

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU SEND YOUR COPY FOR TRANSLATION

**ACES CONFERENCE, CHICAGO, IL
FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2018
MADALENA SÁNCHEZ ZAMPAULO**

#ACESTranslation

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU SEND YOUR COPY FOR TRANSLATION



**ACES CONFERENCE, CHICAGO, IL
FRIDAY, APRIL 27, 2018
MADALENA SÁNCHEZ ZAMPAULO**

OVERVIEW

- **What is a great translation?**
- **Finding the right translator**
- **Develop the goal for your copy collaboratively**
- **Consider the ideal readership**
- **Develop a style guide**
- **Discuss the Dos and Don'ts**
- **Passive vs. active voice**
- **Gender and pronouns**
- **Formal vs. informal language**
- **Prepare your copy and what to bear in mind**
- **Tips for working with translation professionals**
- **Positive outcomes**

**THE SIGN OF A GREAT
TRANSLATION IS ONE THAT
DOES NOT *APPEAR TO BE A*
TRANSLATION, I.E., IT READS AS
THOUGH IT WERE ORIGINALLY
WRITTEN IN THE READER'S
PRIMARY LANGUAGE.**

WHERE TO FIND A TRANSLATION PROFESSIONAL

- **Basics about professional translators and editors**
 - translates into his/her native language
 - specializes in the type of content you plan to write
- **Find the specialist**
 - professional directories
 - American Translators Association (ATA): www.atanet.org
 - Local ATA chapters and other T&I organizations
 - LinkedIn and other online channels
- **Where *not* to look**
 - friends of friends (unless professionals)
 - those who “took _____ in high school”
 - office staff, etc.

TALK TO YOUR TRANSLATION TEAM BEFORE YOU WRITE THE COPY

- **Avoid writing the source copy first and then finding a professional translator**
 - allows you to gain insight about the target language
 - may give you ideas for the copy or influence the way you write it
- **Nuances are *everything* when it comes to well written copy. You've got to get them right!**
 - This is why automated translation will never surpass professional human translation.
 - “It is easier to do a job right than to explain why you didn't.” – Martin Van Buren

DEFINE THE PURPOSE/GOAL OF THE COPY

- What kind of text is it?
 - marketing
 - web or blog content
 - technical or reporting
 - script or speech
 - manual or guide
 - press release
 - presentation
 - white paper
 - etc.



DISCUSS THE IDEAL READER OF THE COPY

- **What is his/her background? How might it affect how he/she receives or comprehends the text?**
- **What is his/her level of education?**
- **How old is he/she?**
- **What is his/her previous knowledge on the subject, if known?**

All of these factors affect word choice, language used and sentence structure (both in the source and target languages/texts).

PREPARE A STYLE GUIDE WITH THE TRANSLATION TEAM

- **Consider**
 - punctuation
 - run-on sentences in one language or the other
 - words to avoid
 - tone
 - how to handle values, metrics
 - etc.



Table 1: Sample Table for Organizing Client Preferences

Spelling	Use American standards (color, humor, gray)
Punctuation	Client prefers to omit extra “s” in plurals with “s” plus apostrophe (the IRS’ decision, not the IRS’s decision)
Word Choice	Use “undocumented” rather than “illegal” to describe immigrants.
Numbers	Round up to nearest dollar (\$498.95 -> \$499)
Hyphenation/Compound Words	Healthcare = single word, decision-making = hyphenated
Acceptable Foreign Words	Don’t translate person’s title (use Mme. Pernaud, not Mrs. Pernaud)
Unacceptable Words	Client dislikes nationality “English” – use “British” instead.
Formatting (Lists, Abbreviations, etc.)	Section headers are boldface, subheads are italicized
Other	Shorter sentences, lots of puns, don’t use bullet points

Source: Yohn, Carolyn. “Copyediting for Stand-Out Style in Any Translation,” *The Chronicle*, American Translators Association, Jan/Feb 2018.

DETERMINE WORDS/TERMS (NEVER) TO BE USED

- This largely depends on your readership, the industry for which you are writing, culture, etc.
- Give the translation team a list of these terms and discuss options for the best translation for them.
- Don't assume that because you are working with a specialist, he/she will already have this information.

