



ATLAS
translations

Translation Agency Tips

for clients needing translation
and language services

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1. Twelve steps to make a difference to your business

1. Think you don't need translation? Think again - read this blog about how translation can help you grow as a business:

www.atlas-translations.co.uk/language-services/

2. Research your local area – how many people live near you don't speak English as a native language?

3. Research your competition – if they're translating product listings etc. then maybe you should be too. How about starting an Amazon store?

4. Research the market – is there a requirement for what you do/sell in another country? We can help you with this.

5. Check if your website is being auto-translated by Google if viewed in another country. This could be doing you more harm than good.

6. Through Google Analytics, see if your website is getting any hits from countries outside the UK.

7. Get a professional translation of your website homepage and/or About Us section. A cost effective way of marketing yourself to customers who don't speak English as a first language.

8. Sign up for a 24/7 telephone interpreting account. It's completely free to set up, and you only pay for your exact usage. Open new horizons and the ability to conduct business in over 400 languages.

9. Look at your marketing and advertising details. Is there anything which could be putting off people from other countries? Certain colours/images denote negative connotations in some cultures and you could be shooting yourself in the foot.

10. Think about your pricing. Would it help to list prices in € and \$ as well as £?

11. Think about your SEO strategy and terms. Is it worth translating these to raise your Google ranking in other countries?

12. Consider translating a quarterly newsletter/bulletin, to appeal to new and existing customers in other countries – and locally.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

Written by:
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Ruben Luna Moreno

2. Translation myths debunked

Translation is one of those professions that people have no real idea about. Are we sitting with quills, poring over a dictionary? What do we do all day? Isn't it just a hobby? Can't anyone who has learnt a bit of a language translate? Are we not all redundant now thanks to Google? Here we debunk several myths which surround the translation and localisation industry.



As for interpreters, two words – Nicole Kidman. That's a whole other article though. 'Translation' and 'Interpreting' are not interchangeable. Interpreters translate spoken language orally. Translators transalte the written word.

So what myths about translators and translation do we hear regularly?

Myth #1: Anyone who speaks two languages can translate.

Translators have trained and honed their skills over many years, and they have specialised in particular subject areas – be it computing, marketing, finance, tax or wine. I'm English and couldn't claim to understand all of my mortgage paperwork... let alone translate it into another language!

Myth #2: Surely there is no need to translate this – everyone speaks English?

It's true that English is popular, but when people are doing business, shopping and communicating, they want to be 100% sure they understand all of what you are saying. And it's courtesy to cater for all clients – and potential clients – in their own language? If all your clients speak English, all that may prove is that you haven't attracted any non-English speaking customers.

Myth #3: Translators work on books, interpreters just work at the UN and EU Parliament

Practically everything you pick up has translations – food packaging, how to use your camera, instructions for your washing machine, your car manual. .. Interpreters are sent to conferences, court cases, business negotiations and lots more. Once you start looking, you'll see that languages really are everywhere.

Myth #4: With GoogleTranslate and technology these days, who needs a real person?

GoogleTranslate is great to get the gist of a message, but if you want to be confident that you are using a professional, fluent translation, the only option is to use a person. Currently packages such a GoogleTranslate can only go so far, and cannot handle nuances, cultural references, humour or complicated sentences. Most people will spot an automatic translation a mile away, and it may make them laugh – not so good when you want to be taken seriously in business.

Myth #5: All translators do is type one text into another language.

Take into account writing skills, top-notch grammar and spelling, working out what the original author intended, research and terminology checking, and add in cultural considerations. Translators draft a translation, revise and rework, and ideally sleep on ideas to allow them to tweak their work until they are happy with it.

Myth #6: With a good dictionary and Google I can work out a decent translation.

See number 5. You can't.

Myth #7: Translators sit around in dusty libraries all day and are out of touch with technology

In fact translators have always been ahead with technology. They are running businesses, marketing themselves as professionals, qualified and highly skilled in their area. You're much more likely to find them in their home office using speech recognition software to take down work, or out updating their considerable skills and Continuing professional development at conferences and seminars.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations



About the writer...

Clare Suttie founded Atlas Translations in 1991 and has a vast level of experience in the translation industry. Clare is also a board member of the ITI and runs CV clinics for people looking to improve or tailor their existing CV to the world of translation.



About the writer...

Jim Hearn has worked for Atlas Translations since the beginning of 2012, first as a Project Manager, and then Manager. In that time he has worked on more than 2000 projects, working with hundreds of talented linguists.

3. How translation can help grow your business

We meet a lot of people at business shows and networking events or who've never required language services before. Some had never even heard of what we do, or considered that there could be such a thing as the 'translation industry'. It's always interesting to watch their faces change as we explain what we do, and how our services help other business grow, as they reach that 'Eureka' moment.

It's completely reasonable to be unaware of the existence of language services, or indeed the value that they can add to your business. The role of translations in business is usually viewed in the same way as petrol is for your car - a necessity purchase that is not needed unless unavoidable.

Someone who's never been pressed into looking into language or translation services could be forgiven for having this attitude. After all, what use could languages be to someone whose business is conducted entirely in the UK, in the English language?

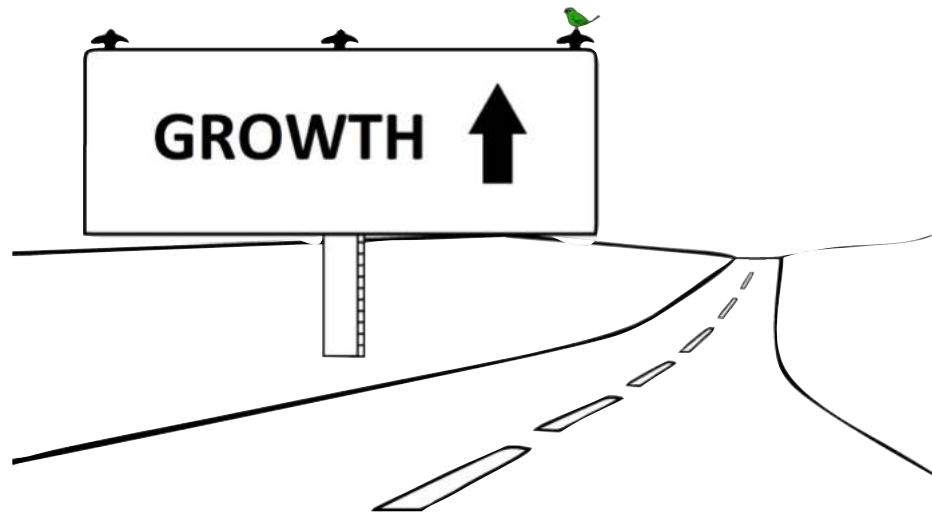
Broaden your appeal

Firstly, take a look at the UK. Figures released in 2012 showed that 12% of primary aged schoolchildren speak English as a second language. That's around 1.1 million people who, almost five years later, are on the verge of becoming potential customers for your business. The 2011 census indicates there are more than six million UK residents who don't speak English as a native language. In 2015 it was been forecast that we had 34.4 million overseas visitors spending £22.0bn. This figure was predicted to rise to £22.9bn in 2016.

Clearly a large customer base of non-native English speakers exists in the UK, so how about trying to appeal to these people? One key way to do this is to speak to them in their own language, and here's where we can help. By translating your homepage, or some of your product listings you instantly forge a connection.

It's not just helping people to understand your offer more quickly either. Put yourself in your potential customers' shoes and imagine being a non-native speaker in another country. It can be a lonely, even intimidating experience. So when someone makes the effort to reach out to you in a way you understand, it's a big gesture, not to mention the priceless feeling of familiarity they will draw from reading your message in their own language.

Taking this first step is relatively inexpensive, and you're more than likely to receive a return on your investment. If you're worried about then dealing with enquiries in languages other than English, we can set you up with the tools to handle these. A 24/7 telephone interpreting account instantly grants the capability to converse with anyone in any language.



Exporting/Importing

Then there's the rest of the world. If you've never considered exporting your products/services, then perhaps now is the time to look into this. While the economy in the UK is predicted to weather some hardships in the next few years, other economies are expanding. British businesses have a global reputation for quality, and you can make the most of this by exporting to some of these growing economies.

Even if you are a small business, you can try selling overseas on sites like Amazon to test the waters. We have helped numerous businesses with this process and can do the same for you. Translating the details of your products is a cost effective way of appealing to a broader market base and, if successful, we can provide ongoing support for your business.

