1-STOPASIA
EVERY WORD COUNTS

Pulse of Asia

Localization Steps for Multilingual Websites for Asia

The Challenges of Technical Document Translation

Challenges of Gaming Localization in Japan

In-House Linguists: the Crown Jewels of Every LSP

Preface

Dear Reader,

Feel the *Pulse of Asia* with our brand new Summer Edition for 2022.

As usual, we have handpicked our articles and we have chosen topics that are close to our hearts. Issues in the industry that need to be brought up and discussed.

You will find your multilingual worries answered at our *Localization Station*. Professionals on the other hand can dig deep in our *Focus on Experts* section where we shed some light on challenges we have experienced first-hand. After all of that, we suggest you get your media fix at the *Media Buzz* part of our magazine, there we love talking about cinema, manga, gaming, subtitling, and everything in between.

For dessert, we are leaving you with our *Takeaway* article, which touches on a subject very dear to us this time. For our Summer Edition our Head of Global Strategic Development, Gergana Toleva, will give you some insight into our world — what we care for, what we are here to achieve and what our brand is all about. Make sure to get to the end!

Enjoy and thank you for reading!

Nikola Stoyanov
SEO & Content Specialist

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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……常用粉与其他材料和制而成，

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。

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焚香的台状几案，可……炉、香盒和香瓶等物……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

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LOCALIZATION STEPS FOR MULTILINGUAL WEBSITES FOR ASIA

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

In our technologically driven world, we use the internet for so many aspects of our lives. From online shopping to communicating with friends and family, and even having services delivered to us via apps. All this is done with the help of websites. But if you are a company that wants to expand into the Asian market with your website, it's not enough to simply have your web content translated. It's essential to plan for a solid strategy that localizes all the content as there are many aspects that need to be taken care of and make it easily digestible for people in Asian countries. If you're wondering what some of the best practices are when localizing web content, keep reading below.

Consistent Use of Industry-Specific Terminology

Every business operates within its own specific sphere and taking industry-specific language and terminology into account is crucial. This will mean some upfront work before you even get started with the layout and design of your multilingual website. For example, one good practice to follow is to ensure that you have a glossary of terms ready to pass on to the translators, who will then input this into the translation programs. This means more uniformity when it comes to translations, less ambiguous terms used, and more precision when it comes to the translation.
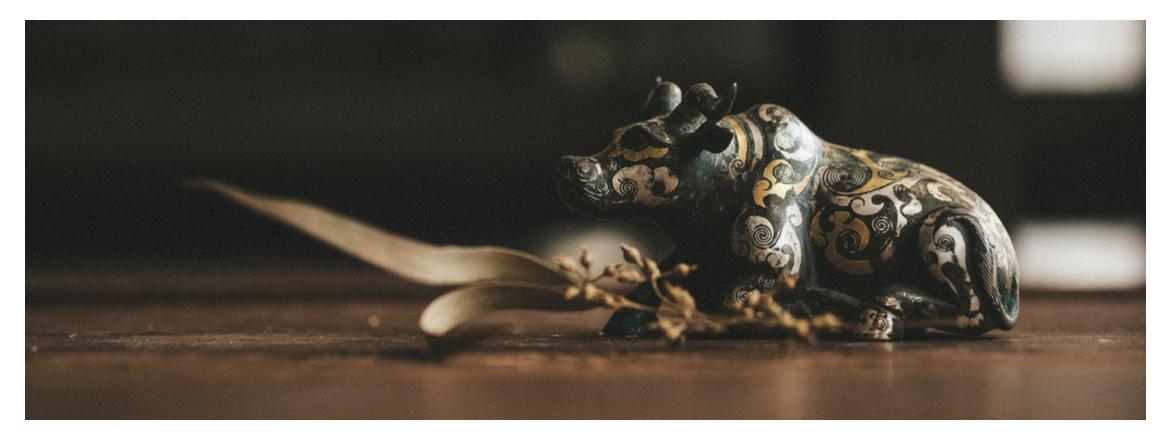
Adapting to Different Locations and Cultures

Asia is a huge continent with many different countries, cultures, language groups, subcultures, etc. It would be a mistake to assume that you can apply a one-size-fits-all approach to all countries where you're planning to enter the market and you rather need to spend some time researching local customs, and ideally, use the expertise of a native translator who will be able to help guide you to see if you're on the right track with your use of specific words for your multilingual website. Some things to keep in mind here are avoiding idioms and humor as these are extremely difficult to translate and can sometimes send out the wrong message. Next, consider the layout of the translated text and whether it fits properly on the screen. With some Asian countries using characters instead of letters, you may require more space on the page. You also need to think about the design itself. For instance, are the colors and photos culturally appropriate and sensitive enough? In addition, you should always consult with local regulations and requirements to ensure you're on the right track. Finally, you need to look at your formatting. For example, do you use the right local currencies, units of measurement, dates, formats of addresses or phone numbers?

Performing UI Testing

User Interface (UI) testing is crucial before launching your site. You will need to have it reviewed in front of a group of test subjects to iron out any mistakes or errors that may have cropped up. You need to make sure that every word appears in the correct context, and that there is accurate localization. In addition, once this is done, there's the need to ensure that the overall design accurately depicts what you're trying to convey to your target audience. Remember that first impressions are critical for the discerning web audience and if you make minor errors that aren't ironed out in the initial stages of your multilingual website creation process, you could lose out on potential customers.

Convey the Right Tone

As mentioned above, Asia is a melting pot of different cultural and language groups. This means that while in some countries, being informal in your word and language use may be considered appropriate, in other cases such as South Korea where honorifics play a major role in the local culture, you may need to use a more formal tone to convey the right levels of respect to your audience. This will mean determining whether you will refer to your audience by first name or surname, whether there will be suffixes added to certain words to denote an honorific term, and overall whether you're striking the right note with the readers and users of your multilingual website.
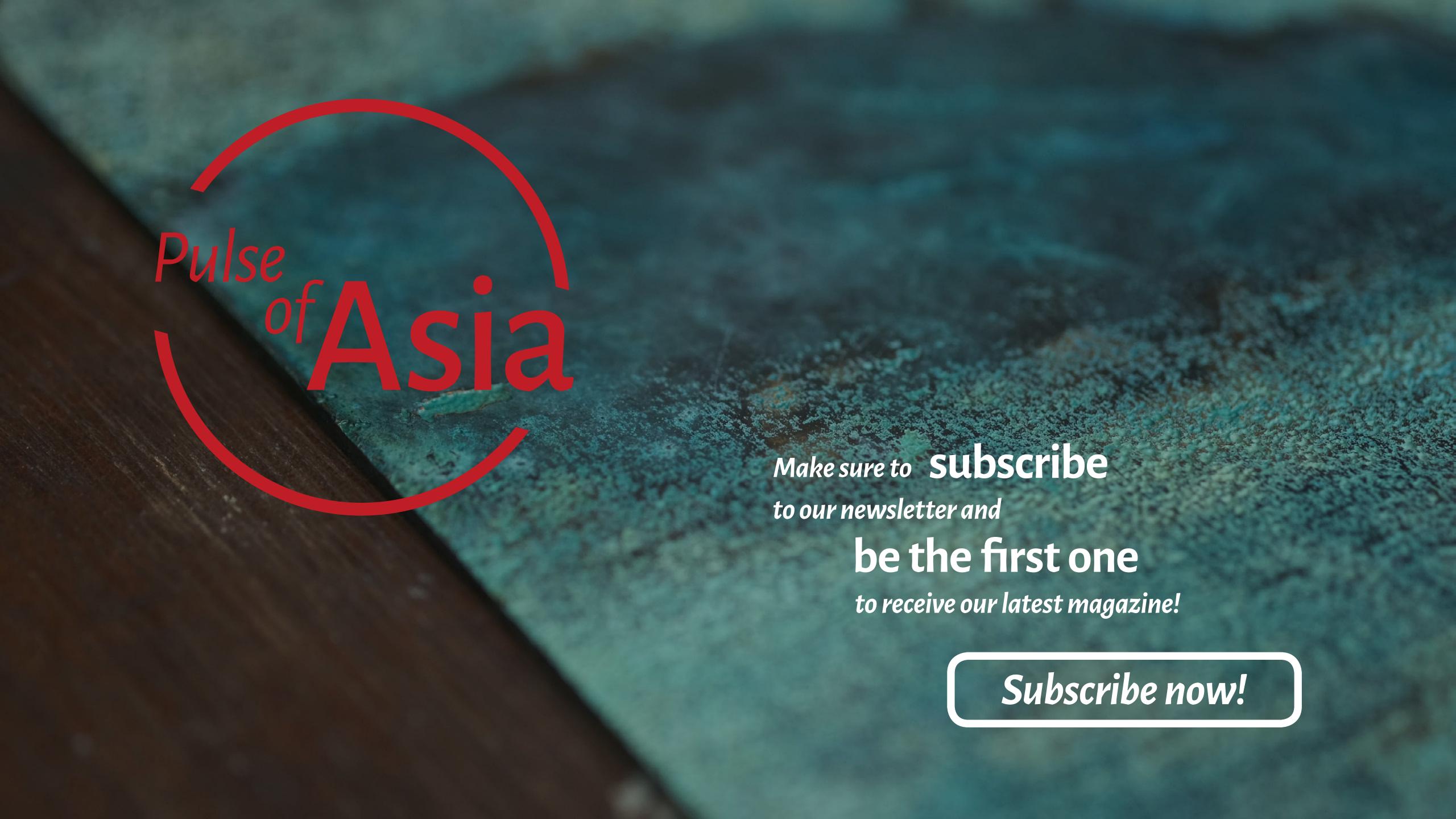
Determine Users' Search Habits

Search engine optimization (SEO) is also crucial for your site as it is through keywords (whether short or longtail) that users come to find your site by entering their query in a search bar. Knowing which terms they're actively looking for and how your business falls within that category of search is another key element. For example, in some countries, users might search for terms such as CCTV (closed-circuit television) for their home security needs. The keyword "CCTV" could therefore be what you want to target. On the other hand, users in different Asian countries with the same search intent may not be familiar with "CCTV" and may type in "smart home" instead to find results that appropriately meet their needs. Even though "CCTV" and "smart home" may be closely related in terms of actual meaning, the specific word usage will be culturally driven in terms of what's most acceptable in their specific culture. Therefore, keeping user intent top of mind and targeting a wider spread of different keywords for the same concept will help ensure your multilingual website is easily found, that users' searches are relevant, and that the right and useful results are easily yielded in a search.

