process, L10n encompasses many issues. It involves global navigation, adaptive translation, cultural customization, quality assurance, consistent terminologies, deified brand name, updated digital content, online transaction processing, customized measuring units, numbers time and date formats, adapted paper sizes, character sets and word separation, adjusted local payment methods as well as converted currencies (Jiménez-Crespo 2018; Kassawat, 2022; Masoud & Awni, 2012; Singh, 2012). This is in addition to the cultural customization of the semiotic, non-textual content. The adaptive customization of all the previously mentioned elements stipulates the degree of the website localization.

### 2.1.4 Glocalization

The two contradictory processes of globalization and localization are at work within the milieu of online cooperate websites. They can be combined in one portmanteau word; glocalization. Although “the slogan and brand name are two important items to consider” (Afarinasadi, 2021, p. 10), they are not enough to appeal to target website consumers in certain specific locales. Therefore, a glocalized, heterogeneous policy synthesizing the two concepts may seem more practical to achieve the intended high business revenues. It helps “reconcile the two ends of a continuum: in cultural studies” (Jiménez-Crespo, 2021, p. 378) by establishing a global brand name and adapting local target cultural strategies. It thus guarantees, what Abrahamian (2013) calls, “overseas survival” (p. 22). Such imperative dichotomy raises the question; to what extent should the corporate website lean towards either of the two strategies.

### 2.1.5 Translation

Within the process of the GILT, Translation (T09) involves the transfer of the textual, cultural, pragmatic and semiotic fabric to accomplish a promotional, marketing mission. T09 function is to “guarantee that international communication fulfill the communicative purpose and lead to increased sales or improvements in company image” (Jimenez-Crespo & Singh, 2016, p. 254). Web translation, thus, does not embrace the concept of source text. Otherwise, it adopts the homogenized text template translated to many target ones or what Kassawat (2021) calls “*reference text*” (RT) (p. 100). Such genre of translation is dubbed by Pym (2014) as “generalized one-to-many translation” (p. 131).

Web translation is mostly actualized by translation memories and terminology management software, which help produce repetitive, direct and unequivocal versions of the standardized RT. T09, functioning in the website hyperlinked, multilinear coded parts, like URL addresses, formatting tags, dialogue boxes, date formats, user contracts, menus and placeholders is superficial, formal, automatic type of translation achieving a minimum certitude of functionally and communicative equivalence. Such peculiarities render the translation rather artificial, prescribed and user-based oriented fit for the “the digital and interactive nature of the texts” (Jiménez Crespo & Ángel, 2022, p. 6).

Conversely, parts like nodes or promotional blurbs created for product description require more than artificial replacement of the RT contents. They entail textual, cultural and semiotic customization. A functional website translation is considered an asset to the corporate’s marketing plan and to the aspired sales numbers. This sequentially pins down the worth of translators “as creators of additional value (spiritual/cultural and/or material/economic) that is eventually added to the total value of the canons or commodities and social services” (Ho, 2004, p. 225).

Nevertheless, the genre of commercial web translation involves speed, tools and manipulations. The collaborative work and concurrent factures of its key players affect the quality of the localized textual chunks in terms of usability and impact on the target audience. Hence, it is reasonable to probe the quality of web translation in localized texts to reveal their adaptation level.

Corporate websites can exhibit either what Toury (2012) calls adequacy (faithfulness) or acceptability (naturalness). Faithfulness to the RT keeps the corporate marketing identity. While acceptability achieves conformity to “the norms prevailing in the target culture” (Ezzoubeyr,

2021, p. 510). Perhaps it is convenient here to define what culture means. Culture, as defined by Hofstede et al. (2010), “is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others” (p.6) (originally in italics).

Since localization involves a great deal of practical, pragmatic manipulation it can be considered “as an activity that is entirely different from “translation proper” (Sdobnikov, 2018, p. 1491). Web advertisers sometimes go the extra mile linguistically to achieve cross cultural, functional prominence, thus resorting to customization. The extent of such pragmatic customization affects the website translation quality and its communicative level of persuasion. As excessive “transfer of the characteristics of the original language into the target language” may result in language barriers (Han et al., 2020, p. 234), and advertisers cannot afford to take risks of cultural disturbance. While excessive cultural customization of the localized website blurs the global corporate identity. Therefore, assessing the translation quality of the website is so much related to assessing its cultural customization.

However, when the target market language (Arabic in the present case) is discursively, structurally and culturally rather remote from English (the global, standard language), achieving either adequacy or acceptability between such language pairs is rather demanding. Therefore, the actualization of linguistically competent branding adequacy and culturally successful marketing acceptance between the English RT and its Arabic target text (TT) can be achieved by employing a consortium of macro and micro translational strategies.

Macro translational strategies “involve analyzing how meaning is transferred and categorizing potential paths for equivalence” (Purba et al., 2023, p. 26) on the whole textual level. While micro translational strategies “assess and classify the various ways in which equivalency might occur” (Saputra, et al., 2022, p. 30) on the level of words, phrases and sentences. House and Kadar (2020) pinpoint that “the majority of previous research in this area has pursued a macro-agenda” and thus “further micro-level research is needed on the pragmatics of globalisation, in order to avoid overgeneralising the effect of globalisation on language use” (p. 2). Hence, the present study aims to probe more the translational micro-level strategies involved in IKEA Egypt Arabic website. As Alharbi et al. (2023) point out, a research assessing the website translation and customization would be expedient, as researches on localization translation and cross-cultural adaptation are somehow limited.

More particularly, Sobh et al. (2015) assert the shortage of researches on Arabic web localizing advertising providing recommendations about for Arab consumers (p. 1). This is in spite of the fact that, “Arabic is the fourth used language on the Internet with more than two hundred and twenty million users” (Benaida et al., 2018, p. 65). Therefore, Arabic localization should have a notable position on the map of the localization business, as there are conflicting forces affecting Arabic localization that is worth studying. Moreover, since the Arab community is encompassed by particular religious, socio-cultural and linguistic aspects, thus websites addressing the Arab region would hypothetically reflect higher levels of customization and adaptation. Accordingly, researches in this milieu may yield interesting results adding to this under searched field of study.

#### **2.1.6 IKEA Case Study**

IKEA adopts a global expansion strategy, by operating through 462 stores in 63 countries by 2023 (IKEA, 2023). To operate globally, the company needs to have an irreplaceable, identifiable brand name, with a unique idiosyncratic identity, empowering it with a selling mark in different market locales. As a global Swedish furniture-producer, IKEA is keen to keep its Scandinavian identity to delineate positive associations in the consumers’ minds. Its website catalogue (its main promotional pride) is full of Swedish cultural markers; models, names, customs, practices, traditions and even folk arts. The company “insists on the particularity of its Swedishness from the name IKEA, in capitalized yellow letters against the blue building, which indicates the particularity of the company’s patriarch and his geography” (Taher, 2019, p. 51). In IKEA Egypt English and its Arabic mirror replica, products in the promotional textual blurbs keep their Swedish names, despite being probably incomprehensible to the Egyptian web users.

