



## reface

Dear Reader,

We are happy to present you with the Fall Edition of 2022! It is the  $6^{th}$ edition of *Pulse of Asia* magazine.

The number 6 is considered to be lucky in China. Six sounds like "liú", which means "flow" and the positive reassurance that everything will go smoothly!

Similarly, we have observed that over the past few years, the role of Asia in the global economy has gradually become more prominent! From our collection of articles you can see the impact this has on the ever-changing landscape of the translation and localization industry.

After exploring the localization station, focus on experts and media buzz make sure to check out the Takeaway article. As usual, it includes our first-hand experience and the topic is sure to spark your interest!

Enjoy and thank you for reading!

Nikola Stoyanov SEO & Content Specialist

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#### Takeaway

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## OCALIZATION QUIRKS FROM ENGLISH TO **JAPANESE**

Global borders continue to shrink and this is becoming ever more evident when it comes to English to Japanese

translations. Many Western companies are heading to Japan to offer their products there – including games,

technology, and other wares. But with this comes many challenges related to localization. Whether you need to

translate English to Japanese or translate Japanese to English, a couple of important localization points need to be



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#### What Makes English to Japanese **Translation So Difficult?**

English to Japanese translations come with a number of different challenges related to both the language and alphabets of both societies, as well as culture and formality levels and more. Here, we take a look at some of these challenges that a Japanese translator would need to consider.

kept top of mind on your expansion journey. Let's take a look at some of these.

- · Vocabulary: the Japanese language isn't only comprised of words of Japanese origin. In fact, there are many borrowed words from both Chinese and English, and as a result, these words and their meanings within a cultural context need to be taken into consideration by a Japanese translator
- **Grammar:** sentence structure in English and Japanese differs vastly, too. For instance, English grammatical rules place the order in terms of subject-verb-object. However, in Japanese, you find that the sentence order is subject-object-verb. This would mean that the sentence "I am eating an apple" in English would be directly translated into "I am an apple-eating" in Japanese. Although it sounds odd, this is the Japanese grammatical rule that needs to be followed. What's

more, is that the subject of the sentence determines

- Honorifics and formality levels: Japanese culture, and accordingly the language, is full of honorifics and formality levels depending on one's standing in society, the age of the person that you're addressing, and their relative position to you. What makes this even more complicated is that formality levels can change verbs, adjectives, and nouns depending on their usage. This is why there is no single direct translation from English to Japanese of the word "hello". In Japanese, you'd need to look at the time of day, the social standing of the person being addressed, and the levels of politeness required.
- Typography: if that doesn't make localization complicated, this part should. Japanese uses three different types of scripts including Kanji, Hiragana, and Katakana. Although there are rules about when to use each one, there are numerous exceptions to these rules making for a more complex translation and localization landscape. In addition to this, Japanese characters can be written both horizontally and vertically. Horizontal text is read from left to right, much like English. However, vertical text is read from top to bottom but is read from right to left.

#### **Quirky Japanese Website Design**

Taking all this into account, a Western user of a Japanese website might find the user experience (UX) on such websites quite overwhelming. A standard, well-performing Japanese website would, for example, be full of multiple banners (both horizontal and vertical), be packed with text, and have numerous pictures. To Western sensibilities, this may go against the grain of the minimalist designs that Japanese culture is typically associated with. However, if one delves a bit further into the culture, the entire website design in Japanese makes perfect sense. Here's why.

Firstly, it's important to look at the demographics of Japanese website users. While millennials are on the rise, they do not appear to have the same purchasing power as more elderly citizens over the age of 60, who have both the funds and the time to shop. These citizens need text to be written in at least a size 16 font, require as much information on one page without having to follow links (much like the West does), and also, they are sometimes not aware that they can scroll down on the page. This means that Japanese website design is usually text-heavy and content-rich. The purpose behind this is to ensure that the target audiences that these websites cater to are actually valuable to them.

Another reason behind the apparent complexity and density of information on Japanese sites is the fact that many are targeted at men as the decision-makers of households. As a result, men in Japan appear to prefer text that is informative and which does not only specify the unique selling points (USPs) of a product but also looks at how it was manufactured and the technical specifications that comprise it. These are just some of the factors to consider when looking to conduct English to Japanese translation and localization for websites.

#### **Other Challenges With English to Japanese Localization**

If you thought that this is where the end of the challenges is, you'd be wrong. There are a number of other factors to consider when doing English to Japanese translation and localization.

For starters, it's almost impossible to undertake a literal translation of text from English to Japanese. As a result,

localization experts need to keep this in mind to ensure that their texts are as accurate as possible given the local cultures and customs of Japanese society.

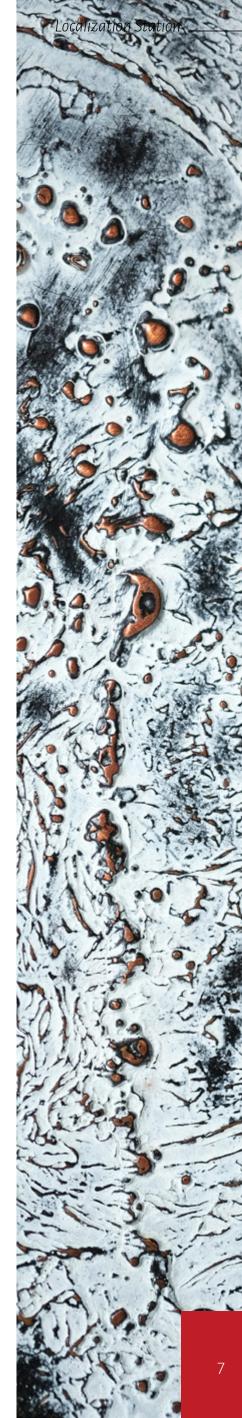
Further to this, translation tools lack resources regarding the Japanese language. This is why a Japanese translator can have a hard time translating words, phrases, sentences and even entire scripts of dialogue (whether for games or for websites) if they don't have a strong enough resource toolkit. Using tools that have been created specifically for Japanese, therefore, should be used to help make the English to Japanese localization process as accurate and meaningful as possible.

Finally, it's critical in English to Japanese localization to ensure that one remains culturally sensitive to aspects like honorifics. The omission of these or non-uniform usage of honorifics such as "Ms. Saiko" or "Saiko-san" can create frustration on the part of the users and therefore lead to less satisfaction with the final product, leading to poor or negative reviews and ultimately loss of business reputation and loss of face. The latter is a huge cultural no-no and must be taken into account quite seriously if a Western business wishes to be successful in Japan.

#### **English to Japanese localization: Quirks** can be overcome

Irrespective of whether you as a Western business are seeking to offer games or products to your target audience, the linguistic quirks that arise as a result of English to Japanese localization can, in fact, be overcome. This will mean selecting and working with professional language service providers (LSP) who are not only native speakers but who are also close to the local culture. Cultural sensitivity and awareness have never been more important now and as a result, it's crucial to ensure you partner with the right LSP to ensure your product takes off in Japan, despite the plethora of linguistic and cultural nuances and challenges mentioned above.

#### Visit our blog!





# POLITENESS FROM ENGLISH TO HINDI

Despite the multitude of linguistic differences between all the languages of the world, they all have one thing in

common and that is that they contain levels of politeness, making politeness a universal language factor. Since

politeness is socio-culturally determined, the context in which a polite request or statement is made can have

devastating consequences when translating from a target language into a source language if not done correctly. For

example, inadequate levels of politeness may lead to conflict and misunderstanding and ultimately frustration and

negativity. In this article, we explore some of the ways in which one can translate English to Hindi politeness levels as



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#### **Politeness Levels**

When it comes to someone who will translate English to Hindi, what becomes apparent based on research is that there are three main politeness levels to be taken into consideration. These are the lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic/discourse levels. However, these three levels should not be considered mutually exclusive and they are not to be viewed as autonomous. Rather, they should be viewed in terms of a hierarchical relationship with pragmatic/discourse appearing at the top and lexical and syntactic at the bottom. Let's take a look at each one in turn.

well as the implications for machine translations.

- Lexical: the lexical level is the level of words and vocabulary in a given language such as English to Hindi. There are highly specific words in an utterance which make it polite. For example, in English, in order to be polite, one would say "Could you hand me the pen please?" as opposed to the direct command "Give me the pen".
- **Syntactic:** the syntactic level deals with the sentence structure in a particular language, such as English to

Hindi, and all its associated rules and relationships to other aspects including semantics, morphology, pragmatics, and phonology. In the context of English to Hindi translations of politeness levels, we need to consider when the syntactic structure of the sentence type (such as a request or an apology) makes the utterance polite. One example of this would be the sentence: "Please speak, Jahul Ji."

• **Pragmatic/discourse:** at the discourse level, translating politeness from English to Hindi will depend on the context of the use of politeness. Using the previous example of "Please speak, Jahul Ji", we see that it could be perceived as impolite, a rebuke, or even sarcastic if, for instance, a teacher catches out a student in front of a class, that he has not attended in a while, or a father speaks to his son over the phone after not communicating for several months. But the crucial aspect to remember with this level is that politeness or impoliteness remains hidden or inactive until the values are assigned in the default context.



## Translating Politeness from English to Hindi

Because both English and Hindi are highly complex languages with vastly differing rules for sentence structure and other linguistic intricacies, translating politeness comes with its own set of issues and this, in turn, has implications for translation results. Here are a few scenarios to consider when it comes to translating English to Hindi.

