Pulse of Asia

Preface

Dear Readers,

In the ever-expanding landscape of the globalized world, the art of translation and localization has emerged as a crucial bridge, connecting cultures, industries, and ideas across borders. It is with great pleasure that we present to you the new issue of *Pulse of Asia*.

Within the pages of *Pulse of Asia*, we aim to provide you with valuable insights, hands-on experiences, and expert perspectives that will illuminate the path in this dynamic field. We believe that by sharing our collective wisdom and fostering a spirit of collaboration, we can elevate the standards of translation and localization, while embracing the unique challenges and opportunities that arise when working with Asian languages.

Pulse of Asia proudly features esteemed professionals and visionaries who share their expertise and real-world experiences, offering invaluable insights and practical advice. In our coLABoratory segment, we are privileged to showcase the remarkable contributions of **Andrew Hickson**, **Mathijs Sonnemans**, and **Fabio Schmuki**, whose dedication to advancing the industry serve as beacons of inspiration.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you, our cherished readers, for your support and intellectual curiosity. Let the pages of *Pulse of Asia* guide you through the intricacies of translation and localization. Together, let us embrace the challenges and celebrate the triumphs, as we navigate this fascinating industry.

Thank you for joining us on this illuminating journey!

Enitsa Koeva
Global Marketing Manager & Graphic Designer

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Focus on Experts

coLABoratory

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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
…炭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。

香几

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

又称…香…
臭"。用于装填…
的小盒，材…
挂于车轿、…
香囊可香身…辟秽。早…孔雀东南飞》
记·内则》："男女未冠笄者……衿缨
…皆佩容臭。" 香囊也常用为爱情信物，如繁钦《定
…放冠帽，又称帽架。在冠架的"冠承"
也言及香囊："红罗复斗帐，四角垂香囊。"
"何以致叩叩？香囊系肘后。"

MOBILE APP L10N IN ASIA: A GUIDE TO SUCCESS

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

When Western organizations seek to enter the Asian market through e-commerce stores or useful applications, one of the most important things that they will need to do is mobile app localization. Localization goes beyond the mere translation of words from a source language to a target language. Instead, it takes into account legal, cultural, linguistic, and other factors that influence a buyer's purchasing journey and the decision to buy from you.

As such, effective mobile app localization must be an essential part of your business development because it can either expose you to a brand new market full of opportunities or, when done incorrectly, it can result in alienating yourself from your target audience. With this in mind, this blog post explores some of the crucial mobile app localization practices you need to know and implement for a successful business outcome. Let's take a closer look.

Legal and Technical Considerations

One of the very first things you need to be aware of when doing an app localization is the legal considerations behind your project. It must be borne in mind that for countries such as China, which use **Baidu** as their primary search engine, Western search engine optimization (SEO) tactics are highly unlikely to work. As such, you need to ensure that your very first step is the optimization of your mobile app for Baidu. But with this comes the next challenge – optimizing for mobile. Because most Chinese consumers access the Internet with their smartphones, your website must be optimized for mobile usage in order to ensure that you capture and retain their attention and interest.

Further to this, China implements the "Great Firewall" which blocks many APIs. As such, you will need to use local options that may include **Youku, Baidu Maps, WeChat**, and others. But there's more. For Internet hosting, you need to host your site locally in order to have greater site load speed but for this, you will need an Internet Content Provider (ICP) license.

As for e-commerce websites, your mobile app localization process should implement payment integrations and logistics integration with local service providers. For payment integrations, you need to go local and use options such as **Alipay, WeChat Pay, UnionPay**, and others.

And to further streamline your offering, there are third-party platforms that can help you deliver the right customer experience. Here, we are talking about choosing the right warehouse management systems, customer relationship management systems, enterprise resource planning, and operating measurement systems.

Culturally Sensitive Design and Content

Once the legalities and the technical aspects have been taken care of, it's time to carry out your **mobile application localization**. However, this can be challenging not least because of the user interfaces, user experience, images, icons, fonts, emojis, and colors that are specific to the Asian market. We have broken up some of the most important considerations you need to implement when you localize for mobile apps or when you do app localization below.

Images and symbolism

For effective mobile app localization, you need to be aware that images play a crucial role in the customer experience. These images need to be culturally sensitive. For example, in many Asian cultures, a lot of text is the preferred choice over the minimal amount of text used in Western sites. Also, gestures and images are not universal. A clear example of this is a Western image of a parent patting their child on the head.

In many Asian cultures, touching someone's head or shoulders are considered a big no-no and should be avoided. This is why being aware of cultural symbolism is so crucial. Also related to images and symbolism when it comes to the pictures you use is the importance of showing lifestyle photos where people are seen enjoying your products as opposed to using text to demonstrate the product's main features or benefits.

Colors

Many Asian people place great importance on the colors used, especially in China and in the East Asia region. For example, red is associated with happiness and prosperity. Purple is an imperial color. White is considered the color of mourning in China, as opposed to black in the West. Yellow can have many connotations. For example, it can be linked to adult content, the color of different Chinese emperor dynasties, or even nourishment. As such, it needs to be used carefully.

Icons and emoticons

Many Asian brands use mascots or characters that are of a cartoon-like nature and are quite comical and cute. These should be considered a part of your mobile app localization process, too. In addition, whereas the gear symbol in the West is usually used to signify settings, in many Asian locations, the wrench is used instead. Also worth noting is the difference in the meaning of the use of arrows on a website. In the West, it is frequently used to indicate a map direction or link. In many East Asian countries, it is used to indicate "explore" or "discover" more.

A single page for all your content
Further important aspects in the mobile application localization process are the need for your organization to place virtually all of your website's text on one page. This is irrespective of whether the site may look cluttered or not. Why? Because there's a preference for everything to be on a single page. Although it differs from the Western design approach, it is a meaningful way of connecting with your audiences.

Fonts
Fonts also need to be considered when doing your mobile app localization. It's already clear that many Asian languages have thousands of distinct characters. This may make it difficult to embed fonts and consequently, there are no options to use bold or italics to create an emphasis on certain words. In addition, the compact nature of the characters means that there is likely to be a lot of densely-packed writing.