Nonetheless, it is assumed that, IKEA with a total of 3.8 billion web visits in 2023 (*Improving affordability for IKEA customers*, 2023) employs a kind of localized cultural customization to its website conforming to the local tastes of the target market. Since furniture is a type of products that needs higher degrees of self-expression (Singh, 2012, p. 93), therefore, IKEA localized websites as a furniture platform need higher levels of cultural adaptation. Moreover, since IKEA is an exemplification of paradoxical identity branding and cultural adaptation (Alaali & Vines, 2020, p. 1602), thus analyzing the level of such cultural customization in Egypt websites may yield some useful linguistic,

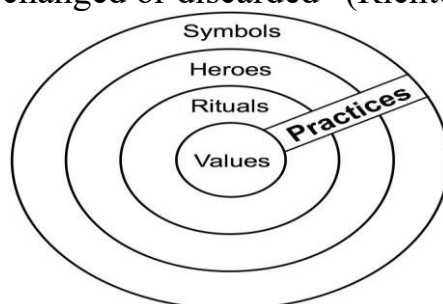


cultural and even business insights into the field of localization in general and Arabic localization in particular.

### 3. Methodology

The present paper follows a qualitative research method to compare some RT contents of IKEA English standard website in Egypt and its Arabic TT equivalent content, to examine the localization quality of the created website using Singh's (2012) model of web localization assessment. This model is based on four primary dimensions, namely **content localization**, **local gateway**, **cultural customization** and **translation quality**. **Content localization** addresses the basic elements of the website; navigation, equivalency, relevancy, support and currency. **Local gateway** deals with web pages' accessibility, finding the target locales, placement of the gateway links and the use of URLs. **Cultural customization** addresses values, themes, colors, graphics and web page design adaptation. **Translation quality** deals with the accuracy and functionality of the translation process.

To gauge **cultural customization**, the present paper employs palpable, principles of culture as identified by Hofstede et al. (2010) in their “Onion Model”, which depicts classified layers of concentric circles constituting culture. The metaphor of onion peeling reflects the importance of the layers, which gets more significant in deeper circles. “The level of depth further indicates the persistence of cultural phenomenon types: The less deeply rooted a cultural phenomenon is, the more likely it is to be changed or discarded” (Richter, 2016, p. 3).



The “Onion Model”

Cultural Manifestations at Different Levels of Depth (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.8)

Hofstede et al. (2010) see that **Symbols** can be words, gestures, pictures or objects conveying certain meanings. **Heroes** are alive/dead, actual/fictional persons possessing certain qualities cherished by members of a certain culture. **Rituals** can be defined as sociocultural, collective activities carried out apparently to achieve certain purposes (pp. 8-9). The first three cultural aspects have been listed under the layer **Practices**. The deepest position is occupied by the circle of **Values**, which are

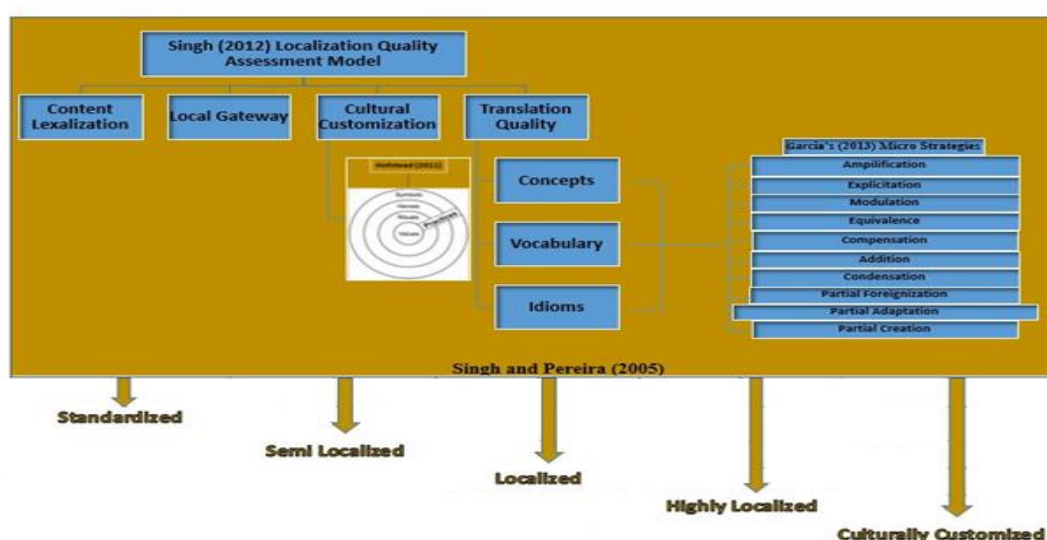
supposedly more stable, unchangeable representing the compelling ethics, inherent tenets and firm beliefs that form the mental and psychological entity of the members of a cultural group. Hofstede et al.'s (2010) Onion Model of culture “strongly supports focusing on cultural values and thus, encourages the application of value-based culture dimensions models” (Richter, 2016, p. 3). As a result, it can prove to be functional as a model of cultural analysis in tracing the degree of the website cultural customization.

To gauge the website **translation quality**, **conceptual vocabulary**, and **idiomatic** equivalences are investigated (Singh, 2012, pp. 282-283). Cruz García's (2013) micro strategies are used as parameters to probe these three linguistic aspects to probe the web translation quality criteria. Such micro strategies can reveal the extent of adequacy and acceptability actualized on the translational level of the web content. They include; *amplification* (using a larger number of linguistic monemes), *explicitation*: (elucidating implied elements), *omission* (deleting some information or elements) *modulation* (changing perspectives in the TT with regard to those expressed in the RT), *equivalence* (employing elements in different forms and meanings yet with the same pragmatic function), *compensation* (placing an element in a different place in the TT), *addition* (adding information and elements to the TT), *condensation* (using smaller number of monemes to express the same meaning), *partial foreignization* (keeping some untranslated foreign element of the RT in the TT), *partial adaptation* (replacing RT CSIs with CSIs of the target culture) and *partial creation* (creating new elements in the TT replacing another ones with different meaning in the RT) (p. 347).

The previously illustrated parameters measure the quality of customization and translation of IKEA Egypt 2023 websites and thus their degree of localization. Adaptation levels of website localization depend on the inherit importance of the locale and on the cultural, technical and linguistic website content variables. To decide upon the customization level of website localization, Singh and Pereira (2005) identify five degrees of web localization; **Standardized** (exhibiting the same web content for both local and international users, without traces of translation, internationalization or localization), **Semi-Localized** (providing proactive contact information about foreign branches with very little content variation), **Localized** (having country-specific web pages with translation of relevant parts only, yet not that easy to locate), **Highly Localized** (having country-specific URLs with translations of relevant parts, and relatively high levels of localization for time, date, zip

code, number formats and other website relevant contents) and **Culturally Customized** (offering sophisticated country-specific design of web pages echoing full adoption of the target market culture and they are easy to find and navigate) (pp. 10-15).