- Mistranslated polite structures: in this scenario, the structure of the source language is translated into the target language but not the politeness value. This could lead to mistranslations at the lexical and syntactic levels. In such a situation, the structure of the source language may have an equivalent in the target language but the politeness value equivalent is not the same. As a result, this implies that at the lexical level, a particular word in the source language has a one-word equivalent in the target language and that at the syntactic level, the sentence structure of the source language is preserved in the target language. (Although it must be remembered that word order distinction in both English and Hindi must be taken into account).
- **Dissimilar structures:** in such a case, the politeness value of a sentence is said to be carried through in the target language. However, the sentence structure itself changes and differs from the source language. The reasons this situation may arise include the fact

that although a politeness structure is possible, it is not carried through in the target language. In addition to this, the politeness structure of the sentence may be preserved irrespective of the dissimilar structures of the sentences in the source and target languages.

Non-translatable structures: in this case, there is simply no possibility to translate the structure of the source language into the target language, meaning that the structure cannot be preserved. As a result, neither the structure nor the politeness value is carried through. The possible consequences for such an outcome on an English to Hindi translation could include an accurate translation, improper translation, or simply a poor translation.

## Translate in Hindi with Machine Translation

Machine translation has advanced significantly over the past years but it still has some ways to go, especially when it comes to English to Hindi translations and incorporating levels of politeness. Some of the factors outlined above have implications for machine translation, which must attempt to maintain structural similarity and integrity by either translating a word for another word and no other; translating a phrase for another phrase and no other; or translating a clause for another clause and no other.

## The Future of English to Hindi Translation of Politeness

Whether you wish to translate in Hindi or in English, incorporating levels of politeness is a must in order to produce accurate and quality translations. However, it must be noted that when it comes to machine translation, the linguistic levels of politeness need to be factored in, as should their challenges and methods of overcoming them. For example, there is no equivalent of the Hindi word "Ji" in English, although it can signify a friendly and polite relationship and approach to a person. Therefore, both on the lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic or discourse front — language particularities need to be paired with the closest equivalent when engaging with English to Hindi machine translation.



# HY IT IS DIFFICULT TO TRANSLATE ENGLISH TO KOREAN?

While every language has its own set of peculiarities and rules, there's something special to be said about translating

English to Korean. Apart from the fact that the languages are so vastly dissimilar in so many ways, translating a

piece of content requires strength in the knowledge of both languages, having a historical context, understanding

honorifics and levels of politeness, and so much. In this article, we'll explore whether it is really that hard to translate



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Language Similarities and Differences from English to Korean

to continue grammatic

Yes, Konglish has come to the fore with the incorporation of English words into Korean as the drive to get more of the population to speak English continues across schools and universities. The plethora of English foreign teachers in Korea is a great example of this. And Konglish generally means that it could be easier for an English speaker to understand a "Koreanified" word.

But perhaps that's where the similarities end. For instance, not only does an English speaker need to learn a brand new alphabet that contains characters instead of letters in most of the Western world, but there are also new sounds to consider, new grammatical structures with rules and regulations that are completely different than what people may be used to.

Some examples of situations where difficulties may arise due to the differences in translating from English to Korean include tenses and idioms.

When it comes to tenses, it must be remembered that English has present, past, and future tenses in addition

to continuous or perfect tenses. However, this important grammatical feature is absent in Korean. In fact, the Korean language generally has about three main verbal times and in order to represent the continuous or perfect tenses, an adverb of time is simply added to the sentence. This makes it difficult because you'd need to pay careful attention to what the speaker or text is trying to communicate. The importance of context here cannot be overstated.

Idioms are another challenging aspect when it comes to translating English to Korean. Why? Because although most languages have idioms, these idioms are based on a country's historical, social, and economic background and peculiarities leading to its development.

They are also learned by the person by heart and their origins and meaning may not make sense if a direct translation from English to Korean is embarked upon. This is typically explained by the fact that idioms typically come in groups of words that would normally not be put together, and hence if a direct translation is attempted, the result will be nonsensical. Context once again prevails in this case.

#### There Is Never Too Much Context

As mentioned above, the importance of context is crucial in any Korean translation. When an English to Korean translation is required, it's also important to see what the surrounding circumstances of the language are. For example, the Korean language, while quite rich, is used more sparsely by Korean people. They use fewer words, opting for more efficiency instead.

To make matters even more complex is that some words can have more than one meaning and in order to overcome this, you'd need to have a very clear idea of the context surrounding the use of the word. A perfect example of this would be the word "nun" which can either mean "eye" or "horse". In spoken Korean, the difference can be distinguished between differentiation in the sound and pronunciations of the word, but in its written form, context will be required. This can significantly impact an English to Korean translation.

#### Is Korean That Hard After All?

Despite all these challenges and linguistic differences, there is light at the end of the tunnel for those who are interested in Korean. After all, the alphabet can be learned in an hour or two and this means that your journey to starting your language experience with Korean can begin.

Furthermore, it is argued by some that Korean grammar is quite simple and straightforward. Genders and numbering become obsolete because sentences such as "he eats", "she eats", or "you eat" are all conjugated in the same way. This only changes when you add a level of politeness to the sentence (for more on honorifics, see below). In addition to all this, nouns don't change according to the case. In Korean, there are some basic suffixes (case markers) that are easy to pick up and use.

Although there are some copula verbs, there is no auxiliary verb for action or descriptive words. For example, we can have the sentence "it is a house" but "I am happy" will be simply translated to "I happy".

Other aspects to consider when it comes to English to Korean include the fact that Korean phonetics are considered very simple for English speakers, there are no consonant clusters like in other languages, nor are there tones as with many East Asian languages.

Korean is also pronounced the same way in which it's written (as opposed to English), although there are some cases where sounds can be omitted when combined with others. Finally, there's the aspect of word order. Whereas English is considered a subject-verb-object language in terms of sentences, in Korean this is literally the opposite with a subject-object-verb structure.

#### The Difference In Korean Culture

There's a lot to be said about honorifics in Korea and apart from the social and cultural implications of this, there are also language differences. In Korean, many sentences would end with or drop a  $\Omega$  or -0; at the end of sentences to show politeness, depending on who you are speaking to, what age group they fall in, and what sort of authority and standing they have over you.

## Translating English to Korean: Concluding Thoughts

Translating English to Korean certainly has its challenges and quality and native-like translation would require the services of a professional translator who can factor in aspects such as tenses and idioms, honorifics and respectful addresses, as well as sentence structure, verbs, and more. Overall, the quality of a translation will depend on the knowledge, experience and expertise of the individual performing it and if you're in any doubt, don't hesitate to get in touch with us.

Request a quote!



## Taegeukgi – the Korean flag



## TRANSLATION TERM BASIS FOR THAI

The Thai language does not have an alphabet but rather uses a writing system which is called the abugida. Through

this system, every new consonant may invoke an inherent vowel sound, such as an implied "a" or "o". What makes

matters even more complicated is that while consonants are written horizontally from left to right, vowels can be



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arranged above, below, or to the left or right of a consonant, or in a combination of positions. When it comes to medical translation services, especially from English to Thai or Thai to English, a few challenges can arise due to machine translation. Due to the peculiarities of the language, Thai language translation, especially in a medical context, poses several obstacles. Below, we identify some of them.

#### **Word Segmentation**

Word segmentation refers to the placing of spaces or periods between words to indicate the end of a phrase or sentence and the start of a new one. Since Thai script is exactly that, a script, it does not segment different words and one would need to look at the holistic meaning to determine the accurate translation that's required in the target language, in this case, English.

#### **Sentence Markings**

Sentence markings are another challenge when it comes to medical translations. This is because there are no periods used in the language to indicate the start or the end of a sentence. Instead, certain interjections are used by Thai people such as "because" or "so" to indicate the start of the new sentence, but in machine translation, this can result in several run-on sentences, which are grammatically incorrect.

#### **Word Meaning Ambiguity**

A further challenge regarding medical translations to and from Thai is word meaning ambiguity, which a translator or even a machine can struggle with. One such example relates to the fact that there can be more than one word for the medical problem of a peptic ulcer. Which word(s) should be used in such a case and which one would convey the accurate and intended meaning?

#### **Wrong Lexical Choices**

Translators are also often found struggling with what is considered "wrong lexical choices". Due to the difficulties in directly translating from or to English and Thai and due to the variety of different expressions available in Thai to describe one thing, challenges arise.

#### **Missing Words**

Missing words pose a further problem. In Thai, there are sometimes no equivalent words to the English language and this can result in the adoption of an English word or looking for phrases to convey the intended meaning.

#### Singular vs Plural

In Thai, if one were to say "book", one specific word would be used, whereas if one were to change this word slightly

to the plural form "books", in Thai, it is more common to add a number to the word such as "two books" to convey the meaning of plurality. **Omission of Pronouns** Thai also often omits personal pronouns in daily conversation as well as in medical terminology, which can cause significant problems in translating as it would not be clear, for example, if the patient in a case would be a male or a female. **Word Order** Word order is a further challenge that arises with medical translations, as the sentence structure does not follow the English rules of subjects, objects, and verbs. **Absence of Standardization** The absence of standardization of medical terminology is another issue that many translators struggle with. This can be seen in the usage of certain medical terms which have no Thai equivalent. Other Challenges Thai translators and even machine translators may find that they also struggle with other linguistic challenges which include but are not limited to: inflectional errors, reordering errors, missing words, extra words, and lexical choice errors.