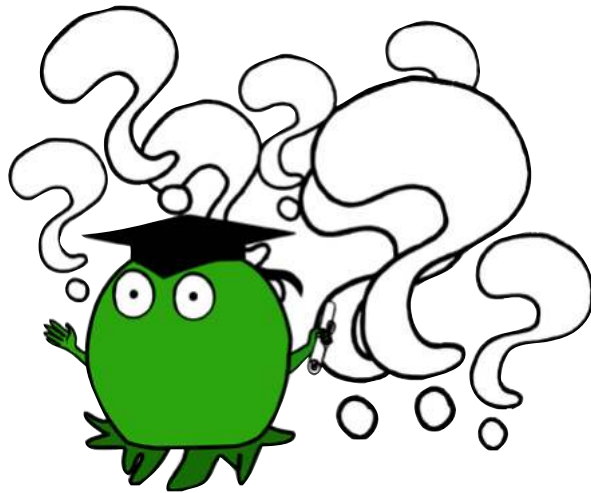
Expanding opportunities

In a nutshell, language services can broaden your appeal to a wider base of consumers and present more opportunities for your business to expand. So if you're one of those people who viewing language services as a necessity purchase, perhaps it's time to think differently. Instead of looking at translation as the fuel you're forced to buy to get where you want to go, how about seeing translation as the road which can take your business to exciting new destinations?

Get in touch today to see how we can help your business grow.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

4. What qualifications should I look for? Is my translator suitably qualified?



Translators and interpreters are fully trained, qualified and experienced professionals. Speaking another language does not make someone a professional linguist. Did you know that we reject around half of the applications we receive?

Experience and qualifications are mandatory to beginning a career in the translation industry. There are so many ways people find and come into this exciting and ever-changing profession:

By accident – doing another job

These people are already working in another career. Word goes round the office that they are bi-lingual and before they know it, they spend more time helping with translation or attending meetings to interpret than doing their actual job! They discover that they really enjoy this, and are good at it.

By accident – doing a language-related degree

These people love languages and so chose a language degree. Then they discovered that they could have a career using their languages in translation or interpreting. They focus on this during their degrees and may do an MA after their degree.

With careful planning

These lucky people know that this is what they want to do from an early age! So they plan their education and possibly an MA to match.

With careful planning – from another job

These are people in other careers who have always loved languages, kept them active, and decide to take the plunge and make a career change. Every translation agency and end client will have their own criteria for applicants. All our linguists are very carefully vetted and considered, and have one of the following before their application can be considered:

- Formal higher education in translation (recognised degree)
- Equivalent qualification in any other subject + a minimum of 2 years of documented experience in translating
- At least 5 years of documented professional experience in translating

So what qualifications should you look for? Well, as you can see, this can vary. You could find a bi-lingual website designer who discovers they enjoy languages more than designing websites.

Or you could find a new graduate with a degree in Business and French, and an MA in Translation. This leads us on to experience, and there is no getting away from the fact that no experience = big risk. Plus in the world of the internet, anyone can promote themselves as an “expert”, so it’s worth considering trusting an agency such as Atlas for your peace of mind.

5. Translating in Word format

Word is definitely the most popular format for both clients and translators. It is simple to use and has a few handy tools worth knowing of while translating in Word.



Although formatting with Word is not particularly complex (as it may be for a PDF file, for example), it is usually important for clients to receive a translation that matches with the layout of the source text. A translation agency such as Atlas will always ensure that what we deliver to the client is as close to what we have received from them as possible, just in a different language.

Another issue that you may encounter is spelling mistakes left in the translation. This is something that can easily slip by and the longer the text is the more likely this is to happen. Again, Atlas will ensure spell checking has been completed, and will always recommend proofreading for any materials destined for publication.

The quality of the translation is of course our main concern, but we do care about formatting as well and as an Italian speaker would say... ‘Anche l’occhio vuole la sua parte’ (The look needs to match the substance)!

By Stefania Orlotti, Project Manager, Atlas Translations



About the writer...

Stefania Orlotti is a qualified and experienced Italian translator, with an MA in Linguistics and Specialised Translation. Stefania is also an experienced project manager, working for translation agencies in Belgium, France and the UK. Originally Stefania joined Atlas on a Work Placement before becoming a project manager in 2015.

6. Researching & dealing with queries

Whether you're dealing with a translation, proofreading or transcription project, projects will inevitably throw up a few queries as your team of translators seek to gain a firm understanding of the source text. You should appreciate the necessity of providing clarification on any ambiguities, and strive to answer any questions as fully as possible. After all, it's in your best interest to do so.

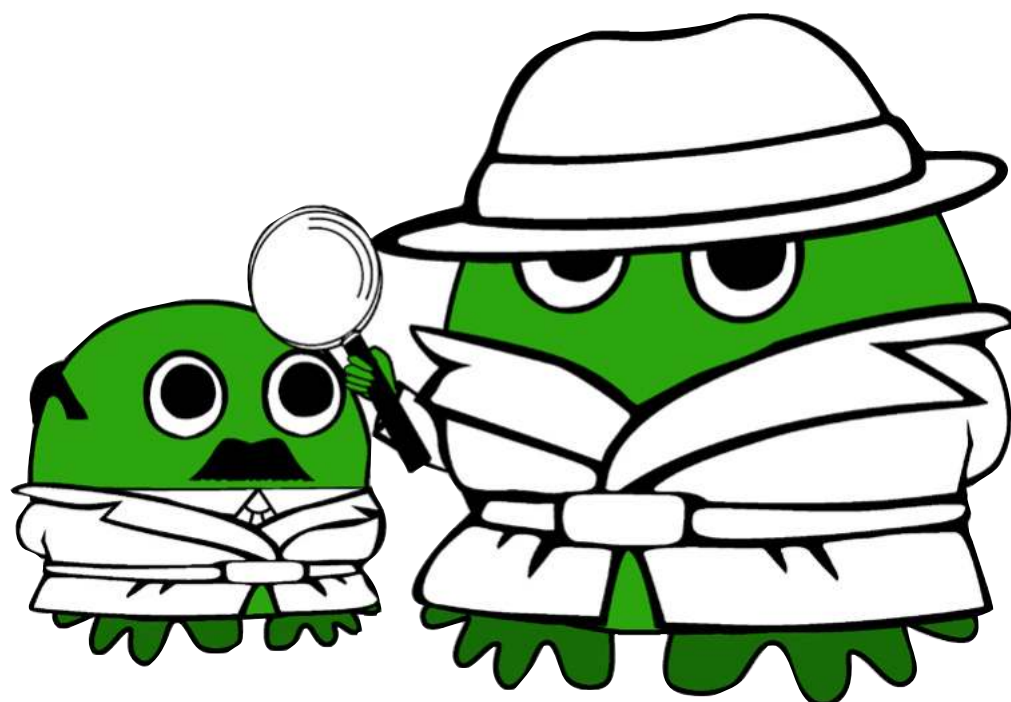
If you don't respond, translators will generally leave a note in their translation (if in Microsoft Word, the 'Comment' facility works well for this) and hope someone picks up on the points raised.

Atlas will present any queries clearly, logically, and ideally all in one go. We will list each query in the order in which it appears in the source document, stating clearly where the issue in question occurs within the document.

Before raising any queries at all, our translators will always put some time in to do a bit of research. However, sometimes we find terms, in-house jargon, and particularly abbreviations, of which an external worker such as a translator cannot be aware.

As a client, you'll get the best result if you are responsive and understanding to any queries raised.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations



7. You have a translation job - what do you need to send your translator?

You've got something that needs to be translated, you've lined up a perfect translator/agency for the job, what do you need to send them to make sure they can do the best possible job for the deadline?

Firstly, you need to send them the source document. Maybe read the document all the way through and try to think of any potential issues with formatting or if there could be any cultural issues when localising the text into the target language. Is everything clear in the source document? Is all of the text legible?

Have you had a similar document translated before? Whether good, bad or ugly your translator will find any reference material helpful. Do you have particular instructions on style or tone? Formal or informal? Don't be worried about asking these questions - doing this will ensure your translator has a clear idea of what you want from the outset.