The eclectic model employed in the present paper can be presented as follows:



#### 4. Aim of Study

The present paper attempts to probe to what extent IKEA keeps the balance between global branding standardization and culture-based marketing localization policies in its English standard 2023 website and its localized Arabic mirror version. To assess the level of localization, Singh's (2012) model of web localization quality assessment is employed providing evaluative parameters. By scrutinizing the websites cultural elements as suggested by Hofstede et al. (2010) and the linguistic translational strategies as suggested by Garcia (2013) the degree/level of localization can be identified, as categorized by Singh and Pereira (2005). Such degree can reveal to what extent the persuasive and propagative selling function of the localized websites is actualized.

#### 5. Research Questions

The aim of the study can be realized by answering the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are the contents and gateway of IKEA 2023 websites in Egypt localized?
- 2) To what extent are the cultural elements present in IKEA Egypt 2023 websites culturally customized?
- 3) What are the micro strategies employed in translating IKEA Egypt 2023 websites material and the impact of such

employment on the website translational quality as a mediation platform?

- 4) What is the degree/level of operational localization in IKEA Egypt 2023 websites and the effect of such adaptive level on actualizing relevant readership?

## 6. Analysis

The parameters of Singh's (2012) model are probed as follows to assess the quality of localization:

### I) Content Localization

This parameter measures the extent to which IKEA localizes its basic web content to the Egyptian audience. The first factor is equivalency which gauges the amount of translated website content in IKEA 2023 Arabic website. IKEA 2023 English website main page and some cover pages are localized and designed differently from the main standard IKEA global site to fit the Egyptian market needs. IKEA Arabic website is a flipped mirror of the English one with nearly a full content translation with a few exceptional node chunks which go untranslated. For instance, the node blurb entitled Easter found in the English website is not translated in the Arabic mirror site. A few content pages like the one describing a French customary dinner called diner-en-blanc is missing in the Arabic website. Contrariwise, an Arabic page displaying the elegance of an apartment in Paris is missing in the English website.

The contact depth in both Egypt English and Arabic websites exhibits ample availability of useful links, images, brochures, planning tools, stores, site maps and information about IKEA. Besides, general information on newsroom, products recalls and products guides are made available in the English website homepage and translated in the Arabic one. Home, cover and content pages together with product specifications or any other information are updated and translated in both websites.

The content synchronization, exemplified in currency, is updated in Egypt English website in Egyptian Pound EGP and translated into جنيه in the Arabic website. The navigational features provided in IKEA English website are rather detailed, categorized and elaborate. Navigational bars contain a side hyperlink for IKEA website main divisions like; products, offers, rooms, harmony at home, low price everyday products and other restaurant, business and family membership facilities. All such directories, forward and backward buttons and even breadcrumb trails are translated and mirrored in the Arabic website with the same order and under the same sections and subsections.

IKEA Egypt 2023 English and Arabic websites provide sufficient service sorts and adequate support features according to local time and location. The customer service section is quite detailed with subsections for terms and conditions, spare parts, shopping applications, [guarantees](#) and warranties, return policies, [contact us](#) info and frequently asked questions section (FQA). Customer support, hotline phone numbers and emails, social media pages as well as feedback and chat boxes are available in both sites under the same directory and using the same entry.

Spatial orientation or navigational direction for user interface elements, for the Arabic website, are positioned from right to left using programs like right-to-left (RTL) software support. HTML files are designed to function in RTL directionality. The spatial orientation in the Arabic website is preserved by the veracity of keeping the same look and feel of the English website, yet with an RTL alignment.

## II) Local Gateway

This parameter addresses the ease of locating IKEA 2023 *website address* in Egypt. IKEA website adopts a global template, imprinting its global branding policy, displayed in its global landing page (<https://www.IKEA.com>); the mother homepage for the whole corporate, containing hyperlinks so that online users can geo-locate their different countries in the web spatial domain. They can also switch the navigation country or language they wish to apply. Most importantly, IKEA implements an optimized search engine optimization (SEO), so that the user of an Egyptian search engine (SE) can be easily directed to IKEA's URL domain in Egypt. If the word IKEA is typed in the search bar of any SE interface in Egypt, a hyperlink domain in the global gateway landing page; *eg-en* directs the user to IKEA.eg (English) or IKEA.eg (العربية) (Arabic) websites. Besides, online users of IKEA Egypt websites can move between the English version and its Arabic clone from the same URL by simply selecting changing language hyper link option. They both provide the same common path.

## III) Cultural Customization

Adaptation in localization process should involve what Afarinasadi (2021) calls “extra-linguistic and cultural particularities” (p. 9). However, cultural aspects are not that plentiful in IKEA Egypt blurbs except for local market-specific-campaigns; like Ramadan and Eid ones. However, even in such campaigns IKEA Swedishness is asserted instantly by the Swedish word Hej in the salutation tag of the cover page: Hej and welcome to IKEA Egypt. Allusions to Scandinavian CSIs are rather abundant; about 63 content pages in IKEA Egypt English website.

The degree of cultural customization is gauged through exploring the cultural circles exhibited in Hofstede et al.'s (2010) Onion model. The first outer CSI circle is **Symbols**. Symbols are amply used in campaigns like Ramadan offers campaign, so that Egypt website visitors would feel related and belonging. Products with Ramadan Islamic symbols are propagated, like in the blurb:

RT	TT
Light up a dark corner with this floral-patterned <u>Ramadan lantern</u> that boosts the atmosphere in your home for a <u>happy Ramadan holiday</u> .	يمكنك إضاءة مساحتك بزينة هلال رمضان وبفانوس مزين بالزهور ليضفي أجواء مميزة في <u>تجمعات الإفطار</u> في رمضان في منزلك.

The English RT clarifies the traditional symbol of Ramadan lantern as a source of glowing dark corners. Yet, this is transferred in the TT into the nominal group مساحتك which fades some semantic and pragmatic meanings. However, this loss is compensated by transferring the noun holiday into the nominal group تجمعات الإفطار which is more culturally pertinent. The cultural symbol of زينة هلال رمضان is added in the Arabic TT, maybe to reinforce the significance of the cultural symbols reflected in the semiotic level of the symbol of the radiant lantern in the promoting photo, with its glare and shadows.



Ramadan is a month of religious, cultural and social significance. Therefore, IKEA dexterously releases a special product collection under the title HEMBJUDEN (a home invitation in Swedish) as Ramadan collection; a very expressive title which reflects Ramadan meanings of hospitality, generosity and cordiality. However, such meanings are not directly conveyed to the visitors of IKEA Egypt websites as the Swedish language are not common. Nonetheless, IKEA refuses to give up its policy of globalizing its brand identity.

The cultural symbols of Ramadan table decorations (Ramadan lantern and Eid Crescent) are explicated in the TT as the typical Ramadan cultural symbols, فوانيس رمضان وهلال العيد, familiar to the Egyptian and Arab

market locale. Besides, the semiotic revelations in the photo convey these typical cultural symbolic connotations through the curtains, rugs, cutlery, cushions and lighting, which go well with the Middle Eastern Ramadan associations.



