# Pulse of Asia

**Climate Change, Asia, and Translations**

**When NOT to Choose Native Translators**

**Word Count for Japanese for Project Managers**

**Introduction of Context-Awareness in NMT for Korean**

# Preface

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present the Spring Edition for 2022 of the Pulse of Asia magazine.

Spring in Asia is wonderful—colorful, vibrant, and full of life. Numerous festivals celebrate the end of winter and the coming of warmer days. The weather can be especially pleasant in East Asia, where flowers and fruit trees are mindfully appreciated. On the other hand—as the rainy season approaches—it can get unbearably hot. April is usually the hottest month in Thailand, and maybe that's why buckets of cold water thrown over your head during Songkran don't sound so bad!

Dive into the culture and traditions of Asia while we will also keep you up to date with the latest technological advances in the world of translation and localization. Learn about the challenges that you can face when working with languages such as Khmer, Japanese and Chinese and what you can do to save yourself time, money, and headache.

Enjoy and thank you for reading!

*Nikola Stoyanov*
Content Manager

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炉瓶盒套装香具

由一香炉、一香瓶（带香箸、香匙等）和一香盒组成。常配有底座。盛行于明清。

香几

焚香的台状几案，可放香炉、香盒和香瓶等物。矮者不过几寸腰，矮者不过几寸的围挡。几面多制作考究者则纹饰都颇具匠

香囊

又称"香包"、"香臭"。用于装填的小盒，材质挂于车轿、香囊可香记·内则》："男女未冠笄者……衿缨也言及香囊："红罗复斗帐，四角垂香囊。""何以致叩叩？香囊系肘后。"

香箸、香匙等香具

用于插放香箸、香匙等工具，瓶口常有分隔

香炭

用于熏烧香品的炭（借助炭火熏烧香丸、香木片等香品）。可以是较好的木炭，也可以是更为精制的炭饼与其他材料和制而成，

Localization
Station

# CLIMATE CHANGE, ASIA, AND TRANSLATIONS

**Gergana Toleva**
Head of Global Marketing

When we mention Asia and climate change in the same sentence, people usually anticipate that the conversation will be about politics. But, to start on the right foot here, I'd like to stake a claim—no politics involved in this article, just the language industry, professional translations, and the common ground between these and climate changes.

## Climate change communication

I was amazed to discover that communicating global warming strategically is pretty much the same as a marketing strategy. The first thing you do is a segmentation of your target audience, and then the choice of how to influence it. And this is where we will tie it to language and translations. Because as with any marketing strategy, people tend to understand way better when we try to communicate a message in their own languages. And saving the planet is quite an important message we'd like everyone to hear about, right?

Now, let's get this mixed up with Asia and its diversity of languages, cultures, perceptions, and also standards of living.

Despite the fact that further down I am going to talk about two of the significant players in the picture, one thing should be clear—there is a pattern here that is valid for most countries in Asia. The most important thing is that every single country matters when it comes to shifting the direction of where our planet is heading.

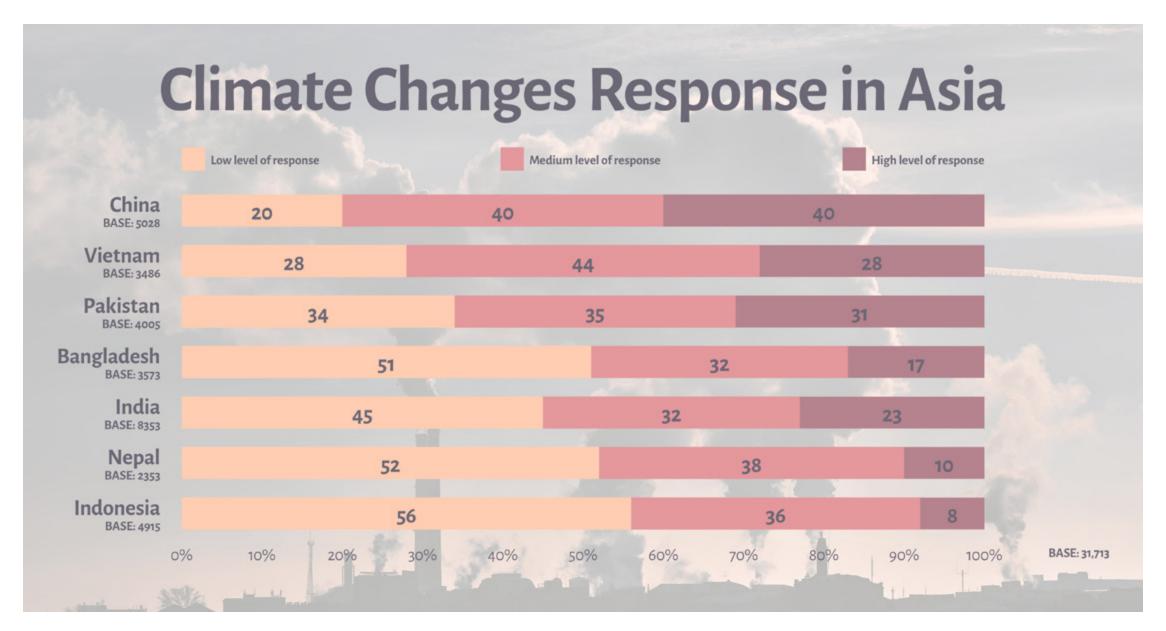## Growing climate change awareness in Asia

CWhen it comes to communicating climate change and how to prevent it there are a few very important factors

influencing it, one of these being politics of course. Leaving that aside we'd like to address the other one, which is related to the keyword here—communication. The many languages of Asia and their variety pose a problem in sending our important message through to everyone even more than you can imagine.

Every professional in the industry knows what we are talking about but we've decided to summarize a few of the key issues we have stumbled upon when it comes to the language barrier and climate change communication.

Translation shifts the message sent and we all know how important an accurate translation is when you want to send a particular message across in another language. This is even more so when we talk about Asian languages, where a single tone can shift the meaning of a whole sentence. On the other hand, this can turn the conversation in a completely different direction and that can turn the scales up or down. And that does affect politics or local perceptions if not done properly.

With that being said, we have to be aware that most of the information delivered to any audience in the world about climate change is done via various media—video, newspapers, online news websites, and other kinds of information channels.



## Climate Changes Response in Asia

| Country | Low level of response | Medium level of response | High level of response |
|---|---|---|---|
| China BASE: 5028 | 20 | 40 | 40 |
| Vietnam BASE: 3486 | 28 | 44 | 28 |
| Pakistan BASE: 4005 | 34 | 35 | 31 |
| Bangladesh BASE: 3573 | 51 | 32 | 17 |
| India BASE: 8353 | 45 | 32 | 23 |
| Nepal BASE: 2353 | 52 | 38 | 10 |
| Indonesia BASE: 4915 | 56 | 36 | 8 |

BASE: 31,713

## Specifics of reaching different audiences in Asia

Let's take India as an example with its rural areas where the locals don't speak English, or they are not reachable via conventional modern communication methods. Who is going to teach them to save the planet?

Climate change communication in India has been meeting various challenges and some of them are purely language-related. The first one is language diversity.

**Diversity of languages** leads to a diversity of media like newspapers and TV. At the same time, the media penetration is different for the different languages in the country with English and Hindi being the most spread out. Additionally, rural regions suffer the most from disinformation as there are many dialects and at the same time low media coverage.

A close second, which is valid for any country, is the fact that **journalists are not professional translators** meaning that a lot of the world news, actions, and basically any kind of information might be twisted in the

beliefs and personal views of the people who actually do the writing. With this being said, true valid information can be reached only by professional translations which if not being in the scope of the country's policy is not likely to happen any time soon.

The only solution to finding out relevant information is through international scientific forums held in many languages or an Asian country, where the scientific content has been delivered via professional translation.

**Chinglish, Hinglish, Taglish, and more...** A challenge that needs to be covered is the influence of English in modern Asian languages. We'll go back to India here, and the fact that besides English being used alongside Hindi and other languages in the country's official communication, a big part of the talk happens in Hindi and other local dialects. The lack of proper terminology in Hindi along with the necessity of having such very fast leads to modernizing English words into Hindi, creating the modern Hinglish. Add the illiteracy, the many dialects, and the low media penetration in some regions and we have quite a lot on our plate. If we can offer a solution for this, however, it is going to be related to

offering professional translators and goodwill on behalf of the country itself.

We can't skip a country like China, when it comes to global warming and however controversial the country and its policy towards it, we are here to discuss the linguistic issues.

So in a nutshell China's population has a very strong awareness of climate change compared to other countries in the region.

However, when it comes to the challenges they meet it is pretty much the same as other Asian countries, meaning the diversity of languages, Chinglish, and the subjective representation of the issues from media and journalists.

## Professional scientists need professional translators!

With the growing issues of our planet, the awareness of climate change is becoming more important than ever. There are scientific forums all around the world and to be on the same page professionals need professional presentations for their scientific researches and data, which is changing fast and at the same time needs to be delivered immediately to everyone else. Sounds familiar, right?

However, we've noticed that for Asian languages the awareness of scientists on the accuracy of the translation and linguistic issues that come with the language, is not that high. Here I'd like to point out that for languages like Chinese, Japanese, or Thai for example one may need not only translation but Desktop publishing, too and they won't be even aware of that until the very last moment. Coming right out of our experience – even choosing the wrong font for the wrong language might make any scientist look unprofessional to a scientific forum in China for that matter.

## Where am I going with all of the above?

I was thinking the same while I was researching the topic—how can we possibly get translations, language, and climate change connected? The moment I started writing though, I didn't need to think of a direction anymore. At the end of the day, the most important thing I want to address is awareness...about our planet, about our children, about being The Ambassadors and reaching out to every single person out there. And what better way to do that than sending one and the same message in every single language we have...

**"Save Our Planet!"**

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# S BAIDU NMT BETTER THAN GOOGLE AND WHY?

**Nikola Stoyanov**

Content Manager

Special credits to our wonderful colleagues Semi Hong and Cindy Zhang 张夕. This article would have not been possible without their help!

When I originally did my research on this topic I was thinking that creating such an article would be a piece of cake. I imagined it would just be something like running a few phrases in both engines and then seeing what the output was. Adding some explanations from our colleagues from Asia would seal the deal, right? I should have known better from my experience with Asian languages already...