Honorifics
And last but not least, we also look at the importance of honorifics in Asian cultures. Respect for elders and seniors is a major cultural element and there is also the moral perspective to be considered. Furthermore, decisions are often made collectively as opposed to individually. This means that your content should take these cultural nuances into account, where relevant.
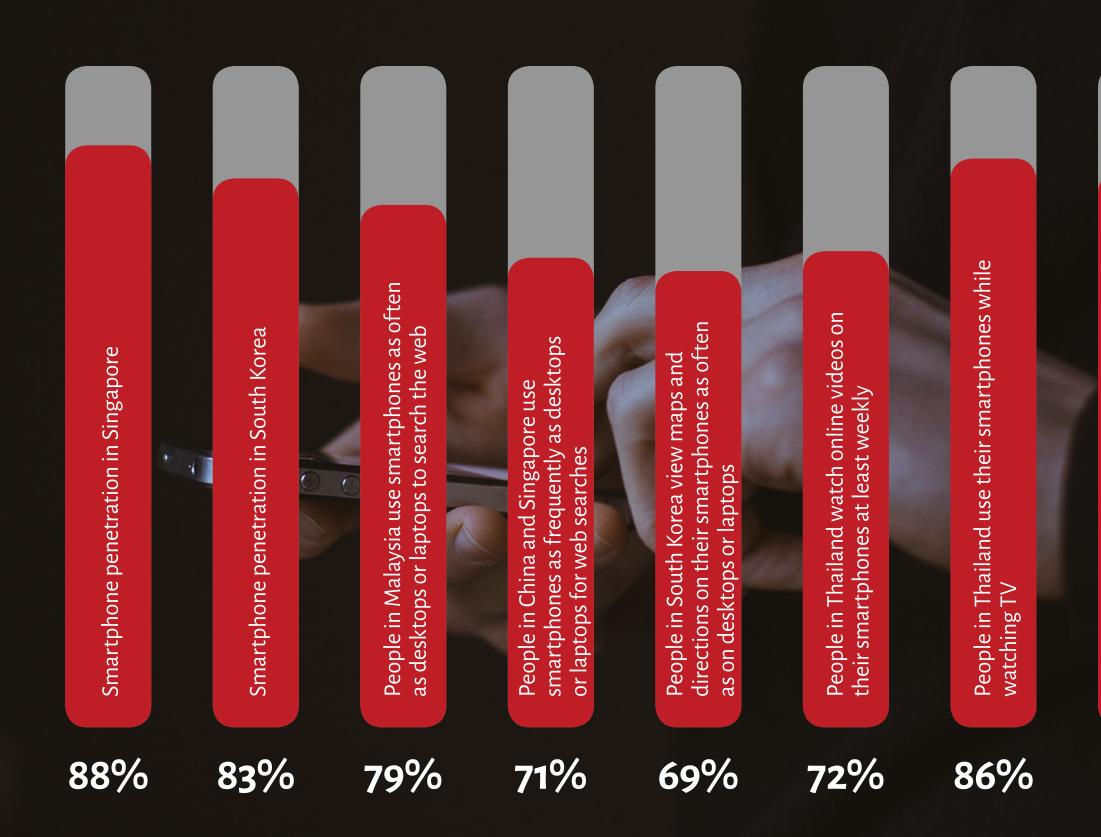
In Summary: The Importance of Effective Translation

Effective translation techniques will necessarily include mobile app localization. The reason behind this is that failing to localize mobile apps could be detrimental to your business. The Chinese consumer market, as an example, is set to continue growing at a rate of about 12% per year, reaching billions of dollars in sales annually.

If you want to cater to this important market, using a mobile app localization service that is trustworthy, professional, reliable, and of high quality, is an absolute must. Choosing to ignore these aspects could be the end of your business' Eastern expansion efforts. However, when done right, mobile app localization can endear your business to your customers and you can quickly gain a loyal following by catering to their unique needs.

Visit our blog!

Measuring Asia's Mobile Transformation

Smartphone penetration in Singapore — **88%**

Smartphone penetration in South Korea — **83%**

People in Malaysia use smartphones as often as desktops or laptops to search the web — **79%**

People in China and Singapore use smartphones as frequently as desktops or laptops for web searches — **71%**

People in South Korea view maps and directions on their smartphones as often as on desktops or laptops — **69%**

People in Thailand watch online videos on their smartphones at least weekly — **72%**

People in Thailand use their smartphones while watching TV — **86%**

People in Malaysia and 72% in Indonesia have the highest usage of social media on smartphones — **84%**

Source: thinkwithgoogle.com

HUMOR & SARCASM TRANSLATION IN ASIAN LANGUAGES

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

With the growing transcendence of boundaries and cultures through increased cultural exchanges via television shows and movies as one example, translating humor has become a must in the translation industry. However, as can be imagined, translating humor comes with a number of challenges. Not least of which include cultural and historical references, references to famous people, puns and plays on words, syntactic structure differences between the source and target language, and so many others.

Because translating humor is such a difficult endeavor, translators need to be aware of numerous factors and strategies to ensure that they get a laugh out of their target audience through their translation, as intended. Although translating humor can be difficult, it is not impossible. In this article, we explore some of the challenges and differences in translating humor as well as which non-verbal cues may signal a funny situation. Let's take a closer look.

What Is the Purpose of Humor?

Research studies show that humor plays many different roles in the linguistic and everyday experiences of people. For example, when used cross-culturally, it can:

· Bridge cultural divides

· Strengthen the impact of adverts

· Increase the effectiveness of business communica-tion, and

· Enhance the teaching-learning process.

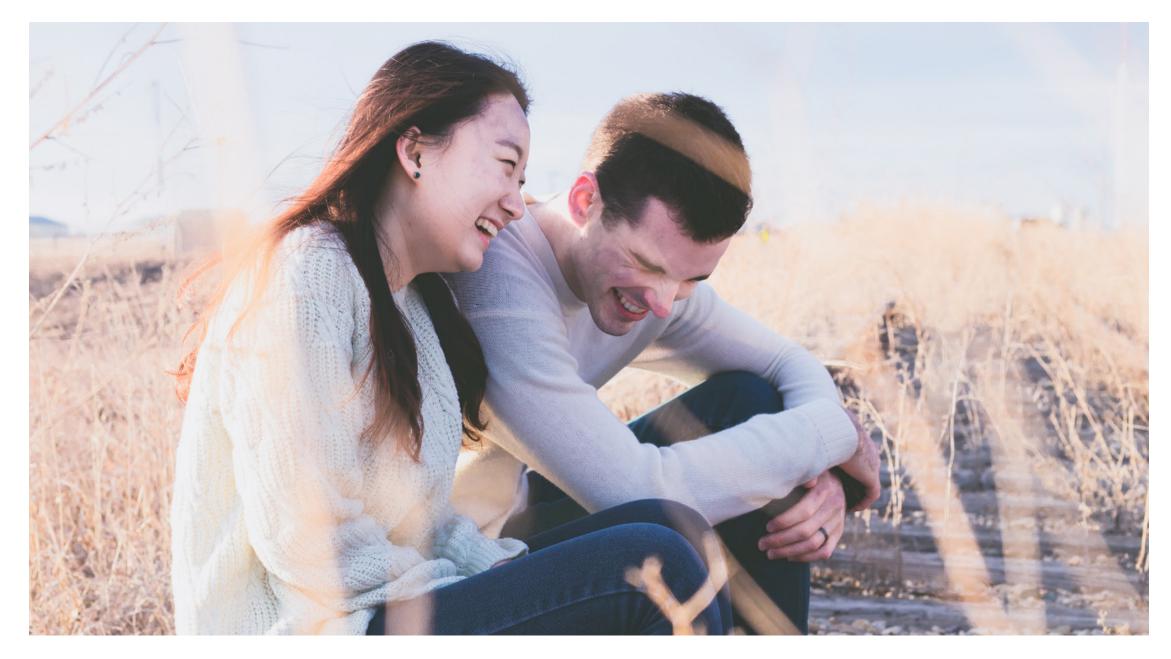## What Makes the Translation of Humor Difficult?

It wouldn't be an overstatement to say that translating humor is a complicated process. This is because it is both culture and language-specific. A joke often happens when something incompatible or unexpected is stated as opposed to something that is compatible and expected in a sentence or a joke. It can be a pun or wordplay (through homonymy, homophony, homography, or paronymy).