While the cultural symbols related to the Egyptian and Arab culture in general are present in Egypt two websites, cultural symbols from all over the world are present in both sites also. The gesture symbol of welcoming neighbors is presented in the Finnish, American and the Chinese ways of doing so. The textual and semiotic levels express the cultural symbols adequately in both the English and Arabic websites. Baking an American pie, offering a loaf of Finns' bread and giving a Chinese tea party are all cultural symbols of welcome a new neighbor.



The second cultural circle in the Onion theory is **Heroes**. Employing cultural heroes' references in the textual content of IKEA Egypt websites is spotted in alluding to Scandinavian folk-arts, like the blurbs:

RT	TT
Blue, red and white. <u>Dala horses</u> and shower curtains. This autumn and winter it's easier than ever to give your home a <u>Scandinavian folk-art infusion</u>	أزرق، أحمر وأبيض. <u>خيول دالا</u> وستائر دوش. هذا الخريف والشتاء، أصبح إدخال لمسة من الفنون الشعبية الاسكندنافية إلى منزلك أسهل من أي وقت مضى

The hero here is the folklore of IKEA's original locale Scandinavia. The Arabic website keeps the Scandinavian heroic folksy unchanged, by resorting to *transliteration* without explaining what Dala means. Yet, this is compensated in the later phrase: لمسة من الفنون الشعبية الاسكندنافية.



The third CSI layer in the Onion theory is **Rituals**. Exhibiting cultural and social rituals is spotted in many blurbs like in Ramadan campaigns:

RT	TT
In the holy month of Ramadan, make every minute count and start preparing for the <u>Ramadan family feast</u>	في شهر رمضان المبارك ، خصص كل دقيقة وابدأ في الاستعداد <u>لجمعة العائلة الرمضانية</u>

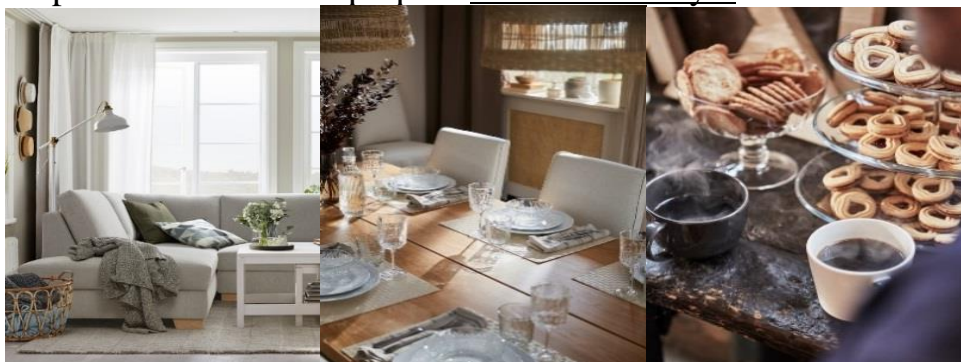
Both the linguistic and semiotic levels convey the practices of the rituals. The photo participants gather around the dining table which is full of delicious dishes. The mother figure is wearing Islamic clothes looking gleefully at the family members waiting to start the Ramadan family feast, which is aptly transferred as جمعة العائلة الرمضانية.



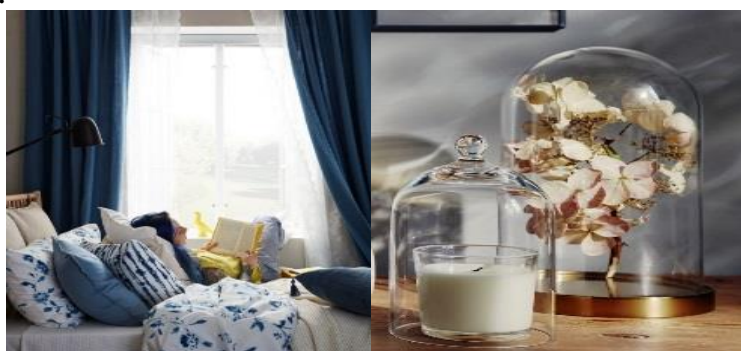
Besides, cultural customization is quite apparent in changing the standard IKEA's products that are not directly meant to Ramadan in particular into products directed to the Holy fasting month. Pieces of furniture like sofas and chairs are promoted as means to Sit back and



relax during and after fasting times. Cutleries that may have a western hue are promoted as sets to prepare delicacies in style for Ramadan.



Similarly, products like string lighting, candle holders, tableware, napkins, runners, lanterns, potted plants, cushion covers, table linens, decorative plates, glasses, flowers are promoted as means of Eid preparations. Photos of regular IKEA's products are exhibited as Eid decorations.



Eid, together with its traditional saluting phrase Eid Mubarak are transliterated not paraphrased as happy Small Bairam or Happy Eid for instance. This maybe meant to keep the cultural customization elements in the TT nodes.

However, again IKEA's globalized character is averred in celebrating rituals from all over the world in both English and Arabic IKEA websites. Rituals of festivities; like Chinese new year, Scandinavian Cray fish party and Swedish midsummer celebration are kept in the English website and translated in the Arabic one.

**Practices** are depicted in Hofstede et al.'s (2010) Onion theory as an encompassing circle for the three previously mentioned ones. Being mainly business-oriented showrooms, IKEA's websites in Egypt culturally adapt the main cover webpage with the incidents/events/practices essential for marketing purposes. For instance, back to school timing in Egypt is manipulated as an event to promote school related IKEA's products, using catchy tags as:

**Localized or Globalized: Assessing the Localization Level of IKEA Egypt 2023 English and Arabic Websites Arabic into English**

RT	TT
<u>Back to school offer</u>	<u>عرض العودة إلى المدارس</u>
<u>You bring the mess! We bring the solutions!</u>	<u>لدينا دائماً حلول مبتكرة للفوضى</u>

Practices from all over the world, even the ones unfamiliar to Egypt, are also kept in both the English and Arabic websites. For instance, practices like having parties in the street are not common in the Egyptian locale. Therefore, sentences like:

RT	TT
<u>How to join a street party – without leaving your home</u>	<u>كيف تنضم إلى حفل الشارع - دون مغادرة منزلك</u>
<u>It's summer and open-air celebrations light up the city streets</u>	<u>جاء الصيف وبدأت معه الاحتفالات في الهواء الطلق في شوارع المدينة</u>

are reflecting outlandish practices infrequent for the Egyptian public, thus not likely to be employed as a promotional material.

Similarly, a blurb like:

RT	TT
<u>How to save a rainy day with friendly neighbours</u>	<u>كيف تتقذ نشاطات يوم ممطر مع جيرانك المفضلين</u>

is quite culturally peculiar. A photo of neighbors gathering on a rainy day at a staircase adorned with lights, candles and IKEA's pieces of furniture is neither culturally nor ecologically common to Egyptians. Hence, this may not be the best way to persuade an Egyptian web user to buy such products.