The Importance of Multilingual Websites for Asia

While all these factors put together, creating a multilingual website may seem like a costly, time-consuming experience that involves an array of hassles. You need to make sure that when you're targeting Asian consumers, no matter in which specific location, you localize all content and designs to ensure that you reach them, gain their attention, and trust to help you reach more potential customers and then retain them. Wherever in Asia you choose to spread your wings and take your business to, localization is a must. Localization takes a look at not only direct translations of words, but intended, nuanced meanings or those that might seem contradictory and helps iron these challenges out while catering to a user's needs and product/service demands.

Pulse of Asia

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CAN YOU TRANSLATE ACRONYMS FROM ASIAN LANGUAGES?

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

An acronym is briefly defined as a shortened version of the various words that make up a meaningful phrase, with every first word of the phrase being abbreviated and then spelled out as a word itself. One example of this is the World Health Organization, which is often referred to as WHO and is read or said out loud as such. While this aspect of abbreviations does convey an element of language economy, in other words, it shortens otherwise lengthy texts and provides deeper context, sometimes it is very difficult to translate acronyms, particularly in Asian languages. This article will consider acronym translation from the perspective of Chinese, Korean, and Japanese and provide some practical examples of how, when, and if such acronyms should be used in official documents or in a business environment. To find out more, keep reading below.
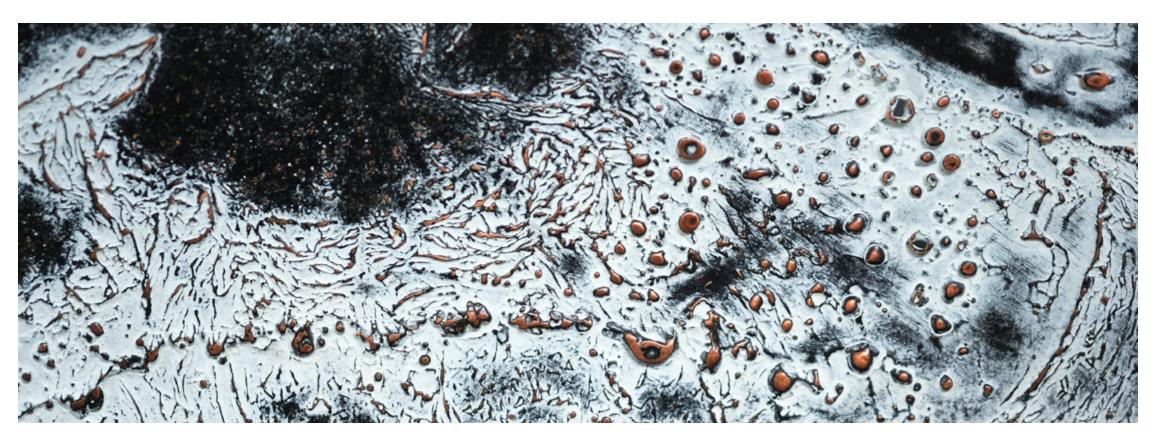
Can and should you translate acronyms from Asian languages?

To translate acronyms can be a challenging endeavor for many professional translators. For example, the term *Unidentified Flying Object* (UFO) mentioned above, has its own abbreviation in Spanish, which is *Objeto Volador No Identificado*. In short, it is written as OVNI. However, when it comes to Asian languages, the challenge is compounded. Not least because sometimes there are no direct translations. In some cases, the challenge comes to the fore when an English acronym is so widely and prevalently used in a target Asian language that its everyday usage in the target language is simply substituted for the English version. In other cases, there are translations that use an approximate translation of the English acronym, while in others, a direct translation exists. It all depends on the acronym itself, the environment in which it is used, as well as the target Asian language that the translation is being done in.

This brings us to the question of whether one can and should actually translate acronyms from and to Asian languages. The answer to this question is not as clear-cut and straightforward as one may think. For example, a poll that was initiated among professional language translators indicated a wide degree of disagreement in terms of whether there should be translations of acronyms into and from Asian languages or not. On the one hand, a large group of respondents (52%) indicated that this will depend entirely on the language pairs that are being translated. Meanwhile, 23% indicated that acronym translations should always be performed. Yet others said that this should "never" take place (12%). And the remaining 13% indicated that an acronym translation will always depend on the relevant industry in question.

With so much disagreement about acronym translation, within the professional translation industry, one thing is clear. And that is that there is no clear-cut answer to the question of translating acronyms into Asian languages. This will always be dependent on context, industry, environment, and language and will always require careful work together with the client as well as taking local or national rules into consideration. Here are a couple of examples of this in practice.

Acronyms in the Chinese language

The Chinese language has hundreds of years of history behind it, as it has developed and evolved over time to produce a number of local dialects and variants. However, the official language of China is Mandarin and it's used in government, business, education, technology, and other sectors. This essentially means that there's a level of synchronicity or uniformity in language usage. However, with the slow but steady incorporation of English terms in China and in the Chinese language, there's been a great debate about whether English acronyms should be directly translated or simply use the English version in official publications.

One example of this is the acronym NBA, which stands for the *American National Basketball Association*. Since basketball is a very popular sport in China, and many Chinese follow American developments in this sport, it was common for Chinese television to directly use the term "NBA" to describe the sport. However, this sparked a national debate with some people calling the move a dilution of the Chinese language. Hence, the direct reference to and translation of the acronym NBA was removed from national television for a while, only to return a couple of years later.

Other examples of acronym translations from English to Chinese include the terms *World Trade Organization* (WTO), *Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries* (OPEC), *Gross Domestic Product* (GDP), *Master of Business Administration* (MBA), and others. In essence, each of these terms has its own version in Chinese. The WTO, for example, is abbreviated as 世贸组织 / 世界贸易组织; OPEC is abbreviated as 欧佩克 / 石油输出国组织; GDP is 国内生产总值, and MBA is abbreviated as 工商管理硕士.

The challenge, however, lies in the fact that some abbreviations have a lengthy translation with more characters being used to describe the English acronym and owing to an economy of language usage, English abbreviations are sometimes directly used in newspapers and other formal channels of communication, with a backlash amongst many in professional Chinese circles who argue about the infiltration of the English language into everyday Chinese and the dilution of the rich Chinese language itself.

It can therefore be generally concluded that to ensure there are no negative ramifications, Chinese language translations or Chinese acronyms should ideally be used when translating business or governmental texts, as opposed to not translating these acronyms and using the English version instead.

Korean acronyms

We now come to another language where translating acronyms can pose a challenge and that is translating English to Korean acronyms. Let's take a look at an

example of a case where this can be applied. It relates to translating what may be considered plural acronyms such as *Intellectual Property Rights* (IPR) or CPUs. What tends to happen with Korean translators is that they do not remove the plural "s" from IPRs or CPUs. But this would be incorrect (because the English acronym itself is in the singular and not plural) and leads to an inaccurate translation from English to Korean, especially when it comes to Korean acronyms.

In the informal sense, when it comes to abbreviations of internet slang, translations can also pose a challenge. For example, the Korean abbreviation "ㄱㄱ", or "G G" is meant to stand for and represent the lengthier form "고고" which means "go-go" in English. Once again, translating Korean abbreviations into English, whether in the formal or informal sense, can be cumbersome and will depend on the context used (whether formal or informal) and the actual meaning of the word in Korean or English and its subsequent translation. Therefore, there's no straightforward answer to the question of whether Korean acronyms can be directly translated. This will all depend on the context of the word and the environment in which it's used in.

Abbreviations from Japanese

Finally, when it comes to Japanese acronyms, it's important to remember that the language consists of syllable pairs and that contractions of words in Japanese are common and frequent. A further difficulty arises when some loan words from English are incorporated into the Japanese language, such as the words "remote control", which is rimōto kontorōru (リモートコントロール) in Japanese and when contracted further becomes rimokon (リモコン). It is language intricacies like these that must be taken into account when creating accurate translations from English to Japanese or Japanese to English, especially when it comes to Japanese acronyms. There are numerous other examples of English words that have made their way into Japanese, which have

subsequently been contracted, and this is something professional translators must take into account to ensure not only an accurate translation of the terminology but also an effective translation that conveys the correct meaning of the word in the target language.

Leave acronym translation to the professionals

As can be seen from the information above, in order to translate acronyms into an Asian language, one must take cultural and language-specific contexts into consideration when looking for an accurate translation. In some cases, a word-for-word translation will be possible, thereby converting the English acronym into its accurate Asian language form. However, in many other cases, there are English acronyms that are directly substituted in the target language. But this can lead to disgruntlement in academic and intellectual circles, which posit that the dilution of their language is taking place.

Therefore, accurate acronym translation will need to occur on a case-by-case basis as well as take into consideration the target language in question. English acronyms that need to be translated into Chinese may need to use the full Chinese term, despite lengthier character numbers, in order to ensure that the Chinese language is not perceived as being diluted. Meanwhile, when it comes to Korean or Japanese acronyms, a professional translator will need to take into account language peculiarities such as internal and informal contractions to provide an accurate translation.

If the world of Asian language acronym translation still boggles the mind, then perhaps it's time to rely on professional translators who will be able to take language intricacies and cultural factors into account in order to yield a more accurate translation of the Asian language acronym translation that you need.

Chinese Acronym Slang

NSDD
你说得对
[nǐ shuō dé duì]
you're right

XSWL
笑死我了
[xiào sǐ wǒ le]
hilarious

BDJW
不懂就问
[bù dǒng jiù wèn]
just asking

ZQSG
真情实感
[zhēnqíng shígǎn]
heartfelt

HLL
华丽丽
[huá lì lì]
glamorous

PLJJ
漂亮姐姐
[piàoliang jiějiě]
a pretty girl

PLGG
漂亮哥哥
[piàoliang gēgē]
a pretty boy

YYDS
永远的神
[yǒngyuǎn de shén]
eternal god

DIFFICULTIES IN DEVELOPING NLP FOR VIETNAMESE

The Vietnamese language is spoken by around 75 million people across the world and it is the official language of Vietnam. The language itself has undergone several centuries of development starting with borrowing words from Chinese until the 17th century when the language was Romanized by a Jesuit missionary. Today, the Vietnamese alphabet contains 29 letters. This includes one digraph and nine with diacritics. Five of these diacritics are used to designate tone while the remaining four are used for separate letters of the Vietnamese alphabet. In terms of phonology and diacritic marks, it can be said that these indicate tones while others represent accents.

What makes the Vietnamese language even more complicated is the fact that its tonal system is even more complicated than the Chinese one. In Vietnam, the language has six basic tones, two more than Chinese, and to make things even more difficult, these tones will be pronounced differently, depending on the region in Vietnam where one finds oneself in. Thus, when it comes to natural language processing (NLP) for Vietnamese, certain difficulties and challenges arise which need further exploration in order to ensure more accurate English to Vietnamese and Vietnamese to English translations. Wondering what some of these challenges are? Let's take a look below..