Other examples include allusion, verbal irony, subtle uses of humor, and cultural references. With regard to cultural references, humor can be particularly difficult because pop culture icons, books, movies, or daily phenomena can be misunderstood by a foreign audience. Direct translations are therefore not encouraged. Ultimately though, a joke necessarily involves cognitive processes that should ultimately result in laughter.

Further to this, there are six main parameters that jokes can be broken down into. These are:

1. Knowledge sources
2. Language
3. Narrative strategy
4. Target
5. Situation
6. Logical mechanism, and
7. Script opposition

In the translation industry, several different strategies are used to translate the humor and especially puns. These include leaving puns unchanged, complete pun replacements, replacing puns with rhetorical devices, the pun is rendered as a non-pun (which could result in the loss of effect), the complete omission of the pun, an adjacent or corresponding pun is used through the process of "compensation", or inserting notes that explain the pun.

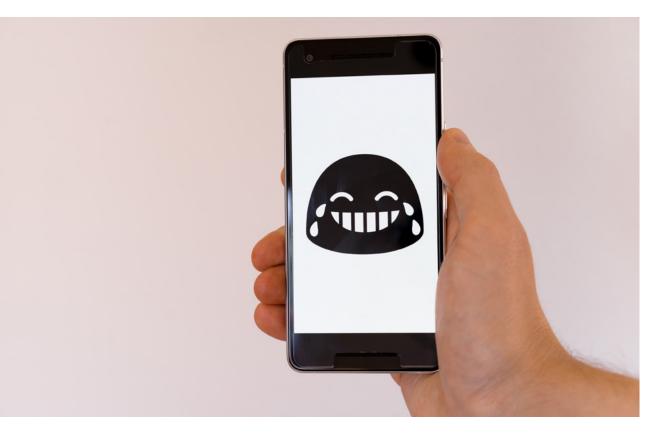## Challenges of Translating Humor for Subtitling

Translators that wish to have the desired effect, namely be funny translators, also face challenges with subtitling and translating humor for subtitling. Subtitling is the process of inserting words/sentences at the bottom of an audiovisual production such as a TV series or a film in its translated form so that the target audience can understand it. Although some subtitling can be addressed with relative ease, challenges arise when humor needs to be translated.

These include: unstandardized translations of the film title, lengthy sentences, literal translation without re-ferring to the visual image, rigid literal translation, and free translation.

As such, translators will use strategies that include core principles of translation theory and subtitling strategies which are: retention, specification, direct translation, generalization, substitution, omission, and official equivalence.

Apart from making use of these strategies, there are a further 10 subtitling strategies to be considered and implemented. They include: expansion, paraphrase, transfer, imitation, transcription, dislocation, conden-sation, decimation, deletion, and resignation.

Is There a Different Perception of Humor in the East and the West?

When translating humor, research was carried out in the translation of a Western comedy film for a Chinese audience. It was found that common challenges that occurred in the translation (although it was a fan-based one) included the following:

- Chinese has shorter sentences than English
- The languages have different syntactic structures
- There were difficulties encountered when translating celebrities or famous places
- Some funny words in English may be considered taboo in Chinese and are often omitted
- The need to preserve the function of the text
- Audience unfamiliarity with cultural and historical contexts
- Lack of consistency between the referential and pragmatic meaning, resulting in a failure to deliver the intended message
- Lack of receiver orientations
- Inadequate choice of vocabulary

Therefore, although every culture appreciates and enjoys humor, what constitutes humor is perceived differently from the East to the West and vice versa. For example, what may be funny in one culture may be offensive in another. As such, being aware of cultural

differences when translating humor should be a must for any translation project that deals with jokes.

A simple way to explain these cultural differences is that traditionally, in China with the predominant philosophy of Confucianism dominating, humor was previously regarded in a negative light. Self-restraint and seriousness were encouraged instead. It was only in 1924 that the word "humor" was introduced in China and then only in the 1980s when its official study as part of an important discipline began.

Further to this, Chinese people are said to have a narrower understanding of humor than their Western counterparts. This is possibly due to the major difference in language families and the fact that some linguistic differences are nearly insurmountable. Today, however, humor plays a much more important role in Chinese society as part of cultural norms.

Are There Ways to Pick Up Humouristic/Sarcastic Cues Not Based on Language?

The two predominant non-language related cues when it comes to humor and sarcasm that transcends language are the tone of voice and exaggeration. For instance, regarding the latter, studies have shown that sarcasm in Cantonese has a specific acoustic pattern where sarcastic speech in Cantonese is raised to a higher tone or pitch than usual, whereas this is the opposite in English. This is just one example of non-verbal cues to attempt to demonstrate humor between Western and Eastern language families.

In Summary

In short, translating humor is a challenging and complicated task overall. These complications are compounded when different language families need to be translated into other language families and this is where humor can literally get lost in translation. However, experienced translators use linguistic tools, strategies, and theories to overcome this challenge through various techniques and attempt to ensure that translations of humor, such as translating humor for subtitling, are performed effectively and with the desired effect.

Oyaji Gyagu – the Japanese Equivalent of the Infamous Dad Jokes

生姜ない、しょうがない

[Shouga nai, shouganai]

There's no ginger, it can't be helped.

Shouga means "ginger", and Shouganai is a very common phrase in situations where nothing else can be done.

いくらはいくら？

[Ikura wa ikura]

How much is the salmon roe?

Ikura means "salmon roe", and also means "how much" with regards the cost of something.

帽子を忘れてハットした

[Boushi wo wasurete hatto shita]

I forgot my hat and made a hut.

Here there's an added gag since the loanword for "hut" also sounds very similar to "hat".

トイレに行っといれ

[Toire ni ittoire]

Have a nice time in the toilet.

Toire is a loanword for toilet, and ittoire is an abbreviated form of itterasshai, which is commonly said to wish a good day to someone going somewhere else.

DNNS FOR KANNADA-ENGLISH MACHINE TRANSLATION

When people think of India, it's common to associate the country with linguistic diversity. In fact, apart from Sanskrit, there are 21 modern Indian languages. Among these are Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Nepali, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and others. Of course, one of these 21 languages is the lesser-known **Kannada**.

Spoken natively by around 47 million people, it is the second-oldest of the four Dravidian languages that is spoken mainly in Karnataka in southwestern India. It also has an extensive literary tradition with the oldest Kannada inscription being discovered dating back to 450 CE. As the official language of the state of Karnataka, it was previously also known as Canarese.

When it comes to English-to-Kannada translation or Kannada-to-English, little research has been done in the field. However, five researchers got together in 2021 to discover more about the accuracy of machine translation related to using **Deep Neural Networks** (DNN). Their paper is titled *Kannada to English Machine Translation Using Deep Neural Network*. The results are quite impressive. Let's take a closer look below.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

What is Kannada in the Context of Machine Translation?

The Kannada language has a rich history dating back centuries. However, it is deemed to have a poor resource "in terms of computational linguistics". As such, machine translation becomes a difficult task because of its syntactic and semantic variance in its literature. In terms of statistical machine translation (SMT), much research and many studies on Kannada have focused on the English-South Dravidian language (Kannada/Malayalam) as a more traditional approach to machine translation.

However, Kannada-to-English translation remains a considerably unexplored area as it relates to machine translation. It has generally involved the translation of simple sentences in a Kannada transliterated corpus using lexicon analysis and phrase mapper. But recent research applied neural machine translation (NMT) to translate Kannada to English using the Encoder-Decoder mechanism.