Moreover, cultural aspects of social norms and communal system are not adapted in the translation of the website textual content in some instances. For example, working days and weekends are not modified in the TT to suit the ones known in Egypt. In a blurb promoting night lantern the sentence:

RT	TT
<u>And Monday to Friday only manage to spend time together when sleeping</u>	<u>ولا يحصلون على وقت سويًا من الإثنين إلى الجمعة إلا وقت النوم</u>

The typical transference of IKEA standard RT content in both the English and Arabic websites in Egypt sometimes mars the idea of cultural

customization. For instance, in Egypt, and most of the Arab countries, common working days are from Saturday to Thursday as Friday (the prayer day) is mostly a day off at the weekend. Similarly, promoting a 2-seat breakfast table as being ideal for a quick bite over the Sunday crosswords: وهي مثالية لتناول وجبة سريعة أثناء حل الكلمات المتقاطعة يوم الأحد is not culturally realistic as Sunday is not the weekend day off in the Egyptian culture. Customizing both the RT and the TT can be more persuasive and audience-oriented.

There is a curious example reflecting the cultural customization parameter. It shows that Ikea has changed its adaptation policy in tackling some cultural aspects. An English RT blurb is rendered differently in 2020 and 2023 IKEA's catalogues, in the Arabic clone site. Difference in the customization level can be shown as follows:

RT	2020 TT	2023 TT
<b>Swim, surf, sleep, repeat!</b> Some love the city, they prefer the sea	<b>بالمرح مفعمة عملية حياة</b> يفضل بينما المدينة، حياة البعض يحب بالطبيعة وجمالها الاستمتاع آخرون	<b>، النوم ، ركوب الأمواج السباحة</b> <b>، وتكرار كل ذلك</b> البعض يحبون المدينة، يفضلون البحر



In 2020 Arabic catalogue, cultural customization is apparent in the choice of the blurb tag lexical items. Surfing is not a common sportive activity in Egypt, even for lodgers of coastal areas. Thus, opting for substituting the four verbs in the tag line with a modified nominal phrase expounding an interesting, lively type of life explicates the underlying pragmatic functional meaning in a way to be assimilated by the Egyptian public. Moreover, the verbal phrase prefer the sea is transferred brilliantly by generalization as الاستمتاع بالطبيعة وجمالها discarding the idea of practicing sea activities. The same pragmatic function is conveyed, sparing the Egyptian web user a lot of unneeded slipup.

Nonetheless, in 2023 catalogue, the blurb is transferred literally either verbally or non-verbally. Faithfulness to the English RT renders the TT blurb culturally awkward. However, this faithfulness, which conforms to the surfing tools exhibited in the photo (which should have been altered to suit Egypt sportive practices), misses the pragmatic

acceptability of the adventurous life, as the practice itself is not common in the Egyptian locality.

**Values** is the core circle in the Onion theory, which should be given much care in the customization process, being not prone to constant change. Religious values are of prime importance to Arab and Egyptian audiences. Therefore, the religiously-themed Ramadan campaign is used in instances in both RT and TT sites to glorify respected values of the market locale, like family ties for instance. Verbal and non-verbal cultural customization can be traced in the following sentence promoting tableware:

RT	TT
So, why not make time for regular family or house meals	فلماذا لا تخصص وقتاً لتناول وجبات عائلية منتظمة أو وجبات منزلية

The verbal content is reinforced by the non-verbal level of a photo of a supposedly Egyptian family displaying participants with Middle Eastern features and female veiled models so that the Egyptian audiences could relate.



Besides, cultural customization of values can be traced in other instances. For example, drinking liquors is not allowed as an everyday practice in the Egyptian society like in the Western world. Promoting glassware as liquor-related products would not presumably appeal to the Egyptian audiences, being against their values. The non-verbal, semiotic level accompanying glassware marketing blurbs exhibits nearly no cultural adaptation, as follows:



Nonetheless, although the verbal level is kept unchanged in IKEA Egypt English website (maybe also intended to English speaking web

users of Egypt English website), customization takes place in the translated verbal content in the Arabic website, like in;

RT	TT
wine glasses, beer glass, wheat beer, champagne coupes, cocktail set, wine glasses, beer glasses, white wine glass, red wine glass, and juice, champagne or wine	العصائر، كأس، ---، مجموعات كأس، ماء، عصير، الشراب، مشروبات غازية، كأس، كؤوس

The translator adapts no consistent strategy in rendering blunt alcohol items. Different adaptive strategies like; *condensation*, *partial adaptation*, *equivalence*, *omission*, *partial creation*, *condensation* (by generalization) and *partial creation* respectively are employed, just to respect the religious values of the target market audiences.

A 358-words English node chunk discussing insights on wine and champagne, their types, shapes of their glasses and their modes of drinking under the tag: Match your wine with the right glass is not translated in the Arabic website, but transferred as it is in English. However, transferring the node in English in the Arabic website does not render it culturally customized. On the contrary, it may seem more offensive to the Arabic speaking audiences who can read English.

In spite of such cultural customization efforts, sometimes instances of ironic customization errors take place. For example, in Ramadan campaign in the English website, under the tag: Ramadan offer there are promoting sentences like: Here's space for 9 juice or wine bottles and with this wine shelf you add a warm and personal detail to the home, accompanied by photos of typical wine bottles racks and storage units underneath. A Holy month with a special theological and spiritual status for the Egyptian audiences is used as a promoting season for wine products and containers, an idea seems quite strange.



On the contrary, in the Arabic website such content is dexterously tackled, exhibiting clear signs of cultural customization for such offensive blurbs, by translating the two sentences as: مع إليك مساحة تتسع لـ 9 قوارير and هذا الرف ستضيفين لمسة دافئة وشخصية إلى الغرفة. Although, omission of liquor allusions in the TT is not conforming to the stark semiotic, non-verbal

signs in the photos, it seems a desperate attempt of cultural adaptation to respect the target market values.

Verbal and non-verbal customization policy can also be starkly detected in a one blurb content showing many types of liquors, in Ramadan campaign. The Arabic rendition of this blurb content exhibits a complete *recreation* on both verbal and non-verbal levels. The blurb is subjected to utter change, to fit the sacred grandeur of the Holy month. This recreation verbal and non-verbal process can be traced as follows:

RT	TT
<p><b>Glasses to enhance your enjoyment of any drinks</b></p> <p>Whether you're thirsty for wine, water or champagne, these clear, stylish and strong glasses suit every occasion</p> 	<p>تحافظ الزجاجات الجديدة المزخرفة على مشروباتك طازجة</p> <p>لا تدع المشروبات أو المناسبة تفقد متعتها تتمتع هذه الزجاجات بمظهر تقليدي، حيث تبقى السعادة القديمة على الزجاجاة</p> 

#### IV) Translation Quality

Translation quality can have a notable impact on the overall localization quality of the website. Singh (2012) assigns three facets of translation equivalence; **conceptual**, **vocabulary** and **idiomatic**.