I ended up with 11 pages of examples for just a few pieces of text, so I decided to split it into a series of articles, rather than try to put everything together in a single piece.

## Attention Reader! This is not science just hands-on-experience

This is the spot where we have to say we wanted to deliver real-life experience, not some theoretical explanations on how the NMT works. We've got other articles that cover this topic separately. So I and my colleagues Cindy (China) and Semi (S. Korea) have chosen 3 different types of texts: single words/characters, short sentences, and longer excerpts.

## Short phrases and expressions

We chose to translate the following Korean phrase and its Chinese equivalent into English in both Baidu and Google translate:

**Chinese phrase (source):**
新冠疫情结束后，我想尽情地去海外旅行。
The result Google returns "After the COVID-19 pandemic is over, I want to travel overseas to the fullest."
The result Baidu returns is "After the end of COVID-19, I want to travel overseas."
· Chinese people usually use the word "coronavirus pandemic" to describe "COVID-19", Baidu translates

it into "COVID-19", and Google translates it into "COVID-19 pandemic", they are both correct.
· For the word "~结束后 (when ... is over)", Baidu translates it into "after the end of ", while Google translates it into "after...is over", the translations are not incorrect, however, they are not natural when it comes to the sentence structure.
· For the word "尽情地 (as much as...)" in Baidu the translation is missing, while Google translates it into "to the fullest", and it can be awkward when used in this sentence.

Second attempt to translate another short phrase from Chinese into English.

**Chinese phrase (source):**
我的生活每天都充满着快乐。
The result in Baidu is "My life is full of happiness every day."
The result in Google is "My life is full of joy every day.".
· The sentences translated by Baidu and Google are very similar in structure.

· However, for the word "快乐 (happiness)", the platforms used different expressions to explain the meaning of the word. Baidu translates it into "happiness", while google translates it into "joy". Google's translation is not incorrect, however, it can be awkward when used in this sentence.

**Korean phrase (source):**
나는 코로나가 끝나면 마음껏 해외 여행을 다니고 싶다.
The result from Google is "I want to travel abroad as much as I want after Corona is over."
The result from Baidu is "When the epidemic is over, I want to travel overseas as much as I can."
· Korean people use the word Corona [korona] describing "COVID-19" which derives from coronavirus. Baidu translates Corona into "epidemic", while Google translates it into Corona which is closer to what Korean people actually use. The word "epidemic" can be used for many cases not specifically for COVID-19, therefore, I would choose the word from Google for this case.
· Another difference between Baidu and Google Translate is the order of the English sentence. Baidu places the part "when the epidemic is over~" first, while Google puts "I want to travel ~" upfront. Baidu's translation is not incorrect. Placing conditional

sentences first is typical for many Asian languages when they speak English. While Google's English sentence is more natural when it comes to the sentence structure. This tendency can be found in Korean speaking or translating English too. We place the result in the last part of the sentence whereas English puts it in the first sentence.
· Both Baidu and Google translate "마음껏" into "as much as". I tried to put this single word in Baidu and Google. The result shows that Baidu translate " 마음껏" into "heartily", while Google translate it into "to your heart's content'. Both translations are not wrong, however, they can be awkward when used in the sentence. In this sense, both Baidu and Google translate "마음껏" nicely into "as much as".

## Longer excerpts from the eCommerce industry

As we already saw the performance of Chinese and Korean source phrases translated into English, for our second part of the experiment we chose to run some longer excerpts from the eCommerce industry English text as a source and get the Asian languages as the target. Our first choice for English is an excerpt from a product page.

**Bai度 百度**

Product details:
A short-length denim jacket with a classic collar, front button fastening and hard-worn details. Large chest pockets with a flap and button and welt pockets below. Available in light blue and light green. Make sure to refer to the size table for correct measurements.

제품 상세 정보:
짧은 데님 재킷, 클래식한 네크라인, 앞단추와 내마모성 디테일.가슴 큰 포켓, 밑에 커버, 단추, 스티커 포켓이 있습니다.연한 파란색과 연한 녹색은 선택할 수 있습니다. 정확한 측정값을 얻으려면 반드시 치수표를 참고하십시오.

**Google**

Product details:
A short-length denim jacket with a classic collar, front button fastening and hard-worn details. Large chest pockets with a flap and button and welt pockets below. Available in light blue and light green. Make sure to refer to the size table for correct measurements.

제품 세부 정보:
클래식 칼라, 앞 버튼으로 잠그는 스타일, 견고한 디테일이 특징인 짧은 길이의 데님 재킷. 플랩과 버튼이 있는 큰 가슴 주머니와 아래에 웰트 포켓. 밝은 파란색과 밝은 녹색으로 제공됩니다.정확한 측정을 위해 사이즈 표를 참조하십시오.

- For this part "*hard-worn details*":
Baidu translates it as "낡은디테일 (stale/old details)", that is incorrect, while Google translates it as "딱딱한 디테일 (hard detail)", it is closer to the original expression, so Google's translation is better.

- But for this part "*Available in light blue and light green*": Google translates it as "밝은 파란색과 밝은 녹색으로 제공" Semi says "the translation sounds very natural and it actually seems like one that is translated by a human" however, Baidu's translation "연한파란색및연두색옵션 (Light blue and light green options)" is not entirely correct and can sound confusing.
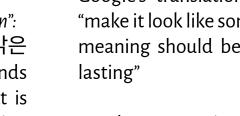
In this case, it seems Google's translation is more useful than Baidu's when it comes to translating English to Korean. I noticed that Google's translation is better and more natural.

For translating into Chinese, we chose the same paragraph, so we can better compare the two translation engines.



Product details:
A short-length denim jacket with a classic collar, front button fastening and hard-worn details. Large chest pockets with a flap and button and welt pockets below. Available in light blue and light green. Make sure to refer to the size table for correct measurements.

产品详情:
短款牛仔夹克，经典领口，前扣扣件和耐磨细节。胸部大口袋，下面有翻盖、纽扣和贴边口袋。浅蓝色和浅绿色可选。请务必参考尺寸表以获得正确的测量值。



Product details:
A short-length denim jacket with a classic collar, front button fastening and hard-worn details. Large chest pockets with a flap and button and welt pockets below. Available in light blue and light green. Make sure to refer to the size table for correct measurements.

产品详情:
这款短款牛仔夹克采用经典衣领、正面纽扣和做旧细节设计。带有翻盖和纽扣的大胸袋，下方有贴边袋。有浅蓝色和浅绿色可供选择。请务必参考尺码表进行正确测量。

- According to Cindy, both results are acceptable. There is nothing missing from the overall description and are grammatically correct, however, both could seem slightly unnatural.

- Google's translation of "hard-worn" comes out as "make it look like something old", whereas the proper meaning should be more along the lines of "long-lasting"

From the comparison here it looks like machine translation for Simplified Chinese could use some improvement and possibly Baidu is slightly ahead. To make a stronger comparison we have another sample text that is a bit longer this time.

- Baidu provides a literal translation that sounds very awkward in Korean. Words like "once" and "location" are not wrong, but are used in a different way. Location is directly translated to "위치", whereas "지역" is more natural. The word "당신" is also there and according to our colleague Semi, this is usually

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omitted in similar texts as the audience is the general public.

- Google shines in this example as well, with nearly impeccable translation which also sounds very natural. The translation of "you" is also properly

omitted from the text which further improves the natural flow of the sentence.

Let's see how they will deal with the larger example for the Chinese:

**Baidu 百度**

Shipping & Returns:
Once an order is placed, it is usually processed within 2 – 3 working days after receipt of payment. The estimated delivery date varies according to your location but usually, it would take between 10 – 30 days. Standard shipping is available for every purchased book and is included in the price.
Please note that sometimes delays of delivery can occur due to circumstances we are not able to influence like the Christmas Holidays and other celebrations around the world.
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发货和退货:
一旦下单,通常在收到付款后2-3个工作日内处理。预计交货日期因您所在的位置而异,但通常需要10-30天。每本购买的书都有标准的带跟踪功能的配送服务,价格中包含了这一功能。
请注意,有时由于我们无法影响的情况,如圣诞节假期和世界各地的其他庆祝活动,可能会导致交货延迟。
如果你发现你的产品与你期望的不同,你可以退货。但是,我们不接受已经损坏的货物或误用产品的退货。如果您的商品在交付过程中因包装不当而受损,请联系我们,我们将考虑是否可以为您更换。

**Google**

Shipping & Returns:
Once an order is placed, it is usually processed within 2 – 3 working days after receipt of payment. The estimated delivery date varies according to your location but usually, it would take between 10 – 30 days. Standard shipping is available for every purchased book and is included in the price.
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下订单后,通常会在收到付款后的 2 - 3 个工作日内处理。预计交货日期因您所在的位置而异,但通常需要 10 至 30 天。每本购买的书籍都可以使用带跟踪的标准运输,并且包含在价格中。
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- Yet again both Google and Baidu both provide an acceptable result with grammatically correct translations that could sound slightly machine-like.
- Google translates "in case" as "in order to prevent", which is incorrect

The largest excerpts helped us to further establish the accountability of Baidu and Google for the Korean and Chinese languages.

For the final part of our experiment, we decided to turn the tables and provide the MTs with a source text that



is in Korean and Chinese and this time English is the target language.

- Baidu struggles with the word "fasten" and translates it to "locked" instead. "Welt pocket" also comes out as "sleeve pocket" and our colleague couldn't find a way for Baidu to correctly translate this part of the text. According to Semi, you can clearly see the source language was Asian with the way "Available in" has been translated to "You can buy".
- For Korean to English translation, Google provides another excellent translation that is not much different from the original. Even if the translation for "hard-worn" is not literally translated, it is still correct as it is "sturdy" and it doesn't sound unnatural in any way.
- Cindy on the other hand is not impressed with Google's translation as the sentences sound awkward and unnatural. Meanwhile, Baidu gives a relatively smooth translation that is close to the original.

## The result of practice versus theory bring us to reality

Our little experiment will help everyone make their own conclusions but there are a few things that stand out.
- Single words/characters in and out of context - this is quite typical for the Chinese language for example - words can change meaning when they are in various parts of the sentence but at the same time mean a completely different thing when taken out of context. This we noticed is present in both platforms.