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Difficulties and Challenges When Developing NLP for Vietnamese

NLP for Vietnamese is a complex sphere when it comes to producing accurate language translations. Creating algorithms and software to translate any language is a complex enough task. But when it comes to English to Vietnamese translations, especially when NLP is involved, many difficulties arise for human translators and for the machines. Here are a few of these.

Vietnamese Word Segmentation

Let's begin by approaching the basics. A word is considered to be a linguistic unit that is made up of one or more morphemes. Meanwhile, word segmentation is the process of determining the word boundaries in a sentence/document by a computer program or specific software. With this in mind, we can now make some

deductions about the Vietnamese language and NLP for Vietnamese. At its most basic, when approaching NLP for Vietnamese, word segmentation will be one of the first aspects to consider and getting this wrong can cause the rest of the translation to be nonsensical or inaccurate. This is why NLP must take into account word segmentation in Vietnamese to deliver accurate results.

Part-of-Speech (POS) Tagging

Next up, we come to POS tagging. In NLP, POS tagging refers to determining the meaning of certain words in relation to the parts of speech in the sentence to convey an accurate meaning as it relates to the definition of the word and its context. In Vietnamese, for example, the sentence *"The old man walks too fast"* can also mean *"The father walks too fast"*, *"The old man died too fast"*, *"My father died too fast"*, *"You get old too fast"*, *"Grandfather gets old*

too fast", and more. There is therefore a lot of ambiguity in the language that needs to be considered before an accurate translation is made.
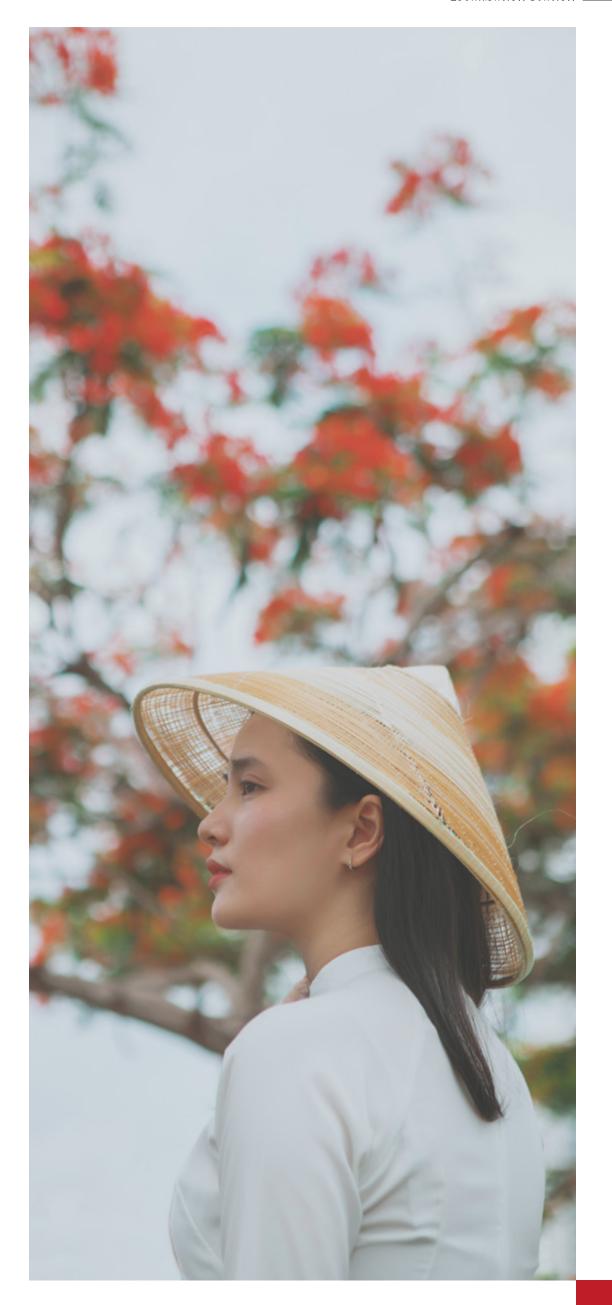
Syntactic Parsing

Following POS tagging is the challenge of syntactic parsing. This aspect of language understanding, development, and translation deal with the syntactic structure of a sentence. According to sources, "the word 'syntax' refers to the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence and their relationship with each other. The objective of syntactic analysis is to find the syntactic structure of a sentence which is usually depicted as a tree." In the Vietnamese language, the general grammatical rules of structuring a sentence include the fact that it is similar to English in the sense that sentence structure is based on Subject+Verb+Object. NLP for Vietnamese needs to take this into consideration when it comes to translations, too.

Named-Entity Recognition (NER)

Named-entity recognition is another aspect of NLP that must be taken into account when translating the Vietnamese language – whether from English to Vietnamese or Vietnamese to English. Essentially, NER looks at aspects such as names of people, organizations, locations, times, quantities, monetary values, percentages, and more within a sentence in order to provide the reader with more context and information about the depth of the text and result in a logical outcome and accurate translation. One example sentence that illustrates this point is: *"Ousted XYZ founder John Jones sells London penthouse for £10 million"*. At present, this sentence contains information about the organization (XYZ), the person (John Jones), the location (London), and the monetary value (£10 million). Each of these linguistic components builds up the sentence to give it meaning. This is why NLP for Vietnamese needs to take NER into account in order to produce accurate translations. However, NER is not always straightforward and NLP software must have accurate NER inputs to yield the desired result.

Coreference Resolution (CR)

Coreference resolution (CR), is a subtask of NER. When referring to entities in a sentence or a document that needs to be translated, it is common for pronouns to

be used to refer to the entity instead of repeating the same entity several times throughout the sentence. For example, one would not say *"John Jones is selling John Jones' penthouse"* but would rather say *"John Jones is selling his penthouse"* to convey a truer translation that's free of repetition and uses accurate entity descriptions. When it comes to Vietnamese, however, it has been found that CR has received very little attention in the Vietnamese NLP community. In fact, it appears at present that there are only two researchers that have used CR as a subtask of NER in NLP. This is another challenge that arises with NLP for Vietnamese – there is simply too little data in the NLP database to yield better results.

Other Challenges

NLP for Vietnamese must also take into consideration Vietnam's unique writing system and the lack of resources for the Vietnamese language. For example, some sources state that there are approximately 40,000 to 50,000 Vietnamese words that have been defined in modern dictionaries. This, coupled with the fact that several words in Vietnamese that are separated by spaces actually represent one word, make translating this language from English to Vietnamese and the other way around much more difficult.

NLP for Vietnamese Is Making Progress

Despite the challenges outlined above, research is slowly but surely making progress in identifying difficulties in NLP for Vietnamese and addressing the intricacies of the language when developing software and algorithms to produce more accurate translations. Several studies have found that using hybrid algorithms can address these challenges with a relatively high percentage of accuracy. Nevertheless, there remains a lack of resources to see that this takes off as effectively as it could. However, by ensuring a translator is aware of these language translation difficulties, better reproduction of the language will be possible. In addition, as advances in technology continue and more research is carried out in this field, we are likely to see better NLP for Vietnamese in the future.

Vietnamese Tones

Name	Tone Marks	Pitch
Ngang	Unmarked (Aa)	Flat
Sắc	Acute (Áá)	Sharp
Huyền	Grave (Àà)	Deep
Hỏi	Hook above (Ảả)	Asking
Ngã	Tilde (Ãã)	Falling
Nặng	Underdot (Aạ)	Heavy

TADAKIMASU — THE JAPANESE WAY TO LIVE LIFE WITH GRATITUDE

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

There's a Japanese saying that goes like this: *"Seven Gods live in one grain of rice."* And what this means is that when one eats food, one should not waste even a grain of rice that's leftover in your bowl. In Japan, spurred on by Buddhism, history, and the Second World War, the concept of Itadakimasu was born. But what is the itadakimasu meaning? And when should you use it? Let's take a closer look.

The Concept of Itadakimasu

When it comes to the itadakimas meaning, there's no literal translation to English. Some say it's the equivalent of saying *"Bon appetit"* in French or saying grace before a meal you're about to consume. Ultimately though, the Itadakimasu meaning in English means to accept or take something humbly. This is a practice that has been practiced by a majority of Japanese people before they consume a meal as a way to say thanks and show appreciation for the person who made the food and for the food itself.

With Buddhist roots, Itadakimasu places the receiver of the food in a humble position of accepting something from a higher authority or higher power. It is a way of expressing gratitude to the giver.

So, how would you properly and politely express your thanks to your host when dealing with Japanese itadakimasu? The process is pretty standard across Japan, with some variations, of course. Firstly, you will need to place your hands together in a pose as if you were praying. Then, raise your hands slightly high near your face and say "Itadakimasu" to your host, the server at the restaurant, or anyone else who is giving you something.

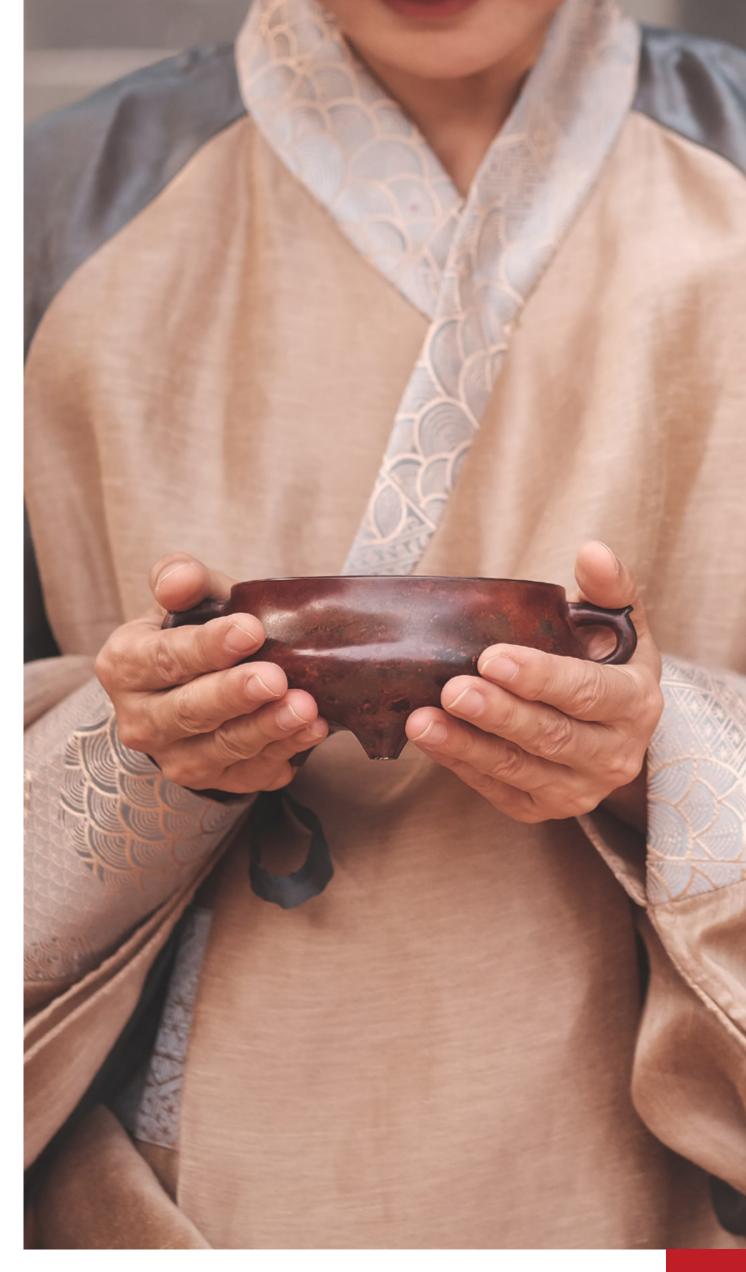After that, you're ready to pick up your chopsticks and start digging in.