**Concepts** can sometimes be translationally problematic, if they do not denote the same things in the RT and the TT. For instance, the concept of man-women relationship/partnership can be detected in IKEA English and Arabic websites. Emma, one of IKEA's interior designers, relates her story saying:

RT	TT
<p>I spent my college days living in a super tiny apartment in Islington, North London together with <u>my</u> boyfriend (now husband)</p>	<p>أمضيت أيامي الجامعية في السكن في شقة فائقة الصغر في آيسلينغتون، شمال لندن</p>

The translator opts for *omission* strategy to evade the awkwardness of conveying an offensive and bizarre concept for the Egyptian audiences; the concept of two partners sharing an apartment without being married (despite the parenthetical note that denotes that they are married now). In another blurb instance, narrated by someone called Elisa, a different translation strategy can be detected as follows:

RT	TT
she (Elisa) and <u>her boyfriend</u> , Guido, have an open-plan space	مساحة ذات <u>Guido</u> لديها (إليزا) هي وزوجها _تخطيط مفتوح.

The strategy chosen here is *partial adaptation*. As the RT problematic lexeme boyfriend is replaced by زوجها, denoting a legitimate relationship to be both conceptually and culturally acceptable for the target market audiences.

Implicit, free relationships is apparent both verbally and non-verbally in the blurb:

RT	TT
<b>Sometimes, <u>love</u> is all about giving date night a miss</b> That's why there are times when the most loving thing you can do is to give in to tiredness-----and <u>rock your darling to sleep</u>	في بعض الأحيان، يرتبط <u>الحب</u> بمجرد الاسترخاء والراحة سويًا لذلك هناك أوقات يكون فيها أكثر الأشياء الرائعة التي يمكنك القيام بها هي الاستسلام للتعب ، ----- <u>والاستمتاع بالنوم</u>

The blurb TT tag exhibits *partial creation* strategy by translating the nominal group a night date (implying love relationship but not necessarily marriage) as الحب (a general noun reflecting romantic feelings). Strategy of *condensation* and *partial creation* is adopted in translating the verbal phrase rock your darling to sleep as الاستمتاع بالنوم as neutrally enjoying relaxing sleep without alluding to holding a lover. Though this rendition may appeal to the audiences' tastes and beliefs, it is in stark juxtaposition with the photo semiotic hues represented in the two models hugging each other.



In addition, the concept of **toasting** (celebrating by coercing glasses, usually alcohol) is not culturally conforming with the Egyptian values. Therefore, blurbs content related to toasting as: That's worth a toast is sometimes omitted in the Arabic TT. Another blurb denoting the

RT culturally strange concept of toasting: Raise your glasses is translated into وقت الاحتفال والمرح using *equivalence* strategy, to convey the underlying pragmatic meaning of celebration and merriment without referring to the physical act of toasting. In other instances, strategies of *omission* and *partial adaptation* manipulate this concept like in the sentence:

RT	TT
When it's time to toast, fill INBJUDEN champagne glasses with a sparkling and refreshing drink	عندما يحين وقت الاحتفال، املاً كؤوس INBJUDEN بالعصير المنعش

In spite of such desperate translational attempts to conceal the RT concept of toasting on the textual level, the semiotic level exposes undesirable hues of meanings in the TT website photos that bluntly exhibit such concept:



Other instances of translating **concepts**, can be detected as in the blurb tag:

RT	TT
In Sweden, we like “ <u>lagom</u> ”	ونطبقه في السويد "lagom" نحب مبدأ

The translator opts for employing *partial foreignization* strategy by keeping the RT Swedish word concept untranslated in the TT, conforming to Swedishness IKEA's policy. The concept of “lagom” (which means moderate in Swedish) is explicated in the RT blurb text and aptly translated using *condensation* and *equivalence* strategies, producing both an adequate and acceptable translation

RT	TT
not too much, not too little, but just right	عدم الإفراط أو التفريط، وإنما الاعتدال

Other concepts which are not that common in the Egyptian target culture are translated using *explicitation* strategy, to render the concept more understandable to the Arabic website user. The concept of bring-along breakfast, for example, is simply translated as فطور لأحبائك (treating your dear ones with breakfast), as the practice of bringing a pre-prepared meal would be actualized only with the dear ones.

The second parameter to be probed in translation quality is **Vocabulary**. Constituting the fabric of the textual website content; it is a



key element in indicating the translation quality. Apropos choice of lexical items achieves translational adequacy and acceptance. As a marketing platform, IKEA website blurb tags are translated as advertising material using different manipulative translational strategies to convey mainly the pragmatic and functional meanings. The following RT translated lexical items exhibit such strategies:

RT	TT
<u>If only babies came with instruction manuals!</u>	<u>تختلف حاجات كل طفل عن الآخر</u>

The *partial creation* strategy expounds the blissful, confusing sufferance of young parents about their baby's needs. The lexical elements in the RT, which draw a humorous analogy between newborn babies and complicated devices, are changed in the TT to explicate the underlying pragmatic meaning directly. However, such replacement deprives the TT sentence from the jokey, stylistic effect conveyed in the witty RT simile. The same *partial creation* strategy can be detected in blurb tags like:

RT	TT
<u>A story of two lives well-lived</u>	<u>المشاركة والتنظيم أساس كل حياة</u>
<u>The loved-and-lived-in look</u>	<u>منزل جديد مفعم بالدفء والأجواء الحميمة</u>
<u>All in a day's work</u>	<u>حياة عملية وأسرية مثالية</u>
<u>Part hallway, part closet, part hockey rink</u>	<u>تنظيم مساحة محدودة بشكل أفضل</u>
-	-

The RT tags are memorable, concise, succinct and catchy. They are structurally formed mostly from compound, hyphenated lexemes in short abrupt sentences. The Arabic TT tags are also concise slogan-like, yet using different lexemes. Their verbal constructs directly explain the advantage of the promoted products in conformity with the representations in the photos. Photos reflect happy shared life with partners, cozy fashionable house furniture, blissful private life successful professional one and well organized limited space.

In other RT textual instances, the translational strategies of both *explicitation* and *amplification* are employed to elucidate the basic pragmatic, functional meaning, even if this takes more space in the TT allocated space for the node. This is obvious in RT sentences like:

RT	TT
<u>An eclectic space for nomads to settle</u>	<u>مساحة مميزة لعائلة عاشقة للسفر</u>
<u>Having led a footloose and fancy-free life for a while</u>	<u>بعد قضاء فترة طويلة من حياتهما في التنقل من مكان لآخر والاستمتاع بالسفر وزيارة العديد من الأماكن</u>

However, in another blurb *explicitation* and *addition* strategies are crucial in clarifying a point that may seem culturally problematic, like in:

RT	TT
But our working day isn't typical – it's more 24/7 than 9 to 5	لكن يوم عملنا ليس تقليدياً - إنه يستمر 7/24 وليس مثل العمل في الشركات من الساعة 9 إلى 5

The expression 24/7 can be familiar to Arabic speaking audiences, yet 9 to 5 may need more elaboration, as it is not globally standardized. Thus, the prepositional complement في الشركات is added to explain the typical working hours in companies; especially private ones.

Conforming to the semiotic level in translating some vocabulary instances, needs some manipulative strategies. For instance, the RT onomatopoeic word Shhh

is recreated in the TT using *amplification and partial creation* strategies into ملاذ هادئ وسط الكتب. The Blurb tag: Time for something new is *partially created* as تصميم عصري بلمسة ريفية using lexemes that exhibit what is reflected in the two photos; a serene, elegant corner displaying a desk, chair and bookcase, and a modern house with a rustic touch.



