



AUTOR: YANA DINCHIYSKA

The Terminology Decision That Costs LSPs Three Years of Rework

How a single undocumented call in week two quietly becomes the standard, and what it takes to stop the cycle before it starts.

A Problem That Passes QA



A PM spent most of a quarter managing a problem she couldn't name. Client feedback wasn't pointing to a specific error. It was just: *"it feels clunky and unprofessional."*

Every deliverable passed QA. The root cause surfaced on project seven: a terminology call made in week two, with no glossary and a deadline, had quietly become the account standard.

⚠ Terminology problems don't look like problems, until they already cost you.

The Symptoms Arrive Before the Diagnosis

Inconsistent Scores

No single project fails outright, but quality is uneven across the account.

Vague Client Feedback

"It doesn't sound like us." Not a specific error - something harder to act on.

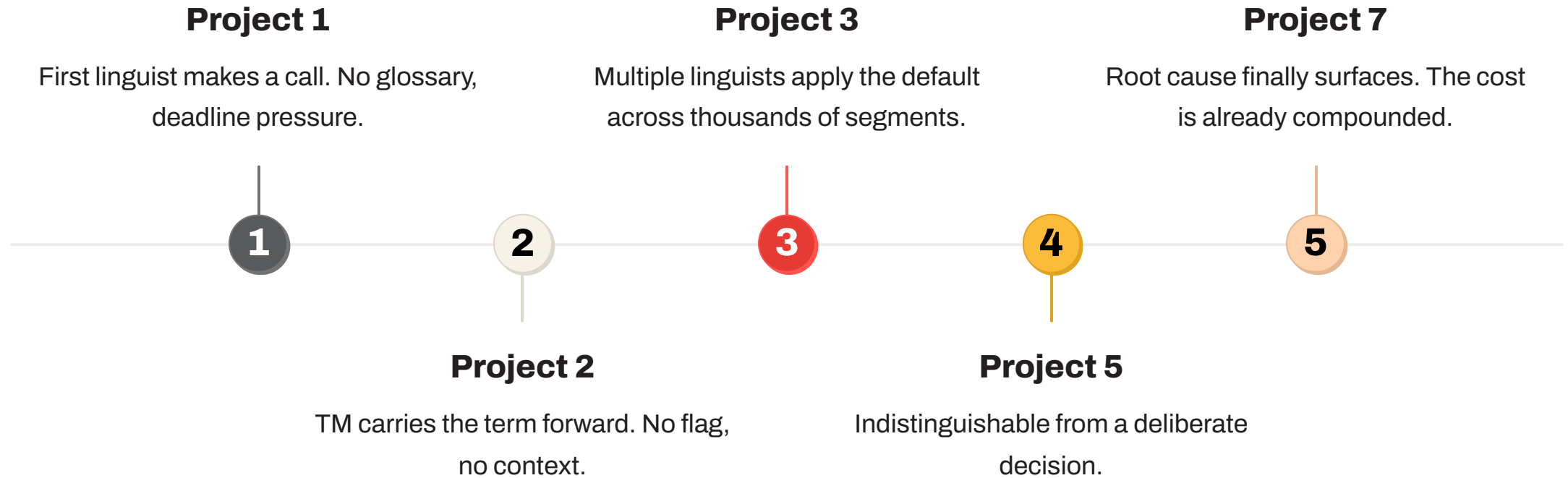
Stretched Review Cycles

Longer than the account's history would predict, with no clear cause.

In a Vietnamese EdTech project, "Attendance" was translated as *Sự tham dự* (general presence) instead of *Điểm danh* (taking roll call). Linguistically valid. Contextually wrong. No automated tool would flag it.



When the TM Becomes the Problem



☐ The term spreads rapidly, but the context that should have flagged it gets left behind.