What is a Deep Neural Network (DNN)?

A Deep Neural Network or DNN is considered to be a "hierarchical organization of hidden networks (layers) that connect input and output". DNNs generally have at least two layers to them, which gives them a sense of complexity.

They are used in artificial intelligence, mathematical modeling, statistics, deep learning, machine learning, and even in linguistics in terms of translation.

Consequently, in the context of this study, the DNN sought the correct mathematical manipulation in order to transform the input into an output. In this case, the input was parts of the Kannada language to achieve a Kannada-to-English translation.

Results of the Research

Applying a DNN in the context of an English-to-Kannada machine translation, the research produced results that are considered impressive and advanced for the field, in which research remains limited.

Some of the results noted as part of this research study include:

- Translation time for the model was between two and five seconds, based on the length of the input sentence;

- The validation loss obtained was 0.849

- Initially, for the first epoch, validation accuracy was approximately 74.84%. However, as the number of epochs increased, validation accuracy also increased to 86.32%.

- The Bilingual Evaluation Study (BLEU) score, a metric that is used to evaluate a predicted sentence to a target sentence usually uses 1 to depict a perfect match and 0 to depict a complete mismatch. The results were impressive in this regard, too.

The Future Scope of English to Kannada MT: Could It Be Applied to Other Languages?

The results of the study mentioned above are quite significant for linguists, translations, localization experts, academics, businesses, and so many others who work within the ecosystem of the Kannada language. What must be noted is that the Kannada script differs drastically from the English alphabet script and sentence structure, lexicons, and various other linguistic nuances essentially mean that these will pose significant challenges to both humans and machines when translating English to Kannada or Kannada to English. However, with an 86.32% accuracy score, the results are outstanding and prove that the researchers have achieved what few have been able to do before them.

This breakthrough can possibly be applied to English-to-Kannada machine translation in the future as well. Although more research is proposed to be carried out in the field, this is a good sign that the complexities of two different languages with completely different roots can withstand mathematical modeling and result in a highly accurate final result. Although it is not perfect, it does mean that the human touch of a translator will be required to make the finishing touches. But the amount of time, effort and resources that could be saved in mere seconds of receiving highly accurate output is an impressive feat indeed.

The Richness of Kannada Language, People & Culture

1 Linguistic Marvel

Kannada's indigenous script, over 2,000 years old, is a testament to its rich literary heritage.

2 Architectural Splendor

Karnataka's Hoysala temples narrate tales of grandeur and artistic brilliance.

3 Festivals Galore

Mysore Dasara, Navaratri, and Ugadi reflect the essence of Kannada culture.

4 Folk Traditions

Yakshagana and Dollu Kunitha preserve Karnataka's cultural heritage through vibrant music and dance.

5 Culinary Delights

Kannada cuisine's unique flavors, from Bisi Bele Bath to Mysore Pak, showcase the state's gastronomic heritage.

EXPLORING THE RICH DIVERSITY OF JAPANESE DIALECTS

A predominantly homogenous nation, it may come as a surprise that the land of the rising sun contains multiple different Japanese dialects. The country consists of around 6,000 islands and it's capital city Tokyo is home to over 35 million people.

This makes it not only one of the most amalgamated melting pots of people that come from various regions in Japan, calling it home. It's also the largest city in the world. Considering that there is so much diversity within Japan then, it certainly makes sense that there are multiple Japanese dialects.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

To find out more about what the main ones are and how you should strategically use your understanding of Japanese dialects in the business sense, keep reading below.

What Ddifferentiates the Various Dialects in Japan?

Japanese dialects are variations of the formal Japanese language that are typically used in media, government, and business communication. However, what makes this "formal" Japanese "formal" in the first place? The truth is that the Japanese language has gone through quite a long period of development.

Starting with the attempt to unify it through Standard Japanese, which then developed into a policy of calling it Common Japanese, which now takes into consideration different dialects.

These Japanese dialects may differ based on aspects such as vocabulary, inflections, pitch accents, particle usage, as well as the use and application of some consonants and vowels.

In addition to all this, many prominent linguists have attempted to pinpoint where these different dialects are located. This has led to an east-west division. But unlike a line that can be drawn on a map to signify a physical boundary, this is not really possible with language.

That's why yet others have even opted for a north-south division, but even this fails to take into account all the intricacies that the language involves.

Which Are the Main Dialects There?

Although many have attempted to classify Japanese dialects, the exercise has often been difficult and inconclusive. However, there are around 10 dialects that we were able to pinpoint to help you get a better understanding of the variations in the Japanese language. Here they are:

- **Kansai dialect and Kansai ben:** The Kansai dialect is unique and distinct and is predominantly heard in the cities of Kansai. Since the people there are described
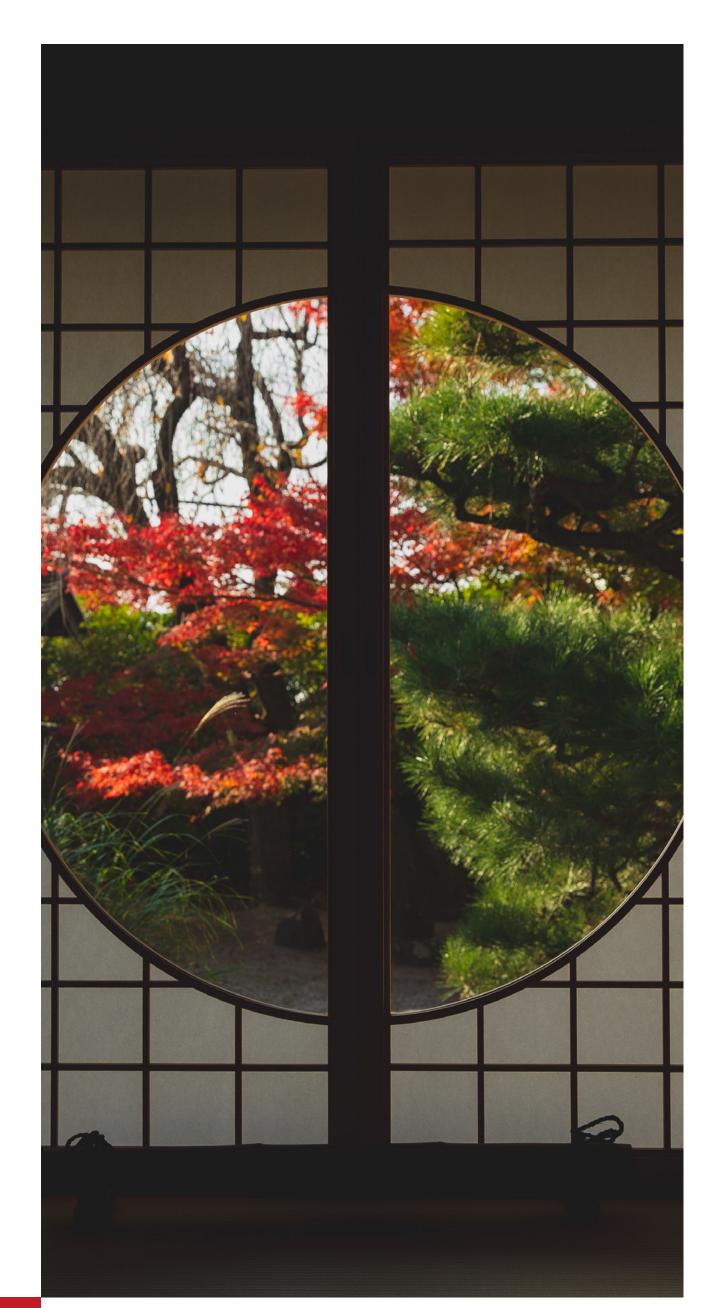
as being warm and possessing a strong sense of humor, it's no wonder that this dialect sounds a bit louder, funnier, and generally more outlandish than Common Japanese.