Localization Station

#### Conclusion

Based on our experience at 1-StopAsia, we have found that sometimes, our own translators prefer not to use machine translation (MT) when it comes to Asian languages. The reason is that it takes much longer to fix something broken. For example, editing an MTtranslated text rather than just having a good translator and editor to do the work from the beginning. The expectation that MT is cheaper and easier is not always valid and in many cases is the other way around. And in the case of medical translations, when it comes to well-structured information and the fact that the term basis are to some extent the same due to medical terminology, it might seem that MT will work quite well, However, based on the rest of the text in a medical translation, pure MT it's a risk we are simply not willing to take due to the impact of a wrongful translation. That is why it is always key to find the proper balance between advancing technologies and well-established and tested practices to deliver the best suited final result to our clients.

#### **Colors in Thailand**

There is a custom in Thailand that originates from Hinduism where each day of the week corresponds to a different color. The color is based on the God connected to that particular day. For example, Budha's color is green, so on Wednesdays, you might see many people wearing green clothes. Which one is your favorite? Learn more about Thai culture and language from our free e-book!

Download now!

## Colors in Thailand

#### Sunday

Red Surya

#### Monday

Yellow or Cream Chandra

#### Tuesday

Pink Mangala

### Wednesday (Day)

Green Budha

### Wednesday (Night)

Grey Rahu

#### Thursday

Orange or Brown
Brihaspati

#### **Friday**

Light Blue Shukra

### Saturday

Purple or Black Shani



## EXT-TO-SPEECH CONVERSION FOR ASIAN LANGUAGES



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Text-to-speech conversion systems are used to convert text into speech that comes as close as possible to the speech of a native speaker of the language reading that text. Prime quality text-to-speech conversion has been the focus of researchers for more than two decades and we can see this from the text-to-speech converters available today. The needs for text-to-speech conversion are many. To mention some: telephone response systems, computer interfaces, reading for the blind and other text-to-speech systems assisting the handicapped. It finds use in language learning software and audiobooks as well.

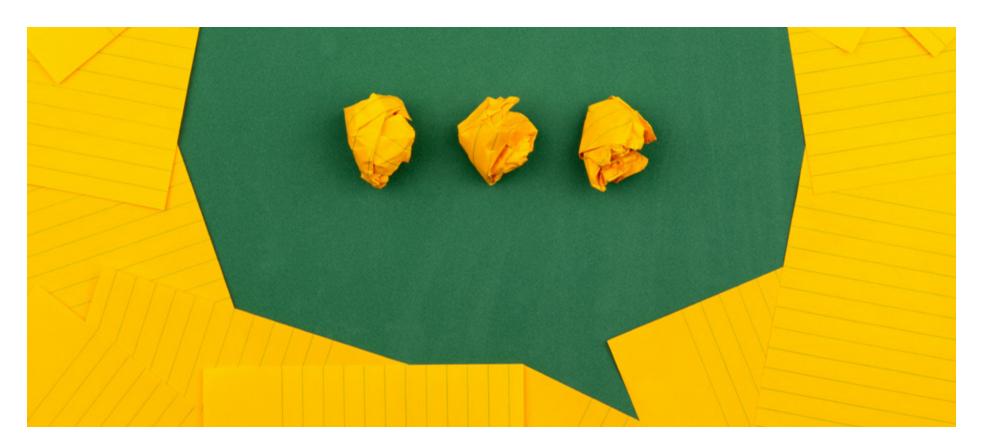
A complementary part of the text-to-speech conversion is the automatic speech recognition which can play a big role in the application of the system by converting audio to text. However, designing a text-to-speech conversion system for a language is very dependent on the linguistic structure of that language. In addition, there are numerous dialects for most languages which makes this endeavor even more difficult. Developing a text-to-speech converter demands significant research of the language structure and linguistics of a given country. In our article, we will take a look at how text-to-speech conversion technology has been developing and its major aspects.

## Approaches to Text-to-Speech Conversion

The current approaches to text-to-speech synthesis are articulatory, concatenative and formant synthesis and even though they all take a different approach, they are equally important for the development of text-to-speech conversion systems, here is a brief explanation of them:

• Articulatory synthesis models are based on the human vocal tract and the articulation processes occurring there. The shape of the vocal tract can be changed in a number of different ways by changing the position of the tongue, jaw and lips. Speech is created by digitally stimulating the flow of air through the vocal tract.

- **Concatenative synthesis** is done by using short samples of recorded sound. It is used in speech synthesis to generate user-specified sequences of sound from a database built from recordings of other sequences.
- Part of what makes the timbre of a voice consistent over a wide range of frequencies is the presence of fixed frequency peaks called formants. These peaks stay in the same frequency, independent of the pitch being produced. There are many other factors that go into synthesizing a realistic-sounding timbre, however, the use of formants is one of the ways to get a reasonably accurate result.



## Problems with Text-to-Speech Conversion

The problems with the text-to-speech conversion are many, however, there are two that stand out. The first is text analysis. The task here is to convert an input text into a linguistic representation. This linguistic representation is usually a complex structure that includes information on grammatical categories of words, accentual or tonal properties of words, prosodic phrase information, and of course word pronunciation. There is also the issue of proper synthesis of speech or the synthesis of a (digital) speech waveform from the analyzed text.

#### Qualities of a High-Performing Text-to-Speech Conversion System

One important quality of a text-to-speech conversion system is multilingualism. As we already mentioned, to develop text-to-speech conversion for different languages, it is necessary to have a good understanding of the linguistic properties of each target language. In other words, language-specific knowledge is required in the entire development process of a text-to-speech conversion system.

## Robustness is Another Quality to Look for

In an audio-to-text converter, it refers to the capability of maintaining reasonable performance for different

users under different conditions. In practical applications, the speakers' voice characteristics and speaking style may change substantially. There may be channel distortion and environmental noise as well, which can further complicate the speech-to-text conversion. A robust automatic speech recognition system is expected to be anticipative and adaptive to the change in these conditions. As for a text-to-speech system, the robustness requirements are on its capability of processing text with unrestricted content and format, and on the perceived naturalness of the output speech.

#### **Speaking of Naturalness**

It is one of the major issues with synthetic speech. For it to be considered unnatural there is an obvious lack of perceptual continuity. This can be due to the fact that transitions in between syllables are missing. In natural human speech, adjacent syllables are closely followed by each other. The naturalness of speech is determined by a few different aspects, among which prosody is generally regarded as predominant. Prosodic parameters refer to the overlaid linguistic functions of the inherent acoustic features of speech sound segments, including timing, tone, intonation, and stress. While timing, tone and intonation are realized through duration and fundamental frequency, respectively, stress is considered to be formed by the collective realization of duration, frequency, and intensity. Proper control of the prosodic parameters is the key to making synthetic speech sound natural.

#### And Finally the Usability of the Text-to-Speech Conversion System

Although the existing spoken language translation is not perfect, they find a lot of meaningful applications. After all, there are many hi-tech companies that have a strong interest in using spoken language translation in their products or services. However, most of them do not specialize in speech signal processing and acoustics, let alone linguistics. It becomes increasingly important to make the spoken language translation easy to use, without requiring expert knowledge. It is also desirable to enable automatic system reconfiguration and adaptation.

## Text-to-Speech Conversion Has Come A Long Way

There has been substantial progress in text-to-speech conversion systems over the last two decades. We have progressed from systems that could transform annotated phonetic transcriptions into barely intelligible speech, to systems that can take the written text in normal orthography and transform it into speech that is highly intelligible, though certainly still mechanical in quality. To a large extent, the problems that remain to be solved for Asian languages are the same as the problems that are faced by synthesizers for any language.



# RANSLATE ENGLISH TO CHINESE ACCURATELY – ADVANCEMENTS OF MT



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Content Manager

Using machine translation to translate English to Chinese accurately sounds amazing, right? If this technology is freely applied, it will impact a wide array of industries including e-commerce, automotive, gaming, engineering, medical and many more!

The main issue with this undertaking is the difference in grammar and specifically the lack of clear word boundaries in Chinese compared to word-based languages such as English. You might have already seen that translators such as Google and Baidu have increased their accuracy greatly over the years when you want to translate English to Chinese (or even if you want to translate Chinese to English). In this article, we will delve deeper into the issues of English to Chinese translation and the advancements of machine translation.

## What Makes It Difficult to Translate English to Chinese?

The Chinese language is one of the oldest in the world, dating back to 1250 BC! Therefore, you cannot expect simplicity. In fact, if you compare it to the simplistic English language it would seem otherworldly. English to Chinese translators have to deal with many challenges to make sure the proper meaning is conveyed, here are just some of them:

#### **Chinese Grammar**

There are several factors that make the Chinese grammar complex, one of which is no clear distinction between singular and plural. To top it off, the verbs lack conjugation patterns to express time reference. You can probably imagine that this already poses a serious challenge when you want to translate English to Chinese and strong context is required to proceed with a proper translation.

#### **Direction of Writing**

What do you think is the direction of writing in the Chinese language? Left to right? Maybe right to left? What about top to bottom? The answer is simple... Yes! It can take any direction. And while modernization has taken place in recent years and the primary way is the one we are used to, do not be surprised if you see a Chinese text written differently. It is completely normal and it is a good idea to have it in mind.