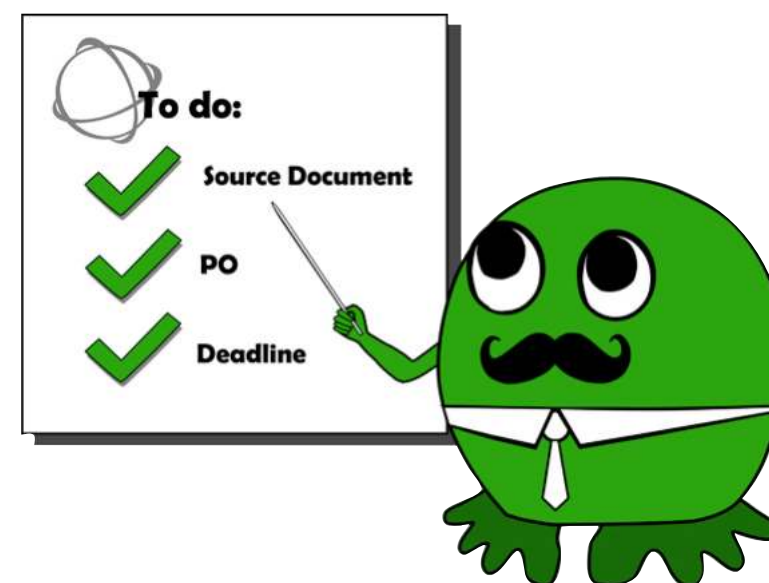
As your translator proceeds with the translation job, queries may crop up. You may need to clarify certain points to make sure your translation perfectly reflects the source text. We have discussed dealing with queries in greater depth in an earlier section, but being available to answer queries will save time and avoid delivery delays.

Another thing to consider is your own systems for receiving invoices. Does your translator/agency need a purchase order? Sometimes translators won't begin working until they've received this, so try to send it through ASAP!

If you require changes to be made to the source text you've already sent, make these clear by highlighting or making them in track changes.

Working closely with your translator is possible even from a distance and it's always the best way to make your business relationship work effectively and efficiently. At Atlas we do appreciate collaboration and help from our clients!

By Stefania Orloff, Project Manager, Atlas Translations





8. Translating in Excel

There are a few things to be aware of when translating Excel spread sheets. The program wasn't really designed for flowing passages of text, which means translating in Excel can be far from ideal. That said, for many clients it is a convenient way of collating translations ready for end use.

First and foremost, you should be aware that the spell check is not automatic for Excel. To perform a spell check, go to the 'Review' tab, then click 'Spelling' from the 'Proofing' group. This will perform a spell check on the text. Older versions of Excel may not have this function, so a way around this would be to copy and paste your translation into Word, which should highlight any spelling discrepancies. Make sure you haven't selected any cells before clicking the spell check or only these cells will be checked.

Another issue we frequently encounter with translating in Excel concerns formatting. The golden rule we follow is to replicate the source text as faithfully as possible. This is where the 'Format Painter' tool (found in the top left hand corner) comes in handy. Selecting the formatted source text and clicking the 'Format Painter' tool will load your cursor with its formatting attributes. Now if we click on our translation, it will be formatted to match the source. Often when typing text into a new cell the text will trail across the screen, so that only the first part of the sentence is visible. Clicking the 'Wrap Text' button from the tool bar will format the text to be contained within the parameters of the column, so that all the text in this row is visible. If something is highlighted or coloured differently in the source, make sure these words/sentences are highlighted or coloured in any translation.

Excel is a popular choice of format for clients writing texts to appear with html coding. Often code will appear in brackets within the source text, and while this text doesn't usually need to be translated, it will probably need to be present in any translation. It's important to make sure this is copied across accurately, and that any formatting is retained. It's also worth considering what text will replace the code in the final version of this (it's not always easy to tell) and how this could affect your translation. If you foresee any potential problems, do check to avoid any potential issues before they become problems.

Last but not least, check that the translator has translated all the tabs. It can be quite easy to overlook, but I can't count the number of times we've received a translation back with missing tabs or when the incorrect tab has been translated - something Atlas will always check. Also be aware that it can be quite difficult to get word counts for Excel documents, particularly if there are multiple tabs involved.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

9. What about proofreading and other services?

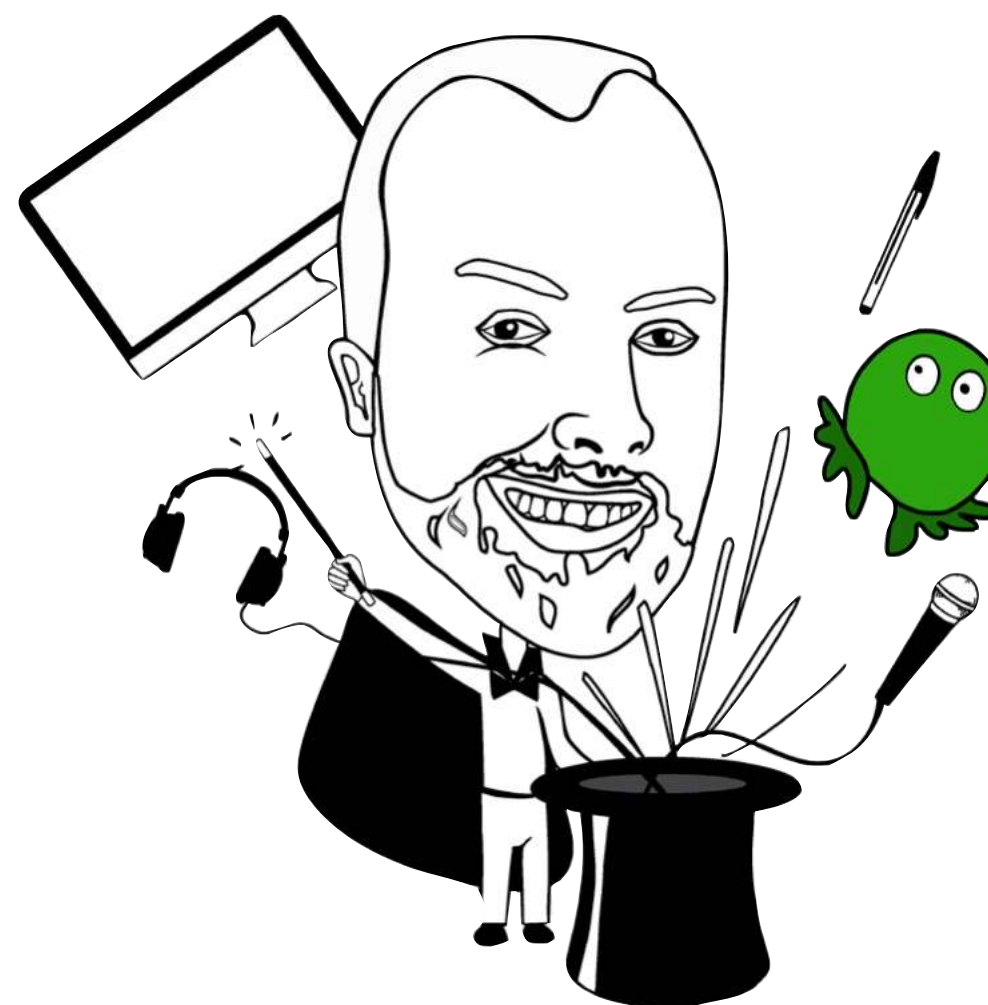
Calling our business Atlas Translations, I am always keen to point out that we don't just "do translation"! We've always offered spoken interpreting, proofreading and typesetting, and due to clients' requests since 1991, we've added sign language interpreting, Braille, SEO work, telephone research and a whole lot more.

If you think you don't need any other services, think again. Do you need proofreading, or certified translations? Do you need your translations notarised? Do you need expertise checking facts, testing web links and so on? Can we help with layout or subtitles, voiceover or transcription?

When it comes to telling clients, we could just fire off an email to tell our clients, hey look what else we do (ie look at our other services). But instead we try to build a relationship with each client, looking carefully at what they do, asking questions about the work we do, and seeing if there is anything else we can help with.

Clients are delighted to find that we can handle projects, especially multi-lingual projects, from start to finish.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations



10. Computer-assisted translation (CAT) Tools

Translation has changed so much in the last 25 years. Technology has dramatically improved and found its place in the translation world, with the creation of new tools aimed to help translators perform fast and quality translations.

CAT (computer-assisted translation) tools have been around for a number of years now, but there are still many translators and clients who do not find CAT tools as useful as others do. Many people don't find them to be helpful, but the benefits become obvious later on and as a client learns more about working with them, the more productivity they will get out of them. Using a CAT tool can provide an advantage in terms of maintaining terminology and style consistency, quality control and efficiency.

As most CAT tool using translators already know, CAT tools generally work with three basic functions: segmentation, translation memory, and a terminology database. CAT tools usually present the document in a bilingual format and break up the text into segments, which helps the translator to easily read and translate the text. The source and target segment are saved together in a translation memory that can be reused in similar texts, maintaining consistency and quality between documents – great news.

A terminology database is usually included within a CAT tool. This is a multilingual dictionary, which allows translators to choose the correct terms for the text they're translating. Using consistent terminology within a document and throughout a project is extremely important – especially in technical translation.

