

1-StopAsia Orange Book Series

Korean Language Quality Standard
Marketing Edition

Published by: 1-StopAsia Korean Linguistic & Marketing QA Team

Domain: Brand Localization | Digital Marketing | Consumer Campaigns | Product Copy



1. Introduction

This guide is part of the 1-StopAsia Orange Book Series. It documents the quality standards applied by our Korean linguistic and marketing QA teams when working on marketing content for which no client-defined style guide exists.

Korean marketing localization requires more than linguistic accuracy. A translator with native Korean fluency and general translation skills will still produce substandard marketing content without explicit training in the conventions documented here. Korean consumers respond to tone, register, and rhetorical style in ways that differ substantially from English-language marketing. Errors in these areas produce content that feels imported rather than crafted for the market.

This document is organized into five sections:

- **Brand and Product Name Handling:** How Korean consumers expect brand names to appear, and when localization introduces more problems than it solves.
- **Register and Tone for Marketing Copy:** The specific speech levels and rhetorical choices that make Korean marketing persuasive rather than awkward.
- **Readability and Sentence Structure:** The structural errors that most consistently reduce Korean marketing copy to literal translation.
- **Idiomatic Localization:** How English marketing idioms must be recast for Korean audiences.
- **Punctuation, Format, and Numbers in Marketing Context:** Korean-specific formatting rules that affect how professional and trustworthy content appears.

⚠ **Marketing Note:** This guide applies when no client instruction, translation memory, glossary, or style guide is available. When client materials exist, those always take precedence. Questions must be raised with the PM before the project begins.



2. Brand and Product Name Handling (브랜드 및 제품명)

The single most consistent error in Korean marketing localization is incorrect handling of brand and product names. Korean consumers interact with global brands daily, and domestically produced content almost never translates well-established brand names into Korean, yet non-specialist translators frequently impose Korean transliterations where none belong.

2.1 Brand Name Localization Rules

[PN001] Brand Name and Product Name Translation

Product names and established brand names are generally not translated. When a Korean rendering exists in official client materials or established consumer usage, use that form. Otherwise, keep the original.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint	마이크로소프트 워드, 엑셀, 파워포인트	Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint	Established software brand names are not localized. Korean consumers recognize and use the English names.
Google Analytics dashboard	구글 애널리틱스 대시보드	Google Analytics 대시보드	Brand name retained in English. Generic descriptor (대시보드) may be Korean where natural.

⚠ **Marketing Note:** When a client has an official Korean brand name or product name registered in Korea, always use that name. It may differ from a direct transliteration. Verify with the PM when in doubt.

[PN002] Tagline and Slogan Handling

Brand taglines and slogans require transcreation, not translation. A literal Korean rendering of a marketing slogan almost never achieves the intended emotional effect. Flag taglines for dedicated review.



Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Just Do It.	그냥 해라.	지금 바로 하세요. / 망설이지 마세요. (transcreation required)	Direct translation loses brand voice. Imperative form and register must be calibrated for the Korean audience. Escalate for client approval.
Think Different.	다르게 생각해.	다르게 생각하세요. / 남다른 생각 (transcreation per campaign brief)	Register calibration required. Informal imperative (해) inappropriate for premium brand positioning in Korea.

3. Register and Tone for Marketing Copy (어조 및 경어 체계)

Korean operates across a spectrum of speech levels. The choice of speech level in marketing content directly signals the brand's relationship with its audience and affects how the content is received. Using the wrong speech level in Korean marketing copy is equivalent to addressing your customer base incorrectly: the content becomes either too formal and cold, or too casual and disrespectful.

3.1 Speech Level Selection for Marketing Contexts

[MK001] 해요체 (Haeyoche) as the Marketing Standard Register

For the majority of Korean consumer marketing content such as website copy, product descriptions, and social media, 해요체 (polite informal) is the correct default register. It is warm, approachable, and respectful without being stiff.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Discover a better way to work.	더 나은 업무 방식을 발견한다. (합쇼체, too formal) / 더 나은 방법 찾아봐. (해체, too casual)	더 나은 업무 방식을 만나보세요.	해요체 imperative (만나보세요) balances warmth and respect. Both 합쇼체 and casual 해체 misrepresent the brand register for general consumer campaigns.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Start your free trial today.	지금 무료 체험을 시작하십시오. (over-formal) / 지금 무료 체험 시작해. (too casual)	지금 무료 체험을 시작해보세요.	해요체 verb ending (-세요 / -해보세요) is the correct CTA register for Korean digital marketing.