#### **Cultural Differences**

One of the biggest clashes between the East and the West is the cultural differences and it impacts translation as well. The world-view of a given nation is strongly ingrained in their language and you can clearly see this through their expressions. In Chinese, there are four-character idioms that are called Chengyu, and a professional Chinese language translator will be well aware of these. Here is an example:



囫囵吞枣 (hú lún tūn zǎo) which roughly means "to swallow information without assimilating it", but how would one of the best machine translators phrase it? If you thought "swallow the dates whole", then you are correct!

The list of difficulties continues, but let's see how machine translation is advancing in order to deal with them.

## Translate English to Chinese with Deep Learning

The main push behind machine learning in recent years has been deep learning. But what is deep learning? This subset of machine learning is trying to imitate the human brain and even though it is not able to match it (yet?), it has unlocked a technology that allows the algorithms to use a large amount of data at once. These deep neural networks achieve excellent performance on major issues such as speed recognition and visual object recognition. Therefore, the advancements and breakthroughs in natural language processing have been pushed forward to fulfill the main task of machine translation — translating text and speech quickly and accurately.

Neural Machine Translation, compared to previous paradigms such as the popular Statistical Machine Translation, has shown much better performance with a lot less linguistic knowledge and is currently the main focus of researchers. The attention mechanism is one of

the latest components of the neural machine translation model. Interestingly enough, it is based on human behavior. When reading and translating text we would often read the text repeatedly to better understand the meaning of a sentence. An example of such a model is the "Transformer" from Google, which is completely attention-based and shows excellent performance. What it does is — it provides additional context to the algorithm, and as we already learned in a previous article, the introduction of context in NMT shows strong performance and accuracy, even if you want to translate English to Chinese.

## Methods for Improving Machine Translation Accuracy

Machine Translation models need data to have reliable performance. The methods used for this can differ, depending on the language pair, or in this case trying to translate English to Chinese and the major differences between the two languages.

#### Word Segmentation in Chinese

In English, the word segmentation is quite simple, there are spaces between each word. However, this is something that is totally missing in some languages, including Chinese. In these cases, a process called text tokenization takes place, where the text is divided into meaningful chunks or tokens in other words. These tokens make it easier to translate English to Chinese, avoiding ambiguity and awkward or even wrong phrases.

#### **Insert Training Data**

This is what sets the different translators apart — the data which they have gone through, this further teaches them the intricacies of translating the language pair in question, or in this case, if you want to translate English to Chinese. However, the direction this field is taking is to research models and algorithms that show good accuracy and performance even with a low amount of data. This is exactly where neural networks excel, and even the attention mechanism in particular. They have shown excellent results with very little data being "fed" to them, which means that these models can start bringing satisfying results right away with a lot fewer resources.

#### A Future With No Language Barriers

The research in the field of machine translation has shown us how close humanity is to globalization, a world where language will not be a barrier anymore. If you want to translate English to Chinese right now, you will face a series of challenges. Technology can definitely help us bridge the gap and incredible advancements happen every year. In this article, we have talked about just some of the steps that are being taken. However, this is most certainly just a stepping stone in the right direction. And until that happens, make sure to use professional services when looking to properly localize your business.



# OP QUESTIONS OUR PMs GET ABOUT THE INDUSTRY

With over two decades of experience in the translation industry and spread over three continents, our project managers

(PMs) at 1-StopAsia are often asked similar questions by new clients who need to be assured that the translation project

they hand over to us will be in good hands. As a result, we have collected some of the most frequently asked questions



Desi Tzoneva

**Content Writer** 

1. How long would the translation take and how long would it take to translate and review?

(FAQs) posed by clients and provide the answers below.

The answer to this question is "it depends". Some of the influencing factors to consider would be what is the target language that the translation should be translated into, has the source document been sent in an uneditable format such as a PDF or other version, what is the character count of the source document (considering that Word cannot accurately calculate character count accurately, especially for Asian languages), what is the nature of the translation project, which industry is the translation for (e.g. medical, legal, marketing, or otherwise) and do you need a specialized translator for the job? These are all factors that affect the length and duration of a translation project and should be taken into account when providing you with the final time frame for delivering the final translation.

## 2. Do you have experience in a certain field/industry?

We have broad experience in a variety of fields and industries due to the fact that we work with both in-house and freelance translation staff with a broad combined range of skills and experience. Some of the industries which we commonly work with include but are not limited to the following: Art & Entertainment, Automotive, Business & Financial, E-commerce, Education, Gaming, Industry & Engineering, IT & Technology, Legal & Government, Manufacturing, Marketing & Localization, Medical & Pharmaceutical, Oil & Gas, and Software.

#### 3. Which CAT tools does 1-StopAsia use?

Computer-aided translation (CAT) tools make the life of our translators that much easier and the quality of the translation project that much better. In addition, translators who use CAT tools have found that using these tools improves their productivity by around 30%. Some of the CAT tools our translators work with include the following, although we are always open to finding out more and learning about new technologies: Across, Trados, SDL, Smartcat, memoq, Memsource, Wordfast, dejavu, Translation Workspace from Lionbridge, ApSIC Xbench, and Star.

## 4. Can you work with non-editable files?

Although working with non-editable formats can cause some delays in the translation project, we do, however, work with non-editable formats to help ensure you receive a final product that's of high-quality standards that we adhere to, in terms of our ISO certifications.

## 5. Can you deliver the translation with the same layout as the original document we send you?

We aim to offer our customers a service that meets their needs appropriately and in a high-quality manner. Therefore, if you send us a project in a certain layout and require the translated version to be in the same layout, we can definitely help you with this.

## 6. How many people can you provide for a big translation project?

We have an extensive team that works across various time zones on three continents. Therefore, we can provide you with a large team depending on the size and scope of the project you've assigned to us. We work with 60% in-house translators and the remainder are freelance-based translators.

## 7. Why does the translator send us questions about the text?

When a translator sends you questions about the text, it means that they care about the quality of the translation output they would like to deliver to you as the final product. Asking questions could be done in order to confirm something, to get clarification, to ensure that the correct wording is used when more than one option is available, and so much more.

## 8. Can I send special instructions for my content translation?

You are very welcome to send special instructions for your content translation project. Whether it is related to its layout, the type of CAT tool you'd like the translator to use, specific requirements about the final product, specific words or terminology that you'd like to be used instead of others, a file format you prefer or anything else, we can help you with all this and more.

## 9. Do you need a glossary for the translation?

Glossaries are an excellent way of ensuring that translations are standardized across the board and that the final product is a quality one. In the best-case scenario, by offering our translators a glossary to work from, you'll ensure more consistency in your translation project as well as save translators time looking up terms that could be ambiguous. You can either create the glossary yourself, knowing which terms are most important and which translation of each specific word you'd like to be used, or you can ask us to create a glossary for you using various CAT tools to help you have a consistent glossary which you can re-use again in the future.

## 10. Will my materials be kept confidential?

At 1-Stop Asia, we believe in producing translations to the highest quality standards and we do this by complying with various ISO standards. In fact, we are ISO 9001:2015 and 17100:2015 certified. However, we also take confidentiality seriously. This means that all our translators have signed a non-disclosure/confidentiality agreement. Furthermore, we work with an internal communication system all while ensuring that we are also GDPR compliant.

#### **Conclusion**

And there you have it! Some of the top questions our PMs are asked about our services in the translation industry. From the format and layout of your translation project to using glossaries and even ensuring the confidentiality of your materials — we cover it all. If you have any more questions, feel free to head over to our FAQs page or get in touch with us for more information by visiting our website and leaving us a message.

Contact us!



## Nadezhda Kavrakova

Account/Project Manager

To sum up Nadia in a few simple sentences is not nearly as easy as it looks. The first thing that comes to our mind is that she is like Spring – fresh, full of life, and brightening our days with the fun stories she has up her sleeve.

If you are communicating with her online, you'd be surprised to learn that she is one of our youngest teammates. Why? Because Nadia is so professional when she handles her work, one can't recognize she is in her second year at university, while working full time.

One thing you can count on with Nadia is that you always know where you stand with her. She will find the most charming way to serve the truth to you and all you'll want to do is hear more. Probably that is why she is one of our Aces when it comes to our German partners. Read her interview below to learn more about forks, socks, and a few other things. Intrigued? Go on...read!

### How many languages do you speak? Please write them in a list. Which is your mother tongue?

Besides Bulgarian, which is my mother tongue, I am fluent in both English and German languages.

### What is your favorite sport or hobby in your free time? Why is it so? Any interesting stories on it?

My favorite sports are volleyball and handball and I love them so much I was part of the female teams of both sports, which I was at school. We went to a lot of competitions all around the country. I still keep my medals and other prizes I have from these events. One more sport I shouldn't miss and I loved a lot is relay running.

Idon't have other interesting hobbies, but I love spending time with my family and friends because this is what makes me truly happy.

### Top 3 things we don't know about you? Might be something funny, quirky or strange ©

I must say that I am a very honest person and I don't have secrets from others. However, I do have a few quite peculiar habits:

- · I eat with only one particular fork at home. We have about 5 different types, but I eat only with one of these because otherwise, I won't enjoy my meal.
- I am a huge fan of *socks* (yes, you read that right). I have more than 150 different pairs of them. Unlike other people, I will be extremely happy to receive socks as a gift.
- I can proudly share with you that I have a secret talent and it is...falling down the steps. Yes! I am very, very clumsy. I think it is part of my charm and the one thing I am grateful for is that I have never broken a bone, despite that fact.