Although these may sound very similar, and clients often confuse the two, there is a huge difference between machine translation and CAT tool. Both use software to help create translations, but in completely different ways. Machine translation is a rapid form of translation. The purpose in this case is to receive a usable translation in the shortest turnaround time possible. The quality of the final product is not preserved in this case and the text will most likely present grammar and syntax errors throughout. These documents would need to go through a process called “post-editing”, which involves a linguist reviewing the document and making sure the text is completely legible.

CAT Tools work in a very different way. They require a linguist to operate them in order to translate the document and the final product is an accurate translation. This method allows the linguist to work faster while still maintaining accuracy throughout the document.

By Stefania Orlotti, Project Manager, Atlas Translations

11. What is professional indemnity insurance and is it important?

Should your translator have professional indemnity insurance (PII)?
Straight answer – yes!

But seriously, to expand further, your translator is offering a professional service to businesses. Professional indemnity insurance (PII) covers you and them if they are negligent or make a mistake which causes a business to suffer financial loss.

If you think it couldn't happen to you, have a read (link below) (Lonely Planet Founder Recalls Worst Publishing Mistakes).

www.huffingtonpost.com/doug-lansky/lonely-planet-founder-rec_b_670848.html

It's not just translators who should take out professional indemnity – consider accountants, IT consultants, business consultants, journalists, architects, financial advisors, engineers and many more.

And of course Atlas Translations have comprehensive PII.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations



12. Typesetting FAQs

What is typesetting?

Typesetting is the process of laying out a document in a particular format, usually in preparation for printing. We regularly typeset magazines, brochures, leaflets and business cards. Our work is carried out using desktop publishing packages such as Quark Xpress, In Design and PageMaker.

Who will carry out my typesetting?

All our typesetting work is completed by linguists with knowledge of the target language, who are aware of such things as the correct hyphenation, capitalization and punctuation for this particular language.

How can you supply the finished document?

We can supply documents electronically in a variety of formats, but you should be aware that if the text is in a language that does not use the Latin alphabet, for example Arabic, Chinese or Hindi, you may only be able to read the file if you have the appropriate fonts for that language. Alternatively, we can offer EPS files or PDF files, depending on your requirements.

Can I see the work before a final version is sent to me?

We always send proofs for your approval before running out a final version. Proofs can be supplied as PDF files or as laser copies.

How do you charge for typesetting?

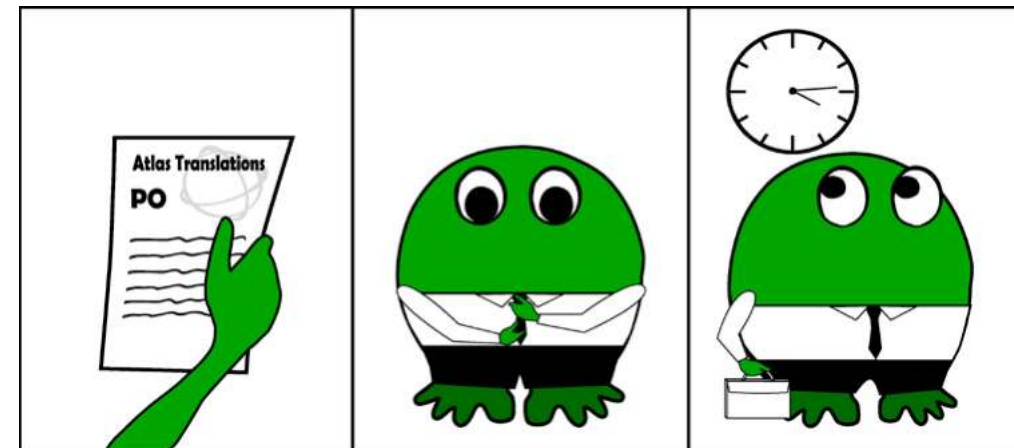
This depends on the language, how much work is involved and in what format you would like to receive the final version. Each project is priced individually. If you can supply sample pages of the original document, we can get a good idea of your requirements.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations

13. Can I book an onsite translator to come and work with me?

Working onsite for a client brings with it a different set of requirements for translators. First and foremost, agree what is covered/included. This may seem like we're stating the obvious here, but it's important to have everything agreed upfront and in writing ahead of the assignment. Provide a purchase order as confirmation of the work instruction.

At Atlas, we always agree a daily rate with suppliers for work carried out on clients' premises – even if the assignment is only expected to last one or two hours. The reason for this being that the supplier will probably have to block out a whole day from their schedule to ensure their availability for the assignment, so they should be paid for this whole day. Also if the assignment (though expected only to run for one or two hours) should overrun, the supplier won't need to rush off to be somewhere else.



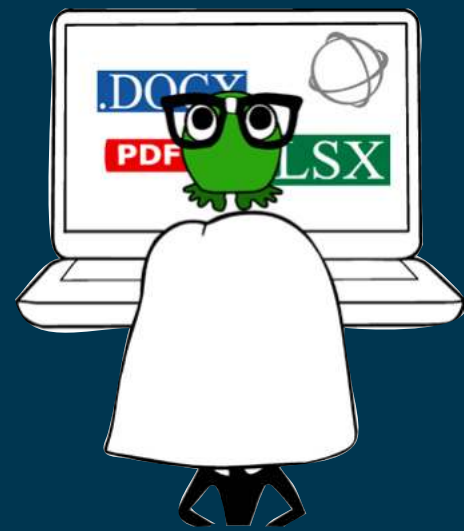
We consider the standard working day to consist of 8 hours (usually between 9 and 5 and with a break for lunch). If the assignment goes on for longer than this, we charge overtime at an hourly rate. Again, this should be agreed up front.

Check what software and equipment the translator needs. For in-house translation assignments some of our translators prefer to bring their own laptops when possible. Think about what they'll need to work effectively. Things like foreign language keyboards and CAT tools, even wifi and a desk space.

Let your translator know ahead of assignment if there is a dress-code. While most offices have done away with strict collar and tie dress-codes, it's still important for the translator to be comfortable and in keeping with your office protocol.

Help with practical matters – the closest station, the best coffee, where to park and so on. You also need to agree how travel costs will be covered and calculated. Is there a policy for mileage (if travelling by car)? All of this needs to be confirmed in advance of the assignment.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations



14. Translating PDFs

There are two or three different types of PDF we generally receive, so the first thing to do is to ascertain which type of PDF you've got, because it may effect a number of things including cost, formatting and length of deadline.

It'll be one of the following (please note the terminology used to describe the different types of PDF is only our in-house lingo):

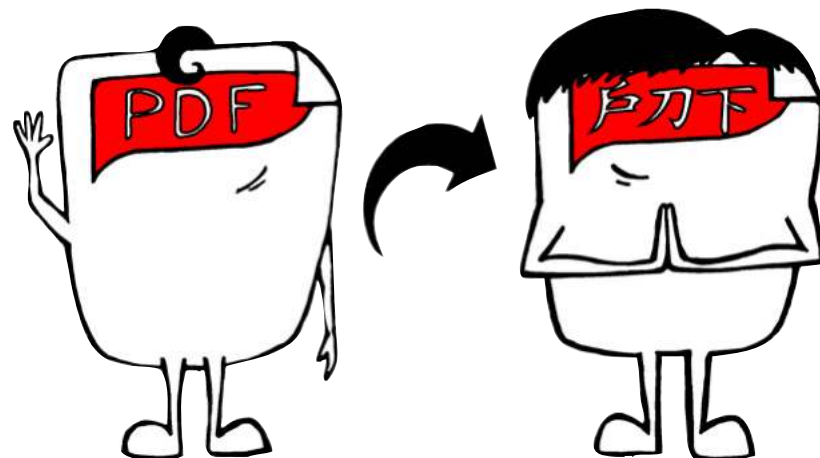
- 1) A 'Dead' PDF. This is usually a scan or photocopy where the text is not in an editable format.
- 2) A PDF created from Word. Word files which are saved as PDFs can usually be re-opened with Word, which makes editing and translating the content fairly straightforward.
- 3) A designed PDF. Usually these will have been exported from a design program such as InDesign or Quark Express. These usually contain a lot of design elements with graphics and images often rendering the file too large to open and work on, with a program like Word.

Translating 'Dead' PDFs

'Dead' PDFs are the most time consuming to work on of the three different types of PDF, because there's usually no way to format them other than manually reproducing them into a separate (usually Word) document.