△ **Marketing Note:** Premium or luxury brand campaigns may appropriately use 합쇼체 for elevated formality. Youth-targeted campaigns (Gen Z, gaming, streetwear) may warrant 해체 or 해라체. Always confirm with the brief or PM before deviating from 해요체 default.

[MK002] Avoiding Assertive and Extreme Expressions (단정 지양)

Extreme or absolute expressions in English marketing copy do not translate directly into Korean. Where English uses emphatic absolutes for persuasive effect, Korean marketing prefers nuanced constructions that invite rather than command.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
You MUST try this.	이것을 반드시 시도하셔야만 합니다.	꼭 한번 경험해보세요.	Emphatic obligation (반드시 / 하셔야만) creates pressure rather than appeal in Korean consumer copy. Invitation construction preferred.
Never miss another deal.	절대로 다시는 할인을 놓치지 마십시오.	이제 할인을 놓치지 마세요.	절대로 is grammatically correct but tonally harsh for promotional content. Softer construction better suits marketing register.
Your search did not match any documents.	검색결과와 일치하는 문서가 하나도 없습니다.	검색 결과가 없습니다.	하나도 없습니다 over-emphasizes negation. Neutral construction preferred in UI and product copy.

3.2 Pronoun and Person Reference in Marketing

Handling 'You' and Personal Pronouns



English marketing relies heavily on 'you' and 'your' to create a personal connection. Korean marketing achieves this through different means. Direct second-person pronouns are largely dropped, and the connection is conveyed through verb endings and contextual address. Mechanically translating 'you' as 당신 is the most common register error in Korean marketing copy.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Quickly deploy applications that meet your business requirements.	당신의 사업 요건에 부합하는 애플리케이션을 신속하게 구현합니다.	비즈니스 요건에 맞는 애플리케이션을 빠르게 구현해보세요.	당신 dropped entirely. Korean marketing copy creates personalisation through verb endings and contextual framing, not explicit pronouns.
Sign into your account.	귀하의 계정에 로그인합니다.	계정에 로그인하세요.	귀하 is overly formal for UI/UX copy. Dropped pronoun with 해요체 verb ending is correct for digital product marketing.
Grow your business with us.	당신의 사업을 우리와 함께 키우세요.	비즈니스 성장, 저희와 함께하세요.	당신 and 우리 both dropped. Noun-forward construction with 저희 (humble first person) is more natural for Korean B2B marketing.

4. Readability and Sentence Structure (가독성 및 문장 구조)

Korean sentence structure differs fundamentally from English in ways that create predictable failure patterns when translated by non-specialists. The errors below represent the most consistent structural quality failures in Korean marketing localization reviewed by our QA team.

4.1 Repetition and Concision

[R001] Avoiding Unnecessary Repetition

Avoid repeating the same word or subject when it appears multiple times in quick succession. Korean readers find repetition clumsy. Where the subject appears once, subsequent references may be dropped.



Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Functional tests are tests of various instrument parameters that give confidence the instrument is operating correctly.	기능 테스트는 기기의 여러 변수에 대한 테스트를 의미하며 기기가 얼마나 정상 작동하는지 확인합니다.	기능 테스트는 기기의 여러 변수를 확인하여 정상 작동 여부를 검증합니다.	테스트 repeated twice in close proximity. Subject (기기) dropped in second clause. More concise Korean construction is preferred.

[R002] Negation Restructuring (부정→긍정)

To improve readability, negative constructions in the source are often better expressed as affirmative constructions in Korean. This applies especially in marketing copy where negative framing reduces appeal.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Do not connect the power cable before setting the switch to the 0 position.	스위치를 '0' 위치로 설정하기 전에 전원 케이블을 연결하지 마십시오.	스위치를 '0' 위치로 설정한 후에 전원 케이블을 연결하십시오.	Affirmative construction is more direct and easier to follow. In instructional marketing (tutorials, onboarding), this improves comprehension and compliance.
The manager did not come back till yesterday.	매니저는 어제까지 돌아오지 않았다.	매니저는 어제서야 돌아왔다.	Positive reframing using 서야 construction. Cleaner and more natural in Korean.

[R003] Parentheses in Long Copy

When parenthetical text in the source is long, consider unpacking it into a natural Korean sentence rather than preserving the parenthetical structure. Korean marketing copy reads better without heavy use of bracketed asides.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
This process runs when you aren't using your computer (so it makes sense to install it at night or before lunch).	이 프로세스는 컴퓨터를 사용하지 않을 때 진행되며 (그러므로 잠자리에 들기 전 또는 점심식사를 하러 나가기 전에 설치하는 것이 좋습니다.)	이 프로세스는 컴퓨터를 사용하지 않을 때 진행됩니다. 따라서 잠자리에 들기 전 또는 점심식사를 하러 나가기 전에 설치하는 것이 좋습니다.	Parenthetical unpacked into two natural sentences. Significantly more readable in Korean marketing and product copy.