- Both engines struggle with sentence structure, which in many cases is different from what we are used to in English for example. Especially, when we do it for English into Chinese.
- One of the biggest problems is the fact that even the best algorithm needs data to perform and a lot of MT experts when asked about Asian languages will tell you that they don't have enough data to train engines for languages like Chinese and Korean. And in this article, we haven't even discussed Japanese…

We need to point out that all is good for personal use but when we get to the professional level though and the need to have an adequate translation quality for Chinese or Korean, it would seem that both won't give you much of an advantage. Sometimes Baidu performs better, sometimes Google does but overall the necessity of editing is obvious.

And while for most of the Latin-based languages translations reach a near-human quality, this is not the case with Asian languages. I am aware that the hype for MT might bring wrong expectations on the table for any translation company but let's face it: *If high-resource languages are reaching a very good level of translation quality, there is a very long road ahead for Asian languages to go. If you do a bit of research and see how limited the real data for most of the Asian languages is, you'll do the math yourself.*

Just a hint for next time… sometimes it is easier for a translator to start from scratch rather than post-edit a machine-translated text.

# TOP 7 CHALLENGES WHEN TRANSLATING ENGLISH TO CHINESE

There are over 50,000 Chinese characters, 20,000 words in use, and if you know about 500 Chinese characters, you'll know about 80% of the language. While this may seem encouraging in terms of learning one of the world's oldest and most complicated languages, there are several challenges in translating English to Chinese. In most cases, the translator involved will need to avoid sounding Chinglish and will need to do a thorough job of looking at the whole script first to get an idea of its essence and intended meaning before proceeding with the translation. So what are some of the obstacles in translating English to Chinese? Let's take a closer look.

**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

## Difficulties translating English to Chinese

### 1. Word order

Word order is the first challenge in an English to Chinese translation. Why? Because in languages where the topic is prominent, the object of the sentence is placed first. Therefore, a sentence that reads "I eat an apple" in English will change to "Apple I ate" in Chinese. What's more, is that the language doesn't have singular or plural forms, and it's crucial to look at the entirety of the text to decipher whether plural or singular word is being described. These are some of the reasons why translating English to Chinese is so difficult.

### 2. Lack of verb conjugation

If you're thinking about the complexity of tenses in English, after all, there are tens of tenses describing moments in the past, present, and future, you may really struggle with the fact that there are no tenses in the Chinese language. This means that the four main tones of the language determine the sentence's meaning. Once again, it's crucial to get an idea of the wider context to determine which period in time is being spoken or written about.

### 3. Sentence structure

Sentence structure is another aspect of translation that can really challenge any translator. In English, for example, there are rules for adjective order. For example, you would say "the nice, big, green coat" whereas in Chinese, the description could go something like this "the coat, nice, green big". While this would be enough to make any native English speaker cringe, the fact of the matter is there is no such rule in Chinese, which can even make computers, machines, and artificial intelligence which are all involved in translation struggle to determine the correct meaning. As a final point, Chinese has two types of sentences: simple and complex. While the simple sentences may be relatively easy to decipher, complex ones may need to be broken up into shorter, simpler ones for the entire sentence to make sense.

### 4. Chinese characters are logograms

Whereas the English alphabet consists of phonemes, Chinese characters are considered logograms. What does this mean for translation? Essentially, every single character has a different meaning, which is highly dependent on the given context. To make things more complicated, Chinese characters can be combined together to form an entirely new one, with the new one's meaning again highly dependent on context and placement. Here's an example of this: 開 in Cantonese translates as "to open something", while 心 signifies "heart." When joined together, the expression "to open your heart," (開心) now arises. And finally, when combined as a word, the meaning of the word will be "happy." Complex, isn't it?

### 5. Idioms, metaphors, and sayings

If you've been to China, have Chinese friends, have read some translated Chinese literature, or you're simply interested in the culture, you'll quickly find out that the Chinese are highly prone to using idioms, metaphors, and sayings to get their intended meaning across. This is why if you're not a native translator, such meaning could literally get lost in translation because you may not be aware of the hidden meaning behind the saying.

### 6. Different dialects

It may come as no surprise that given China's vast size, the population spread across its land is prone to speak different dialects and sub-language groups that are part of Chinese. What's more is that there's simplified and traditional Chinese, implemented after the 1950s, which makes translating Chinese that much more difficult. The translator involved in your translation project should be aware of which region in the country the source document is from and be familiar with their style and language usage in order to prepare a translation that's as accurate a representation of the original meaning as possible.

### 7. Tones

Chinese is a language that's made of four main tones. While this may sound quite simple at first, it gets challenging pretty quickly. This is because one short word like "mother", pronounced "ma", can have four different variations depending on the way the word is pronounced and the way in which the tone is expressed. In addition, the absence of a Chinese alphabet and the characterization of words to form a sentence means that using a dictionary to find your chosen words becomes that much more difficult.

### 8. Bonus: Chinese fonts

Finally, Chinese strokes can also pose complications when one translates English to Chinese. There are several fonts that are most commonly used that the translator will need to be familiar with, and apart from this, we return to the traditional vs. simplified Chinese. While some Chinese calligraphy fonts appear bolder, others are more narrow and thin. This can confuse a translator who is trained in translating traditional Chinese compared to one who's trained to translate simplified Chinese. As a final point, Chinese used to be written from top to bottom, but this changed to the Western-style left to right, meaning that translating older works may be a challenge as well. Especially with the strokes of the characters, and the font used to translate them from or into.

### Final thoughts

Given all the challenges mentioned above, it's clear to see that an accurate rendering of a world from English to Chinese or Chinese to English will require significant effort to convey the accurate meaning that was initially intended. Whether word order or sentence structure, it's hard for machines to provide an accurate translation and this is where native translators come to the game. However, even with native translators, there remains another challenge and that is the issue of different dialects. While the government has tried to simplify the language since the 1950s with the use of simplified Chinese, there still remain many works, especially literary works that are in the traditional style and their meaning, absence of sentence structure, placement of characters next to each other to form new words and meanings, as well as the issue of idioms, metaphors, and sayings are critical factors for a translator to keep in mind as they proceed to translate into Chinese.

# The Two Sides of The Coin

## Ricard Sierra

The idea to present together is also a reflection of how multiculturally diverse our industry is, but at the same time how similar we really are. That's why we decided to name it "The Two Sides of the Coin" because even though it would seem that a Spaniard working for direct clients and a Bulgarian working for an Asian languages company for other LSPs have very little in common, the real truth is that we share a lot of similarities on so many different levels. It also goes to show how easy it is for two people from different cultures to connect and work together.

## Gergana Toleva

The one thing about our industry that fascinates me is how open we are to sharing. We live, work, and breathe with language, different cultures, and people from around the world. These very specifics of our field made the idea of creating "The Two Sides of the Coin" a reality. For me and Ricard, walking the road together to make it happen is an amazing journey, teaching us how little but at the same time important the nuances of the localization industry are. The most precious gifts we have at the end of the day are friendship and knowledge. And that is what we all dream about, right?

# THE CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING KHMER LANGUAGE

**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

Cambodia is a fascinating country. If you think it's only about Tomb Raider being shot there, you'd be wrong. Apart from the delicacies and tasty foods, there are so many different things to experience there. There are temples which you can reach by tuk tuks. There is a vibrant nightlife in Siem Riep, you can watch elephants take a stroll in Angkor Wat and so much more! As a foreigner travelling to Cambodia, it's always a sign of respect to learn a few of the local words to help you get by. However, this situation gets a bit complicated when it comes to this special country because of the variety of different dialects and the sheer complexity of the language. That's why if you want to translate English to Khmer or translate Khmer to English, it can be quite challenging.

## Different dialects

As a starting point, the Khmer alphabet consists of 33 consonants and 24 vowels. And while in general writing happens from left to right, there are no spaces between the words, making them hard to distinguish if you're not a native, and secondly, some of the consonants are placed under each other to create specific and unique sounds.

Apart from having one alphabet, there are so many different dialects of this one Khmer language, which is believed to be spoken by about 16 million people. Wondering about all these dialects?

## Here is a brief summary of the most common ones:

**Standard Khmer:** this is the dialect used around the capital and its surrounds, it is taught in schools, used by the government as an official language and is also used for legal texts.

**Battambang Khmer:** this dialect is spoken in the central region and Siem Riep.

**Battambang Khmer:** this dialect is spoken in the central region and Siem Riep.

**Phnom Penh Khmer:** the dialect that's spoken in the capital and its surrounding areas.

**Northern Khmer of the Khmer Surin:** you will be able to hear this dialect in the Thai province of Surin, Sisaket, Buriram and Roi Et.

**Cardmom Khmer, Western Khmer or Chanthaburi Khmer:** this is spoken by people in the Cardamoms mountains.

Other dialects include:
· Khmer Krom or Southern Khmer/Vietnamese Khmer
· Khmer Khe or Kes, which is spoken in the Stung Treng Province
· Khmer Loeu, primarily spoken in the province of Ratanakiri

With so many different dialects, it is no wonder that translators face so many challenges!

## Translation challenges

So, what about the challenges of translating Khmer? If you needed English to Khmer or if you needed to simply translate Khmer – what are some of the obstacles you may encounter? Well, there are several.

Firstly, because of the French influence in the country, the intermingling of French words in the language (apart from all its dialects) means that a translator would not only need to know the correct dialect of Khmer but also be familiar with French and the target language for translation.

Secondly, is the issue of spacing. While English uses a space between each word no matter how short it may be, there is no such distinction in the Khmer language, which has its origins in ancient Indian languages such as Sanskrit.

Thirdly, there's the issue of tenses and plural forms of nouns. While the rules for these are quite simple and there are no verb tenses or plural nouns in Khmer, this is where it starts getting difficult. This is because there are many complications when it comes to a person's status in life and how they are addressed. For example, depending on your age, gender, and status, there is no specialized form of "you" in Khmer. Rather, you would need to use the status-appropriate word to describe the person. As such, these differences can't really be translated into English, making this a further challenge.

A fourth issue to consider when translating English to Cambodian is related to scientific words that often don't have a Cambodian equivalent. What often happens in such cases is that "unintended meanings emerge during translation"

Finally, there's the issue of modifiers. For example, a modifier is placed in front of all cylindrical objects, such as a pencil. However, there is no such equivalent in English and this is therefore often omitted from the translation.

## Conclusion

Luckily, with the onset and advancements in technology, translating English to Khmer or Khmer to English has been somewhat eased. This is especially the case as Khmer became the 66th language that can be machine-translated by Google Translate. Although it may not yield perfect results, it's a step in the right direction to ensuring a smoother process of communication between English and Khmer speakers.