Often these are short documents such as birth certificates and university transcripts. There are some translators who refuse to work on 'Dead' PDFs at all because of the time and effort it can take to replicate formatting. If there are any tables, do these need to be replicated? This may involve additional formatting costs. Also it should be noted that any numbers will be included in the word count because they will need to be typed out in the target document.

Is all the text in the scanned document legible? Check this first and if not, try to provide a clearer copy. Translators will not want to take chances guessing at illegible sections, even if just a couple of lines. If the text is handwritten, is the handwriting clear? If not is it possible to get a typed up version of this?



Our translators will always check and double check any names, dates and numbers, as these are aspects they normally wouldn't touch when working in an editable format. If the formatting isn't important to you, let your translator/agency know as it will save time and possibly money! Usually a basic level of formatting (maintaining headings, paragraphs etc.) should suffice and it will be clear how the translation corresponds to the source. If the source 'dead' PDF contains tables or diagrams how do you want these to be presented in the translation? If a simple bilingual table will serve for a diagram then the translator can take care of this. If you need diagrams replicated accurately then you may have to pay for a designer for these aspects.

Translating PDFs from word

These are the simplest of the three types of PDF to deal with. More often than not these can be opened with Word (or alternative word processing software) and translated. We'll check carefully that everything has opened correctly in Word against the original PDF, as sometimes the formatting can become corrupted and text is hidden. If you have an editable version to work from, please send this to your translator/agency.

When it comes to finalising the translation, we can save the document in PDF form, so you have the translation in the same format.

Translating a Designed PDF

You may not be aware, but the beautiful brochure that you're looking to translate will have been designed by a professional designer using professional (and usually expensive!) software. To expect a translator to replicate this is unfortunately unrealistic. This is when we need to involve a typesetter in the process (see section 12).

If you don't need the translation to the same quality, we can use PDF conversion software to work on these, but the formatting will almost definitely not be the same as the original.

Generally source materials in this form are things like brochures or leaflets, so translations will usually need be typeset by a professional.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

15. What information does my interpreter need?

What will be required?

Check what type of interpreting you need. At Atlas, we have a checklist we ask clients to complete so we have all the information we need.

Payment

Is the rate clear and understood by both parties? Probably the most important thing to find out. We have a daily rate for interpreting, with an hourly rate for any overtime agreed in advance. This way everything is agreed upfront and there are no surprises. Travel should be covered by you, and if the interpreter has to stay somewhere overnight, accommodation and subsistence should be provided.

Location

Where is the assignment? Is it easy to get there? If it's a long way to travel, does the interpreter need to travel and arrive the day before and then leave the day after? All things to consider before assigning an interpreting assignment. As we've already mentioned, travel costs will need to be covered by the client.

Specialist Technology

Will the knowledge of any specialist terminology be required, and what is the purpose of the interpreting assignment? Clarify this in advance, and avoid any misunderstandings later on.

Supporting Documentation

Is there any supporting documentation for the interpreting assignment? Anything that will help the interpreter understand the situation better. Atlas offers translation services to ensure consistency in the terminology of the written materials and any spoken interpreting. At least an agenda and list of names and job titles is a good start.

Cancellation Fees

Any interpreter will have cancellation policy in place and enforce this as necessary. At Atlas we try our best not to charge cancellation fees, but if a client cancels a booking at the last minute then it's only fair that appropriate payment is made. Make sure you agree a cancellation policy in advance of the booking and keep written agreement.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

16. Translating in PowerPoint

Translating in PowerPoint format isn't all that different from working in Word format, but there are a few things to be aware of.

It can be more time consuming, particularly when slides are in a 'non-editable' format. Let your translator know if featured tables and graphs need to be translated. They're often not editable, which means the translator will provide a separate file with these elements translated.

Although easily overlooked, there is a note section just underneath the slides where there may be some additional text. If there is text here, do you need it to be translated? Often notes left here are for reference and won't be required. If you don't point this out to your translator or agency then you run the risk of either having this text missed from your translation, or translated unnecessarily, adding to the overall cost.

Formatting is another aspect you need to take into account when translating in PowerPoint. The text in PowerPoint presentations is often designed to fit nicely within each slide. When translating this text into a new language, the length of sentences and words is of course, different. We may therefore need to edit aspects like font size accordingly, so that your translation fits the design. Bear in mind then, that when you get your translation back, it may look slightly different from a design perspective.

By Stefania Orlotti, Project Manager, Atlas Translations



17. Why should translations always be proofread by a second translator?

While thinking about proofreading, I was immediately reminded of reading Eats, Shoots and Leaves a few years ago and this quote sums up my feelings perfectly:

“Part of one’s despair, of course, is that the world cares nothing for the little shocks endured by the sensitive stickler. While we look in horror at a badly punctuated sign, the world carries on around us, blind to our plight. We are like the little boy in The Sixth Sense who can see dead people, except that we can see dead punctuation.” □ Lynne Truss, Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation.

Spelling mistakes and slip-ups happen to everyone; you only have to Google ‘hilarious typos’ and be kept amused for hours. (If you want further language-related entertainment you should follow @HilariousTypos on Twitter, a feed dedicated to publicising amusing errors and spelling calamities.) So, how can you avoid having your work added to one of the many ‘Top 30 best typos’ lists?

Proofreading. It sounds simple enough but thoroughly and effectively checking the work of the translators (and others) for mistakes can be a real challenge. It is all too easy when reviewing work to read what was intended to be written, rather than reading what is actually written on the page.

Firstly, if you have the time, then it is always a good idea for the translator to step away from the completed work for an hour or two before going back to review it. They are likely to skim over any mistakes in autopilot if they are proofreading content that they are very familiar with.

If you are proofreading, a tip that a university lecturer gave to me was to read the text backwards, from the end to the beginning, so that you focus on each word individually and pick up on spelling mistakes or omitted letters. By allowing enough time to proofread properly, you can focus on looking for one type of mistake at a time. For example, start with spelling, then move on to punctuation, before checking layout. This is where a checklist can come in handy. You can’t go wrong with a good list and proofreading is no exception. Think about including things like spelling, punctuation, double or missing word spacing, capitalisation, formatting, website addresses, numbers etc.

I already proofed



before it was cool

What if you are proofreading another translator’s work? As well as what we’ve already talked about there are a few other things to keep in mind. Regardless of whether the document is destined for publication or not, the proofreader should always aim to deliver a document which is print-ready.

Checking that the language and style of the translation is consistent throughout the document and also matches up with the source text is vitally important. Some alterations may be necessary, but try not to make too many changes, especially if they are stylistic choices. Proofreading should be a collaborative task where suggestions are made – preferably using something like track changes – and then the original translator can evaluate whether he or she agrees with the suggested alterations. If available, complete a feedback form to give the translator as much information as possible; it will help the translator in the future and ultimately you will receive a higher quality document.

We offer proofreading in all languages, including English. Let us quote for you and give you complete peace of mind. Not piece of mind.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations

18. Will my translator format translations?

When working on a translation project, we may sometimes find it difficult to deal with the formatting of our documents, especially when dealing with complex layouts. It is usually part of the translator's work to acknowledge any alterations the files may suffer and try to minimise the risk of formatting chaos. It's worth discussing with your translator.

Let's take a look at a few things to take into account as regards formatting translations:

Use of CAT tools in formatting translations

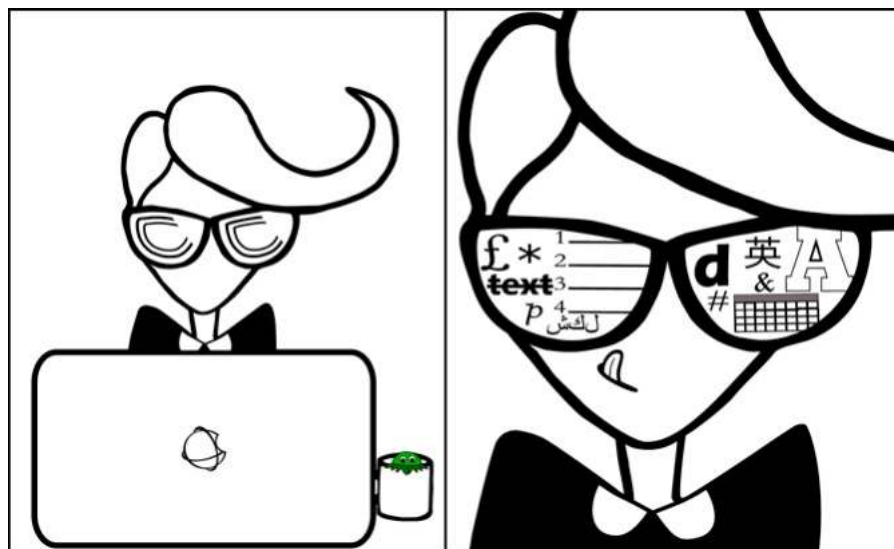
Computer-assisted translation tools such as Trados, MemoQ or Wordfast, often provide great support with formatting, as they can be configured not to alter the formatting of target documents. Sounds about right, doesn't it? However, there are some things to take into account. Whereas most translators nowadays use CAT tools, not all of them do and they still face the same problem. Additionally, it is important to remember that, when we translate a document, the characters in the target language can increase or decrease, thus altering the formatting of our documents.