- **Tokyo dialect:** as mentioned earlier, Tokyo is home to over 35 million people from all over the country. It's also where Japan's largest media network is, which then influences language use throughout the country. Whether through anime, comedy, films, news, drama, or sport, the Common Japanese that's spoken here infiltrates the rest of the country. It is therefore considered the "neutral" dialect.

- **Fukuoka dialect:** Hakata ben – this dialect is generally spoken around the quiet port town of Fukuoka. Lined with beautiful streets, charming markets, and incredible temples, this Japanese dialect is also often used when regional news is presented, alongside Standard Japanese.

- **Osaka dialect:** another Japanese dialect is the Osaka dialect, which is considered a part of the Kansai dialect. As such, it is spoken in the Kansai region and what's noteworthy when you hear native speakers

talking is that they will often omit particles resulting in the language sounding rather "musical".

- **Hiroshima ben:** this Kansai dialect is commonly associated with two things: the Chugoku region and the Japanese mafia. Although the extent of the latter remains to be confirmed.

- **Kyoto ben:** this dialect, together with Osaka ben, is generally referred to as the Kamigata dialect. As the name suggests, it is spoken more prominently in the Kyoto region and it has softer, more elegant, and possibly feminine characteristics of expression which make the language sound even more polite.

- **Nagoya ben:** this Japanese dialect is primarily spoken in Nagoya City, particularly in the Aichi prefecture. This is where the east-west language divide lies because of the city's geographical location.

- **Sendai ben:** the Sendai ben dialect is spoken in the Tohoku region. It's also noteworthy that Sendai is the capital of the Miyagi prefecture. Interestingly enough, speakers of this dialect often require subtitles if consuming content from Japanese mainstream media.

- **Hokkaido ben:** this island's distinct dialect is a mixture of speakers who have populated the island from various regions, which include the Tohoku and Hokuriku regions.

- **Kyushu:** also related to the city of Fukuoka, people who speak this dialect are often presumed to be "passionate" and "hot-headed".

How Dialects Can Impact Your Business in Japan

Japanese dialects can certainly make the landscape of doing business in Japan that much more difficult. This is because you're not speaking to one homogenous language group but rather to multiple linguistic communities that communicate with each other and wish to be communicated to in their own ways.

As such, businesses seeking to enter the Japanese market *must* keep these differences in mind in order to ensure that they do not alienate their target market but rather draw them in with deeper cultural and linguistic sensitivity.

Request a quote!

Tokyo dialect

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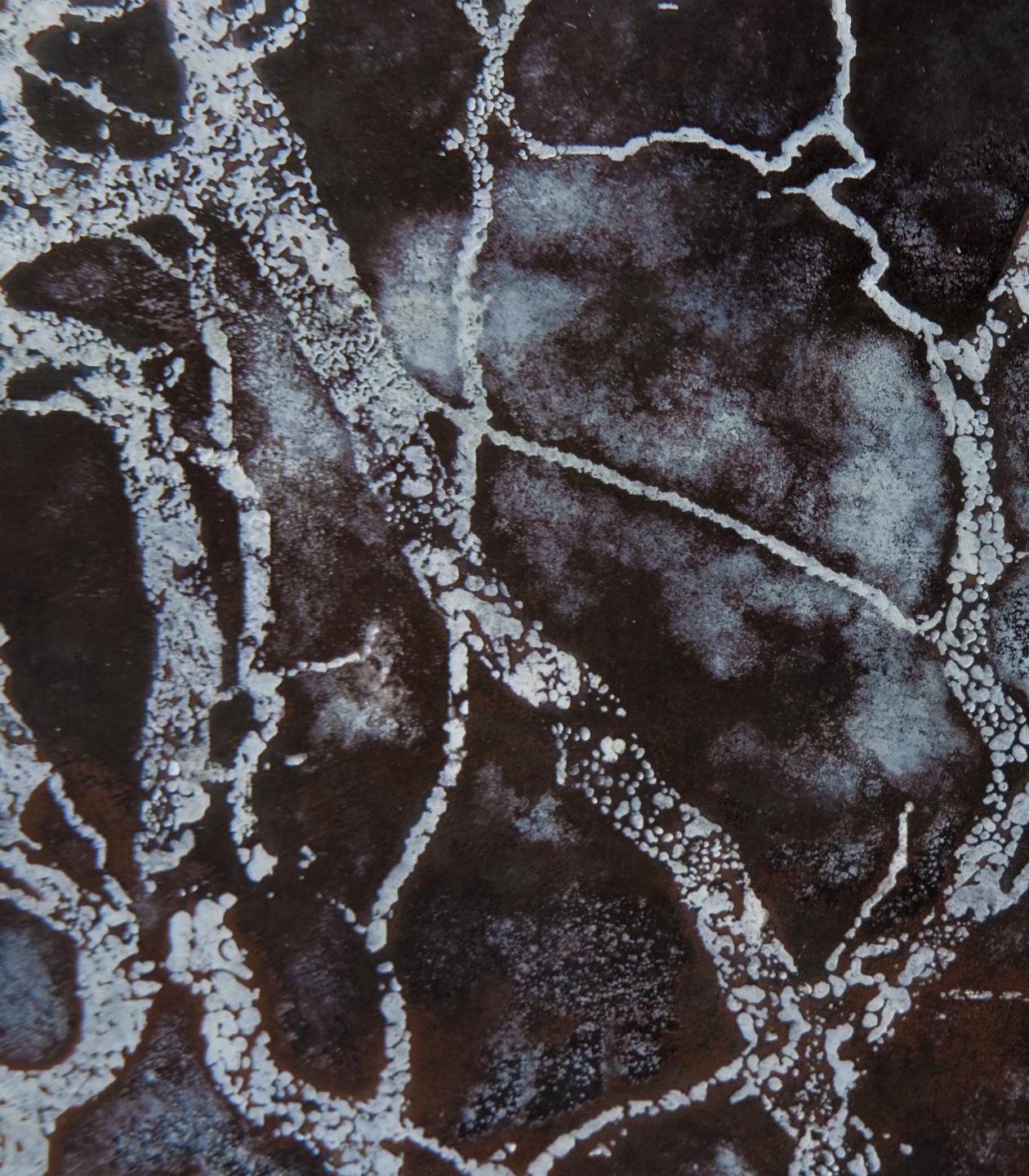
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Kansai dialect & Kansai ben

It is unique and distinct and is predominantly heard in the cities of Kansai. Since the people there are described as being warm and possessing a strong sense of humor, it's no wonder that this dialect sounds a bit louder, funnier, and generally more outlandish than Common Japanese.