## What was the most surprising thing you learned about Asia while working here?

There are a lot of surprising things I stumbled upon about Asia. One thing, though, that I really find strange is that young couples in China can't live together, prior to getting married.

### Favorite book or a book that changed your mindset and why it did?

I love the series Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children—that is one of my favorites. Despite the fact that I have read lots of books, I can't say there is a particular book that changes my attitude towards life and the world that surrounds us. For me, Reality is the thing that affects a person's mindset.

#### Your most extreme experience so far in your life/ biggest challenge in your life?

I can't say I have experienced something too extreme or faced a big challenge so far. Probably that is either because I'm too young or because I don't accept my life challenges as "extreme", but I regard them as "another tiny stone, along the path I am walking ".

## Your top 3 goals in professional life for the next 10 years

1. My ultimate dream is to establish my own company for event organizing. I want to organize huge rock concerts, promote young talents, and have a chance to meet my idols from the musical scene.

- 2. Another goal of mine is to become a leader in its true meaning and have a professional team of my own behind me.
- 3. Assessment and evaluation of my work are very important as I believe that it is all one needs to achieve growth in both aspects personal and professional. That is the one thing that can prove enough to reach any professional goals.



## ATA ANNOTATION FOR CHINESE LANGUAGE



Gergana Toleva

Global Strategic Development It is no secret that in our ever-growing industry the need for automation, AI and modern technologies is a thing that pulls us forward. At the same time these might not work well, if not used expertly. We got to the point where machine translation has been growing and growing and along with it the need for data annotation has become a niche service, which might tempt most companies to give it a try.

So far in the past few years AI has been implemented with great success to many languages but was found to be lacking in others, especially when it comes to Asian languages.

However, the truth is that smart technologies and science always find a way and the new technologies and modern approaches are doing wonders to machine translation and its quality.

For this article we've chosen to talk about the hot topic of data annotation for Chinese language from the point of view of a company that was involved in new technologies back in the days when the first corpora for Asian languages were built.

#### What is Data Annotation?

Data annotation is exactly what it sounds like: the process of identifying and labeling information, so it can be later used for AI purposes. When it comes to languages, it is the process of "categorizing" and tagging the different parts of a language in order to have it later used in practice. There are various kinds of annotation when it comes to language: POS (part-of-speech), phonetic, semantic or stylish annotation, etc. (these are not all of course)

## What Does It Have to Do with Language?

If you noticed the types of annotation described above you already know the answer. Data annotation is done by people, and who better know the intricacies of a language than a translator or an experienced linguist. And here come the LSPs as a natural partner for providing the service.

Now add the Chinese language, its two writing systems, the hundreds of dialects and the fact that it is a tonal language.

There are numerous cases when the annotators have to decide on the meaning of a character based on their linguistic knowledge, so a sentence is annotated correctly while building the corpora of a Chinese language processing tool. Due to this a very significant knowledge of the language itself especially in syntax is needed. Understanding the language, its sentence structure and punctuation is a key factor in creating a quality database.

Chinese language has no spaces between words and phrases, so it is hard to do word segmentation. It is also difficult to deal with words that can be different parts of speech but at the same time they don't change.

One more challenge is the fact that Chinese uses tones and honorifics, which are very difficult to assess via an algorithm.

#### Where Are We Heading to?

There is a long road ahead until a human quality translation in Chinese language can be achieved. At 1-StopAsia, we are very eager to see where new technologies are heading. With regards to Asian languages in general, so far besides the standard human translation services, we have taken the middle ground when it comes to modern technologies. Depending on the client's needs, when machine translation is requested we can then add a post-editing step to improve the final result.





## **Robin Sung**Partnership Builder & Brand Ambassador

Further down the lines, you will read Robin's words that he is "totally normal" but let us tell you this: "normal" for him covers—vagabonding around Asia (currently somewhere in the Philippines), living on a beach sometimes, surfing (and breaking his surfboard in the process sometimes), and playing music for people (oh yes, he is a DJ on top of it all).

Intriguing as these are, he is an excellent professional with over 7 years of experience in the translation industry. Which makes him more an asset than just an employee.

The day is a never-ending challenge and a true bonding experience for anyone who has the chance to collaborate with him. So dig a bit deeper with the short questions we've asked him below:

### How many languages do you speak? Please write them in a list. Which is your mother tongue?

German, English, and very broken Korean, Spanish, Balinese, and Bisaya. I also have a traumatic relationship with "school francais". If you can picture Arnold Schwarzenneger saying "une banane s'il vous plait", you'll know what I mean...

## What is your favorite sport or hobby in your free time? Why is it so? Any interesting stories on it?

Surfing. Lots of stories, and lots of broken bones. ©

### Top 3 things we don't know about you? Might be something funny, quirky or strange ©

Sometimes I am painfully straightforward to people, which depending on the person might be either offensive or quite charming. I tend to think I'm totally normal.

### What was the most surprising thing you learned about Asia while working here?

That's an easy one. I never expected the amount of alcohol they can drink! And I say that as a German...

### Favorite book or a book that changed your mindset and why it did?

Currently, I'm reading too much Bukowski and study a lot of copywriters/marketers (Gene Schwartz, Ogilvy, Dan Kennedy, Dave Trott, Caldini, Ben Settle, etc.). I love Eastern Philosophy too and my favorite book is probably *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*, a collection of teachings by the Zen master Seung Sahn. Sounds serious, but it's funny as hell!

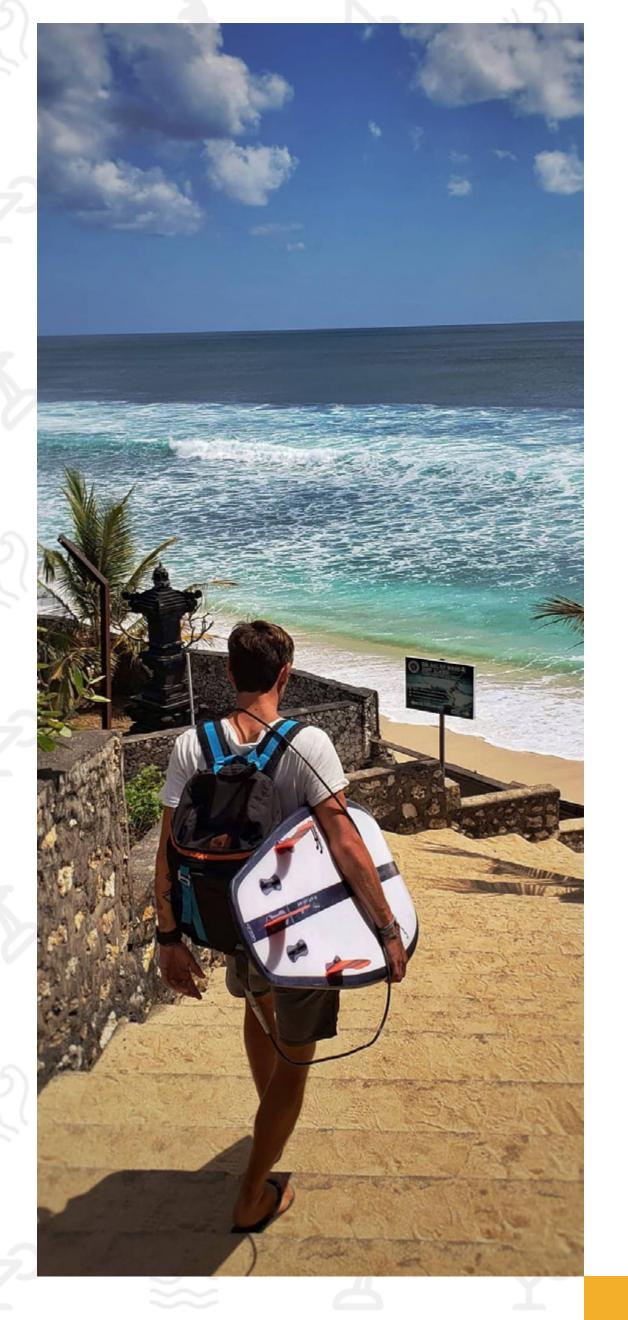
#### Your most extreme experience so far in your life/ biggest challenge in your life?

Can I say "2020"?

## Your top 3 goals in professional life for the next 10 years

I work in sales so I'll have to negotiate you down to two. They are really good ones, though. Firstly, I want to open a small side business here in the north of Siargao. We have a really cool community here, people with great ideas, micro-businesses popping up everywhere and – very important!—no Qends. Everyone is doing their best to give back to the local communities and live and work sustainably. My girlfriend and I are currently growing rice and if the recent typhoons don't destroy everything, we're gonna harvest in March. That's step one, and we'll see where we go from there.

The second thing I would like to do is going deeper into copywriting — which is really just sales, but in written form. I'm currently working my tail off to put a newsletter series for localization folks together and if everything goes well (a.k.a. me and my poor colleagues from marketing don't lose their minds), I hope we can drop that either during our rice harvesting time or at Buddha's birthday (May 19) at the latest. Stay tuned!





# OICE-OVER RECORDING & DUBBING IN JAPAN

Have you heard of a seiyuu? It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that most of us have watched a creative video

piece or listened to the radio where a voice-over recording was used without us hardly even noticing that it was there.

The quality of a good voice-over recording cannot be exaggerated. It is the difference between feeling frustrated at

the voice actors for not conveying the original message versus fully immersing yourself in a video or voice content

that sounds natural and authentic. With this in mind, it's important to find out the differences between dubbing

and voice-over recording and what Seiyuu means in the context of Japanese. Let's take a closer look.