But can Itadakimasu be used for anything else other than food? The answer is yes, but it relates to physical objects and not to inanimate or abstract objects such as advice, directions, or even a ride to the airport.

This means that whether you're offered a potato, a baseball glove, a video game, or anything else, the phrase goes. Its origins come from the fact that when one places their hands together and raises them higher, it resembles the peak of a mountain's highest point, which is where the origin of the word first arose. Doing this will show great respect for your hosts but remember that if you're sitting at a restaurant with a friend and you say this word, you will essentially be implying that they will be paying for the meal. So choose your occasion wisely.

Apart from this, do all Japanese people practice Japanese Itadakimasu, meaning that is it such a big part of the culture? The answer is an overwhelming "yes", but it does come with a pinch of salt. For example, only about

6% of the population doesn't practice Itadakimasu and these people are often referred to as *"Monster parents"*. These types of parents teach their children that they do not need to be grateful for food that they've already paid for. They believe that when they go into a shop and pay for food, they are supporting local businesses and the gratitude should essentially go to the parents instead of the business owner. These types of parents are also the ones who go to their children's principal's office to seek better treatment for their children. As you can guess, this is not a widely popular custom in Japan and is an approach that's best avoided.

Now that you know what itadakimasu is in English as well as when and where to use it, you'll be showing much more respect and gratitude to your hosts, and you'll be displaying a higher level of politeness. It's always safer to express your gratitude rather than doing the opposite. This way, you'll earn the respect of your hosts and friends in Japan as you show a true willingness to immerse yourself in and accept their culture. This is likely to earn you lifelong friends and strong bonds and relationships. So, the next time you're ready to enjoy a meal with your friends, don't hesitate to say Itadakimasu and you'll make a long-lasting and favorable impression on them.

Kaizen (改善)

改善

Visualize

Measure

Improve

Repeat

The four principles of kaizen

We have adopted a very simple Japanese management concept, which is mostly known as the "Toyota approach" but with a twist into marketing.

1 Visualize

- ‣ Map out the channels for your results
- ‣ Strategically narrow down where you receive requests

2 Measure

- ‣ Measure your goals as simple as you can
- ‣ Set up expectations, measure quantity and quality

3 Improve

- ‣ Define clearly what is success
- ‣ Total leads generated/ qualified leads/ clients

4 Repeat

- ‣ And then do it again smile

Focus on
Experts

ISSUES WITH MACHINE DUBBING FOR ASIAN LANGUAGES

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Although dubbing in film and television has been around since the 1950s, machine dubbing is a much more recent phenomenon. There's been a massive proliferation of video content all around the world. This is because the process of globalization has meant that one culture can enjoy another culture's video and film productions and vice versa.

Borders and boundaries are shifting and shrinking and we have access to so much more "foreign" content than we've ever had. But machine dubbing doesn't come without its challenges.

It's not a perfected art and is by no means so especially when it comes to Asian languages. Why is this the case? There are several reasons which we'll explore below. Ready to find out more? Let's take a look.

What is Machine Dubbing?

In the field of translation, and in particular, when it comes to film, video and television series, there are several different formats or branches of translation that should be considered. Yes, there is what is called a direct translation.

But there are other forms or branches as well. These include localization, which is essentially the process of taking a text from the original language and translating it in such a way that the intended meaning and nuances are carried through as well.

A part of the translation tree also includes dubbing. In short, this is an audiovisual translation that takes dialogues, translates them, and enacts them in such a way as to give the impression that the media is in the target language.

One sticky part with this is ensuring that the timing the dubbing actor has is used optimally – in other words, he or she needs to convey speech for as long as the actor in the original piece. Another challenge is the alignment with lip movements. All this gets even more complicated when machine dubbing comes into the picture. So, what is it?

Machine dubbing is taking the capabilities of machines and introducing them to the **translation-localization-dubbing process**. Some sources indicate that the process is divided into several components. First, the video is transcribed from audio to text by a Speech-to-Text API. Then, that text is taken and translated by a Translation API.

Finally, the translation is uploaded through a **Text-to-Speech API**. Overall, if a human were to do all this, it would take hundreds of hours and just for one film or video. But with the elegance of machines, the process can be simplified, expedited, and made significantly more convenient for viewers.

Issues with Auto Dubbing

While all that's been said above sounds quite simple and straightforward, there are several issues to consider.

As a starting point, during the Speech-to-Text transcription, errors can be made. This will mean that the Translation API will be working with inaccurate or awkward translations. Next up, the translations can be mispronounced and convey a different meaning, tone, or nuance.

But there are other challenges, too. These include:

· The need to match the voice as well as the tone of the character that's being dubbed;

· Using translations that fit the time span of the original speech; and

· Achieving a realistic alignment of the dubbed audio with the lip movements of the actual actors.

Language-Specific Problems with Dubbing

It's clear that the Asian continent consists of multiple language groups, cultures, and subcultures. These special nuances need to be taken into account when it comes to machine dubbing, too.

Some examples of how this comes into play are in the following scenarios:

· Japanese and English word order in sentences is by far not the same. This means that a poor machine dubbing scenario could produce a jumbled set of words, fewer words, more words, or if idioms are used, convey a completely different meaning.

· Korean honorifics don't have a direct English translation. When a sentence ends in the Korean "-yo", it's a sign of respect and politeness. There is no such division in the English language. One example of similarity may be with the use of the German "Sie", but again, this fails to take into account the age levels of the Korean person, the relationship with the person, and how much authority they have so that the correct honorific can be used.

· In Thai, there is little to no punctuation used in sentences so figuring out where one statement ends and another begins could pose a further challenge to machine dubbing.

These are just some examples of challenges that can be faced. Overall, it's been argued that there's not enough of a repository of Asian languages to create a strong enough resource corpus. However, with the passage of time and continuous technological advancements, this is slowly changing.

Asian Languages and Machine Dubbing: It's Not That Clear-Cut

Whether Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Thai or something else, each language group comes with a rich set of cultures that embody it. It is often very difficult to translate a piece of specific Asian text to English or English to a specific Asian text, sometimes because a direct translation is simply impossible.

A substitute text or a translation that conveys the intended meaning as well as possible will be the next best thing. This is where localization comes in and this is clearly needed when it comes to machine dubbing, too. A direct translation and subsequent uploading as Text-to-Speech will simply render an awkward at best and annoying and frustrating at the worst piece of video, whose entire intended meaning could be lost or go awry.

To avoid frustrating viewers, it's critical for machine dubbing to take into account some of the challenges and issues posed by translating and localizing Asian languages and build a strong resource base for these languages so that future machine dubbing becomes more fruitful and of a higher quality.

Top 5 Reasons

Why Japanese is Complicated
for Machine Translation

3. The Japanese language is agglutinative - this means words are formed by putting together basic elements

明
(bright, light)

日
(strong)

明日
(tomorrow)

勉
(diligence, endeavour)

勉強
(study)

本
(mind, nature, essence)

柏餅 **Kashiwa Mochi**

The kashiwa mochi is eaten during the Kodomo no Hi festival, or Children's Day, which is celebrated annually on the 5th of May.

Get the recipe!

LOADING CHINESE FONTS ON YOUR MULTILINGUAL WEBSITE

Enitsa Koeva

Graphic Designer

Using your client's native language is detrimental to being successful in foreign markets. We've discussed the topic already and you can read more about that here. Today we will take a deep dive into the technical issues on the way to having your content reach your Chinese audience in the best way possible and in particular loading Chinese fonts.

The Problem With Loading Chinese Fonts

If you've never been faced with the task of having a Chinese version of your website, you'd probably wonder what's the fuss all about, after all, Chinese is a language like every other language, right? Right? Let me explain where the issue of loading Chinese fonts all stems from. Chinese has thousands of characters which means a font file would be considerably larger than a Latin font file. We are speaking megabytes (MB) instead of mere kilobytes (KB) here. In today's world, loading speed is one of the most important technical requirements for a website. We can't afford to make the user wait 10 seconds or more just so they can see the text on our website. They will most probably think something is wrong and just move on to the competitor's website.

The Way Out

So the first step to achieving a better loading time with Chinese is generating a font file that contains only the characters your website uses (instead of the whole lot of them). There are different tools out there that would do that for you. And if you're targeting a Chinese-speaking audience outside of China – like the large Mandarin-speaking and Cantonese-speaking communities in the US for example (each with more than 400,000 speakers as of 2010) – the easiest way is to go to Adobe Typekit.

It's a win-win because you get a piece of code you paste on your website and users will have no issue loading the Chinese fonts directly from Adobe when they visit your website.

Dynamic Subsetting

Thankfully we live in a world where this "magic" exists. When the script you added to your website loads in the user's browser, it will detect the character usage of your page and request a dynamic subset for the glyphs needed. This means the font file to download will be as small as possible. Great, right?

China

Things are significantly more complicated if your target audience is located in mainland China. There's this thing developers jokingly call *The Great Firewall of China* that basically requires you to have your fonts hosted somewhere in China if you want a reasonable loading time. The good news is today that is no longer such a tremendous obstacle as it used to be.

Here I'll mention two Eastern-based alternatives to Adobe's Typekit:

· YouFont – previously known as Youziku. In their own words "Youfont is the world's first Chinese web font service platform."