Focus on
Experts

CHINESE E-COMMERCE TRANSLATION

Unlocking the Digital Market
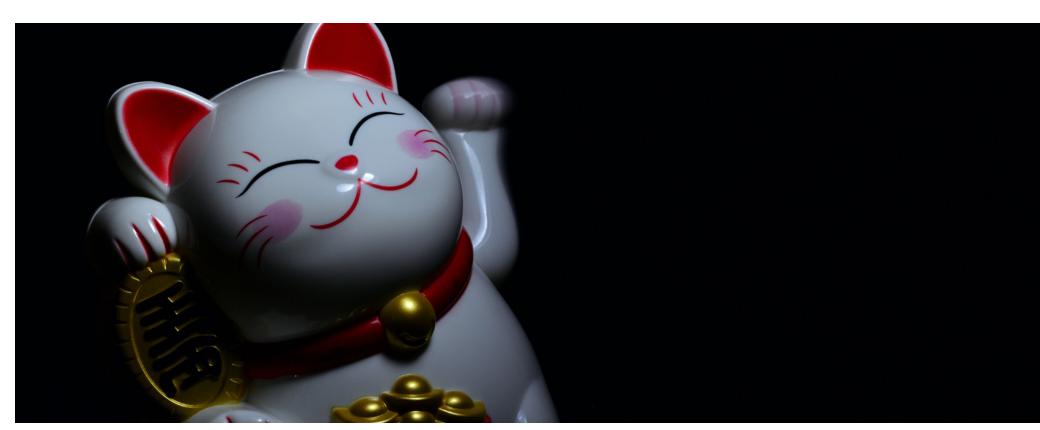
Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Online marketplaces all over the world are booming. But nowhere is this more prevalent than in China. e-Commerce translation is a major piece of the puzzle for foreign companies seeking to enter the Chinese marketplace. But it's not just Chinese language translation that will endear you to your customers.

It's a combination of factors that must all be taken into account simultaneously for greater levels of success. This is why the best translation for e-commerce is not only translation. It is localization, too. If you are operating in an online marketplace and you'd like to spread your reach to China, there are a few essential things you need to know. Let's take a closer look.

What Is Omportant for an E-Commerce Business Trying to Make It in China?

You'd think that you'd only need Chinese e-commerce translation to make it in China's digital market. But there are several other factors you need to consider in tandem with each other for better market penetration, increased sales, and a level of authenticity that only accurate e-commerce localization can provide. As such, here are some things you need to consider when you enter China's e-commerce digital market.

- **Register your IP:** you may have your intellectual property registered in your home country. But what about China? Remember that you need this registration before you even think of starting and this will involve having both a merchant's trademark registration certificate and a letter of authorization to sell products on the Chinese digital market. Why is this important? Because without it, your business will remain unprotected. But what's also worth knowing is that it can take up to 18 months to get this documentation. So, starting early is key.

- **Ensure your content is completely localized:** e-commerce localization for China e-commerce goes beyond mere Chinese language translation. It's about reinventing your business so that it comes across as authentically Chinese. This means catering to the vast nuances of the culture and language in China and not merely reproducing word-for-word e-commerce website translation. You, therefore, need to ultra-localize and not just localized. This necessarily involves taking the entire customer journey and authenticating it for the Chinese digital market. This is why e-commerce localization should be able to follow the customer along their entire journey on your site with all elements having been localized including your checkout page, the currency used, units sold, images, videos, and all content put together.

- **Optimize your website for mobile:** research shows that around 904 million people in China have access to the internet. Nearly 100% of these people use a smartphone. It's therefore no surprise that China has the world's biggest smartphone market. The population is highly engaged online and catering to mobile is essential. This means taking your website and making it mobile-friendly in every single aspect together with the right e-commerce translation and e-commerce localization.

- **Optimize for the right search engine:** western search engine optimization (SEO) tactics are highly unlikely to work in China. Why? Because there's no Google there. Instead, the Chinese population primarily makes use of the Baidu search engine, which only considers content in Chinese. Consequently, you'll need to be prepared to not only have native knowledge of the language, but also the culture and online habits of Chinese consumers.

- **Focus on customer service online:** Chinese shoppers appreciate and demand a personalized shopping experience. How is this achieved? Through a constantly present, interventionist online customer service and support. They also make thorough product research before buying and you need to ensure that you have good product reviews of your items sold. In addition, keep in mind that it is a part of Chinese culture to haggle. This extends to the online marketplace. As such, you will need to not only have staff constantly available for your shoppers but the staff that is well-educated and trained in terms of knowing where to offer discounts and how to do up- and cross-sales.

- **Get on the right social channels:** from both a marketing and social engagement point of view, you also need to be on the right social platforms. For example, WeChat Moments (with 1.2 billion users) is a platform that offers text messaging, video, and images for interactions – whether these are with individuals or with businesses. Online forums are also crucial as they offer official recommendations. Chinese shoppers therefore greatly rely on these forums to share details about products and experiences with your store.
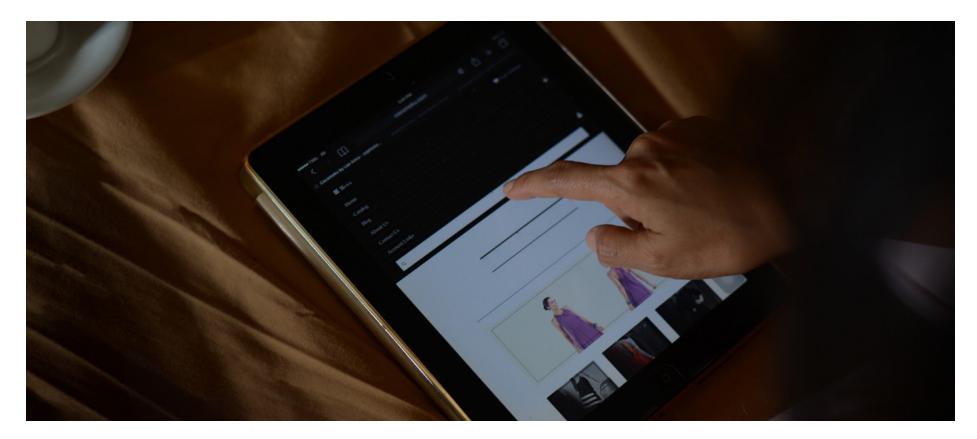
Specifics of the Chinese Digital Market

Simply put, the Chinese digital market is massive. Here are some numbers to put it in perspective:

- The country has a population of 1.4 billion
- In terms of GDP, it is the second-largest global economy
- There are over 900 million internet users
- Of these, around 70% use Baidu as their preferred search engine
- By this year, e-commerce is expected to reach 64% of all retail sales in the country – this is bolstered by the rise of websites and online shopping
- Around half of the population makes use of mobile payments

It is therefore essential that you carry out native-level Chinese e-commerce translation in order to succeed. But what are the challenges of Chinese language translation? Let's take a look.

What Are the Challenges of Chinese Language Translation?

Chinese is a complex language. It consists of Simplified and Traditional Chinese. What's more is that in Mandarin alone, there are more than 80,000 characters. A much, much bigger combination than English's simple 26 letters. Furthermore, of these 80,000, there are about 3,000 characters that are used most frequently. These, together with 6,000 characters are commonly used in technical writing and literature.

There are also a great number of dialects and you need to know exactly which one you are catering to so that your e-commerce translation is completely spot-on.