Be specific about formatting

If you're not, translators will usually maintain the original format if possible. In case the format needs to be modified, it is advisable to make the instructions for the target document as clear as possible (use explanatory notes, pictures for reference, bullet points if necessary, etc.).

Working with dead PDFs

We are aware it can be a real pain in the neck having to struggle with dead PDFs – scans of documents whose characters cannot be recognised by translation tools, particularly when their format is complex. In these situations, remember that it would always be advisable to decide if it is acceptable to receive the documents in a different format.



19. How do I brief a transcriber for my transcription project?

The first step on your transcription assignment will be to check over the audio file, to confirm the language and subject matter. You'll also need to make sure the quality of the sound is high enough that you can clearly make out what's being said. Try to identify any areas of concern (perhaps due to ambient background noise obscuring what's being said, or temporary bad sound quality).

Once you're confident the audio file is something that can be worked on, and agree a deadline, check that the number of hours being allocated to transcribe the audio is enough. We usually allocate one hour of work for every ten minutes of audio to be transcribed. Sometimes, if the audio is more dialogue intensive or the subject matter is technical we'll need to spend a bit longer on the transcription. Make sure this is all agreed and understood before you go ahead with any job.

Note that we will always carry out a full transcription in the language of the recording and only then will (a second person) the translator start their work on translation.

Transcriptions are required for a multitude of different reasons and it is important to understand what the end use of the transcription will be as this will help provide what you need. For example, do you want to include any of the imperfections which creep into spoken language, such as hesitations (er, erm) or repeated words? Or would you rather a cleaner text with these parts left out? When the end usage of a transcription is for subtitling, there will often be a limit to the number of characters we can use in each line of your transcription, so this is something you need to be aware of from the beginning. Check these details before assigning the project.

Finally, how does the transcription need to be formatted, and how often do you want time codes (if at all)? We prefer to use a simple Word table template for transcriptions with columns for time codes, the name of the speaker and the transcription itself. If we need to then translate the transcription, we can add in a new column for this. For subtitles, sometimes clients prefer using Excel. Either way, if you've not provided a template for the transcription, it's best advise us if you have a preferential format. Time coding is sometimes needed and sometimes not. We include time coding as a standard part of the transcription service though some choose to charge extra for this. Again, this comes back to the end usage of the transcription, but checking how often timings need to be indicated will avoid having to revisit this later on.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations



20. How do I get the best out of my interpreter?

Atlas offer a broad range of different interpreting services, and has a good deal of experience with different types of interpreting assignments, but regardless of which type(s) of interpreting you need, here are some tips.

Agree rates and any other costs involved with an assignment. Travel expenses and subsistence costs – these should be discussed. Is the rate daily or hourly? Does it include travel time? At Atlas, we always prefer to go with a daily rate, no matter how long or short an assignment is. We also do not pay for travel time (though we do cover travel costs). Even if an assignment is only expected to last a couple of hours we will agree a rate for the interpreter's time for the whole day, so that if the assignment overruns, the time is covered. Also, the interpreter will not have any other appointments to get to that day, so will not have to leave early in the event that the assignment goes on for longer than expected. Usually the first stage of any interpreting assignment involves budgeting, and by being clear about costs, we aim to make everything that much simpler. Of course, we also agree overtime rates and cancellation costs in the event that things change.

We are quick to respond to emails and phone calls. As with many assignments, interpreting jobs can be urgent in nature, and giving you a prompt response will help move the project along smoothly.

Once costs are agreed and the assignment is confirmed, we like to do some groundwork and preparation to help us do the best possible job. We'll ask for any background or supporting materials, demonstrating a willingness to go the extra mile and an attention to detail. All of this feeds back into the quality we will deliver on-site. Arriving in plenty of time is absolutely vital. We'll plan any journey well in advance and try to arrive half an hour early if possible.

Once the assignment is complete, we'll check in to find out how the assignment went and to see if there is any feedback. Maybe there's a future requirement for interpreting, translation or any other services?

Careful planning will always ensure a smoother assignment, and we recommend booking your interpreter as early as possible, and briefing them as much as you can.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations



21. Are marketing translations different? What is transcreation?

Some of the most popular subject areas we receive texts for translation are legal, medical and marketing. While it is common knowledge that legal and medical texts, which are known for their technicality, and often written in a language unto themselves require translators who specialise in these fields to work on them, the same can be said for marketing translations and advertising texts. Lacking the technical terminology which is immediately obvious upon inspection of legal or medical texts, marketing materials may initially seem straightforward to translate, and at a glance present little or no surface difficulties with such technical terminology. However, these marketing texts are carefully and deliberately structured in a certain way, and do require the attention of translators who specialise in this area. It is important not to underestimate these materials when working with them.



Your translator should think about the purpose of the text – WHAT is the author trying to achieve, and HOW are they doing it? Getting this right is vital to producing a translation which achieves the same effect as the source document. When translating, the 'HOW' may be subject to change according to what works in another language, but the 'WHAT' should always remain the same. If you're unsure about anything, chat with your translator for clarification. It is better to do this as early on in the project as possible to avoid any potential delays.

Provide a style guide. Even if it is not in the target language, a style guide will provide an insight to the translator of how you like your written communications to come across to the reader, and will give an idea of how the translation should read. The first time we work with a client on any marketing translations or advertising materials, we ask to see any previous translations, even if you weren't happy with them – this will at least give us an idea of what to avoid.

We'll spend some time browsing the internet to get a feel for the brand and how you try to market your product(s). Marketing texts are often heavily stylised and a lot of thought will have been put into the style, so it is important to try and match this in the translation if possible. We'll consider if the style would be appropriate in the target language though. What is deemed friendly and informal in one language could be seen as rude and offensive in another. We'll try to flag any issues with the style with you.

Taglines and slogans are of paramount importance in marketing and branding. If we need to translate these, we'll consider what will work in the target language. More often than not it won't be a straightforward translation, and here is where transcreation comes in. For those unfamiliar with the term, transcreation is the process of adapting a message from one language to another, while maintaining the meaning and purpose of the original. For example, if the source contains a phrase or tagline which makes perfect sense in English such as 'It's all Greek to me!', but does not make any sense in the target language, we'll need to come up with something new that is different but carries the same meaning. We can provide a literal translation that will make sense, and back-translate the translation into English so you can understand the literal meaning. We can even provide a couple of options so the you can choose your preference.