· JustFont – Chinese Web font Application. They are based in Taipei and also develop new Chinese fonts. Both these services will dynamically generate a subset font file. They don't have huge varieties of fonts, like say Google Fonts, but you'll most probably find something that will suit your needs and most importantly expedite loading Chinese fonts.

A Quick Localization Guide to Chinese

Let's summarize a few main points one should consider before localizing a website into Chinese:

· What is your target audience? Where are they located, and are they using Simplified or Traditional Chinese script?
· If there's video or audio content to be localized, you should take into account what kind of Chinese your target audience is using - Mandarin, Cantonese, or other? (some of them are mutually unintelligible). A nice touch is to also consider the dialect. For example, in mainland China, there's an officially accepted form called "Putonghua" 普通话 which means *common language*.

· Chinese typography has its own requirements. You can read about what fonts to use here. But besides the different kinds of fonts, there are many other aspects to consider – font size, leading (the space between lines of text), tracking (the space between characters), and so on.

Expand Your Business Today

I want to stress once more just how important it is to "speak" to your audience not only in their native language but also to shape your text content in a way that will look and feel natural to them. China opens up the gates to great possibilities for businesses and here I'll drop a few facts and figures to prove it:
· China has over 980 million internet users (the US has around 300 million)
· Nearly 50% of app downloads (iOS and Android) are done in China
· Chinese is the most natively spoken language and data shows that users will prefer content in their native language even if they are fluent in English.

So for anyone that wants to tap on the opportunities China presents localization is an absolute must.

Why Should I Sell Asian Languages

4 out the top 10 countries by GDP in 2022 are Asian

China	($14.72 T)
Japan	($5.06 T)
India	($2.66 T)
South Korea	($1.63 T)

Asian countries ranked by average forecasted real GDP growth (%) 2020—2024

Bangladesh	7.3%	Vietnam	6.5%
India	7.3%	Philippines	6.4%
Bhutan	6.7%	Myanmar	6.2%
Laos	6.7%	Uzbekistan	6.0%
Cambodia	6.6%	Turkmenistan	5.9%

1-STOP ASIA

THE CHALLENGES OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENT TRANSLATION

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Many companies that create technology, software, appliances, etc., are entering global markets. But with this comes the need for technical document translation in order to not only provide users and customers with a high-quality product and value for their money, but to ensure that the product is used optimally, leading to fewer returns, complaints, and general dissatisfaction which can ultimately affect the company's reputation. With this in mind, these companies are turning to technical document translation services for a professional technical document translation. However, this field of the translation industry does not come without its challenges. There are several common pitfalls that come into play when a technical manual translation takes place – whether it is performed by a human translator or translation software. These pitfalls need to be avoided for optimal results. But what are they and how can they be overcome? Take a look at our suggestions below.

Popular Technical Documents for Translation

Firstly, it is important to clarify that there are many different kinds of technical documents that can be and are translated across the world. These include, but are not limited to, user guides, maintenance and instruction manuals, handbooks, e-learning courses and training, API documentation, web pages and websites, press releases, patents, and more.
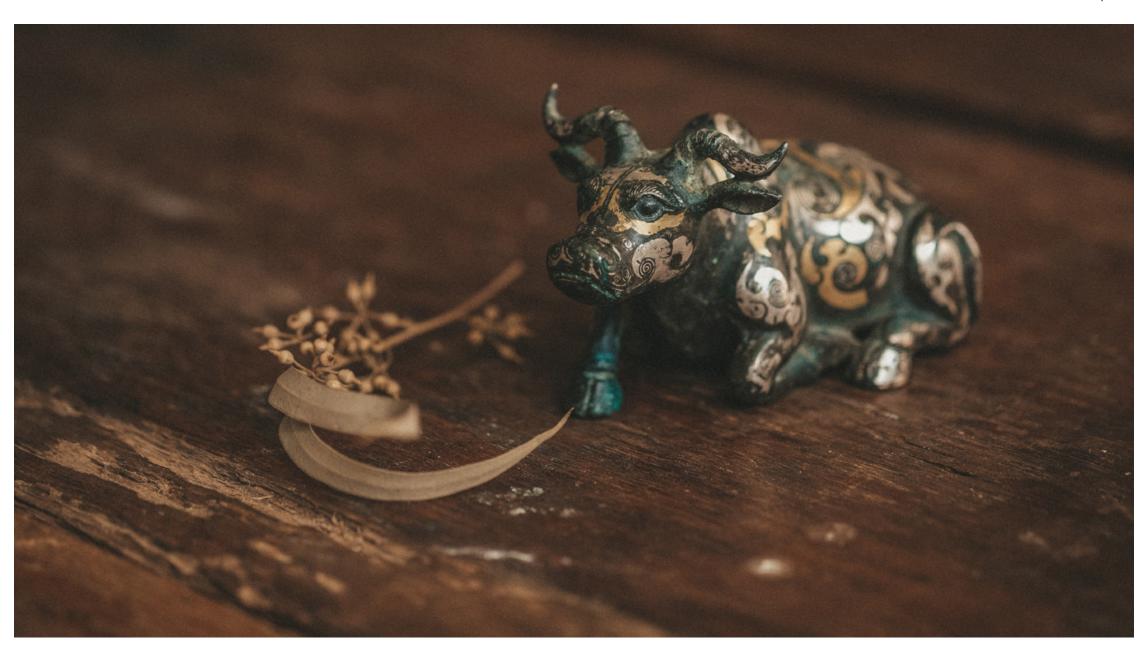
It is crucial to understand that each of these technical document types requires a specific approach. For example, translating a website or a landing page will require more of a marketing perspective when compared to a user guide that helps a customer understand how to use a particular product such as a washing machine or a vacuum cleaner. Specific technical expertise on the part of the translator is, therefore, required to produce optimal results.

In each of these cases, an inaccurate technical document translation can have negative repercussions. Some of these include the fact that a company can lose face, have a damaged reputation, lose customers, and ultimately, affect returns on investment and affect the bottom line.

This is a situation that no company wants to be in and this is why professional technical translation is so crucial. When done correctly, it can help a company strengthen its standing in a target market and thus have better profits.

Challenges and Best Practices with Technical Document Translation

In order to translate technical manuals with accuracy and precision, certain pitfalls must be avoided by translators and software that undertakes translations. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

Literal Translations (word-for-word translations)
Word-for-word translations are one of the primary culprits of poor technical document translation. Technical document translation services can, in some instances, perform literal translations of the target text from the source language, which leads to confusing, inaccurate, and subpar manuals for usage. This will only lead to frustrating the user and having them associate the given company with poor product and service quality.
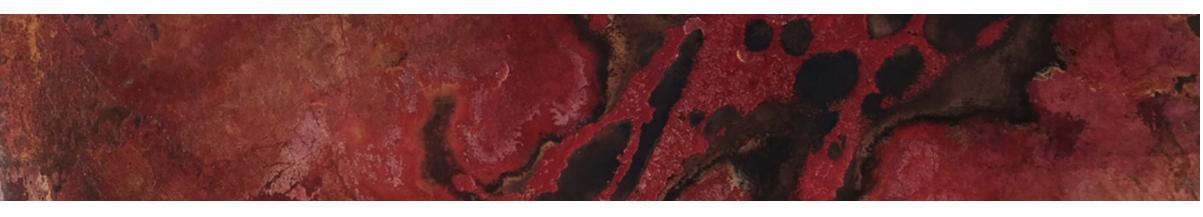
Cultural Nuances
Another element that comes into play with technical document translation is the issue of ignoring cultural nuances. There are a great many cultural differences between the West and the East, and companies seeking to enter either market must take cultural elements into consideration when embarking on a translation. Getting this wrong can lead to alienating one's target market and in some cases, offending them. Professional translators who can identify and accurately deal with cultural nuances will be able to yield much more accurate translations, leading to more favorable results.

Lack of Technical Expertise
Although this may seem self-evident, a technical manual translation also requires technical expertise on the part of the translator. If a translator were to translate an application programming interface (API) document related to software usage, development, and implementation and they had no idea about how this works in practice, the chances of producing a manual that can actually be employed by the user are quite slim. This leads to an ineffective overall product or service offering. In such cases, using professional translation services for technical documents is one way of overcoming this challenge.

Undefined Target Audience
A target audience refers to the users who will actually be using the product or service. Depending on the product itself, the user may be a child or an adult, from various countries with different cultural and linguistic peculiarities. This means that a professional technical translation should take into account the specific age group that the company has in mind in addition to

tempering the language to suit that age group's linguistic knowledge and requirements.

Inaccurate Metrics

Technical documents, by their very nature, are technical. This means that they use numbers and symbols to indicate specific details with accuracy. In some parts of the world, kilograms are used instead of pounds, while in other parts the opposite is true. It is vital for a professional technical translation to take metrics into account and reproduce these so that these are valuable to the target audience and will not force them to convert metrics on their own, thereby frustrating them.

No Visual Aids

In some cases, particularly when it comes to machine translation for technical documents, images and visuals are not translated and are left out of the translation equation. However, these play a critical role in the user being able to identify the right element they need in order to get the product to work as intended. An image of a torque screw compared to a regular screw can make a huge difference in ensuring the product functions optimally and an image that illustrates these differences plays a major role in the accuracy of the translation. This is why translation services for technical documents must also be prepared to translate images and visual aids.

Abiding by Local Laws

Each country and region in the world has its own laws. One example of this is the European Union (EU), which requires the "CE" mark on technical and other goods in order to ensure that these comply with industry standards, are safe to use, and do not pose any health or safety hazards. In some cases, in order to translate technical manuals, such legalities are not factored in. But to counter this challenge, in-depth knowledge on the part of the translator is required to ensure that the technical document is not only accurate but is legally compliant, too.

**Copy editing, Editing, Proofreading:
A Triple-Check Process**

As a final point, but certainly not the last or least important one in this list, we raise the issue of the importance of employing the triple-check process when a technical document translation is complete. This triple-check process involves copy editing, editing, and proofreading so that three sets of eyes look at the text critically before the final version is sent to the client. Minor grammatical or spelling mistakes can be reduced this way and even major translation issues can be picked up when a set of different individuals look at the same document from a different perspective. However, some technical document translation providers omit this process, which can be detrimental to the quality of their service.

Seek Professional Document Translation Services

In the business world, and even in other spheres such as legal, government, education, medicine and healthcare, and more, there are strict standards to follow when embarking on a technical document translation that produces accurate, legally-compliant results that ultimately help the user as opposed to diminishing their experience with the product or service and affecting the company's reputation and international standing. Although the list of challenges and best practices outlined above are not exhaustive, they do comprise the most common pitfalls that translators face when it comes to technical document translation. This is why a business or any other institution that's seeking professional document translation should make use of the services of professional firms with an established reputation. Such services are most likely to yield the best results for optimal usability and customer-friendly results.