Nonetheless, dependence on the semiotic level only in other website blurbs, applying *literal* translation strategy, for instance, leads sometimes to awkward renditions. The tag Preparing a pyramidal success, promoting a multilayer kitchen trolley in a pyramidal shape is translated as إعداد نجاح هرمي.



Although the tag is adequate on the semiotic level, displaying the trolley pyramidal shape, the translation does not seem plausible on the verbal level in the Arabic TT.

IKEA, for example, uses vocabulary with special meanings in its website only. The company has the credit of using the lexeme “hacking” to mean taking the range of looking at things and change it differently (*Why Furniture Hacks Are Now the New Design Trend*, 2018). Accordingly, the TT Arabic website reflects this meaning in translation, like in: The joy of hacking قابل للتغيير .

The third aspect of equivalence is the **idiomatic** one. Idioms used in the blurbs are relatively common expressions and metaphorical lexes. Instances of idiomatic expressions can be translationally scrutinized as follows:

Idioms can be found in blurbs like:

RT	TT
A kitchen this size is <u>a game changer</u>	مطبخ بهذا الحجم يغير كل شيء
Teenage siblings may be <u>two peas in a pod</u>	قد يكون الأشقاء المراهقون متشابهين للغاية في العديد من النواحي

The translator opts for using *amplification* and *equivalence* strategy to interpretively explain the pragmatic meaning underlying the idiom. Although, the linguistic effect may not be well transferred yet the functional meaning is conveyed.

In other instances, *explicitation* strategy is employed to convey the fundamental marketing intention behind the idiomatic expression, like in:

RT	TT
You can <u>high five yourself in the mirror</u>	الاحتفاء بذاتك على طريقتك الخاصة
The one place in the house <u>where all paths are sure to cross</u>	المكان الوحيد في المنزل الذي يجتمع فيه جميع أفراد الأسرة

In the first idiom *explicitation* strategy is employed to overtly demonstrate the pragmatic meaning of treating one's self by elucidating the meaning of this bodily gesture which signifies positive admiration. In the second one, rhetorical aesthetics are sacrificed for transferring the basic meaning of a family gathering spot concisely.

Different translational strategies are employed in rendering the following blurb idioms:

RT	TT
Here are some ways to <u>put on a memorable bash</u> for your near and dear, that <u>won't put a big dent</u> in your bank balance	إليك بعض الطرق لنشر أجواء احتفالية مثيرة لن ينساها أي من أحبائك وأقربائك والتي لن تؤثر أبداً على ميزانيتك

The RT idiomatic verbal phrase put on a memorable bash is translated by *modulation* by modulating the affirmative modifier memorable into a negated TT verbal group لن ينساها, and by *amplification* in the TT nominal group لنشر أجواء احتفالية مثيرة, by adding of the modifier مثيرة to indicate liveliness and vivacity. Translating the two RT nominal

idiomatic expressions near and dear by *equivalence* into the two TT nominal groups أحبائك وأقربائك conveys the semantic and pragmatic meanings pertinently. Although the verbal phrase idiom won't put a big dent is translated by *condensation* and *equivalence* into the negated verbal group لن تؤثر أبداً, the functional meaning of reducing money in a bank account is aptly reproduced. Besides, opting for *partial creation* in translating bank balance into ميزانيتك touches more upon the psyche of the middle class, average Egyptian website visitor. The nominal group ميزانيتك implies more keenness on the user's money, not assuming him/her to have a bulky bank balance prone to be reduced. The translation of the two idiomatic clauses actualizes both adequacy and acceptance.

RT idiomatic expressions are employed in tags, perhaps to save space in the nodes through condensed semantic load conveying appealing, rhetorical effect. The Arabic TT attempts to inspire the same functional impact of the TT enthralling, attractive tags, while keeping the intended meaning. In most of the signaled tag instances, translation takes place by *addition* and *explicitation* strategies. Idioms are rather paraphrased than translated into idiomatic equivalents, like in:

RT	TT
<u>hit snooze</u>	تستلقي في غير أوقات النوم
<u>check in breathe out</u>	مساحتك الخاصة بعيداً عن الأنظار
<u>morning catch up</u>	ركن هادئ للاستمتاع بالمحادثات الصباحية
<u>home-cooked wins, hands down</u>	أكلات منزلية لذيذة وسهلة التحضير
<u>busy bee</u>	مركز النشاط

Although in the Arabic nodes more space is allocated for the translated RT idiomatic tags (except the last example), the TT tags retain the catchy impact of attractive advertising slogans. Technically speaking, since the idioms appear as blurb tags, the translator may have more room for adding lexical items and explicitly state the promoting marketing intention behind such idiomatic expressions.

There are other instances where RT idiomatic blurb tags are translated, using *equivalence* strategy into equivalent TT idiomatic ones. The RT blurb tag idiom feast for the eyes is translated into تسر الناظرين using a rather Quranic reference idiom. The strategy in this instance yields an acceptable TT equivalent idiom semantically and rhetorically. However, in other instance, *equivalence* strategy does not yield acceptable results, like translating the RT idiom unsung hero into الأساس الخفي. The TT lexemes may express the fundamental pragmatic meaning, yet they miss the rhetorical, idiomatic effect. Using the equivalent Arabic idiomatic expression الجندي المجهول, for instance, may be more adequate

and acceptable. Faulty choice of idiomatic equivalents may result not only in awkward renditions, but also in erroneous ones, like the idiomatic verb in the blurb tag:

RT	TT
Make mischief with Gurki the cucumber	قم بإزعاج جوركي الخيار

The RT idiomatic verbal group make mischief or (cause troubles) is translated overlooking the RT preposition with, which if kept in the Arabic TT, would imply childish connotations of innocent impishness and juvenile gullibility. The TT imperative قم بإزعاج implies that the children trouble Gurki the cucumber itself. This mars the RT blurb intended meaning of making children love eating cucumber by befriending Gurki, which is created by a child in a drawing competition organized by IKEA and transformed from a sketch on paper to an endearing new soft toy.



## 7. Findings

Localization of websites is indispensable for any business to be globally visible to web users all over the world. In spite of its linguistic and marketing importance, researches in this realm are not that copious. Thus, a study related to web localization in general and Arabic web localization in particular may prove to be an addition to this area.

The paper attempts to probe how IKEA Egypt 2023 websites, as affordable channels of communication, are contrived both textually and non-textually to appeal to the potential customers online. Since adaptive customization is an imperative in website localization process, IKEA's website has supposedly gone through multi-procedural process of proper technical optimization, common template creation and linguistic and cultural customization to fit in variant market regions. The degree by which IKEA contrives its linguistic and cultural website content determines the level of its website localization, and thus determines its pragmatic marketing function. Hence, the study is after determining the level and results of such localization. Singh's (2012) proves to be quite valid and applicable in gauging localization elements.