**Desi Tzoneva** 

Content Writer

## Voice-over Recording and Dubbing, coneva What Is Better?

What Is Better?

Ever since the film industry changed from silent movies to adding voice to their recordings, it has undergone

dramatic changes. Over the past 100 years, there have been new developments in recording sounds and speech on the screen to ensure that the audience can enjoy a fuller audiovisual experience. And with the onset of globalization where video content is made more global, reaching audiences across the world in their native language, a quality voice-over recording is critical.

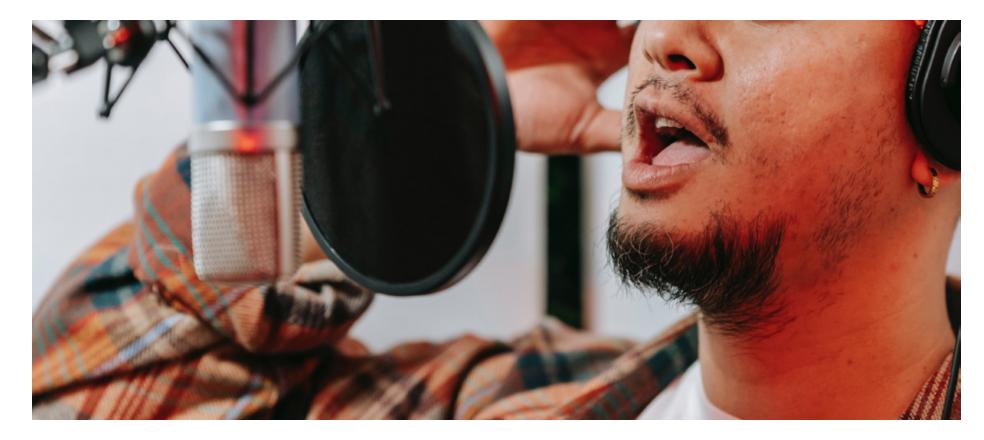
Voice-over and dubbing are two separate but inter-related aspects of audiovisual communication and it is used in films, series, documentaries, DVD and Blu-Ray content, television programs, reality television, interviews and reports, video games, corporate videos, and commercials. With such a vast quantity of audiovisual material, it's essential that there's a high-quality performance by the voice actors to ensure that the video material is accurately and precisely translated and conveyed to the audience. So, let's take a look at the differences between a voice-over recording and dubbing.

#### **Voice-over recording:**

When there is a motion picture that needs to be conveyed in a different language than the source language, say from English to Japanese or vice versa, a voice-over recording is a post-production process in which the original soundtrack is not removed. Instead, the volume is reduced and a dubbing track is superimposed on the audiovisual content. As a result, you'll be able to hear the source language at a low volume and the target language at a higher volume. This is typically used in interviews in documentaries and on radio or news where the original speaker's speech is reduced in volume to enable the audience to hear the same speech in their native language.

#### **Dubbing:**

In this post-production process, which can become very complex, the script of the original motion picture or audiovisual piece of content is given to a translator (usually a native speaker). They then translate the content into the target language while ensuring that the translation is as close to the original as possible without losing any of the content, they also make sure that the lip movements of the original actors are aligned with those of the voice-over actor, and they also see to it that



the timing of the original speech is stuck to as closely as possible by the voice actor so that the piece sounds as original and authentic as it can be. This is all done in a dubbing studio. Then, once this is done, the new *voice track* is substituted over the original artists' voices in audiovisual production and these are replaced with other actors. It is the preferred option for many countries which require that foreign films must be dubbed in their native language such as France. It is also highly popular in countries like Germany, Spain, and Italy. It's also preferable to a voice-over recording because of the higher quality of the entire process and the final output of the audiovisual content.

## The Challenges of Audiovisual Translation

Audiovisual translation is not an easy or straightforward process for several reasons. As mentioned above, the translator's job is to not only match the original actor's lip movements to the translated script but also to ensure that the timing is perfect. For example, the original speech may only consist of three words whereas the accurately translated version may consist of six words. As a result, there arises the possibility of mismatched synchronization.

In terms of synchronization, these challenges can be broken down into the following:

- **Phonetic synchronization:** this relates to the "consistency between the lip movements of the performers and the voices of voice actors."
- **Kinetic synchronization:** "consistency between the translation and the performers' movements."
- **Isochronic synchronization:** "consistency between the duration of the translated sounds and the length of the performer's enunciation, considering also the pace of the original phrase."

However, there is more to be considered. For example, due to the creative nature of audiovisual content, there is often room for misinterpretation. This creativity needs to be well understood by a translator and then it needs to be conveyed to the audience in their native language. As you can imagine, this is a highly complex task and requires good knowledge of both countries, their customs, linguistic nuances, audience preferences, the accuracy of the translation, and more.

## What is *Seiyuu* and the Specifics of Japanese Voice-over Recording

Japan is a country with a highly complex language system. However, the opening up of borders across the world has resulted in the need for audiovisual translations from English to Japanese and Japanese to English as well as multiple other languages to ensure audiences get as much of an authentic watching and listening experience as possible. As a result, *Seiyuu* slowly but surely came on the scene in Japan. But what is *Seiyuu* and what do you need to know about them?

#### 声優 (seiyū)

from Middle Chinese 聲 (\*çiṣṇ, "sound, voice") + 優 (\*ʔɨu, "actor")

- 1. Noun: A voice actor in a native-language version anime, a video game, a radio broadcast or an advertisement in Japan.
- 2. Verb: To take on a role as a voice actor in a Japanese production, or perform a certain character in such a production.



In essence, *Seiyuu* is the Japanese word for a voice actor, irrespective of gender. It can therefore refer to a female voice actress or a male voice actor. In this regard, the Japanese will usually add a word to describe the gender of the Seiyuu in order to clarify whether a male or a female voice actor is being used for a particular piece of content. Interestingly enough, *Seiyuu* can also mean "voice superiority" and "voice gentleness", which is quite apt given that *Seiyuu* is related to vocal performances.

So, what do *Seiyuu* do? In short, they are voice characters in anime series and movies, they dub foreign films and series, they do narration and radio work, and they also do voice-overs for commercials and museum guides. But it goes further than this because they can also act in various performances, sing, as well as create their own YouTube channels.

Because of the complexity of Japanese, *Seiyuu* need to be able to simultaneously capture the audience's attention and interest and give an amazing performance. This is done through the inclusion of the right tones, being flexible to changes, improving storytelling, introducing

characters and adding deeper layers and dimensions to them, helping the audience remember the content better, and being authentic in order to add credibility to the audiovisual piece.

## Voice-over Recordings and Dubbing in a Nutshell

Voice-over recording has undergone major dramatic changes over the past 100 years. The film, cinema, series, and any other audiovisual piece that needs to be translated into a target language from the source language needs to be authentic and of high quality. In Japan, this is done by professional *Seiyuu* who record their performances in a professional dubbing studio. As a result of their performances, *Seiyuu* can convey a better story and provide a much more authentic watching and listening experience to their audiences by capturing their attention and better engaging with them through their work.



## UBTITLING VS. CLOSED CAPTIONING, WHAT SUITS KOREAN MEDIA?



Nikola Stoyanov

Content Manager

Subtitling or closed captioning – most video content nowadays has either one of these, but what is the difference and which one is better? Originally, closed captions (CC) were used to reach the audience that is deaf or hard of hearing. Subtitling on the other hand is the most common audiovisual translation. Subtitling has had a positive impact across the globe, breaking the language barrier and enabling people of different languages to enjoy the same movies, TV shows, video games, books and a variety of other media, including communication. And even video captions can be seen everywhere nowadays, just go to your Facebook or TikTok and you will quickly realize how every video has them, another big example is YouTube closed captioning. Let's talk more about subtitling, closed captioning and what would suit Korean movies and TV shows.

#### **Subtitling vs. Closed Captioning**

A question that many are asking. Is it not the same? How are they different? The answer is rather simple. Subtitles can include dialogue, narration and on-screen text, meanwhile, CC has this and a lot more, making sure that you understand what is happening even without audio. This means sound effects and background noises such as explosions, cars honking, someone laughing or music playing. The names of the speakers are also important, is it the narrator, or the main character? It is important to be able to provide as much information as possible as to what is happening on the screen.

Something that can be seen when watching Korean movies is closed captions that notify the viewer of the speaker's accent, emphasizing certain words to better convey the speaker's emotions. And one of the most important factors when talking about the Korean 3. Adjustment – any timings that do not correspond to language – is the speaker being formal or casual. This can help the audience understand the characters even better.

#### The Process of Subtitling and CC

Creating the subtitles and CC is not a simple process. There are standardized guidelines that are to be followed by trained professionals. However, you can split it into a few different steps as follows:

- 1. Spotting this step revolves around marking the entrance and exit times of the subtitles and making sure they are perfectly synchronized with the audio. How long will they stay and when will they disappear? This requires excellent precision and timing.
- **2. Translation and Localization** that is right, simple subtitling translation is usually not enough. One has to have in mind how long the character is going to speak and adjust the text accordingly.
- what is happening on the screen are to be adjusted.
- **4. Testing** and finally the test phase, where final tweaks and fixes could be applied wherever necessary.



The perfect final product is the one where the subtitles are synchronized with flawless accuracy and the translation is natural, enabling the viewer to plunge themselves into the story. Grammar and timing mistakes can often break the immersion.