Contact us!

Most Spoken Languages in 2022

Languages with the most native speakers

Mandarin Chinese	920,000,000
Spanish	475,000,000
English	373,000,000
Hindi	344,000,000

Languages with the most speakers

English

Mandarin Chinese

Hindi

Spanish

Native Speakers/Other Speakers

Source: ethnologue.com

HOW LOCALIZATION SERVICES WORK

Often used interchangeably with translation, localization services are actually much different. They help shape a variety of different types of content to fit within the cultural, linguistic, and legal nuances and specifications of a given country. As the world's borders continue to shrink, it's evident that many businesses are trying to enter new and previously unexplored markets. While this opens up a world of opportunities in terms of increasing revenue streams, it also poses challenges in terms of the ways in which content is presented to its end-user. This is where localization services come in. Here are some things you need to know.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Translation vs. Localization

As mentioned above, translation and localization are often used interchangeably. However, while both are part of the language-translation industry, localization goes a couple of steps further. Let's take a brief look at what translation means. Essentially, it's the process of using appropriate word-for-word meaning from a source language into a target language. But in many cases, especially in a cross-cultural context, this won't work for a global audience. The information and content need to be localized. This means taking into consideration cultural nuances, myths and beliefs, faith systems, legal parameters, linguistic differences in terms of use of idioms and colloquialism, and more. Therefore, localization services seek to go beyond a mere word-for-word translation. They literally make the content that much more local so that it is better accepted by the local audience at which the message is targeted.

What are Localization Services and What Do They Include?

In order to best make use of localization services, a couple of factors need to be taken into account. These include but are not limited to the source language, the target language, the expected word count after localization, use of colors, shapes, emblems, symbols, etc. (which may have contrasting cultural meanings), button sizes, formatting (eg. date and time, whether the content will be read from left to right or right to left, or even top to bottom). Other factors include the time the project will take for completion, the implementation phase of the localization services, and finally, measuring the results of the localization efforts.

The Localization Process

As a result of the above, the localization process usually entails the following steps:

1. Content analysis
2. Content management
3. Three-step translation process (translation, editing, and proofreading for consistency)
4. Delivery
5. Back conversion
6. Desktop publishing
7. In-context quality control
8. Finalization

Types of Localization Services

With the growing demand for content across multiple platforms, there is also growing demand for localization services to meet businesses' diverse needs. As a result, some of the most common types of localization services can be narrowed down to the following:

- **Website localization:** website localization services are critical in ensuring that a brand's main message from its website is conveyed effectively in the target language. Most of Google's users are not native language English speakers even if they may be from an English-speaking country. Therefore, localization services should ensure that when it comes to website localization, the accuracy of the message is conveyed while also ensuring it takes into account cultural, linguistic, and legal contexts.

- **SEO localization:** search engine optimization (SEO) is a critical part of ensuring that a business can rank highly on a search engine's results page. Here, user intent is determined by the keywords used in user searches. However, if a company or business undertakes a direct translation of these keywords, they could run into two problems. On the one hand, the translated keywords may not have any literal or figurative meaning in the translated language. On the other, there may be cultural nuances behind certain keyword usage that need to be taken into account. This is why it's also important to localize SEO.

- **Video game localization:** video games have taken the world by storm, and whereas some markets are more lenient than others, there are those that have more stringent requirements for video games. This is where game localization comes into play. Game localization is the process of looking at every facet of the game being offered. This can range from looking at the characters, their names, their outfits, the colors used, the monologues and dialogues used between players, subtitle localization, button and menu settings, and so much more. By not paying attention to game localization requirements, a business risks losing out on massive potential marketplaces which they could penetrate.

- **Software localization:** last but not least on our list is software localization. Many products and service-oriented businesses today have apps to make their customers' lives that much easier. Whether it's a financial product, a language product, or another type, it's crucial that software such as apps is translated and localized accurately, too. Software localization will not only benefit the user in terms of having a more favorable user experience, but it can help generate more revenue for the company if done right.

The Way Forward With Localization Services

There's a world of difference between translation and localization and these differences are vital to be kept in mind when a business is considering entering an overseas market. Hopefully, by now you already have a clear idea of why localization is important. So, when choosing localization services, be sure to speak to a language service provider who can help meet all your localization needs in one place. Look for industry experience, translators' qualifications, the history of the organization, and other factors to ensure you pick the best provider for your needs.

Request a quote!

THROWBACK TO CONFERENCE SEASON THIS YEAR!

This year 1-StopAsia participated at GALA with a presentation in collaboration with Kobalt Languages and attended Elia's Focus On Executives. Do you want to see us at another conference?
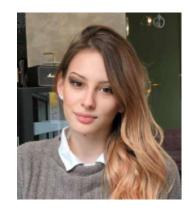
Media
Buzz

CHALLENGES OF GAMING LOCALIZATION IN JAPAN

Nikol Haytova

Content Writer

The interactive entertainment software industry, popularly known as the video game industry is reaching overwhelming numbers in net worth and profit from sales. Japan has the third-largest gaming market globally ($19,2 billion revenue), with the USA and China taking the first and second places, respectively.

The Japanese have always enjoyed video gaming and that is proven by the large sums of money they spend for in-game purchases. The reasons why Japanese people spend so much time gaming are various. Whether they use the long hours commuting to enjoy their favorite game or "meet up" with their friends in multiplayer games, one thing is constant – the regular Japanese believes that spending money on something they enjoy is only natural. So what does a game developer have to do if they want to grab the attention of the Japanese user? A simple game translation is definitely not enough for the overall experience of the Japanese game player.

Mind the tone and writing style

An important part of the process of game translation is preserving the tone intended in the source language. That is when gaming localization plays its role. As we know, Japan has different levels of politeness – how characters speak strongly varies depending on their age, gender, social status, etc. To avoid situations such as moms speaking like bandits or masculine heroes mumbling like schoolgirls, specific speech patterns should be used.

Having this in mind, you can really help your translator (and yourself) by providing a lot of additional information such as screenshots, videos, and extra notes. Good communication with your translator is vital to ensure a high-quality gaming localization, so be prepared to frequently answer a lot of questions.

Don't try to translate everything

A common mistake made in Japanese game translation is trying to translate everything to the target language. Whatever the reasons behind such a decision, thorough market research will show that gamers in Japan actually prefer for the game interface to be in English.

A reason for that is something as simple as gamers thinking it is cool when electronic games use English. Since gaming had become a thing in Japan, players have become used to the English interface and commands. Although the level of English proficiency in Japan is very low, you might actually ruin the overall gaming experience if you go with the decision of translating everything. Some say such games make them feel like the game is made for kids, making the game look awkward and wonky.

Beware of sensitive topics

When hiring a translating team, make sure they are aware of the taboo topics of the country you want to sell in. If you are adapting a game for the Japanese gaming market you should have a couple of simple rules in mind.

Avoid promoting any religion, tobacco or drugs – this is taken as highly unpleasant in Japanese society. Whatever the storyline of your game might be, try not to kill off innocent civilians or children and more importantly – avoid turning the player's character into the "bad guy". Game localization is what will prevent such unpleasant occurrences and will save your game from certain failure.

Always proofread

This might sound quite logical but make sure to proofread. Creating the ideal product for the Japanese audience will require going through it again and again. It is always better to have the opinion of more people than blindly trusting a single professional. When hiring proofreaders, make sure they are people with in-depth knowledge both in the gaming culture and the target language.

How can we help?

This article is aimed at people who want to find their place in the Japanese market particularly in gaming localization. To do so, however, you will need experts that will polish your product and make it a hit. The translation and localization teams in 1-StopAsia will help you present the essence of your product to the demanding Japanese market. Check out our translation services or contact us!

Writing system specifics

- The Chinese language has no alphabet. There is just the Chinese script.
- The Chinese script doesn't use spaces between words.
- The Chinese language is written with characters known as "hanzi". A single character may consist of as few as 1 and as many as 48 strokes.
- The characters in Chinese originate from old drawings that represent the very things they mean.

English	Pictograph	Character
person	亻	人
mountain	山	山

- Reduplication is a common occurrence in Chinese. This means that a syllable or a word is repeated intentionally to produce a different meaning.

Example: yī chuàn chuàn pú táo
(一串串葡萄, "bunches of grapes")

- Words do not change! No matter where they're positioned in a sentence, they don't change form. Verbs aren't conjugated and adjectives are fixed.
- Most Chinese characters are composed of at least two parts. A semantic component that gives a clue to the topic, and a phonetic component which suggests the pronunciation.

Chinese language

Chinese, similarly to Japanese, can be written vertically and is read from right to left, or horizontally and is read from left to right.

When written vertically, the direction in which text is read is first, from top to bottom and then from the right to the left.

When written horizontally, the text is read in the same order as in Western writing systems, from top to bottom and left to right.

Vertical

由 人个生而自
他 都生而自由
相 律而且具有
親 應眼心、并
和 以兄弟關係
待。 的精神互相
對待。

Horizontal

人人生而自由，在尊严和权利上一律平等。他们赋有理性和良心，并应以兄弟关系的精神互相对待。

The languages of China

When it comes to spoken Chinese, we simply can't say that there is just one language. There are so many variations and regional forms of the language that they're hard to summarize thoroughly.

The predominant language is Mandarin Chinese, also known as Hanyu, (Simplified Chinese: 汉语, Traditional Chinese: 漢語, pinyin: Hànyǔ). Its literal meaning is the language of Han. It has between 7 to 13 regional groups, depending on the phonetic development, and these are not mutually intelligible between each other. In Shanghai, for example, the language is understandably called Shanghainese, but it's actually Wu Chinese and it is spoken by around 74 million people. The same goes for Cantonese, which is Yue Chinese and is spoken by about 68 million people.

These variations and the fact that they aren't really understandable between each other make the languages of China a very difficult translation group in general.

15

THE RISE IN POPULARITY OF ASIAN CINEMA

Although there's no single hub for movies like Hollywood in Asia, Asian cinema is steadily gaining popularity and prominence globally. Serious blockbusters and serious wins on the international stage mean that Asian cinema is rising and rising fast.