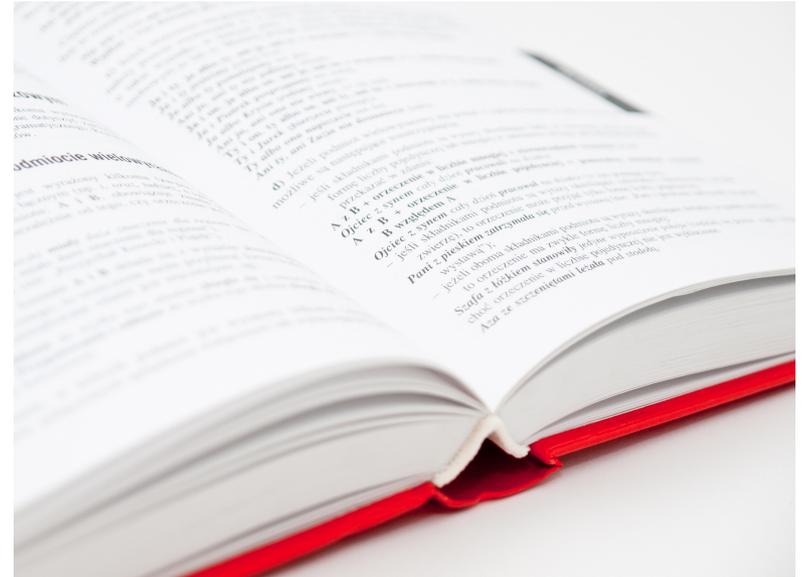


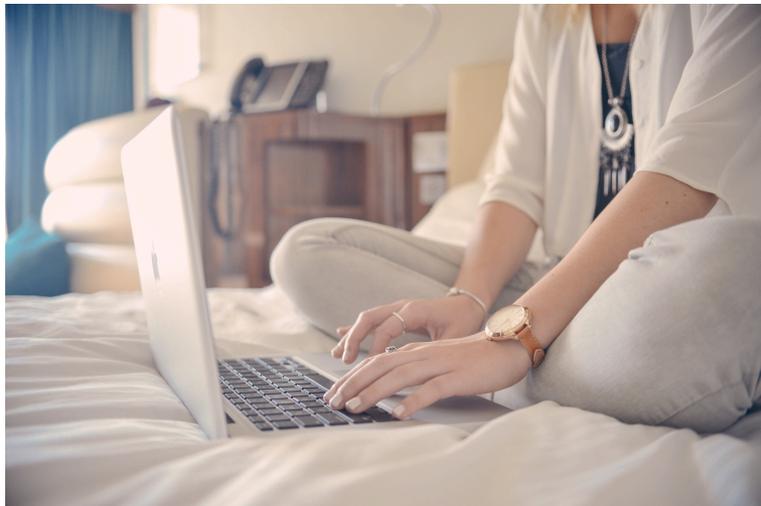
Table 2: Examples of Into-English Translation Issues

Source Issue:	Common Error:	Revise To:
French run-on sentences	Keeping target same length	Use semicolons at natural breaking points.
Hungarian instructions state “We do this, then we do that”	Literal translation	Use command form for verbs.
French use of the ellipsis...	Keeping the ellipsis...	Full stop or switch to “etc.”

Source: Yohn, Carolyn. “Copyediting for Stand-Out Style in Any Translation,” *The Chronicle*, American Translators Association, Jan/Feb 2018.

ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE VOICE

- **Some languages, like English, tend to use more active than passive voice in writing.**
- **Other languages, like Spanish, tend to use passive voice more often in both oral and written language.**
- **Discuss your preferences with your translation team ahead of time if a distinction is important to you.**





MACHINE TRANSLATION AND GENDER

In a peer-reviewed case study published in 2013, Schiebinger illustrated that Google Translate has a tendency to turn gender-neutral English words (such as *the*, or occupational names such as *professor* and *doctor*) into the male form in other languages once the word is translated. However, certain gender-neutral English words are translated into the female form . . . but only when they comply with certain gender stereotypes. For instance, the gender-neutral English terms *a defendant* and *a nurse* translate into the German as *ein Angeklagter* and *eine Krankenschwester*. *Defendant* translates as male, but *nurse* auto-translates as female.