Focus on
Experts

# ASIAN LANGUAGES & CAT TOOLS FOR PROFESSIONALS



**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

It's well-known that Asian languages cannot be easily classified. They come with complex alphabets, sometimes no spaces between words, in other cases there is simply no punctuation. While Latin-based languages have some type of consistency about them, it's hard to say the same about Asian languages. Translators know this better than anyone. And even more so, translators who work with computer assisted translation, or CAT/CAT tools as they are known in the industry, there are several challenges with CAT tools that one needs to be aware of. So, what are these challenges and what types of CAT tool errors can you expect to see if you're a professional translator? We take a look at some examples.

## Japanese

One of the first CAT tool bugs for Asian languages relates to the use of numerals in Japanese. While it is possible to use both Arabic numbers or Japanese characters to express numbers, by a linguist entering the Japanese characters representing the Arabic numbers, the CAT translation will record an error. This is because it doesn't see the Arabic number in the translation as it searches for it. This type of error is known as a "false positive", which essentially means that there's an error that's recorded but it is not an error per se.

## Chinese

The opposite is also true for Chinese when it comes to expressing numbers. For example, if the source indicates the date of 21 October 2021, the Chinese translation will be recorded as 2021年10月21日 and the computer assisted translation tools will record the error as there being too many extra numbers.

## Thai

There is also an issue with fonts. For example, when a language such as Thai is used and there are no pre-installed fonts, the computer aided translation tools will simply show the Thai language as a set of blocks.

In addition to this, some CAT tools have the option of limiting the number of symbols per segment, which can really be a challenge for translators.

What's also interesting to know is that in Thai, there are no punctuation marks. A simple space indicates the end of a sentence and a sentence in the tool will simply appear as one very long symbol.

Finally, memoQ is a CAT tool that doesn't have the option for translating Thai, while Trados does have this but it does not really translate as accurately as possible. Transit is possibly one of the better options on the market with Asian languages translations owing to accuracy that's in the region of 90%.

## Returning to Chinese

Furthermore, there are challenges in formatting. For example, in English it's common to leave a space after a period. However, there is no such thing in Chinese and the CAT tools translation will record an error with "formatting issues".

Staying with the periods, in English, a period is expressed as (.), while in Chinese the period is expressed as (。). In such cases, the CAT tool will again issue an error saying that "The punctuation at the end of the sentence is incorrect."

Next up is the issue of parentheses. In English, these are typically the most common types of parentheses used: (). Meanwhile, in Chinese the parentheses are expressed as follows （）. Not only do they look slightly different but they also have more space between them. Here is an example of this:

（Chinese），(English)

## Back to Japanese

Other challenges with CAT (computer assisted translation) is when they mark as an error the repetition of certain characters. For example, this is what has been written in Japanese: ここがそののち、敵に見つかる. The repetition of のの will often appear as an error in a CAT tool even though it actually isn't. Once again, this is considered a false positive and an error of "repetitive characters" will arise.

## Final thoughts

Although designed to make our lives as translators much easier, CAT tools are imperfect and it often takes a real human being to be able to pick up on such CAT errors and reconcile them with the text. From punctuation to fonts, or even missing language segments, CAT tools have their limitations and although extremely helpful for large-scale projects, the experience of a qualified professional will always be valued.



"Translating **Asian languages** with CAT tools does help the process go faster and additionally saves time for the linguist. Through the CAT tool, a translator can run a QA and see if there are grammatical or punctuational errors. CAT tools can also work with TM (translation memory) from previous translations which can further *speed up* the process and *improve* the quality of translation."
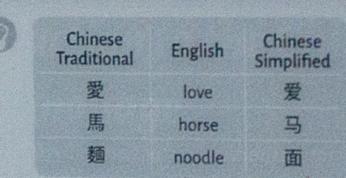
**Rosen Ivanov**
Account Manager

# S IT BETTER TO HAVE AN LSP TO HANDLE YOUR ASIAN TRANSLATIONS?

**Gergana Toleva**
Head of Global Marketing

The question we are asking today is about the advantages and disadvantages of having an LSP for a partner when it comes to translation services. It is one that has been addressed many times already. However, with the growing demand for Asian languages, we feel it is important for us to share our five cents on the topic. The truth is that as a company working with other translation companies, we've been in the shoes of both sides – approached by loads of smaller companies who'd like to work with us and at the same time receiving hundreds of CVs of freelancers monthly.

As an LSP working for other LSPs in a very niche market (Asian languages) we'd like to share with you some of the advantages which you might consider for choosing the proper solution for your own company.

## Cultural barrier with freelancers from Asia

And believe me, it is like the Great Wall of China when it comes to communicating with people from the East. Why does it matter?

You already know that resources in any language have to be local, meaning people who work and live in the country for the language they translate.

If you are looking for efficiency when it comes to delivering your projects on time to your clients, the cultural barrier can be a real problem. It takes more time to understand, negotiate and process a job for a PM that is not experienced in working with people from the East. What an LSP has as an advantage here is that their own teams have already learned the drill and they can remove this burden from your shoulders.

One of the main reasons we have a special structure different from other companies is exactly that, because communicating with our own partners easily and effortlessly in their "own" language makes it much easier for them.

## Latest technology for your clients without investment for your company

It might actually sound a bit cheesy, but it is true at least from our point of view as a language service provider. Have you stumbled upon a case where you need a translator, let's say, in Simplified Chinese as well as in the medical field? You already know it is not an easy thing to do but then your client requests this to be done only in one specific CAT tool, which he has already invested in and can operate with. Along with that, they use a specific TMS where they insist the project be assigned and delivered. That makes taking the job quite a challenge for you.

The thing is LSPs invest a lot of time in order to gather all the latest technology and be up to date with it. That means that we take the time to study the tools, set up the proper operations and train our teams, so they can flawlessly work with it.

Another big advantage of having us on your side is that you can benefit from our own portfolio. If you know what we can offer to you, then you can offer the same to your potential clients and thus diversify your portfolio.

## Larger volumes, bigger clients

You sometimes have this really great opportunity to work with clients that are way higher caliber than your current ones. And this will give you the chance to develop your company. However, what stops you is that you might be afraid you are going to get a bigger bite than you can chew. This is where a reliable language service provider can come in handy with their resources and higher volume capacity.

I am not saying you need to stop using freelancers. On the contrary, for me the right formula is the proper mixture of having a good pool of freelancers along with a number of chosen LSPs. Walking the fine line between freelancers and vendors always makes you more flexible in regard to your own clients.

My advice is to deliver the less complicated languages with freelancers and offer the more complicated ones, like Asian languages with a carefully chosen LSP partner.

In conclusion, I have to say that I've chosen only a few main directions for this article mainly to keep it short and concise. There are plenty of other factors that will point you in one or the other direction in the future. The purpose of this article is not to point you in the direction of using only one LSP as a partner. It is to create an awareness of when an LSP can be a solution when you need that little push forward in order to make progress. When I say progress, this covers both – progress for your company and your clients at the same time. After all, the more we do for our clients, the more success they will have, which is our most important goal, right?

# WHEN NOT TO CHOOSE NATIVE TRANSLATORS

**Gergana Toleva**
Head of Global Marketing

In the last several months, I am actively paying attention to all new and relevant sales techniques that might bring a great experience to our potential and current clients. Our business development team keeps inventing new approaches, and I tend to find inspiration for some of the articles we create from those moments when they walk the mile and are more an advisor than a salesperson. And very recently a wonderful lesson about native translators came to my attention showcasing a few features of the Chinese market that brought me to this article.

Drawing inspiration from my colleague Robin, I am going to talk about transcreation and some cases where our cultural differences and perceptions make the approach to a market especially tricky. At the same time, I want us to gain some understanding on why exactly transcreation is quite a task to behold and that sometimes even the best native translator might not be the best transcreator.

## Essentials for transcreation

Robin speaking here: "I would say that for transcreation jobs, the **cultural understanding** is more important than perfect language skills—a British guy who lives in China for ten years could have a great understanding of the tea culture there—but a Chinese guy who lives in Europe for ten years could have that knowledge as well, right?

I think if we can make that distinction between cultural knowledge vs language knowledge, this point becomes more clear."

## Natives vs Non-natives

There are numerous cases where we would aim to use native translators and this is going to work in our favor. Let's take some of the main languages like Chinese, Japanese or Korean for that matter – certain texts and materials do need to have a very good understanding of the subtleties that lie in the culture itself. In these cases,

it is important that the translator grasp to transmit the right message to the target audience.

But back to the topic at hand:

## When NOT to use a native translator

Usually, we choose the native translators so they can blend in their local knowledge into the translation and we want to sound closer and understandable to the target audience in a certain region. It doesn't matter in this case if we are talking about China, India or Japan. It is one and the same.

Selling popular western products on the Asian markets needs thorough research. The moment when you stumble upon a cultural difference like tea, for example, is when you need to seriously consider what your approach is going to be. That concerns the strategy of producing your translations, too.



One approach would be to hire a fancy marketing company to do most of the copywriting, design ads, etc. But if you are on a budget, here is my solution:

Require a non-native translator to do the job of translating your materials and then negotiate for a native translator to do the final edit. Why?

The non-native translator will have the cultural perceptions of the west and thus a better understanding of what your product entails. That would make the product translation far more easy and relevant when it comes to the message it has to bring to the audience.

The second step, where a native translator will just polish the language, is going to give you the right sound for the purpose. That way the text will be checked for the subtle and tricky tone of voice and cultural subtleties that a non-native speaker might misinterpret.

## In conclusion

I know it is a strange kind of theory on my side, especially when all the talk is about native translators being the biggest asset of a translation company. However, sometimes what is important when it comes to advising our clients is to find the best solution. The biggest challenge is to meet their expectations and if that means using a non-native translator to do the job, why not?

The thing is that we need to be flexible. After all, if thinking out of the box makes a better solution for our client, isn't this what we are looking for?

Special thanks to Robin for always being creative, challenging and making special efforts with each and every partner of ours.

*Contact us!*

# SONGKRAN

## April 13-15

The traditional Thai New Year's holiday, Songkran, is widely considered to be the biggest water fight in the world. Songkran officially starts on April 13 every year, but people start celebrating early — be careful not to get your phone wet! The epicenter of Songkran is in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand.