One of the reasons for this is the intricate, emotional storylines and the hair-raising plot twists. From films like the 2003 Old Boy, which received 40 awards and 21 nominations to the 2019 Parasite with a whopping four Oscars, 308 wins, and 271 nominations in total, there's been a surge in the popularity of Asian cinema all over the world.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Even though this category is hard to pin down, with Asia being a vast continent comprising multiple languages and culture groups, Asian cinema from China, South Korea, Japan, Thailand, India, Hong Kong and more is drawing audiences in. Based on the sheer variety of human and realistic portrayals, it's easy to recognize why this is the case. Audiences all over the world find themselves easily identifying with the emotions the characters portray – from complicated love stories to gore and Asian horror films, anime, and even violence.

But how did it all start? What have been some of the influencing factors? And where is the industry standing now? We take a closer look.

How It All Started

In 1954, the Japanese *Godzilla* came out. Dubbed a sci-fi/horror film, it was the very first film in the *Godzilla* franchise. Just two years later, an edited and "Americanized" version of the film titled *Godzilla: King of the Monsters!* was released in the US. It was recognized by the **Guinness World Records** as "the longest-running film franchise in history".

Thereafter, the stage was set for more. *Crouching Tiger: Hidden Dragon*, was a film based on a Chinese book of the same name and it also received critical acclaim. Over the past decade and a bit, however, there's been a rise in Asian cinema productions with some snatching some of the world's most coveted cinema awards.

Enter *Parasite*. Directed by Bong Joon-ho from South Korea, this movie is about greed and class discrimination and the name seems to say it all. But before *Parasite*, the 2001 fantasy/adventure film *Spirited Away* proved that Japanese culture and folklore could resonate with millions of viewers worldwide.

Of course, there have been some adaptations such as the 2010 *Avatar: The Last Airbender.* This film is said to divide the world "into very different, defined groups, something a lot of popular franchises, like *Divergent* and *The Hunger Games* have exploited, to great success." This is what has made their popularity so enduring. Another example of this is *Ghost in the Shell*.

The Popularity of Asian Media

As opposed to what one might believe about economic affairs and developments, one of Asia's biggest exports would have to be its culture over the past few decades. Specifically characterized by the **Korean wave** or "Hallyu" as it's also known in China, Korea's burgeoning economy also saw great potential for the proliferation of Asian media across the world.

Some examples of this have been K-pop with the massive international success of boy and girl pop bands with their amazing dance routines and catchy rhythms. And much like Turkish dramas have been celebrated around the world, Korean dramas are also massively popular throughout Asia.
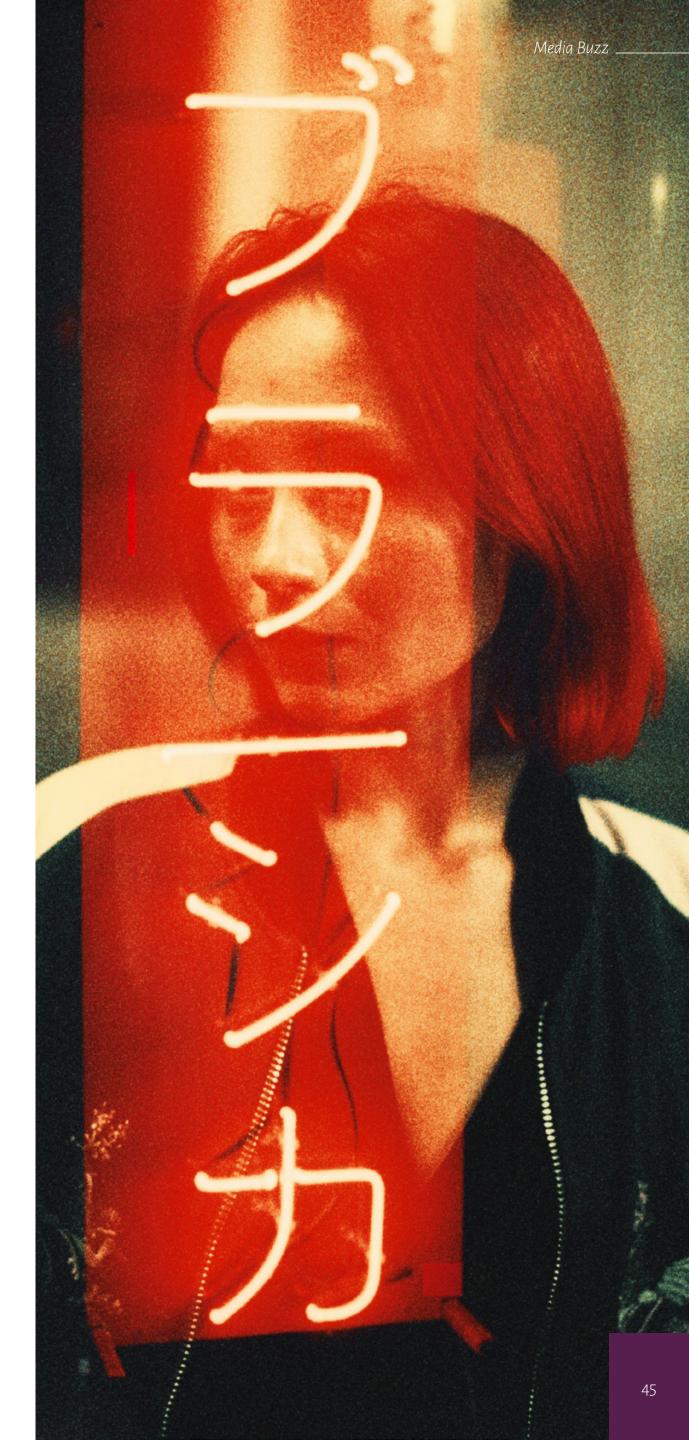
It's not just South Korea though. Japan has also had some great successes with the export of **anime** media. And it doesn't end there. The rising popularity of video or console **games** such as *Lost Ark* (Korean) and *Elder Ring* (Japanese) are also making a huge global impact.

Overall, the cultural capital of the industry has led to a growing affinity for Asian productions including Asian **movies** and Asian-American films, with some of the best Asian films coming out recently as evidenced by major international film databases such as IMDb.

Investments in the Asian Cinema Industry

With the success of Asian cinema and films, investments naturally follow. So, what have been some of the financial ramifications for the industry?

Well, as far back as 2008, Hong Kong-based Global Entertainment Group planned to launch a $100 million fund to invest in film and TV projects across Asia.

Meanwhile, Japan's Avex Group established two separate financing vehicles with Hong Kong players (a $17 million fund with producer Bill Kong and a $50 million fund with Media Asia) "both designed to build long-term, pan-Asian investment strategies."

Moving on to China, in 2021, "the country's cinema industry saw its total box office exceeding RMB 1.7 billion on the second day of the year's seven-day Spring Festival holiday, breaking the record of the daily box office in China," with significant implications for foreign investors in China's film sector.

And as a final point, but not least important is South Korea and Japan, which not only handled the Covid-19 pandemic comparatively well but also saw a steady stream of audiences at theaters despite stringent social distancing measures. It can be said that movies and films play a huge cultural role in South Korea, especially local ones. And such local support was certainly evidenced during the pandemic.

An excellent example of this is the movie *Drive My Car*, which became the first Japanese movie in 13 years to get an Oscar, winning the "Best International Feature" category at the 94th U.S. Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

Is Asian Cinema Here to Stay?

With so much talent coming out of Asia, in terms of acting, directors, scripts, production, etc., it's clear that Asian cinema is here to stay. What's more, is that it's likely to continue gaining international acclaim much as *Parasite* did. There's financial impetus, creativity, and skill coming out of Asia and it's appalling to foreign audiences.

The question that remains is to what extent will localization of films take place through translations of subtitles and dubbing, as these small but highly significant cultural references need an outlet and may not always be conveyed or have their meaning carried across as effectively as they could. Let's see what happens at the very next Asian film festival.

5 Asian Movie Classics

The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice

お茶漬けの味
Director: Yasujirō Ozu
Year: 1952

Still Walking

歩いても 歩いても
Director: Hirokazu Kore-eda
Year: 2008

Yi Yi

＿＿＿
Director: Edward Yang
Year: 2000

Taste of Cherry

طعم گیلاس
Director: Abbas Kiarostami
Year: 1997

Pather Panchali

পথের পাঁচালী
Director: Satyajit Ray
Year: 1955

THAI MOVIE SCENE: SUBTITLING vs DUBBING

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Known for its majestic sights, rich cultural heritage, and divine food, Thailand takes a very special place in its corner of the earth. With a population of over 66 million people, the country is home to some of the world's friendliest people. It is interesting, unique and has a lot of unknown facts such as the fact that the capital Bangkok's real name is *Krung Thep Mahanakhon Amon Rattanakosin Mahinthara Aythaya Mahadilok Phop Ratchathani Burirom Udomrathcaniwet Mahasathan Amon Piman Awatan Sathit Skkathattiya Wirsanukam Prasit.* Quite a mouthful isn't it? Something else you might find interesting about the language is that Thai is often called Siamese and is spoken by around 40 million people in the world. Formerly known as Siam, it's also the original home of Siamese cats and twins. But what about modern-day Thailand? And how about the younger generation? Especially when it comes to an increasingly globalized world where English is spoken more and more often? What interests do they have and how does this relate to localization? Keep reading to find out!

Thailand and English

Some sources indicate that Thailand scored in 55ᵗʰ place out of 60 on EF's English Proficiency Index (EPI), and it also scored the lowest in Southeast Asia in the JobStreet.com English Language Assessment (JELA). In our increasingly globalized world, this score is indicative of some true language barriers between English and Thai. Let's put things in perspective by citing some examples. Thai people often struggle with the difference between the English "ch" and "sh" as in cheese or sheep. Much like other Asian countries, there is also often confusion between the "r" and "l" letters and sounds. To make things even more difficult is the issue of introducing politeness in a conversation. Whereas in English one might say Sir or Miss, in Thailand this is a bit different. This is why if you go to Thailand, you may often find that you get called "you" in shops, simply because the direct Thai translation is in their polite form. This makes translations truly awkward at times and is something to consider.

The Thai Movie Scene

Jumping slightly ahead to the Thai movie scene and the younger generation discussed above (not necessarily at the exclusion of the older generation though), movies are an excellent source of entertainment for them. Dramas, soapies, horror films, animations — you name it, the Thai love it. However, it often happens that most of the time, movies and films are dubbed instead of containing subtitles. Going back to what was said in the previous section, this makes it difficult for Thai people to truly grasp the native way in which a word or a series of words may be spoken, as more focus is placed on one's listening skills instead of their speaking skills. Hence the common language errors made by Thais when converting to speaking English. Since cinema is such a great way of introducing a language and culture to a nation, it may be a good idea for Thailand to consider reducing dubbing and introducing subtitles in movies instead. This will greatly help with language uptake.