#### Korean Media Is Full of Subtitles and CC

If you watch any Korean media, be it movies, music videos, or even national television, you will see that subtitles are everywhere. There are many reasons for subtitling, and it seems it has become culturally acceptable. I am sure Koreans themselves do not even realize it, but to a foreigner, it might be a shock at first. So what are the reasons?

Dialects are a big reason. Something that they do in China in Japan for the very same reason. Maybe not everyone understands the speaker due to their dialect and they do not have to. Avoiding ambiguity and misunderstanding is the best way to ensure no one is misinterpreting what is happening. It is also the best way to avoid offending people.

We already mentioned that closed captions are perfect for the deaf or those hard of hearing. However, you can have perfect hearing and still need CC. Maybe you are on the subway and you forgot your headphones, maybe you are at home and your whole family is making a racket and you can't hear a thing. The reasons can be many, and all of them are quickly resolved by simply adding subtitling or closed captions to your media.

And finally, when speaking of Korean movies and TV shows, you gotta have closed captions to notify the viewer of formal and casual speaking. The Korean language has multiple politeness levels which cannot be translated into English, which is where subtitling is not enough. This will provide the viewers with much-needed context and information about the relationship of the speakers. Their age difference, social status, maybe they are just being rude, all of this can be easily omitted from subtitling and as such you are not delivering the full product to your audience!

#### **Closed Captions Have Become Part of Korean Culture**

It is culturally appropriate to include subtitles or even closed captions in your Korean media. In fact, the same can be said for Chinese and Japanese for similar reasons. At this point, it's even expected. Not only is it the best way to reach as wide of an audience as possible, but you are also ensuring no one is misinterpreting the content and even getting offended. So next time you are wondering between subtitling and CC make sure to consult yourself with professionals, as not only they will be aware of what is appropriate for your content, but they will also know all other intricacies, such as spotting, adjustment and file formatting.

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## RENDS: VEHICLE VOICE CONTROL IN ASIA



Desi Tzoneva

Content Writer

It's highly unlikely that the inventors of the first car could have predicted what the current automotive industry landscape looks like today. With highways spanning 12 lanes and more, countless hours spent in traffic on busy roads, our vehicles have become not only one of our most prized possessions, but also a pure necessity in life. It may come as no surprise that just like technology is developing, growing, and penetrating almost every aspect of our lives, so too is technology infiltrating the automobile sector, with voice and artificial intelligence assistants in the vehicle to help us navigate new streets and ultimately get us from A to Z safely. But what is the automobile space like in Asia? And in particular, what is the impact of voice technology in countries like South Korea? Keep reading to find out more!

#### Room for Growth in Asia

Two main factors are driving consumers towards touchless technology in Asia and these are the coronavirus pandemic and the increased comfort in integrating voice assistants into their daily lives. Asia is home to over 4 billion people and it is certainly not a market to be ignored or taken for granted. Let's put things in perspective with a few figures.

According to iProspect, 62% of smartphone users in China, India, Indonesia, Japan and Singapore have used voice-activated technology in the last 6 months, while over one half had used it in the last month.

Meanwhile, Entrepreneur reports that purchases of smart speakers have increased in China, India, and Indonesia over the last six months, while they have stabilized in Australia, Japan, and Singapore.

Finally, according to a report prepared by WAT Consult, Google was found to be the most widely-used voice assistant by the respondents in India. This was followed by Amazon's Alexa and Apple's Siri. In fifth place came Samsung's Bixby.

However, without language support for Asian languages, western voice assistant manufacturers for automobiles still have a lot of inroads to make into the Asian market. Ultimately, they risk out on an Asian company getting there first and catering to this growing population of consumers who are increasingly becoming reliant on voice assistants in their vehicles.

#### A Spotlight on South Korea

According to a recent survey by dataSpring, when it comes to the use of voice assistants, 54% of South Korean drivers reported using one. Those who responded that they did not use voice assistants said that they are either unfamiliar with the technology or found it distracting. Another interesting fact is that 80% of South Korean car owners said they are "somewhat" or "very familiar" with voice assistant features. Of those respondents, around 63% use built-in car features while another 60% used a third-party device. And what has been the



impact of the coronavirus pandemic? Approximately 24% said that they have increased their usage of voice assistants during this period. Meanwhile, only 4% of potential car buyers said that they consider a voice assistant as an important built-in car feature when purchasing a new car.

#### **Built-in Voice Assistants vs. Mobile Apps**

Not all vehicles come with built-in voice assistants, and these usually appear in higher-end car models. This is slowly changing and some mid-class models are now adding this feature. One of the major benefits of this is that it has the ability to provide hardware diagnostics and adjust car components such as air temperature.

Meanwhile, voice assistants from third-party devices such as smartphones seem to be more intuitive. One reason for this is that the data pool for AI comes from different markets and is pooled together from various devices. One example of this is Alexa, which is able to differentiate accents and dialects as it already has access to millions of users worldwide.

The downside to third-party devices is that they do not have direct access to the parts of the cars, so their services are limited to information and entertainment, for example, navigation and playing music.

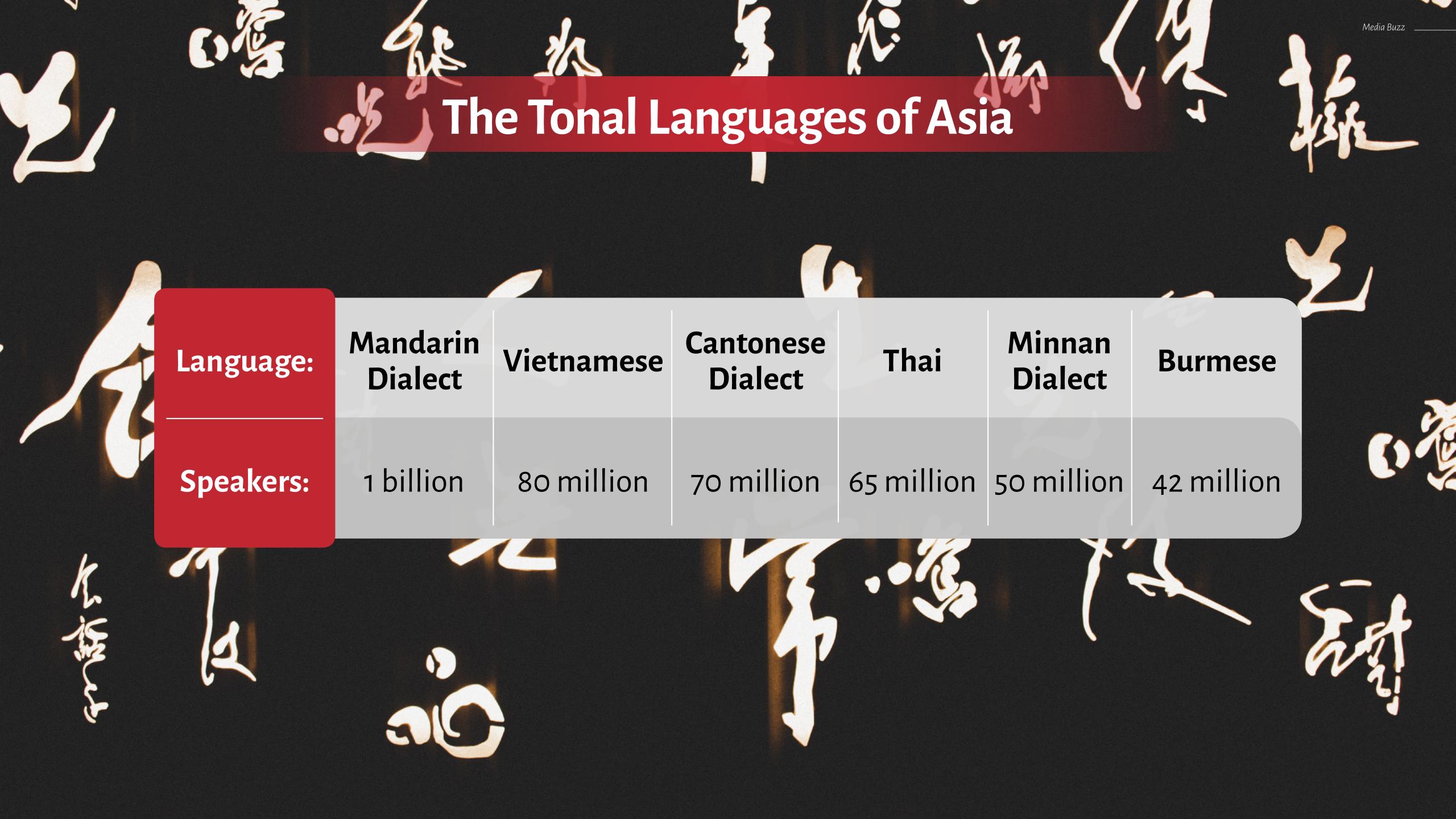
#### **Safety and Security**

Safety and security while driving are paramount and sometimes voice assistants can be a distraction and

a hindrance rather than a source of help. To counter this challenge, a team of South Korean researchers has developed an in-car voice assistant based on AI communication technology that avoids initiating conversation with the driver when it determines that this would be a distraction. Some of the features it collects as data include steering wheel and brake pedal input in addition to surrounding environment information such as vehicle distance and traffic flow. Once this data has been analyzed, it develops a "simulated interactive service" which analyzes the environmental information and determines when it's appropriate to talk to the driver.