[R004] Affirmative Restructuring (긍정→부정)



Occasionally a passive or strongly affirmative English construction is more naturally expressed as a negative in Korean. This is less common but applies in specific contexts.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
My eyes were fixed on the clock.	나는 시계를 바라보았다.	나는 시계에서 눈을 뗄 수가 없었다.	Korean idiomatic expression of captivation uses negative construction (눈을 뗄 수가 없다). Direct positive translation loses the intended intensity, which is critical in narrative marketing copy.

4.2 Tense and Temporal Expression

[R005] Present Tense Preference in Marketing Copy

Where no semantic issue arises, use present tense rather than future tense in Korean marketing copy. English marketing uses future tense ('will') that sounds natural in English but reads as tentative in Korean. Present tense creates confidence.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
You'll never lose another file again.	다시는 파일을 분실하는 일이 없을 것입니다.	이제 파일을 잃어버리지 않습니다.	Future 것입니다 construction sounds hedged in marketing claims. Present tense assertion reads as more confident and credible to Korean consumers.
This section will describe the procedure.	이 절에서는 해당 기기의 설치 절차에 대해 설명할 것입니다.	이 절에서는 설치 절차를 설명합니다.	할 것입니다 is unnecessarily tentative for instructional or feature-description copy. Present tense preferred.



5. Idiomatic Localization (관용적 표현)

English marketing copy is built on idioms, cultural references, and expressions that have no direct Korean equivalent. Literal translation of these constructions is one of the most reliable indicators of non-specialist localization. The result reads as foreign copy that has been processed through a translation tool. It is grammatically possible but culturally hollow.

5.1 Common English Marketing Idioms

[ID001] Greetings, Thanks, and Closing Expressions

Idiomatic marketing expressions for openings, closings, and thanks should be replaced with natural Korean equivalents.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Thanks again for using Urchin!	Urchin을 사용해 주신 것에 대해 다시 한 번 감사드립니다!	Urchin을 이용해 주셔서 감사합니다!	Thanks again loses its casual warmth when translated literally. 이용해 주셔서 감사합니다 is the standard natural Korean expression for product/service gratitude.
Sincerely,	진심으로,	드림 / 올림	진심으로 is a direct loan translation that reads as foreign in Korean correspondence. 드림 or 올림 are the natural Korean equivalents for sign-offs.

[ID002] Marketing Call-to-Action Expressions

English CTA phrases must be adapted for Korean consumer psychology and idiomatic norms. Direct translations of CTAs often read as either too commanding or too passive in Korean.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Get started now.	지금 시작하여 얻으십시오.	지금 바로 시작해보세요.	Get idiom cannot be translated directly. 시작해보세요 is the standard Korean CTA construction. It is invitational and appropriately motivating.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Learn more.	더 많이 배우십시오.	자세히 알아보기 / 더 알아보세요.	Learn more is a link/button CTA. 자세히 알아보기 is the Korean digital marketing standard for this pattern.
Once you sign up, we know you will love it.	가입하시면 만족하실 것이라고 확신합니다.	가입하시면 틀림없이 마음에 드실 거예요.	Confidence claim requires natural conversational register in Korean. 해요체 (-거예요) is warmer and more persuasive than formal 합쇼체 (-확신합니다) for consumer-facing copy.

[ID003] Concision: Collapsing Multi-Word English Phrases

English marketing uses multi-word phrases that Korean can express more concisely. Translating word-for-word produces padded copy that Korean readers find verbose.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Eating meat and drinking alcohol, seen as stimulants to sexual activity, were to be avoided.	고기를 먹고 술을 마시면 성적 활동을 자극하니까 삼가야 마땅하다.	육식과 음주는 성욕을 자극하므로 삼가야 한다.	Two-word compressed nouns (육식, 음주) are more natural and concise than verb phrases. Korean readers expect compression in formal and informational copy.
The police dismissed her with a caution.	경찰은 주의를 주며 여자를 풀어주었다.	경찰은 그녀에게 경고를 주고 방면했다.	경고 (formal warning) and 방면 (release) are the appropriate concise terms. Descriptive paraphrase in the wrong version is verbose and informal.



6. Punctuation, Format, and Numbers in Marketing Context

Formatting in Korean marketing content affects how professional and trustworthy the content appears to Korean readers. The rules below are the most common formatting errors caught by our Korean QA review.