# WHY SHOULD I SELL ASIAN LANGUAGES?

**Gergana Toleva**
Head of Global Marketing

If you are the Executive Director of a translation company and one of your main goals is to continue and secure the well-being of all your employees along with maintaining a steady income for the business itself, then this article might be for you. Today we've chosen to outline a few good reasons for any decision-maker on why considering Asian languages as an addition to your company's portfolio is a reasonable option.

But before we go there, here is some food for thought: throughout the years we've noticed that there is a certain level of insecurity when it comes to dealing with Asian languages without having the resources in-house. However, the diversity of these makes it highly improbable to have all you need within your own team. So it is a kind of a closed circle: you want it, the potential is there but you can't reach it. Do you see any resemblance? I suggest we tackle this one later on and without losing any more time, we're going straight to our first argument.

## Markets in Asia are thriving

We all see how fast China went back on track after the primary COVID-19 shock and now the country with one of the largest populations in the world is recording growth, while a lot of other markets in the west are still suffering. We also can't skip the fact that two of the fastest-growing economies in the world in 2021 are located in Asia (as per Nasdaq) – Macau and India. These developing markets are top locations for investors, too and that is the main reason we are pointing you in that direction. Being an LSP that works in B2B you surely would like to point your finger towards a profitable location to your clients, right?

## Limited number of clients within a certain sector

We'd surely be right to state that if you are a regional language provider and you offer a limited number of languages, then at some point the market opportunities you have available will be depleted. So what would be your options then, when you already have a well-

established reputation, connections with the companies and are already working with them on a regular basis. Should this be enough? What if you still want to grow?
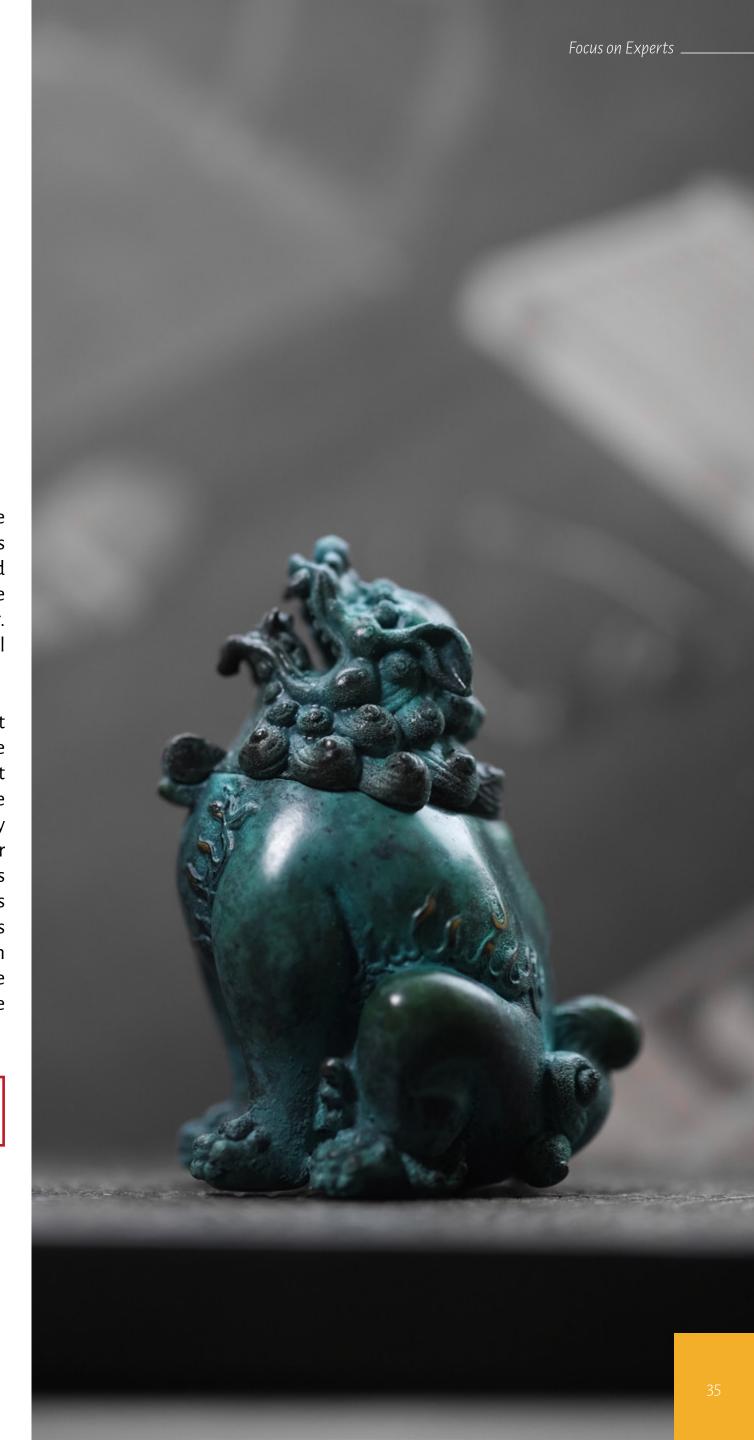
I'd say that this is not necessarily the case and one thing a manager can do is seek other opportunities to diversify the products the company offers. Here is the spot, where a good professional translation company can become a valuable partner for you. By choosing a reliable vendor with a single partnership you'll add more than just Chinese or Japanese to your portfolio. You get a single point of contact with a wide variety of services to offer and you get the chance to deal only with one company, not a whole fleet of freelancers.

## Wider range of services equals more opportunities

I don't think I should even convince you in the above statement as it speaks for itself. However, a rich service list gives you flexibility and this makes the glove fit

when it comes to business. If you have only one Japanese language translator you'd be limited with the topics covered, the CAT tools known, the estimated turnaround time, etc. Well working with a vendor gives you the opportunity to expand the services you are offering. That on the other hand widens the circle of potential new clients that might decide to work with you.

All of the above-listed reasons are good and valid but there is one more thing one should consider about these markets and it is the language barrier. Despite the fact that some Asian countries, like India for example, have adopted English as a second language the vast majority of people there will prefer to communicate in their native language. Language opens up the doors towards these markets and being language service providers one of our missions is exactly this – to open up the doors towards new opportunities. In the end, it all comes down to your team again. You either build it yourself – or have a partner who already has that knowledge (it's what we do all day long ;)).

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# THE CHALLENGE: DEVANAGARI SCRIPT & HINDI FONTS

**Enitsa Koeva**

Graphic Designer

Today we'll dive into the beautiful world of Hindi. Written in the elaborate Devanagari script—it is truly pleasing to the eye. Just look at it: हिन्दी. The Devanagari script, also called Nagari, falls under the umbrella of the abugida writing systems. Abugidas are segmental writing systems consisting of units. Each unit has a consonant letter and a secondary vowel notation. Unlike alphabets where consonants and vowels have equal status.

In this article, we'll try to present the topic in a simple manner and we hope this would help everyone out there making their first steps in the vast field of Hindi typography.

## The different kinds of Hindi fonts

In the western hemisphere, we are used to basically three kinds of fonts—serif, sans serif, and decorative ones. When it comes to Hindi, it is not so different but the eye needs to get acquainted with the shapes and forms of the Devanagari script.

**1. The classics.** Fonts with contrasting stroke thickness (see the example below) have a more traditional feel to them. This is because these contrasting strokes imitate the strokes made by hand with the pen held at a certain angle. Keep in mind that fonts, where this contrast is really high, would be an excellent choice for headings, posters, and the likes. But they would produce poor readability if used in body text. Fonts with a moderate contrast will provide smooth readability at any size.

**Examples:**
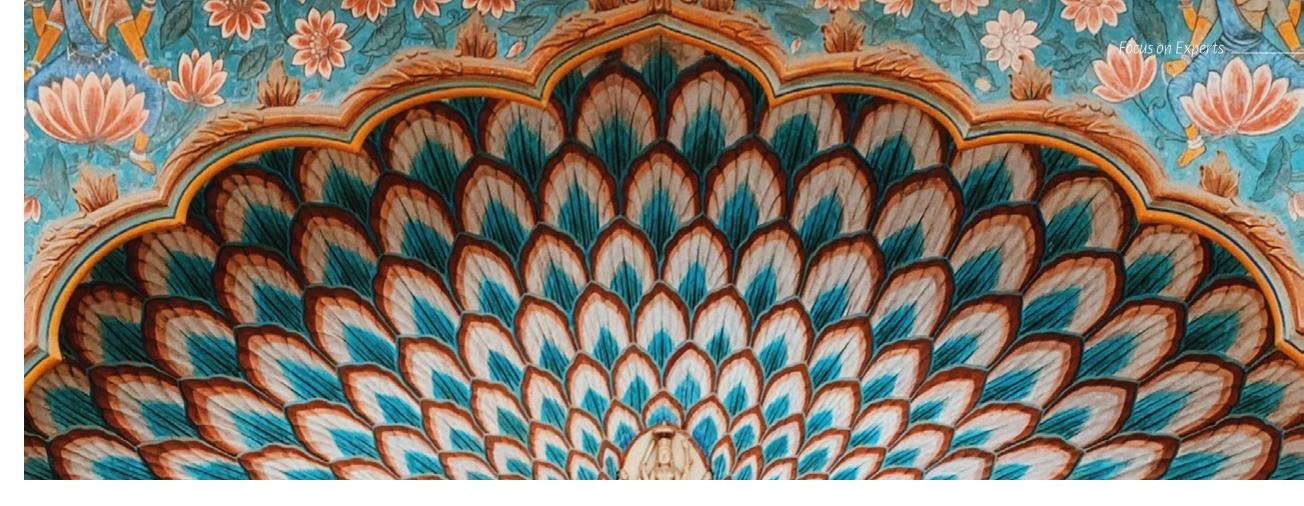Lower contrast: Sumana, Amma Hindi, Kohinoor Devanagari, Aparajita
Higher contrast: Rozha One, Yatra One


Aparajita


Rozha One

**2. The modern.** Fonts with uniform stroke thickness (see the example below) generally have a more modern look. They are basically what the Latin grotesque fonts are. Among them, there are some very geometric and some futuristic ones.


Mangal


Noto Sans

**Examples:**
Mangal, Utsaah, Biryani, Kokila, Nirmala, Chandra, Devanagari Noto Sans*

*In our article about Chinese fonts, we already mentioned the Noto Sans family but we simply love the goal of this project—a single font covering all the languages!