Idioms and their usage in the Chinese language are also major nuances that you need to be aware of. We all know that direct translations of idioms can be extremely difficult and often, the exercise remains futile and unintelligible. Therefore, it's vital to localize your idiom usage and ensure that you use local idioms to convey your primary idea. If you don't have idioms in your marketing content, it may be time to consider incorporating some as this is an essential way for Chinese people to express themselves.

There are also sentences and sentence patterns. In Chinese, good translators know that there are both simple and complex sentences. However, there are often no direct, word-for-word or character-for-character translations. Instead, one needs a trained and experienced eye in order to get the right meaning across using the right sentence structure.

And last but not least, there are complex grammar rules to consider. For example, in Chinese, there are no singular or plural words to express nouns or objects. There is also no verb change when it comes to expressing tenses. Finally, sentences in Chinese begin with the topic or subject first and proceed with the rest of the information. This can be tricky to navigate if you are not a native speaker.

What Does the Future Hold for E-Commerce Localization in China?

In closing, it's important to note how great a potential the digital market has in China. It is a behemoth compared to other global giants and is only expected to be fuelled further as more options and convenience are offered to Chinese shoppers. This is why you need not only effective Chinese e-commerce translation. You also need to work with an e-commerce translation agency that is well-suited to e-commerce localization. Localization takes translations one step further and turns words into meaningful content for users to appreciate in their own language, in the most authentic way.

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LANGUAGE PROCESSES FOR KOREAN TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

If you thought that when referring to a language process, we are talking about one's cognitive ability to process language using memory, attention, and other cognitive functions together – you'd be right. However, the term language process also has a different application that is specifically applied in the translation industry.

This industry is quite broad and it involves numerous intricate sub-processes to ensure a smooth translation flow and a high-quality, accurate output for the client. If you would like to know more about what the language process is in the translation industry, what its critical elements are, and find out how this works in practice through a 1-StopAsia case study, this post is for you.

What Does the Language Process Mean in the Translation Industry?

Every translation company in the translation industry offers translation (and localization) services. While this may be a common feature of these organizations, perhaps that is where the similarities end. This is because the language process involved and used in each organization is completely different from the next. For example, a language process at 1-StopAsia will involve the translation itself, editing, proofreading, quality assurance and control, feedback from the client, as well as remedial steps to ensure that any errors are picked up and addressed during the next phase of the translation process so that they are either minimized or eliminated altogether.
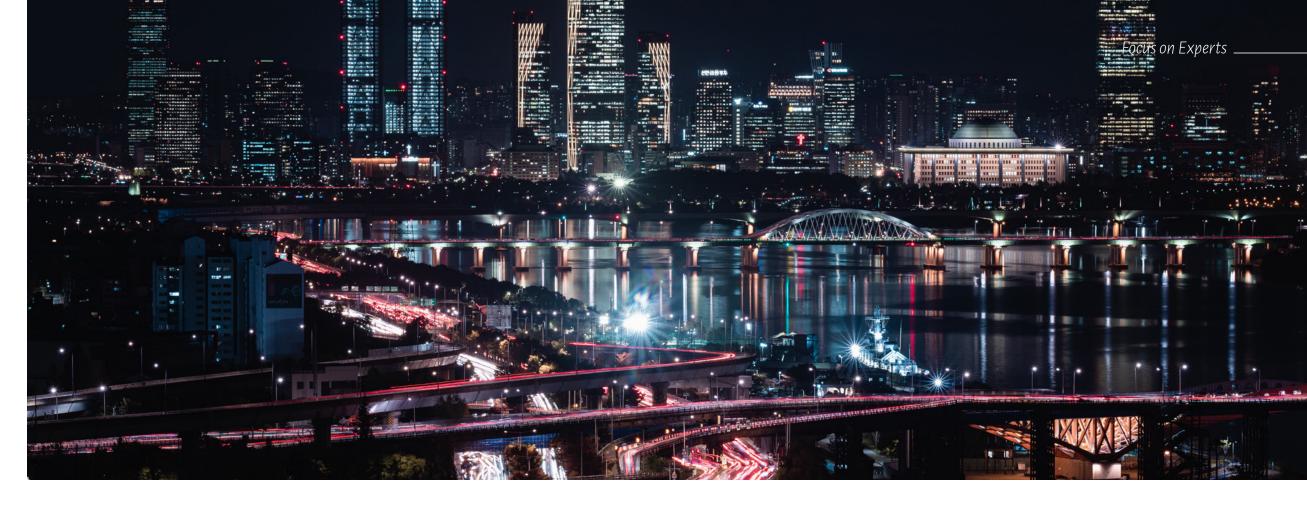
As such, the language process followed at 1-StopAsia is specific and particular and we take great pride in our ability to offer each of our clients the highest levels of assurance in the quality of our translation and localization services.

But what happens when things go wrong? In one instance of our continued self-evaluation and external assessment by clients for the Korean language, we noticed areas where we could improve. Take a look at the brief outline of our case study below.

Case Study: Dealing With Negative Translation Feedback & Improving the Korean Language Process

We had been dealing with a major client since around 2018, offering translation services in Korean in a highly specialized field. However, after careful evaluation by the client, it was discovered that the translations received could be of better quality. Because of our intense commitment to client quality assurance, we immediately launched an internal investigation into the language process utilized for the client and identified areas for improvement, which together with discussions with the client, improved the overall quality of our output.

The process can be broken down into the following three areas:

Critical elements:
The critical elements in a language process were mentioned earlier. However, what was not mentioned was the inclusion of natural language processing (NLP) in the workflow. At 1-StopAsia, we make use of both NLP and human translators to ensure the quality of the output, depending on client specifications. As part of natural language processing, issues related to natural language parsing tend to arise.The latter concept refers to machine or software programs that determine similar phrases that go together and which also identify the subjects and objects in a sentence. As can be imagined, due to imperfections in machine learning, some errors do crop up. And as such, we were faced with a challenge, which we outline in more detail below.
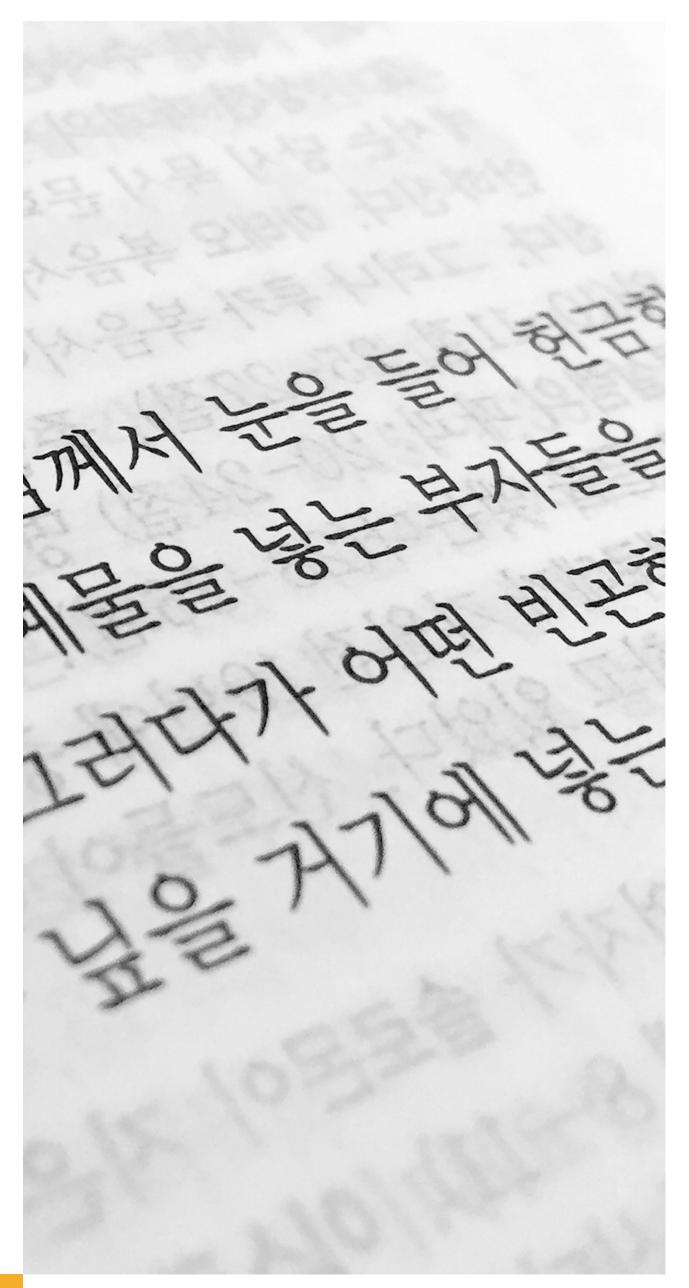
The challenge:
As part of the translation challenge and negative feedback that we received for the Korean language, it was identified by the client that there were spelling, grammatical, and readability errors in some of the translations, translators did not follow the client's list of terminology, and most of the errors identified were human-made and could therefore be prevented.