Source: Ungerleider, Neal. "Google Translate's Gender Problem (And Bing Translate's, And Systran's...)" *Fast Company*, May 28, 2013.



Where Google Translate really trips up, Schiebinger claims, is in the lack of context for gender-neutral words in other languages when translated into English. Schiebinger ran an article about her work in the Spanish-language newspaper *El Pais* into English through Google Translate and rival platform Systran. Both Google Translate and Systran translated the gender-neutral Spanish words “suyo” and “dice” as “his” and “he said,” despite the fact that Schiebinger is female.

Source: Ungerleider, Neal. “Google Translate’s Gender Problem (And Bing Translate’s, And Systran’s...,” *Fast Company*, May 28, 2013.

FORMAL VS. INFORMAL LANGUAGE

- **Some languages have very clear parameters about formal and informal pronouns, verb forms, etc.**
- **If this is something that will affect your copy, discuss it ahead of time with the translation team. Let them know about the ideal reader and your preferences when it comes to the degree of formality to convey.**



MAKE YOURSELF AVAILABLE.

**IT'S BETTER TO ANSWER
QUESTIONS DURING THE
PROCESS ITSELF THAN TO
HAVE YOUR COPY BECOME
LOST IN TRANSLATION.**

PREPARE YOUR COPY

- **Consider your ideal readership**
 - Is it the same as it would be for the source language?
 - level of education, age and other demographic information
 - background knowledge of the subject matter
- **Share this information with the translation team and also request their professional insight**
 - When a translator and/or editor specialize in an area, they should know the ideal reader well.
 - Talk to your translation team about common issues or dilemmas that may come from translating the type of copy you plan to write. This allows you to make adjustments.

POINTS TO BEAR IN MIND...

- **Length of copy can vary from one language to another**
- **Be prepared to handle idioms, nuances, etc.**
- **Words or phrases that don't translate well**
- **Give your translation team choices or some freedom to adapt.**
- **Avoid literal translations for non-technical texts.**

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATION TEAM

- **Discuss patterns you tend to use or will use in the copy**
 - sentence length
 - lists
 - section headings
 - other structural features
- **Pay attention to how you use cultural references/idioms in your copy and be willing to adjust accordingly in target copy**
 - references/phrases referring to certain aspects of one culture and that may not necessarily be understood in another. For example:
 - sports references/idioms
 - Examples:
 - English Source:** “to beat around the bush”
 - Spanish Target:** “*andarse por rodeos*”
 - Literal Back Translation:** “to go on detours”

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATION TEAM

- Examples (continued)

English Source: “Every dog has its day.”

Spanish Target: “*A todos les llega su momento de gloria.*”

Literal Back Translation: “Everyone gets their moment of glory.”

English Source: “when pigs fly”

Spanish Target: “*cuando las gallinas meen*”

Literal Back Translation: “when hens pee”

English Source: “a chip off the old block”

Spanish Target: “*de tal palo, tal astilla*”

Literal Back Translation: “from such a stick, a splinter”

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF WORKING THIS WAY

- **Your translation team will be able to carry out the same style and spirit of your message.**
- **You can avoid multiple rounds of edits after the translation has been carried out.**
- **This way of working also avoids doing work twice.**
- **You can form a collaborative relationship with a translation team that allows you to reach a wider readership (two languages).**
- **It creates more opportunities for both you and the translation team.**

**JUST AS THERE IS NO MAGIC
FORMULA TO WRITING GREAT
COPY, THERE IS NO MAGIC
FORMULA TO CREATING A
SUPERB TRANSLATION.**

**BOTH TAKE TIME, EXPERTISE,
PATIENCE AND EXPERIENCE.**

THANK YOU!

Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo

Email: madalena@accessibletranslations.com



@mszampaulo