**3. The decorative.** Very much like their Latin counterparts, the decorative Hindi fonts are often very elaborate, sometimes imitating handwritten brush strokes, sometimes highly stylized or with an abundance of ornaments. Needless to say, they are a no-go for body text. But they can create some spectacular headings.

**Examples:**
Tillana, Modak, Brahmos Devanagari, Aarti


Modak

## Let's talk DTP

Typesetting text in Hindi has its own set of difficulties. It could be especially difficult if you don't personally know the language. But do not fret, we're here to help! Here are some basic guidelines which hopefully will help you on your journey in working with Hindi.

**1. Metric tracking.** You've probably noticed that line going horizontally across the Hindi text. It should always be continuous—no gaps. In order to ensure that, you need to set the tracking to metric. If you're using InDesign it's most probably set to metric by default but it's good to keep that in mind anyways.

2. There is **no** such thing as **capital letters** in Hindi.

**3. World-ready paragraph composer.** Use it, it's a must! If you're not sure how to do that, there are two ways to set that option (I'm assuming you are using InDesign as it's the most popular tool). The first is through the **Paragraph panel**—click on the little "four horizontal lines" icon in the upper right corner of the panel. In the second section of the drop-down menu, you will see four options: Adobe World-Ready Single-line Composer, Adobe World-Ready Paragraph Composer, Adobe Paragraph Composer, and Adobe Single-line Composer. Choose the first or the second option according to your needs. That will apply to the whole paragraph where your cursor is located no matter if it's selected manually (highlighted) or not. If you have multi-paragraph text— select all the paragraphs you

want to apply the setting to. The second way is through the little "three horizontal lines" icon in the upper right corner of InDesign's window. Your cursor needs to be in the text as this menu is contextual. Same rules for application as in the previous method.

**4. Punctuation.** Unlike the full stop used in English, a vertical bar (|) is used in Hindi. Commas, semicolons, question marks, and exclamation marks are used the same way as in English.

**5. Italics, underline, and overline** are sometimes used in Hindi text but from a typographical standpoint, it's certainly a bad practice so try to avoid them. Instead, use different font weights to achieve emphasis.

**6. Legacy Devanagari fonts.** They can create a lot of problems so it's best to substitute them with Unicode fonts. Thankfully, there are already a lot of Devanagari Google fonts available and generally, this issue will occur less and less in the future.

## Conclusion

With this summary, we're trying to be helpful to as many professionals as we can. Be it graphic designers, DTP professionals, project managers, or simply Hindi typography enthusiasts. So we prepared a list of handy links to make your life easier and to spare you some time you could spend reading our amazing blog instead ;) Joke aside,

· Here you can find 50 Hindi fonts (all of them Unicode) all ready for download.
· And here is the go-to place for your Hindi web font needs.

# HOLI FESTIVAL

## March 18

**18th of March** is the first day of the Holi Festival in 2022, also known as the Festival of Colors. This religious holiday is designed to celebrate the arrival of spring, which symbolizes fertility, flowers and love. In India and Nepal, pilgrims celebrate the event by covering each other with colored powders. Thanks to this unique holiday and its joyful atmosphere, Holi celebrations are held all over the world.

Media
Buzz

# NEXT KOREAN DRAMA SHOW: MY NAME

NETFLIX



*Picture: My Name series, source: www.imdb.com*

There's nothing better than curling up on the sofa to watch a series. And what's even better is the fact that you can now watch or stream South Korean dramas and series. They've been popular for quite some time now, stimulated by the export of Korean culture as the government seeks to boost its global soft power. But one Korean series that you would have definitely heard about is the one known as *Squid Game*. According to Netflix Co-CEO Ted Sarandos, this series has "a very good chance" of being Netflix's most popular show ever.

However, this article is not about the *Squid Game* translation that went wrong as there are plenty of articles on the topic already. We are aiming to anticipate what is going to be the next Korean series to pick your attention and top of that a guide on what to watch out for, so you know how to read between the lines (subtitles).

**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

So we've got a recommendation for you and on top of this, we asked our media expert Semi Hong to watch it with English subtitles and all.

Have you heard about *My Name*? If the answer is negative, then it is time to do some research and check it out. *My Name* is a story about a woman who joins a gang to avenge her father's death and then goes undercover as a cop. No more teasers, we promise! We do have some other things to say about it though...

The series is in a genre that is known as Crime and Noir, which has certain features that are typical for its kind. One of these being a lot of curses and swear words. They are sometimes full of real action, gunfights, street brawls, and lots of complicated relationships. I am sure we already spiked your interest with that description but one thing that can surely spoil your true experience while watching this is inadequate translation.
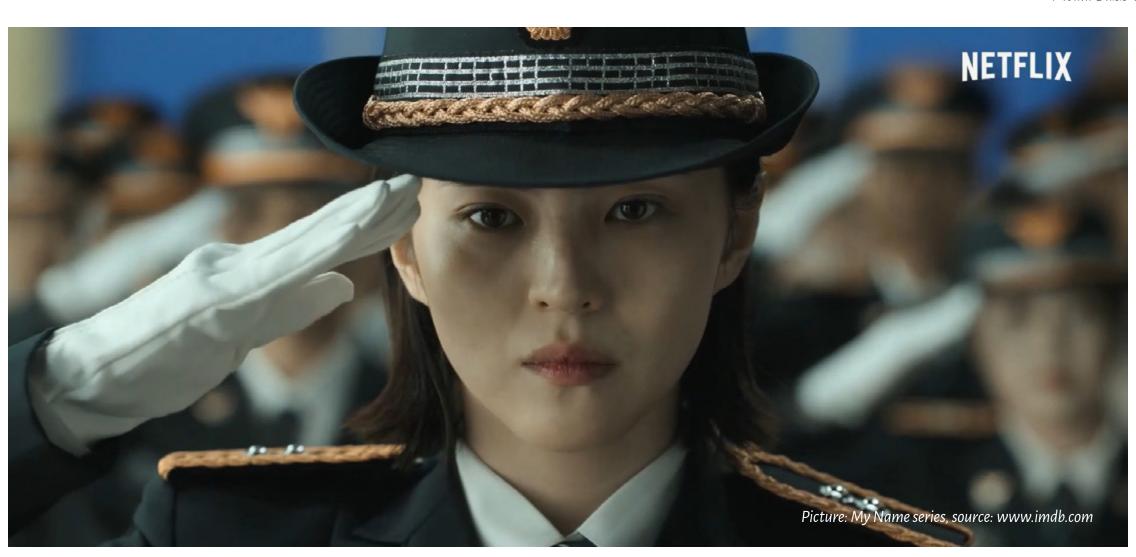
## The Major Slip-Ups in Subtitling Korean Productions

### Swear Words
Semi, who is also a native Korean speaker and heading our 1-StopMedia brand, shares that one thing the subtitles

of *My Name* are lacking is surely the presence of swear words. As the Noir genre has "explicit vocabulary" as a specific feature, it is almost obligatory to find the proper way to transmit these in the proper way into English as well. We are aware that when subtitles are created in another language, the translation avoids swear words, however, when this is part of the genre, it is expected by the audience to have them. The lack of those in the subtitles is twisting the meaning and message the story conveys.

If we have to be particular in the series *My Name* words like f\*\*k and sh\*t are missing in many places in the English subtitles. As Semi explained: *English subtitles do not contain many swear words which actually express and*

*amplify actors' emotions when being used"*, so the emotions transmitted in English are bland and plain, when I see the subtitles, while the actual Korean words are pretty harsh and strong.

### Complicated Relationships
There is a very bright example in *My Name* with the word "짭새 (Jjabsae)", which is a derogatory word for police, which actually gives more taste to the conversation in the show. However, this word is missing in the translated version of the subtitle and the expression became very plain.

I would add that Korean is a rather delicate and sensitive language describing complex relationships between people, emotions, colors and even seasons. Partly this is happening with the usage of honorifics which play a huge role in Korean culture. There are dozens of ways to address a person depending on their age, rank, gender, status, social standing, and more.

### Other challenges
The connoisseurs of Korean dramas would also pose the question of westernization of the genre especially with their growing popularity and the involvement of large western production companies like Netflix. Certain features can be mildly "watered down", so the series look more appealing to the western audience.

Another interesting feature to mention is the expectation of a sequel, which is so typical for popular series. However, don't expect this to happen for Korean dramas, as usually one season wraps up the whole story and there is no next season.

## Conclusion

The demand for Asian media is only set to increase as more and more local content is produced. Along with that there is a certain intrigue in the far more different movie and media culture there is in Asia and this is a breath of fresh air in the streamlined world of western media. Huge companies like Netflix are looking for diversification and with this sometimes the language barrier becomes more visible than ever.

Because of the intricacies of Asian languages, a few small mistakes can make entire characters and episodes make no sense as well as convey a completely different message making the viewer experience way worse as well as pissing off a lot of native speakers. The importance of localization in entertainment cannot be underestimated and cultural nuances and depth need to find a way to reach the greater audience it is intended for in order to give them richer, more accurate entertainment.

# VIDEO LOCALIZATION FOR ASIAN LANGUAGES

**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

The importance of video cannot be underestimated in our current times. Following that trend video localization becomes an irreplaceable service as globalization continues.Here are some facts and statistics to put things in perspective:

— Online videos will contribute to over 82% of all consumer internet traffic by 2022, which is 15 times higher than figures on 2017
— According to studies, 54% of consumers would like to see more video content from a brand/business they support
— It is also reported that viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, when compared to only 10% when reading it in a text

With YouTube surpassing Google as a search engine for videos, it is unlikely that this trend will wane. In fact, video is set to play an ever increasing role in the business and entertainment space. Whether for tutorials, vlogs, interviews, product reviews and demos, live streams, event recaps and presentation videos, video advertisements, testimonials, webinars or product presentations, when it comes to video localization for Asian languages, a few important factors need to be taken into account.

## 1. Target audience and cultural sensitivities

Asia is home to 48 different countries, with the number of languages and language groups spoken there being very diverse from one another. In addition to this, there are so many cultural forces at play that these are difficult to ignore and shouldn't be. Especially when it comes to video localization. This is why video services for Asian languages need to consider cultural elements and sensitivities when converting a video from English into an Asian language product. This means not only taking into account the words that are actually spoken in the original video, which will then either be dubbed or subtitled, but also the music in the video itself, the

type of characters portrayed if it's an animation, the background as well as the colors used.