6.1 Punctuation

[LZ001] Comma Usage (쉼표)

Korean uses commas sparingly. Sentences that contain a comma in English because of introductory phrases or coordinate clauses often read better without the comma in Korean.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
Generally, there are other methods of estimating exposures.	일반적으로, 노출을 추측하는 다른 방법이 있습니다.	일반적으로 노출을 추측하는 다른 방법이 있습니다.	Korean does not insert a comma after introductory adverbs. The comma is unnecessary and looks unnatural.
Customer Support contacts need to be knowledgeable about your systems, the Software functionality, and the business processes.	고객 지원 담당자는 시스템, 소프트웨어 기능, 및 업무 과정 등에 대해 정통해야 합니다.	고객 지원 담당자는 시스템과 소프트웨어 기능, 업무 과정에 대해 정통해야 합니다.	및 (and) is used sparingly in Korean. Serial comma before 및 is incorrect. Restructure with natural 와/과 connection.

[LZ002] Number Formatting in Marketing Content

Korean marketing follows specific number formatting conventions. The most common error is applying European number separators (periods as thousands separators) to Korean content intended for the Korean market.

Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
€5,000 campaign budget	€5.000	€5,000 (한국: 5,000유로)	Korea uses the comma as thousands separator. European convention (period) is incorrect for Korean-market content. Confirm currency display with client for financial marketing materials.



Source (English)	✗ Incorrect	✓ Correct	Rationale
10,000+ users	10.000명 이상의 사용자	10,000명 이상의 사용자 / 1만 명 이상의 사용자	Korean commonly uses 만 (10,000) unit expression in marketing copy. Both 10,000 and 1만 are acceptable; 1만 reads as more native in casual marketing copy.

7. QA Checklist: Korean Marketing

Apply this checklist before submitting any Korean marketing translation for review. Items marked [BRAND] are non-negotiable for campaigns involving established client brands.

Brand and Product Names

- [BRAND] Confirmed established brand names are not localized unless official Korean name exists
- [BRAND] Taglines and slogans flagged for transcreation review, not translated directly
- [BRAND] Official Korean product names verified against client glossary or Korean market materials

Register and Tone

- Speech level confirmed for campaign type: 해요체 default unless brief specifies otherwise
- 당신/귀하 not used as default 'you' translation: pronoun dropped or replaced contextually
- Absolute/extreme expressions (반드시/절대로) replaced with invitational constructions where appropriate
- CTA verb endings confirmed: 해요체 imperative (-세요/-해보세요) used correctly

Readability and Structure

- Repeated words and subjects reduced, not repeated in close proximity
- Negative constructions considered for positive reframing where readability improves
- Parenthetical asides unpacked into natural sentences where appropriate
- Present tense used in preference to future tense (것입니다) where semantically neutral

Idiomatic Localization



- Greeting, closing, and thank-you expressions replaced with Korean natural equivalents
- English idioms not translated literally, Korean equivalents used
- Multi-word English phrases compressed to natural Korean equivalents where possible

Format and Numbers

- Comma usage reviewed, introductory adverb commas removed
- 및 usage reviewed, serial comma before 및 corrected
- Number separators confirmed for target market (Korea uses comma, not period)
- 만 (10,000) unit notation considered for large numbers in consumer-facing copy

8. About This Guide

This guide is part of the 1-StopAsia Orange Book Series, which is our published quality standards for Asian language content across core domains. The Orange Books document the standards our in-house linguistic teams apply when clients have not defined their own quality criteria.

We publish them because we believe quality in localization should be transparent, not assumed. An LSP or enterprise buyer working with 1-StopAsia on Korean marketing content should be able to understand exactly what standard their content will be held to and why.

Scope and Limitations

This guide covers Korean marketing translation / localization quality standards applicable across brand, digital, consumer, and campaign content. It does not substitute for:

- Client-provided style guides, glossaries, or translation memory (which always take precedence)
- Campaign-specific transcreation briefs for taglines and brand voice
- Platform-specific requirements (e.g., character limits for Korean social media copy)
- Legal or regulatory requirements for specific product categories marketed in Korea

Updates and Feedback

This guide is reviewed annually by the 1-StopAsia Korean marketing QA team. Feedback from clients, reviewers, and project managers is incorporated into each revision. If you identify a case not covered by this guide or believe a standard documented here requires revision, contact your 1-StopAsia project manager.



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- Korean Orange Book: Automotive Edition (forthcoming)
- Chinese Simplified Orange Book: Marketing Edition (forthcoming)
- Japanese Orange Book: Medical Edition (published)
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