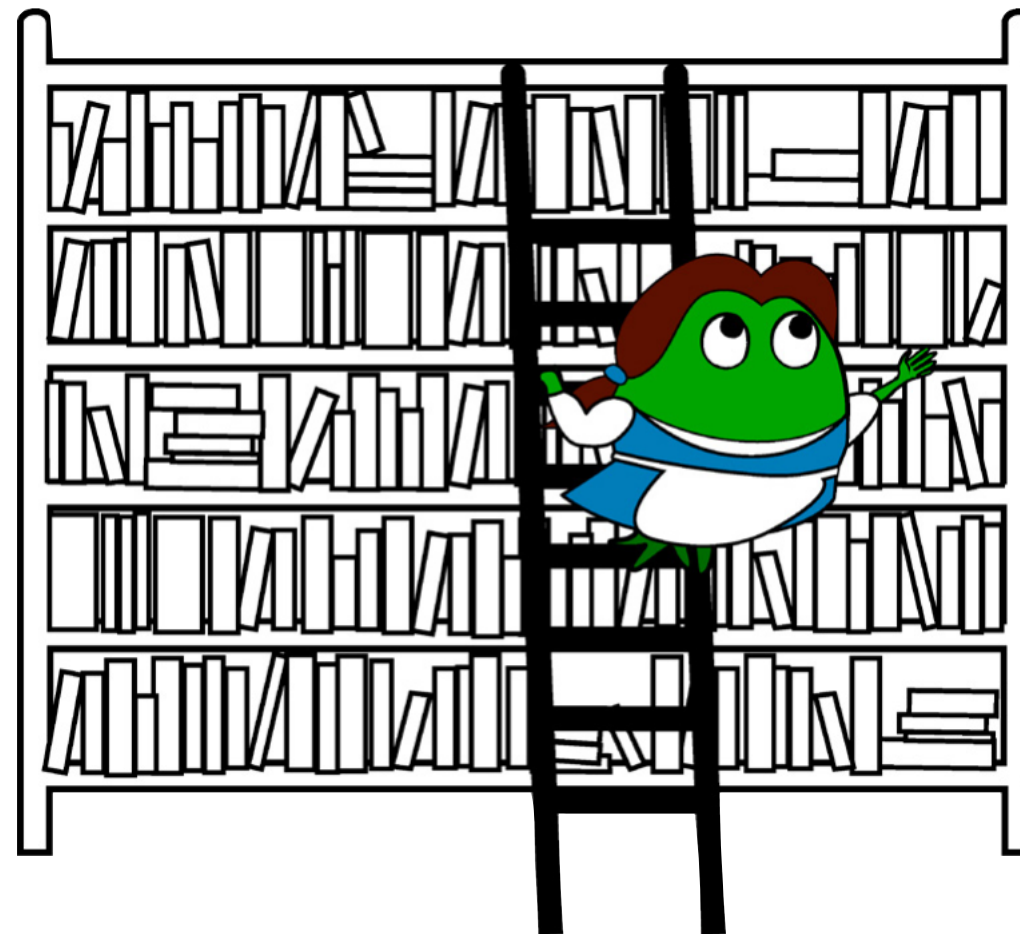
Lastly, we'll try to think about the audience that the materials we are translating is aimed at. What is the demographic? How old will the reader be? This should help us with the tone of the translation. As a native speaker of the target language, the translator may well know the target audience as well as you do, or even better, so be sure to raise anything you consider to be problematic – ask lots of questions, and provide as much information as you can – your translator will appreciate it.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations

22. Why is my translator asking for reference material?

Whether the source materials we've been given to work on are of a technical nature or whether they're fairly straightforward, if you provide us with some reference material we'll make sure we use this efficiently.

The very nature of translation is subjective, so if you've had something translated before in a style you liked, it's beneficial to all parties that you provide this for reference when working on new materials. It'll help us with terminology, style and tone, and make sure we deliver an end product we know you are happy with.



If we've undertaken a translation focused around a technical subject, we understand that you are entrusting us with something that could be crucial to your business or personal life. Sometimes we receive manuals for factory machinery or legal certificates, and if the client hasn't provided any reference materials, it's very important to find our own source of reference to use for the project.

We may need to check out the website of the company that the translation is for and make sure the terminology used is consistent with the client's preferences (if there are any existing translations). Another option would be to look at other similar companies' websites, or at approved technical glossaries available on the web.

We'll ask you to provide any reference material available; especially in the case of technical manuals, illustrative diagrams and specialised glossaries, this can be very helpful.

In many instances there can be several possible translations for the same term, and all of these can be correct, depending on the different context. The differences can vary depending on how formal the word is, the style you require or the industry in which that specific term is used. If/when we come across such a term, it is always best to raise a query for your attention or check with a specialised term base to avoid any mistranslations.

Following these steps should help us to provide a translation you will be happy with, and one that has been perfectly adapted to the necessary target language.

By Stefania Orlotti, Project Manager, Atlas Translations

23. What do I do when my translation project is under way?

We are all about communicating here at Atlas Translations; it is one of our best assets. When we are in the office we are here for clients and suppliers by phone, email, fax (there are a few people still using faxes), Twitter... and in person too.

With good communication everyone is happier – queries are quickly resolved and potential problems can be avoided, relationships become stronger and there is a greater understanding of what each party needs, and the pressures and constraints upon them.

When we work with translators and interpreters, we like to get to know them beyond a “here is your purchase order” level. We want them to become a member of our team who just happens to be working somewhere else.

Most of our clients are the same. They may not know exactly what they need, or what we actually do. They may be up against time constraints and technical issues. Possibly they have never worked with languages before. So firstly we ask some questions – communicating clearly: Who is the audience? What are you doing with the translation? Is someone else checking it? Have you had materials translated before? For interpreting, we will be asking similar questions: Is there reference material? Will they be working with other interpreters? Along with the usual Where/how long and when?

This may raise some questions you can't answer – not a bad thing as you can find out the answer at the start of the project rather than at the last minute when you thought it was finished.

We're not afraid to raise queries and ask questions along the way. We hope you'll welcome these. We try to save them up and wait until we have been through the entire document – the answer may become clear. We'll even point out any spelling errors and/or factually incorrect text we may spot.

Once the job is complete, we like to check back in with you. Was everything OK? Could we do anything better or differently? Rest assured we're always working to improve in all areas, no matter how small.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations



24. Providing feedback on a translation

Translating is very rewarding. It's always nice to hear that a client is happy with our work. At Atlas, we save positive responses on file and forward them onto the linguists who worked on the job(s) so they know the end client is happy.

Aside from the nice, warm feeling that kind words can give us, we take a careful note of positive feedback. If we've done something the client likes, we make sure we do it again. The next time we're contacted by the same (or a similar) client, we will have a record of the style and terminology we used previously. Now we will be able to reference this in the new project, ensuring the client is happy once again.

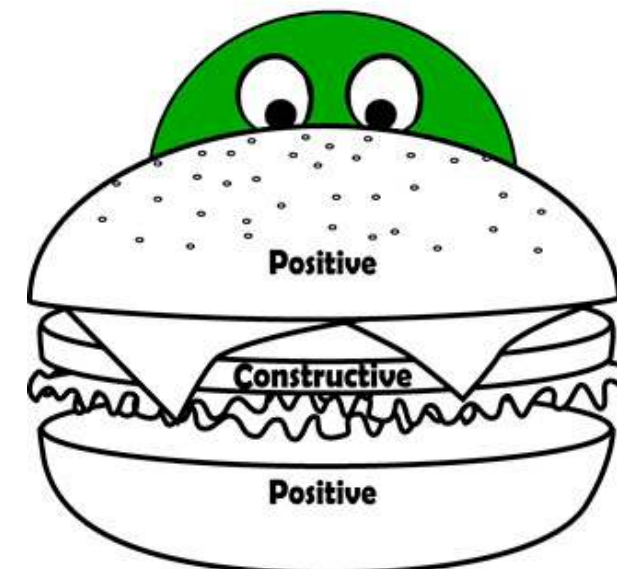
Negative feedback on a translation

If a client has rated our translation as not entirely satisfactory, we will want to find out the reason behind this. Is the issue simply a matter of style, and there was a set of preferential terms that were not available to us? Or perhaps you were unhappy with the formatting? Whatever the reason, if we've not met our clients' expectations it is vital to find out why so we can avoid the same situation in the future.

We will ask why you were unhappy with our work, and ask for specific examples so we can see the exact issue(s). We need an opportunity to demonstrate a method behind our working. Our priority will be to provide you with an end product you are happy with.

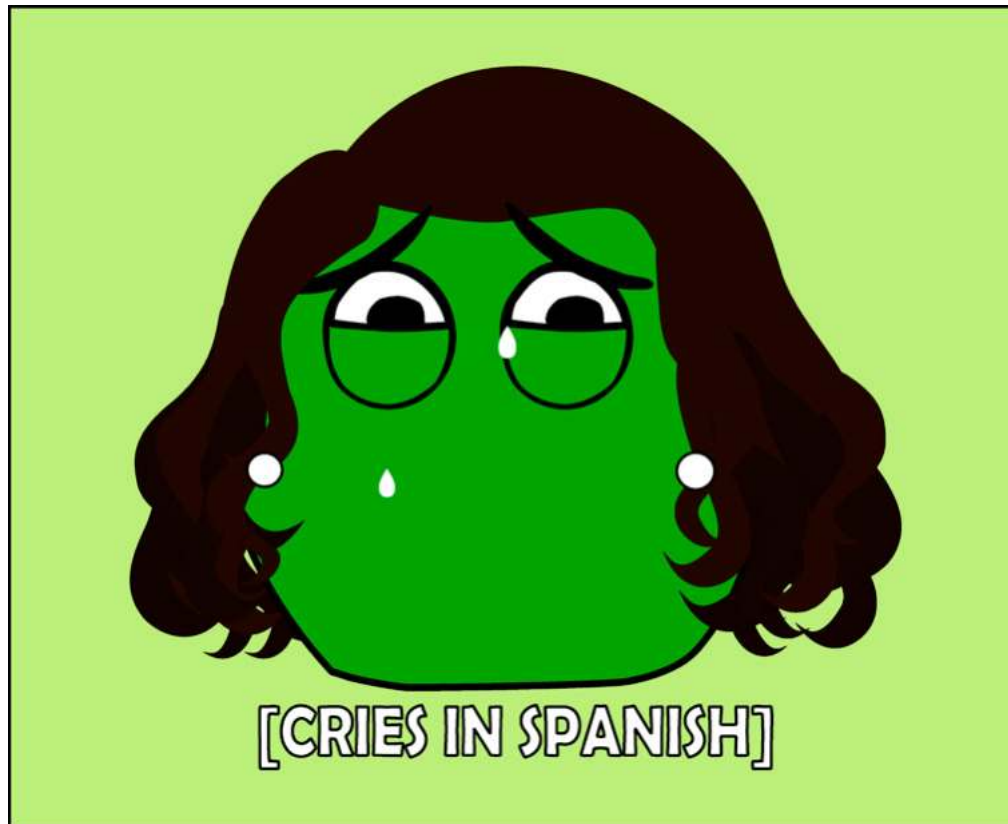
By Stefania Orloff, Project Manager, Atlas Translations