The two IKEA Egypt 2023 websites seem to undergo extensive content localization process to resonate with the end user's expectations. Cover and content pages, user interface elements, links, maps,

information, newsrooms, products recalls, guides, currency, local time and date, navigational bars, hyperlinks, offers, facilities, means of communication, customer support and breadcrumb trails are all customized in Egypt English website. They are also meticulously translated and mirrored in the Arabic website with the same formatting and order. Besides, RTL navigation and spatial orientation directionality is well customized in the Arabic website, keeping the same air and composition of the English standard website. As a local gate, the two IKEA websites have the domain *eg-en* in Egypt, optimized by a SEO, that easily directs the web users to IKEA's URL domain in Egypt, with an equally easy switch between the two languages by a hyper link option.

Web localization involves leveraging cultural and socio-ecological facets to fit the market locale. Hofstede et al.'s (2010) cultural circles prove to be quite valid in probing such facets and markers. Cultural aspects are imbued in IKEA Egypt English and Arabic websites mainly in the cover webpage in the form of promoting local market-specific-campaigns, which are directly pertinent to certain symbols, rituals, practices, celebrations or life events; like Ramadan, Eid and back-to-school campaigns. Such campaigns employ cultural symbols either verbally or non-verbally in the English RT website and mirrored in the Arabic website with a few instances of addition and explication so that website visitors could relate. Cultural customization is quite apparent in IKEA's ingenious policy of framing its standard products within the setting of such cultural events as marketing casing for its products. However, cultural symbols rituals and practices from other parts of the world are employed also as an assertion on IKEA's global approach.

This approach is reinforced by IKEA's aversion of its Swedishness, either linguistically by employing Swedish lexical items in both sites of Egypt or by keeping the products name in Swedish (in Latin characters) even in the Arabic website. Besides, the only reference for folk heroes is the one alluded to Scandinavian folk-arts Dala horses.

Nonetheless, this stiff global approach of retaining the RT standard website contents in Egypt websites sometimes proves to be culturally remote and even ecologically peculiar from the Egyptian locale, and thus not likely to fit as an advertising material, like street parties, staircase gatherings surfing sports or adhering to Western working days and weekends.

The circle of values is the inherit core cultural facet, and therefore the most subjected to cultural customization. Textual web features that are offensive to the core values of the Egyptian locale, especially the

religious ones are adapted to appeal to the audiences' convictions. Their religious and communal values are manipulated as promoting contexts for IKEA's products as exemplified in Eid and Ramadan campaigns. Promotional blurbs exhibiting traces of verbal customization is considered a pragmatic, economic added value. Stark examples of textual cultural customization can be traced in instances pertinent to values. Lexical items that explicitly denote alcohol types and glassware are replaced by non-liquor beverage items. Affairs outside the marital social frame are either concealed or replaced by other legal conjugal relationships.

However, adherence to the global RT sometimes leads to unforgivable mistakes, like promoting wine bottle racks and champagne and cocktail glasses under Ramadan campaign. Besides, null customization of the non-textual, semiotic level of glassware marketing blurbs renders cultural adaptation on the textual level ironic and unrealistic. This is except for one instance of promoting glassware in Ramadan campaign, both verbal and non-verbal content are replaced by variant content.

The translation quality of IKEA Egypt 2023 Arabic is probed on three levels; conceptual, vocabulary and idiomatic. Concepts that can have variant connotations in the RT and the TT is translationally problematic. Cruz García's (2013) micro strategies prove to be quite functional in detecting the translational decisions opted for by the web translators. For instance, man-women relationship, alcohol drinking, toasting concepts are conceptualized differently in the Arabic TT to cope with the Egyptian local underlying convictions. Strategies of *omission*, *equivalence*, *explicitation*, *partial adaptation* and even more drastically *partial creation* are employed to evade cultural awkwardness and offensive concepts.

Nonetheless, such agile translational attempts are marred by the reverse shades of concepts reflected through the semiotic level exhibited in the promoting photos. Inconsistency between the verbal and the non-verbal contents renders the desperate translational attempts not that operative.

Vocabulary, as a fundamental constituent, unequivocally indicates the translation quality. The main translational feature in rendering manipulative textual structure in the Arabic TT is seeking acceptance rather than faithfulness. For instance, *partial creation* is a frequent manipulative strategy to produce succinct, appealing RT tags. Different lexemes in different structures are employed to elucidate the promoting, functional and pragmatic purpose of the blurb tags as revealed in the ad

photos. Strategies of *explicitation*, *amplification*, *addition* and *partial creation* are mostly used, even if by consuming more spatial nodes in the TT.

The translation of idioms, common expressions and metaphorical lexis reveals the same strategy of prioritizing the functional, pragmatic meaning over the rhetorical, aesthetic hues. Idioms are rather interpretively paraphrased using *amplification*, *explicitation modulation*, *condensation* and *partial creation* strategies than being conveyed into equivalent TT idioms.

Fewer instances exhibit *equivalence* strategy of rendering the idiomatic expressions into TT alternative ones, achieving both semantic adequacy and rhetorical acceptance. Nevertheless, faulty choices of idiomatic equivalents can result in awkward, erroneous renditions.

### 8. Conclusion

Eventually, it can be concluded that, the contents and gateway of IKEA 2023 websites in Egypt are quite localized in a way that is both accessible and market locale-oriented. As for its cultural customization level, it is mainly high and notable in cover pages and marketing campaigns. The core circle in Hofstede et al.'s Onion Model that exhibits high customization levels is values, being a crucially ingrained market specificity that needs to be distinctively respected to actualize cross cultural communication and functional prominence. The translation quality exhibited in the Arabic mirror website is mainly a communicative, explicative one. The most employed micro translational strategies are *explicitation*, *equivalence* and *partial adaptation*. These strategies attain both adequacy to the RT content to accentuate the merits of IKEA's product for persuasive, marketing purposes and acceptance as being expressive in the TT. Sometimes these strategies entail *amplification* and *addition*, yet conciseness is sacrificed for functionalism. Instances of *literal* strategy are few, but they are failures most of the time rendering either flawed or incomprehensible translation.

As for cultural customization and translation quality, it seems that IKEA is keen to delineate a unified image of Scandinavian promotional pride and a standard global brand using mainly English as the lingua franca. The Arabic TT website is depicted as translations for the standard template website of Swedish IKEA. However, the company also attempts to attain pleasure and accessibility to its local websites through actualizing a certain level of localization. Glocalization strategy of keeping the glories of the global branding is combined with local communication strategy. Nonetheless, globalization is sometimes



excessively present in instances of strangeness and incongruity somehow creating sociocultural barriers against the overall persuasive and propagative selling function of the localized website, as an advertising platform.

Accordingly, along Singh and Pereira (2005) continuum of localization levels, IKEA Egypt 2023 websites can be considered culturally customized. As, both Egypt websites have their own country-specific design of web pages (mainly cover pages) and their contents are customized to an extent that actualizes a considerable level of relevant readership and substantial sales figures. Nevertheless, the analysis conducted in this paper shows that, the customization level leans more towards IKEA's global side, whose Swedishness is quite ostensible and dominant.

Consequently, it can be said that, this paper is a step on the road of localization studies, that are not recognized as a frequent area of research in translation studies. Since localization plays a key role in enriching the digital web content linguistically and financially, further researches in this field are still needed.

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