## 2. Duration and content

Video is quite a tricky animal to tame. Its creation entails several different forces which play a role simultaneously. These may range from the actual speech, to the music, the background of the video etc. Content is critical here as localization services will need to take into account nuances and emphasis placed on certain words, determining whether the emphasis will have the same effect in the target language. In addition, the content itself needs to be adapted so that it does not offend or even confuse the target audience, especially those in

Asia. Duration of the video itself is another critical factor. This is because a viewer's attention is usually captured within the first 15 seconds of a video being watched, and research indicates that corporate videos are now between 1-2 minutes long only. This does not provide much space for getting your ideas across and therefore, videos not only need to be punchy and to the point, but also catchy in order to grab the viewer's attention quickly.

## 3. Editing

One rule of thumb when it comes to localizing video, especially in Asian languages, is that it's best to work with an unedited video and localize it, instead of working with an edited video that needs to be entirely reworked. The amount of effort required to rework an edited video is significantly higher. Therefore, when localizing video content, consider using the original video as your starting point and then moving it forward to be localized.

## 4. Localization method

Choosing the right localization method will have you deciding between whether to use synchronized or unsynchronized dubbing or subtitles instead. Dubbing is usually the more expensive version when compared to subtitling but its effects can be more profound. However, if you choose to go the subtitling route, consider the fact that there's a very limited space for your audience to read what's on the screen. It takes them about 3 seconds to read one line and while English uses fewer words and letters, Asian languages use characters and in languages such as Chinese, 20 characters per line

is usually the norm for the average reader. Subtitles are not that common in Asia, with a vast majority of audiences preferring dubbing and voice-overs.

## 5. Planning

Planning starts out by the identification of the target audience, the target language, cultural sensitivities and common local practices and customs, as well as whether you're working with an already edited video or one that hasn't been "touched" yet to enable you to localize it. Well-planned is halfway done, as they say, and it would be wise to put in the necessary effort in the preparation of each video — from the script to your chosen localization method to ensure that it conveys the desired message in a non-offensive way.

## 6. Music

Music that's used in the original video will also need to change according to local customs and will therefore need to be localized. Therefore, consider removing any music from the video that might cause offense and replace it with a local version that's likely to catch the viewer's attention rather than draw them away.

## 7. SEO

Search Engine Optimization or SEO as it's commonly referred to, is another key consideration when planning to engage in Asian languages localization. This refers to the ability of search engines such as Google to identify the video as a high-quality addition to a specific search

and present it in a higher place on the search engine results page (SERP). Here, your video will need accurate metadata, which is ultimately the video's title, a meta description, and tags that will be used to identify the video.
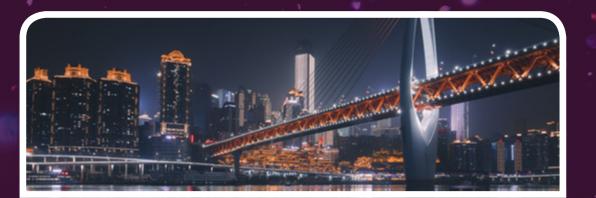
## 8. Budget

We now come to the final point regarding video localization in Asian languages, and although it's the final one, it's certainly not the least important. When it comes to localization services, especially in Asian languages, you will need to work with a localization partner who can truly understand your needs and rise to the challenge by offering key deliverables within the project's timeframe. However, keep in mind that the cheapest option is not always the best one and if you opt for a low-quality video localization, you may need to re-edit, re-translate, and re-localize multiple facets of your video in order to make it attractive and presentable to your audience.

## Final thoughts

The use and consumption of video is only set to skyrocket in the next couple of years as consumers choose this content delivery method over text and other forms. This is why the question now is not whether you should engage in creating quality video content for your audience but when. The sooner you start the better. When it comes to Asian languages, you need to consider adopting the services of a high-quality Asian languages localization provider, who will be able to take into account cultural differences and nuances and portray the main message in your video effectively for maximum exposure and effect.
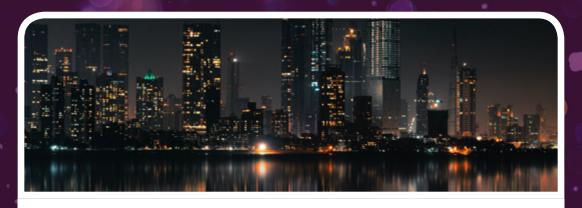
# 4 Facts About Asian Media Markets
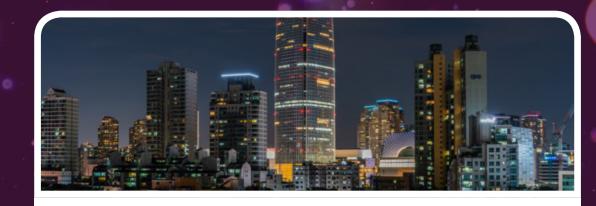## *for Media Tranlslation Services*

**China** is the **biggest movie market** as per latest stats

In 2020 **Vietnam** adopted a long-term strategy for increase and **improvement of media sector**

**India's** media and entertainment industry has been growing steeply with a **25% growth** for 2021

In 2021 **Korean audience** shifts its interest towards **foreign productions**

# WORD COUNT FOR JAPANESE FOR PROJECT MANAGERS

**Rosen Ivanov**

Account Manager

Special credit to our colleague and "Ace" Account Manager Rosen Ivanov. We couldn't have done it without you!

For three years in the translation industry, I learned a trick or two on the peculiarities of working with Asian languages. Sometimes my quest for searching interesting and professional topics leads me in very curious directions but a few months ago, when we did a webinar on Asian languages translation with GALA, I noticed something else. Because it is part of our daily work routine, I didn't even notice that some of the most "usual" topics for us, might be a potential point of interest or something that our colleagues from other companies are curious to know more about. Two more webinars later with topics concerning Asian languages and I decided to pick up the "generic" topic of *Word Count for Japanese for Project Managers*. Why?...

Because people ask, it is industry-specific, it is useful and yes...it is about Japanese!

## So what's the hassle with word count for Japanese?

Now let me tell you something I have learned so far...

"If you want to know what can go wrong in a translation project, take Japanese and try to go through all the professional stages of a translation project yourself."

Starting with the writing system, going through the cultural differences, then the specifics on working with CAT tools and choosing the right linguists, you name it—you'll have it! However, we are not here to discuss the specifics of the language as we have that covered in our book on Asian languages (Asian Languages Translation — As Simple As It Gets). We want to outline some practical advice for PMs on Japanese word count and what to have in mind when processing such translations.

## Writing system specifics affecting word count for Japanese

The first thing we need to point out here is that because of the way Japanese is written there are a number of ways to go about word count. If we have a project from English (or any other Latin-based language) into Japanese it is a no-brainer — we use source language word count. It is easy, straightforward and CAT tools have no issues with it.

The tricky part comes when we have to do the opposite and prepare a quotation from Japanese to English (or another language).

Most translation companies have an approximate ratio for how much a language contracts or expands but this is useful only to provide an estimate for budgeting purposes. Reaching the point where you have to take a project you need to have a clear understanding with your client how much it will cost.

The options available are two: use target language word count or use source language character count. However, both have specifics you must be aware of as follows:

## Target language word count

Target language word count means we approximately predict how many words will be the target language. For your client that translates into an unclear amount of money until the translation is complete. That is a position not many customers would like to be in, right? What we'd recommend is using source language characters for the quotation.

## Source language character count

Source language character count might sound complicated but in reality, despite the exotic sound, it will give you exactly what your customers want — a clear estimate on how much they need to pay. The only thing you should do is just explain to your client why we count the characters instead of words.

## Are CAT tools reliable for Japanese?

As with the word count, there is no simple answer here. The truth is if you know how to navigate the particulars of a language, then almost any CAT tool can do the job. Some better, some with a bit more additional work but CAT tools are useful not only for the quotation part but also at later stages.

To get a better understanding of what our Production team thinks about these, I went to one of my most trusted resources on the matter — Rosen Ivanov, Account Manager at our EU office. I simply asked him about his experience with Japanese for PMs, which is quite extensive.

As we work with almost any CAT tool on the market due to the specifics of our business, I must say we don't show preferences to one or another as usually, our clients request from us which one to use. There are some things you need to look out for, however, and I'll point out only a few in the next paragraph along with some other tips on what affects the word/character count.

**Things to Watch Out for**

There are two aspects here that we will talk about: linguistics and CAT tool highlights. I'll start with the linguistics part affecting the volume of a project.

1. Consider the topic when doing an approximate estimation — the more modern and contemporary topics like IT, computer sciences, and others of the kind include more Katakana characters and sometimes this affects the volume of the text.

2. The ratio you'll find online varies slightly between 2:1 or 2.5:1 (characters to words) and this has to do with the above point we made.

3. When choosing a CAT tool look at its settings and what does it actually count.

4. Pay attention to "hidden" formatting like spaces or "enter" keys which may affect the segmentation of the text.

5. Stipulate which content is translatable and which not — pictures, stamps, and other similar details.

6. Don't use Microsoft Word except if you have the proper version of it. There are differences in line braking, punctuation marks, and others that might mislead you sometimes.

7. Quote your client the same way you will pay your translator or vendor partner and provide a transparent and easy-to-understand quotation.

## The road to learning is asking more questions

Sometimes the simplest advice makes things easier for us and other times it raises more questions. I realize that articles are only scratching the surface on how to go about Japanese translation and word/character count. One thing that I can point out here is that we love to help and usually a well-posed question is what I would love to receive after you read this article. Technology is advancing very fast but in some of the Asian languages, it is lagging behind due to their complexity. Japanese is no exception to this trend but this is where we come in and you don't need a project to ask us a question about quoting Japanese or how to perform the word/character count for it.

# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AUDIOVISUAL TRANSLATION

**Desi Tzoneva**
Content Writer

The global streaming service, Netflix had 207.64 million paid subscribers worldwide in the first quarter of 2021, with most of the company's subscribers being based in the US and Canada accounting for over 74 million of the total subscriber base. The popularity of its streaming service is said to be on the rise. Meanwhile, as Apple and Disney+ introduce their over-the-top (OTT) streaming services, the popularity of streaming is certainly on a growth trajectory. As an example, Disney+ reported 10 million sign-ups within the first 24 hours of launching their service. With this being said, and with a massive global audience, there is an ever-increasing need for audiovisual translation as language barriers need to be broken down in order for viewers to get the main message conveyed. But what is audiovisual translation (AVT), what are the characteristics that comprise it, and what are the criteria for successful AVT translation – keep reading to find out more.