McFeedback



25. Translating subtitles

Subtitles play a central role in films around the world, allowing speakers of different languages access to films they would otherwise not understand. Many (if not most) film goers prefer subtitles to dubbing. This is perhaps because watching a film with subtitles doesn't take anything away from how the film was meant to look, feel and sound. It is therefore interesting to see how it works, and what to bear in mind while translating subtitles.



It is good to remember that reading text on the screen is very different from reading a document. In fact, when inputting subtitles in the video after a translation, it is important to keep in mind a few things. After all, you need to make it easy for the viewer to read the subtitles and follow what is being conveyed. The translation should be concise and communicate what needs to be understood as simply as possible.

For easy reading it is important not to place too many words/characters in a line while subtitling. There will also be a character limit to what you can fit on each subtitle. When translating subtitles, consider a character limit. Remember that people speak more quickly than they read. In all likelihood we won't be able to include everything being said in your translation. The most important thing is to convey the meaning of what is being said on screen. The subtitles should match the images appearing.

If the entire text cannot be placed in one line, then it's necessary to break the lines and keep these grammatically correct, which makes subtitles easy to read. If a proper division of the lines is not maintained, you'll end up with a jumble of sentences causing confusion to the viewer.

The best way to separate lines is after a punctuation mark and before conjunctions (and, because, or, etc.) or prepositions (for, on, in etc.). Also remember not to break down names, abbreviations, numbers, phrases, etc. that will make it difficult for the viewer to understand what is being conveyed.

Here are some tips that can be useful for translators and clients alike.

- Do research. As with any translation work, you should always research words and topics that you're not familiar with.
- Watch the video, if this is available and can be supplied by your client. It's always very helpful.
- Preserve the meaning of the source text but don't translate word by word.
- Keep sentences as short as possible. If your transcript is too lengthy for subtitles viewers wouldn't be able to read all the text while it is on the screen. Make sure each line doesn't go over the character limit set by your client. This will depend on the target language.
- Depending on the nature of the language you are translating into, always prefer simpler/shorter words when available. You'll convey the same meaning without cluttering the screen.
- Know your audience (social, cultural background of the people who speak the language). This helps you to better communicate the meaning to those who use the subtitles.

By Stefania Orloff, Project Manager, Atlas Translations

26. Americanisation FAQs

What is Americanisation?

Americanisation is the task of adapting a text for the American market, taking into account the difference in style, terminology and vocabulary of the text. Any tables, figures, numbers, names, abbreviations, punctuation, conversions etc will also be verified.

How do you work out the price for Americanisation and how long will it take?
We charge by the hour for Americanisation. Please contact us for a quotation, as each project is considered individually. We always confirm all costs in writing.

Who will complete the Americanisation?

All of our Americanisation work is completed by qualified, professional and experienced writers. They also specialise in many areas, such as medicine, law or computing, which means that we can match your project with an appropriate, experienced writer.

Can I do anything to help?

If any reference material or a glossary of terms is available to help with the consistency of style and vocabulary, this is always appreciated. We also provide an Anglicisation and Australianisation service. Please contact us for more details.

By Clare Suttie, Director, Atlas Translations



27. How can I trust my translator?

It's not always easy to choose a translator, and it can be difficult to tell if they're genuine and trustworthy. Now almost everything is done through emails and it always seems like a scam is just around the corner.

It is therefore crucial to do some homework and find out as much as you can about your translators before you start working with them.

There are a few easy things that you can do to make sure they're the right translator for you, such as:

- A quick Google search of the name should bring up some information. If UK based, check for any details on the Companies House website.
- Visit their website (if there is one) to find out whether the company actually exists. If there is no website, it's not a great sign. If there is, make sure that contact details on the site are present, and that these match what you already have. Ideally there will be a landline telephone number and a postal address. Browse their website further to find out as much as possible about them. What do they do? How they do it? If they claim to be a member of a relevant association, such as the ITI (The Institute of Translation & Interpreting), check the ITI website to make sure this is the case.
- Make sure that prices are agreed upfront and confirmed in writing or via a Purchase Order before you start any work.

Still not sure?

It may take you some time to do all your checks beforehand, but it is worth the diligence.

If you've checked all of the above points but still have doubts, pick up the phone. Less trustworthy translation agencies and translators will be more reluctant to speak with you over the phone. That's not to say they won't do it, but by speaking with someone over the phone you will hopefully be able to tell whether this is someone you want to work with.

Most importantly, trust your instincts. If you don't have good feeling about a supplier, don't be afraid to walk away. Far better to spend your time working with a translation company you know you can trust, and funnily enough we know **just** the right people...

By Stefania Orlotti, Project Manager, Atlas Translations

28. Can I split my large translation project?

Often large translation and urgent projects will need to be split between different translators to ensure a deadline is met. Here are few pointers on things to look out for when working on a job which has been split.

Consistency in a Large Translation

Naturally the greatest issues with split translations involve the terminology and consistency of the translations, which will be affected by having more than one person working on the materials. The best thing we can do is to try and limit this as much as possible. Hopefully you will be having the large translation proofread which will add some consistency to the overall translation. Then again, maybe the translation is for information purposes only and consistency is not too important? This is worth checking because then you won't have to worry too much about the consistency, terminology and style.

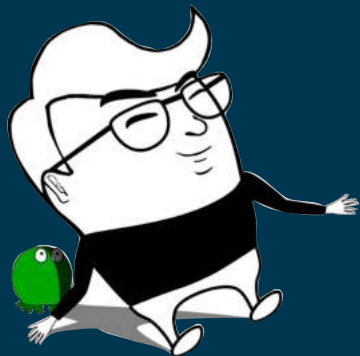
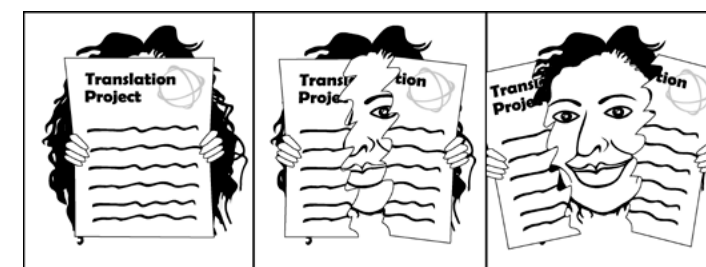
We will usually link up all the translators working on the job. Then terminology and stylistic choices can be discussed. They can also help each other with any queries. Fundamentally, it is the project manager (or whoever is heading up the project) who is responsible for making the translation as consistent as possible, so you probably shouldn't worry too much about consistency anyway, but I know how conscientious and proud of their work most translators are so thought it was worth including.

Provide a translation memory or a glossary. If you don't have something like this, hopefully some reference material or similar materials you've had translated previously would be useful. This should give a good starting point.

Something else to consider is the formatting. If we're working on a single large document which has been split up into different sections, consider how the translations will be pieced back together at the end of the project. Hopefully the materials will be fairly straightforward to format. If not, talk to the project leader about this. In most cases we will assume that you would rather we spent more time on the translations and less time on the formatting, so you should be able to come to a compromise.

Contents pages and page numbering can cause problems so I would leave these until the end, and it's probably worth deciding if these can be left altogether. Sometimes (especially in Word) contents pages pull the information from the titles of chapters/sections automatically. However when a large document is split up, translated, and pasted back together again in the new language, this can cause issues. It will depend on how the project leader wants to handle it. But be aware that this could create an issue.

By Jim Hearn, Manager, Atlas Translations





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