	A	B	Name	C	Date	Date	Date	B
	Name	Date	Came	Date	Amount	Amount	Status	Status
1	9,000	115,000	100,000	0.0%	41,600	15,600	15,500	45,200
2	1,600	1,800	3,000		16,800	17,600	13,600	42,880
3	3,800	4,800	8,800		12,000	23,600	22,200	42,540
4	4,500	1,800	3,500		11,480	12,600	41,000	42,540
5	4,621	1,870	4,600		14,500	13,000	24,600	42,580
6	5,000		9,400		24,500	32,800	11,000	42,500
6	1,200		12,400		15,500	13,000	11,500	44,600
7	2,000		11,300		13,860	22,000	12,000	40,400
8	2,600		12,400		17,400	16,000	14,800	10,030
9	2,500		12,500		14,500	14,600	19,750	44,230
11	9,000		14,600		14,400	22,600	12,640	11,660
10	1,600		15,400		12,800	12,800	12,710	19,660
11	1,600		13,000		24,880	13,300	12,600	12,600
12	4,661		13,600		13,000	13,400	18,780	42,580
13	3,102		10,770		14,800	12,780	10,620	13,590
14	3,500		18,000		11,880	14,000	38,200	19,590
16	9,500		10,500		20,500	18,500	32,530	13,880
17	3,500		11,600		11,900	14,600	24,630	39,440
28	3,800		18,500		21,800	13,000	59,800	10,550
29	1,700		19,600		72,200	14,800	53,500	34,450
21	1,000		13,750		21,000	12,040	32,220	32,520
22	1,000		19,000		14,400	24,000	32,800	34,540
23	1,500		19,630		14,780	12,300	33,500	48,500
34	1,600		19,800		11,500	15,680	39,560	15,510
35	1,502		13,700		15,700	19,600	30,200	26,140
26	1,500		13,510		72,600	14,580	30,580	13,600
27	2,600		15,800		13,000	12,000	22,500	24,580
33	2,000		13,600		25,000	25,550	42,500	35,300
28	1,800		15,000		20,400	24,500	50,580	59,980
28	1,000		13,500		70,600	79,700	32,500	72,000
26	1,820	200	23,250		24,450	23,400	21,260	23,540
20	1,816	000	21,800		12,200	24,560	21,200	32,600

The Decision Nobody Marks as a Decision

In a large-scale documentation project, source English strings and target translations became misaligned in the working file. A linguist editing the target for "Newsfeed" was reading the source for "Save and add to post."

The linguist wasn't careless. They were working inside a setup that assumed a terminology foundation that didn't exist. The PM had to stop production and manually re-verify the entire file. The project's profit margin was gone.

- ❌ The root cause wasn't the file misalignment. It was the absence of a locked, governed terminology structure from the start.

A Real-World Cost: Crypto Platform



On a cryptocurrency platform project covering Hong Kong and China markets, high-frequency trading terms like "*Take profit*", "*Stop loss*", and "*Limit*", were marked Approved in the TM but remained in English.

No initial decision had been made on whether to transliterate or localize. A placeholder became the approved default for every linguist on the account.

The problem wasn't discovered until final delivery. The client asked why a day-one decision was still unresolved at the end of the project lifecycle.

What Three Years of Rework Actually Costs

Direct Rework Cost

TM cleanup, re-translation at scale, and retroactive glossary work, often result in formalizing the wrong term rather than correcting it.

PM Cost

A client who feels inconsistency but can't name it is one of the hardest positions a PM can be in. Review cycles, clarification calls, and remediation conversations compound across every affected project.

Relationship Cost

Clients who lose confidence in consistency rarely complain formally. They review more carefully, slow down approvals, and quietly put the relationship up for evaluation at the next vendor review.

📌 **The asymmetry:** Getting terminology governance right takes two weeks. Fixing it takes years.

The Aerospace Wake-Up Call


An aerospace cleanup project required strict adherence to a Master Glossary for environmental and legal terms.

What Went Wrong

Different linguists working from locally-saved glossary versions. No live master, no version control. Missing legal terms discovered mid-project.

What Fixed It

PM implemented a mandatory timestamped naming convention for every glossary update. One live master, synchronized across all linguists.

 That protocol existed because assuming everyone had the current version had already failed.

What Two Weeks at the Start Prevents

Before the first project starts, terminology ownership is assigned explicitly. The client names who makes the final call and the production side names who is accountable for consistency. This is a specific function, not a general QA responsibility.

Assign Owners

Delegate responsibility for data accuracy and maintenance tasks.

Build Glossary

Define key terms and metrics to ensure consistent understanding.

Validate List

Review and confirm the accuracy of all glossary entries.

Lock Master

Secure the finalized glossary to prevent unauthorized changes.

The Living Glossary Protocol



Candidate Glossary First

Build from available source material and validate with the client before project one begins.



Flag, Don't Decide Unilaterally

New terms encountered in project one are flagged. The decision is made with the client and recorded. No silent defaults.



30-Day Terminology Review

Covers what was established, decisions made on new terms, and whether client reviewers are aligned with TM choices. Misalignments at day 30 are cheap. At project six, they are not.



Vendor vs. Production Partner

A Vendor

Completes the project. Works from whatever foundation exists.
Delivers on time.

A Production Partner

Builds the foundation. Assigns ownership. Validates terminology before project one. Stays on the account in year five.

The clients who stay for five or more years are not staying because of volume or pricing. They stay because the relationship was built on foundations laid before the work started.

The Foundation The Client Never Notices Because It Works

Ownership Assigned

Named accountability on both sides before project one.

Glossary Validated

Candidate glossary built and approved before the first string is touched.

Version Controlled

One master file, timestamped, no local copies.

First-Project Review

Built into the workflow from day one, not added after a problem surfaces.

The PM who builds the foundation in week two is the PM who is still on the account in year five.



GET IN TOUCH

Ready to Build the Foundation?

Let's talk about what terminology governance looks like for your team.

Contact Our Experts