#### The Way Forward

The world of the automotive industry is developing very fast in Asia, sometimes even faster than other parts around the globe with technological advancements taking place nearly on a daily basis. With smarter apps and built-in voice assistants, more and more drivers, especially those in South Korea, could find themselves with a helping hand when navigating heavy traffic or unknown terrain. While most voice technology caters to an English audience, it's crucial for automotive makers to shift their attention to Asia which not only has so many languages which need to be made available to the public in due course but there are also different cultural contexts which will require significant translation efforts, too.



# OP 5 GOOD VIDEO GAME LOCALIZATION EXAMPLES



Nikola Stoyanov

Content Manager

Video game localization is the cultural appropriation of games for particular countries and languages. Successful video game localization means that players in different locations can relate to the story as if the game was designed with their language in mind. Obviously, this process is much more complex than simply translating the content. Everything within the game such as user interface, dialogue, voice-over and most importantly the story has to be localized! It is important to note that multi-platform releases often get brand new localization, so the below examples may differ between ports.

#### The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt

When speaking of good video game localization The Witcher 3 has become a synonym for it! In fact, most people find it hard to believe that the original is in Polish, the video game localization is so good that it could pass as a locally developed game. The people behind the high-quality translation were really passionate about the localization process that they even moved to the country where the game was being developed for a more authentic result. Since *The Witcher* is a role-playing game, it consists of many elements that require translation and voiceovers. It has been highly regarded for its voice-acting for each of the languages that it has been localized for.

#### The Uncharted Series

The *Uncharted* series is another great example of good video game localization. The main culprit here is the excellent plan done by the developers, as the video game localization took place during the initial development of the game, where usually it is done based on an already completed version. The series includes four games, and while the first ones have some minor translation issues,

they have improved considerably with each new release. Now the *Uncharted* games can be easily made an example when talking about good video game localization and this has provided the fans of the series with a unique gaming experience.

#### Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild

Even though *Ocarina of Time* has its fair share of fans, *Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild* is considered the best game in the series. Released in 2017, the game has a general lack of dialogue and a lot of the characters have no lines at all. Even though this might sound like an easy project at first, it puts that much more pressure on getting the existing dialogue right and being able to share the story with players around the globe! It's sufficient to say the translated meanings stay true to the original text and we can consider it a good video game localization.

#### **Bioshock Series**

The *Bioshock* series consists of three games and are known for excellent localization. And even though the first game came back in 2007 when the whole industry



of translation and localization was still lacking in the video game department, the game came out with a solid localization. It is that much more important for the dystopian world of the series to be properly told with a good video game localization, by such avoiding any confusion and frustration and delivering an immersive game!

#### Borderlands 2

Even though the *Borderlands* series consists of four different games, the video game localization for *Borderlands* 2 is truly exceptional and has received many praises. People are extremely happy with the high-quality voice-overs. And all aspects of the game read and sound very natural. However, this is a big contrast when compared with the newer *Borderlands* 3, where the dissatisfaction mainly comes from the poor voice acting and badly told story. Gearbox (the developers of the game) definitely need to fix their mistake in future installments!

## But what about bad video game localization?

Let's not forget the bad video game translations. They can be funny, confusing and simply strange all at the same time. This only comes to show us that the process of localization is not that easy, and how much we've come along when we look at arcades from back in the day. Many infamous localizations come from a time when the quality was not something to praise and must

have been extremely confusing at the time. However, nowadays they remain timeless classics and are simply fun to look at! Some of our favorites include:

- "All your base are belong to us" line from the video game Zero Wing on Megadrive.
- "Victoly!!" This is how you know you've won the match in the arcade game Samurai Shodown IV.



"Confirm the origin of fire!" – A seemingly unsurmountable task from the Harvest Moon game on Super NES.



#### **Honorable Mention**

"I am Error." – We had to mention this line from the *Zelda II: The Adventure of Link* game that can be played on the NES. Even though this sentence sounds rather strange it is not a mistranslation. From the original (Japanese) version the literal translation would be "My name is Error.", and once you meet the next character called "Bug" (as in computer bug) it would all make sense. However, this joke by the game designers flew over everyone's head that played the English version, since the Bug guy says "Bagu is my name", and the joke gets lost in translation. Nevertheless, "I am Error" has now turned into a meme!



## Good Video Game Localization is Hard Work

These good and bad examples can only show us one thing — video game localization has improved considerably and will only continue doing so. As you can see from this article a good localization involves many components and hard work. Having professional translators that are local to the target language is only the first step of many. Of course, technology helps too, but the main factor for masterful localization seems to be cultural appropriation!





## OMPLAINT **MANAGEMENT:** FAILURE OR SUCCESS



**Gergana Toleva** 

Global Strategic Development

This time the headline says it all and you already know we are about to tackle a very tricky topic in the industry namely complaint management and the fact that it can be both a failure and a success story. The thing is that the way you approach it with your team is the one factor that will place it in any of the above categories.

#### **Complaint Management** vs Quality Assurance

Believe it or not, these two are not the same thing, so the fact that you have a straightforward QA process doesn't necessarily mean that you are doing an excellent job of complaint management, too. QA is just the means to assess the quality of the delivered product, catch the issue on time and fix it as soon as possible.

Complaint management will walk a step further, take the issue at hand, respond to it, analyze it deeper and come up with a potential solution to resolve it in the future.

#### It is a team effort, not a single person's email

In my past experience, I've handled enough complaints to be 100% sure that dealing with complaints properly needs a proper team assembled for the purpose. It is even more so in our industry, where there are so many people, tools, and critical points of a translation to take  $into\,consideration, that\,a\,single\,person\,can't\,be\,the\,judge$ of how to deal with a reported issue from a customer.

The person who communicates with the client is just the messenger who transmits the team effort of finding a solution and holds the key to the proper understanding of the issue and the solution when it is delivered to the client.

#### **Real-life story:**

When I started working at 1-StopAsia, me and my "brain-partner" Yana Dinchiyska, quickly identified the importance of complaint management as we were lucky enough at the time to work on ISO certification. That gave us a pretty good understanding of how important a good process is.

However, having a good process doesn't mean you are doing an excellent job at it. The bigger challenge is to build a proper team to follow it and create understanding on all levels of a multinational company in 3 time zones of how important this process is. Add the cultural and language differences and think again...

It took us a substantial amount of time and effort to do that and I must say that 4 years later, after a few trials and errors on the go and we are now confident to say we've struck gold. And I won't suffer from false modesty and will share that we are very proud of it!

I've decided to give some pointers in both directions, which I've listed below:

I've decided to describe the main issues that would put you on the road to losing a client, as well as how you can turn this into an opportunity for both parties to learn and grow from this.

#### The road to losing a client

And yes, I am not afraid to say we've done that once or twice before we learn our lesson in the past.

- **1.** Lack of recognition that there is a problem from the main communication line. We established that sometimes even minor issues that are repeatable can turn into huge problems if they are not acknowledged on time. The most important thing is to actually be aware that a problem is cooking. Just like finally the recognition from an "alcoholic" is the first step to healing.
- 2. No escalation procedure and lack of a third-party insight. The recipient of the complaint shouldn't be the person to solve it either. Both sides need a fresh point of view and a clear non-emotional head to work on solving the problem.
- 3. Silence is your worst enemy!!! Have you ever been in a situation where you simply don't want to start writing this email because the client is silent anyway? You know there is a problem but if you can just wait a little longer.

Well, it is the worse thing one can do. Any answer is better than no answer as no one likes to be kept in the dark.

- 4. Lame excuses: sorry we know there was a problem, it won't happen again. This is another big mistake you can make. An excuse is not a solution, so there needs to be an actual effort to solve the problem once you identify it.
- 5. Offer a solution without further implementation makes it even worse. This is the last one, I would add so far to the list as part of my Top 5 reasons for losing a client as knowing the solution but not being able to implement it shows some steps to be taken in the company process in general.

#### Turning failure into an opportunity

1. Swift communication with clear deadlines and expected end-result. As I already mentioned the worst thing about complaint management is for the client

not to have an explanation for their own clients. Keep in mind that if it is just a project for you, for them it is probably a key account in their portfolio waiting for an explanation, which they may lose.

- **2.** A quick, in-depth, realistic analysis of the situation at hand (it doesn't really matter how wrong you are but that you acknowledge this and work hard to fix it). Truth is always the best way of working out a mistake or an error and fixing it together as a team with your client is very rewarding. It gives you a true opportunity to learn what will work best for them firsthand.
- **3.** Customized solution for that particular case. There is no one-glove-fit-all situation in our line of business, so building a tailored solution for that situation at hand is the key to making your client feel special and for your solution to actually work.
- 4. Offer only what you can do, not what you wish you could. Sometimes we would like to have that magic wand that will fulfill all our wishes. However, that isn't really going to happen, so building up a solution that is available now (even though it is not the ideal one) and will produce the desired outcome is what you need to come up with. If you wish for the stars but you can't reach them, there is no point in building up expectations.

#### Time for a change of heart toward complaints

Since I started dealing with complaint management at 1-StopAsia I know one thing for sure: I love it! The fact that you are actually making a difference in someone's daily work is very rewarding.

Usually, this work isn't noticed by most people and I must say you need to have the guts to do it all the time, so it is not always hearts and flowers. However, I do believe it is time to change our attitude towards that process and name it an "opportunity" rather than an issue. That is when we can finally sit down at the table and start working together as one.