## What is audiovisual translation?

Delia Chiaro describes AVT in the following way: it is "the term used to refer to the transfer from one language to another of the verbal components contained in audiovisual works and products".

Such audiovisual works and products include, but are not limited to: feature films, television programs, theatrical plays, musicals, opera, web pages, and video games.

These products need to be translated to reach a global audience and are made to be heard and seen simultaneously.

## Characteristics of AVT

AVT has become a very much in-demand type of service as there's an increasing global audience for some of the products mentioned above. However, AVT has certain characteristics that define it in more detail. These include: changing registers, speech, subtitles, dubbing, localization, and AVT for the deaf community. These are explored in more detail below.

## Changing registers

Cultural and general knowledge is required by the translator in order to translate the audio and visual elements in a product effectively. Registers change depending on the type of product being translated. These products can range from children's films to horror films, or even documentaries that focus on nature. The topic in question demands a great depth of knowledge of a variety of cultural aspects and this is something a quality translator will be adept at.

## Speech

Translating speech, although it may appear seemingly easy, is not as seamless a process as it initially appears to be. Translating speech requires that the translator knows both the original and target languages well and then symbolize a dialogue into a natural extension of the original text. This is where cultural knowledge and localization play an important role.

## Subtitles

Subtitles are pieces of text which appear at the bottom part of a visual product which contain a translated text of what is being said on the screen. As with the importance of translating speech mentioned above, it's crucial for the subtitles to appear in the right sequence, and be accurately translated for meaning and context so as not to confuse the audience and create undecipherable sequences of text that are mismatched with the visual element that the viewer sees. Subtitles are an excellent way for those learning a foreign language to read the text in their native language while also hearing the pronunciation and intonation of the words being spoken in the target language. It is a popular method of watching foreign products and learning a new language.

## Dubbing

Dubbing refers to the process of using voice-over artists whose job is to correctly convey the tone, rhetoric, and meaning that is spoken by the original actor or individual in the product. However, dubbing requires a certain finesse as the voice-over actors need to not only be familiar with the translated text, which needs to be accurately localized, but also to convey the right feelings and emotions, subtle voice changes, expressions and more in order for the original actor's performance to be as accurately conveyed to the local audience as possible.

## Localization

Localization, on the other hand, refers to the exercise of literally "localizing" a text, image, or audio-visual element for the target audience by taking into account local cultural factors. For example, the English saying "When in Rome, do like the Romans" might be literally translated into German, the meaning that's conveyed by this expression – namely, that one should adjust their behavior depending on the circumstances they find themselves in – could become totally lost on the viewers. This is why certain nuances are required by the translator who understands idioms and their associated equivalents in the target language.

## AVT for the deaf

A hearing-impaired audience requires certain intricacies in the translation process, which is not only limited to the direct translation of conversations between people, but which also includes non-verbal or semi-verbal cues like sighs, for example.

## Criteria for successful AVT translation

In order for an AVT translation to be successful, there are certain processes that need to be followed by a translator. We list some of these below:

· Colloquialism should be used to a minimum
· A thorough understanding of the target culture is required

- Onomatopoeia and its equivalent sounds should be translated accurately
- Translators should become acquainted with sources in the field and conventional sources to help with unfamiliar terminology
- Avoid mismatches in translations by synchronizing with the subtitles that are shown
- Explore more than one possible translation option per given piece of text

## Final thoughts

The world of AVT is going to boom in the near future and translators need to be well-equipped and well-acquainted with the demands that AVT places on them. These challenges include not only technical know-how but also cultural awareness and a depth of knowledge in different subject areas to make the audio-visual translation as accurate as possible. In this post, we defined what AVT is, briefly discussed its characteristics, and mentioned some criteria for successful AVT translation. We hope this post will be useful to you going forward on your AVT journey.

"I begin like a groan hollowed out with ease, then end like a mouse with a head of hard cheese."

「水が流れて、1日経って、
お皿とウサギの頭があって、
ゴーレムのお尻は土の上」

*Visit our blog!*

An excellent example of localization done right is a riddle in the game *The Witcher 3*.

The Japanese version of the riddle is completely different, yet it managed to retain it's essence in it being a word puzzle and still lead to the same answer. What made this riddle so popular is that usually games locallized from English to Japanese are infamous for their poor translation, while many people assumed *The Witcher 3* was originally a Japanese game.

# 6 Important Markets
## *for Media Tranlslation Services*

### China

### Japan

### Korea

### India

### Vietnam

### Thailand

Takeaway

| 🇰🇷 Style and Name | Politeness | Formality | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hapsio-che *Deferential* | High | High | 빵이 맛있습니다. [ppang-i mas-iss-seub-ni-da] |
| Haeyo-chae *Polite* | High | Low | 빵이 맛있어요. [ppang-i mas-iss-woyo] |
| Hao-che *Semiformal* | Neutral | High | 빵이 맛있소. [ppang-i mas-iss-so] |
| Hagae-che *Familiar* | Neutral | Low | 빵이 맛있네. [ppang-i mas-iss-ne] |
| Banmal-che *Intimate* | Low | High | 빵이 맛있어. [ppang-i mas-iss-wo] |
| Haela-che *Plain* | Low | Low | 빵이 맛있다. [ppang-i mas-iss-da] |

# NTRODUCTION OF CONTEXT-AWARENESS IN NMT FOR KOREAN

**Nikola Stoyanov**
Content Manager

Neural Machine Translation is the latest technology in the world of automated translation, but it still has its limitations, especially when it comes down to more complex languages. We will take a look at some language-specific problems that Asian languages face. The Korean language poses a challenge, in particular, with its varied politeness and formality levels. And one of the ways to resolve honorifics is the context. What impact it could have on the translation industry and how it can be introduced into a machine translation algorithm—we will find out in this article. Furthermore, we are going to discuss these topics and decide for ourselves if the introduction of context-awareness in NMT can help increase the quality of translation and if we can look forward to this improvement for other Asian languages as well.

## Linguistic specifics that complicate things

It's of utmost importance to use the correct honorifics for some languages, such as Korean, Japanese, and Hindi. In Korean, honorifics are used in conversations with elders and people in superior positions. When it comes down to machine translation these honorifics are difficult to address, especially across different languages. There are three types of Korean honorifics—subject, object, and addressee honorification. In English, this is not the case. That makes the translation from English to Korean very challenging.

**Politeness and Formality Levels**
While the politeness level can be categorized as high, neutral, and low, at the same time the formality could be high or low, which can lead to 6 different ways of expression, depending on the relationship between the people in a conversation, as seen in the following graph.

Using the wrong style could lead to humiliation, embarrassment, or even as far as offending the audience.

This means that one cannot rely entirely on NMT, especially when it comes down to business and other formal conversations. This is where context-awareness comes into play.

## Why context matters

Providing context for the translators has always been one of the most important factors when trying to ensure a quality outcome. This can be done in a couple of ways—one is by providing as much information as possible on the given topic, making sure phrases and slang are explained, or even replacing words that could be misinterpreted.

Another good way is to provide visual context, as we know a picture is worth a thousand words. This could be a screenshot that directly points to the place the content would be, which can make the translator's job that much easier.

In that regard, context-awareness is the next step in the world of machine translation and it has already shown positive results. According to research done in 2021 by the Seoul National University, *"the context-aware NMT models can improve not only the translation quality but also the accuracy of honorifics"*. And of course, this could be used for other languages that have similar issues with MT.

## Introducing context into the algorithm

Context-awareness for NMT can be achieved by adding an honorific-labeled parallel corpus that could signify the relationship between the people in a given conversation. By adding relationship information like son, brother, director—all of these can establish who is the elder, or in a superior position. Even if they are outside the content that is being translated. It will provide much-needed context that will improve the quality and mark the proper honorific levels. In time, and as more data is gathered, context-awareness will become an important part of the machine translation software.

**How does it work?**
Generally, NMT models are operated at the sentence level; it takes an input sentence in a source language and returns an output sentence in a target language. On the other hand, a contextual encoder in NMT is designed to handle one or more contextual sentences as input and extract the contextual representation.

**(a)**

| Sentence | English | Korean |
|---|---|---|
| context_1 | You're back. | 자네들 또 왔구만. |
| context_0 | Yes, sir, we are. | 예, 어르신. |
| source/target | We're addicted to your citrus. | 저희는 어르신이 주신 감귤류에 중독됐어요. |

**(b)**

| Sentence | English | Korean |
|---|---|---|
| context_1 | You need to relax, okay? | 진정해 주실래요? |
| context_0 | You are not a suspect. | 당신은 용의자가 아닙니다. |
| source/target | We should find Jessica right now. | 저희는 빨리 제시카를 찾아야만 합니다. |

Let's see how this works in practice:

The examples are taken from the *Context-Aware Neural Machine Translation for Korean Honorific Expressions* article by Seoul National University. The dialogue is from their dataset, which is extracted from subtitles. The yellow words are verbs that are translated with polite and/or formal honorifics whereas the red words are translated with impolite and/or informal honorifics. The bold keywords are used to determine what types of honorifics should be used. The underlined pronouns indicate that the two utterances are told by the same speaker in **(a)** and the utterances are formal speech in **(b)**.

## Context-aware machine translation for Asian languages

In general, context is one of the largest problems of machine translation and its quality for most Asian languages. The Korean language is a fine example of this. An introduction to modern and new algorithms is always an opportunity to improve.

Another issue when it comes to machine translation and Asian languages has always been the lack of data. We've talked about Korean honorifics, but this could easily be used with similar success with different language-specific problems. Honorifics are used extensively and are an important part of Japanese, Hindi, and Javanese, among other languages. This is definitely a promising advancement in the field and we're looking forward to its further development.

In summary, the context-aware NMT models can improve not only the translation quality but also the accuracy of honorifics. While their improvements are less significant compared to the honorific-controlled models, they can nevertheless exploit the contextual information to aid in the correct translation of honorifics.

Special credits to **Yongkeun Hwang, Yanghoon Kim** and **Kyomin Jung** of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of "Seoul National University" for their research and development of *Context-Aware Neural Machine Translation for Korean Honorific Expressions*.

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