Subtitling and Translations

There's a very long process from the time an English or other language film is created to its release to the public. This is especially the case when it comes to a public that is a foreign nation and where English is not a commonly spoken language. This can create significant difficulties when it comes to subtitle translations. While common to many countries around the world, Thai subtitling must be considerate of several factors in order to be effective. This involves not only accurately conveying the author's words, tone, intended meaning, but also plays on words and jokes, which may be very hard to translate and to put into context. Another major issue relates to dubbing.

Dubbing

Dubbing is the art of a professional voice-over actor looking at the movie script as well as the screen in front of them, in a second-by-second time frame, and then adjusting their voices, the speed of their speech, their tone, and making other necessary adjustments to ensure that the scene is accurately recreated and portrayed to the viewers. For example, some professional voice-over artists and actors took on the task of dubbing the English movie by American director Martin Scorsese, The Irishman, took a lot of effort and professionalism to convey all the right nuances in the gangster film.

What About Thai Subtitle Localization?

Some authors indicate that it would be better for Thailand to consider reducing dubbing and introducing subtitles to the films as this is a great way for Thai people to pick up English language nuances better. On the other hand, there is the argument that Thai subtitle localization is a hard feat to master. This will also require the viewers to read as opposed to listening, thereby making them tired instead of relaxing and enjoying the film. Whichever way you look at it, and there are good arguments on both sides, the need for localizing subtitles is great. There are many cultural intricacies that some languages are not able to convey as accurately and succinctly as possible, and there are also language obstacles, such as those mentioned above, which can hinder an accurate localization process.

Where to next?

It's unclear where the world of film will take Thailand in the future. Suggestions have been made for there to be a reduction in dubbing and an increase in the use of subtitles (at least for those who are at a particular age where they're able to read such as young children). This could really be a turning point for the way English is learned and spoken in Thailand and it will only add to a richer and more fruitful interaction with the millions of visitors that the country has each year.

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KOREAN WEBTOONS AND THEIR GROWING POPULARITY

Desi Tzoneva

Content Writer

Western readers who grew up with comic books will surely remember the DC and Marvel superheroes that they grew up with, which have subsequently been turned into movies for all ages to enjoy. But with the decline of print and the rise of online, it's natural for this medium, too, to turn to the web. This hasn't been more relevant than South Korea's webtoon market, which has steadily grown since the 2008 financial crisis reaching billions of Won in value to date. Initially called *manhwa*, which is a Korean term for comics and print cartoons, the webtoon evolved as an outgrowth of manhwa to gain popularity across Asia and increasingly, the Western world.

Let's Travel Back in Time

Those who live or have visited South Korea will be familiar with Daum and Naver as some of the most popular web portals in the country. So what do they have to do with webtoons? Quite a lot, actually. For starters, in 2003, Daum created Daum Webtoon to cater to the wide fan base – after all, around one-quarter of all book sales in South Korea were dedicated to comics at one point in time with over three million Koreans paying to access online manhwa and 10 million users reading free webtoons. Naver quickly followed in Daum's footsteps by launching Naver Webtoon in 2004.

Fast-forward 10 years later to July 2014 and we get a whopping 520 webtoons published by Naver while Daum followed closely behind with 434. There's also been a gradual easing into translating these webtoons into English to reach a Western audience as part of what is known as the Korean Wave.

Apart from this, the evolution of webtoons can be divided into four "generations". Generation Zero was when the webtoon was initially created by having original print comics scanned and uploaded to the internet, typically formatted on one page. Then came the first generation of webtoons, with the implementation of flash animation effects. To cater to the growing use of smartphones and tablets, generation two allowed for enhanced "preloading" which "enabled later authors to adopt a vertical layout with scrolling". The ability to scroll enables readers to view new panels, making such webtoons "suitable for gradual and continuous representation, allowing webtoon reading to become more fluid." Finally, with the third generation and very much still in line with the vast proliferation of smartphones and tablet usage, sound effects have been added to emphasize tones and expressions, in addition to interactive motions that enhance the viewer's experience. In addition to this, webtoons have also ended up migrating to new platforms which include being made available through different apps.

The Revenue Model

As mentioned above, the decline in print has been slowly (or rapidly, depending on the perspective and location) been replaced by online versions of print materials. The same is true for webtoons. The revenue models employed by different webtoon providers differ, but they also share many similarities with other online media. These include offering a limited set of chapters for free while the rest are paid for. Meanwhile, other providers offer a limited number of chapters to be read per day. There is also the ability to earn revenue from ads displayed on their websites as well as through in-app ad revenue.

The Korean Market

The Korean webtoon market, including its derivatives, is valued at **around US$368 million**, attesting to the rising popularity of this medium of comics. It is worth noting that even though these digital comics are gaining popularity, print still remains the primary medium and source of revenue for comic retail. This is possibly why some publishers have opted to offer online and print content simultaneously.

The Asian Market

As part of the Korean Wave, which has taken the world by storm, the popularity of webtoons has also spread throughout Asia. Mainland China and Taiwan are seeing rapid consumption of webtoons and a resurgence in interest in the manhwa industry with increases in digital consumption of content. Meanwhile, webtoons have not been adopted in Japan, possibly owing to the continued popularity of manga there. Other parts of Asia where the webtoon industry is growing and thriving include India, Indonesia, and Thailand.

The Western Market

Korean webtoons have certainly reached their Western counterparts as well with many content providers opting for **in-house translations** to cater to an English audience. One simple example of this is Korea's TopToon's TopToonPlus service which was launched in July 2021. It certainly reached its English-speaking global fanbase quite quickly as it gained over 200,000 subscribers In its first month of service only.

Korean Webtoons Are Here To Stay

Webtoons are a wonderful way for people of all ages to immerse themselves in a fantasy world. They can range from webtoons targeted at children to those aimed at adults. There are many categories to choose from ranging from romance and comedy to drama, thrillers and fantasy. They make for an enjoyable escape experience to help their readers. The addition of sound and visual effects after the third generation of webtoon development is another way of creating an immersive experience that's driven by quality. And the best part is that with in-house translations, webtoons can reach a wider part of the world as is already being shown with their proliferation in mainland China and Taiwan, Indonesia, India, and Thailand. The Western world is not far behind with one publisher catering not only to English speakers but to French speakers, too. The rising popularity of webtoons should be followed with interest as this is a huge market segment that provides quality entertainment and value to audiences.

Popular Korean Lingo

대박

[daebak]

awesome

미쳤어

[michyeosseo]

crazy

짱

[jjang]

cool

셀카

[selca]

selfie

화이팅

[hwaiting]

good luck

여보세요

[yeoboseyo]

hello
(answering the phone)

헐

[omo]

OMG
(oh my god)

진짜

[jinjja]

really?

Takeaway

IN-HOUSE LINGUISTS: THE CROWN JEWELS OF EVERY LSP

Gergana Toleva

Global Strategic
Development

During the last year or two, I've been reading a lot about the companies in our industry, and when I say that it is not only out of curiosity but also to learn about the different paths companies decide to take in business. It is amazing how similar and at the same time how different we are when it comes to management models. Some of us decide to stick to LSPs only, others to end-clients, some decide to invest in technology, while others go for boutique human-delivered services. However, one factor or should I say a very important group of people always sticks out never mind the direction you choose and this group is the true foundation of our translation industry. The people I am referring to are linguists.

Why I chose to talk about in-house linguists?

I do believe that there is plenty to be said about the current dynamics of professional translators and their relationship with LSPs during the last few years. Especially with the rising popularity and international recognition of the significance linguists and translators hold in our everyday lives.

I shouldn't say "everyday lives" probably as in the last few months we've seen fine examples and heartbreaking moments of interpreters and translators walking the thin line of being professionals and being human at the same time. We've all heard the interpreter whose voice broke while interpreting the speech of President Zelensky, right?

Where am I going with this?

Straight to the point with another question here: au contraire to the above we've also seen posts on LinkedIn where translators, linguists and even phonologists have been offered "peanuts" for their skills and there is an honest outrage about that.

With recent technologies access to freelancers has never been easier for LSPs to handle. The latest software and contemporary TMSs offer what previously did the LSPs who work mostly with other LSPs – handling the diversity of linguists, filtering out the less skilled, creating pools of good quality translators that fit your customers' requirements, following deliveries, etc.

This, however, opened up a whole new challenge for linguists to tackle, which a lot of them weren't even prepared to do. What I am talking about are the soft skills needed to market yourself, put your services in the spotlight, negotiate your own payment, do the job, take the feedback and then do that quite a number of times to be successful. That sounds familiar, right?

Are linguists SLVs?

The reason I am posing the question is that this is exactly what linguists have to turn into in order to work for themselves. And we have to say that most of them are completely unprepared to meet the cold reality. Thus their outrage!

We all get emails from freelancers in our inboxes on a daily basis and they all look the same. Most of them don't even bother to check if your company offer's the language pair they are skilled in.

I personally check every one of these because I know how difficult it is to put yourself out there and I realize there is a real person on the other side. But I know that 99% of these are not the people we are looking for and I think that this is the case with a lot of us. It doesn't mean these people don't have the skills, on the contrary, they do but they just didn't target the right people.

I will stop here because there is plenty to be said but it is not relevant to what I would like to showcase today. As the article's name suggests I intend to touch base on the value of in-house linguists and LSPs.

Call me old-fashioned but I love LSPs with in-house linguists probably because I work for one...

Are LSPs the "home" for in-house linguists?

When I was managing only the Marketing department at 1-StopAsia we had to do a lot of thinking about our company values, mission, vision, etc. It might sound by the book but the thing is that is one of the most difficult tasks to complete. You have to put in very few words the whole idea behind your company. After a few months of brainstorming and consulting we came up with:

"We want to be home to the best Asian language experts worldwide – and the go-to partner for LSPs who need Asian language translations."

We did this about 4 years ago but to be honest, it is valid for over 20 when the company started and I'd like to think it is going to be so for the next 10 years ahead. It doesn't mean we are there already but it gives us a beautiful goal to aim for, right?

Human LSPs and their in-house linguists

When we look for our potential LSP partners, we can always see and read on their websites and marketing materials statements how good their in-house linguists are, the pools they use, etc. And I must say we at 1-StopAsia are not an exception. I am thinking that this is going to change very soon and you'll probably see in the next few months ahead, how we will slowly shift our brand voice to match our beliefs. I think it is not important how many or how good your in-house linguists are anymore.

What matters most is what you do for your linguistic family!

How you care about them, how you train them, and what you do for these people to stay with you for the long run and grow together.

Because at the end of the day if you bring enough value for them to work together why would they prefer to be freelancers? Especially with the current trend of working from home or from anywhere around the world.