The solution:
To ensure that we gave the client complete satisfaction with our quality assurance process as part of our translation service, we embarked on a remedial plan which would seek to resolve the client's concerns.

- As such, we either created or received from the client a list of glossary terms in Korean, which helped us determine how certain words would and should be best used in the context of the client's translation documents.

- Furthermore, a style guide in the Korean language was developed to help translators achieve greater levels of consistency.

- Next, a list of the terms not available in the glossary was compiled with the client's support to help streamline the translation process and ensure greater quality of translation output.

- We also evaluated the human translators behind the projects committing the errors, removed them from our list of desirable translators for the Korean language, and ensured that the client was not exposed to further similar errors from the same pool of Korean translators as they had been in the past.

The final outcome for the client was a satisfactory one as we were able to take their feedback on board as part of our quality assurance process and ensure greater accuracy in both of our processes and of our commitment to high-quality output.
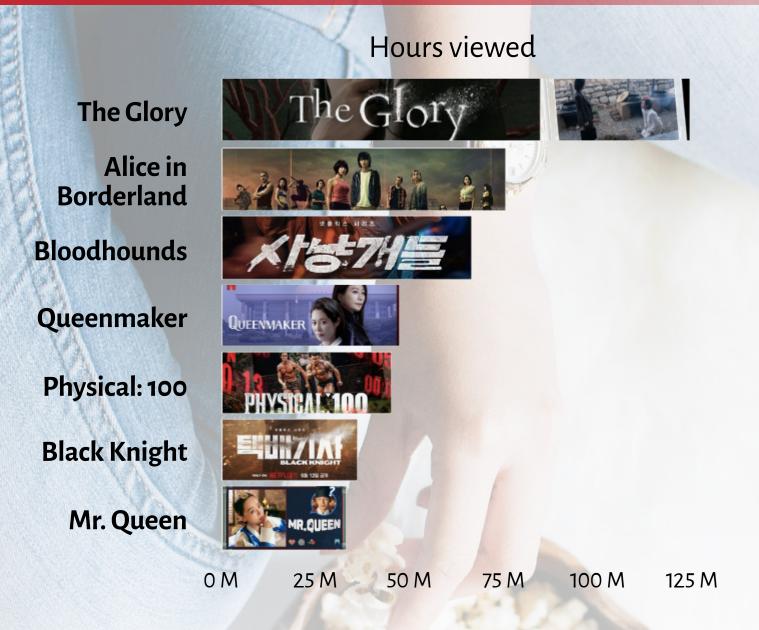
Key Takeaways

At 1-StopAsia, we understand that mistakes with translations can happen. After all, we are humans working together with machines and neither is perfect.

However, what can help streamline translation processes is to ensure a proper feedback loop between the client and us to ensure improved processes and workflows and greater quality of the final translated product.

Because of our serious commitment to quality assurance and in resolving our clients' negative feedback, we were able to improve our internal process and strengthen it for the benefit of both this client and clients who request translation work from us in Korean in the future.

Learn More About Korean

The Most Watched Asian TV Shows and Films on Netflix

Hours viewed

The Glory	
Alice in Borderland	
Bloodhounds	
Queenmaker	
Physical: 100	
Black Knight	
Mr. Queen	

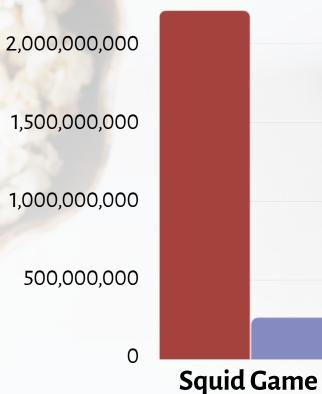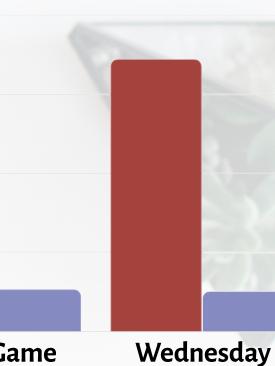0 M   25 M   50 M   75 M   100 M   125 M

In this chart, we can see the most watched non-English speaking shows in the year 2023. Each bar represents a specific title, and the height of the bar indicates its popularity based on the total of hours viewed.

This data let us know that the power of storytelling transcends cultural boundaries and engages with audiences on a global scale, changing the landscape of entertainment consumption and increasing recognition of the rich and diverse narratives offered by non-English speaking productions.

Who is the MOST popular?

Squid Game S1 has emerged as the reigning champion among non-English speaking series. With an astounding 2,205,200,000 hours watched and over 265 million views per account. Its exceptional success has propelled an Asian TV series to become the most-watched show on the Netflix platform up to 2023. In comparison, the highly regarded English-speaking series *Wednesday* S1 garnered 1,718,800,000 hours watched and 252 million views per account. This solidifies *Squid Game*'s position and demonstrates the global appetite for compelling and culturally diverse content.

2,000,000,000

1,500,000,000

1,000,000,000

500,000,000

0

Squid Game   **Wednesday**

VENDOR MANAGEMENT FROM A VENDOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Vendor management was one of the hot topics at this year's Globalization and Localization Association's (GALA's) Annual Conference held in Dublin on March 13, 2023. And if you missed the talk on *Vendor Management from a Vendor's Perspective*, particularly in the language and translation industry, you've come to the right place.

In this article, we take you back in time by introducing the two amazing speakers as well as discuss vendor management and everything that it involves. Let's take a closer look.

Introducing the Speakers

The presentation "Vendor Management from a Vendor's Perspective" was jointly given by Margarita Garcia and Toby Partington, with Gergana Toleva from 1-StopAsia acting as the panel host.

Margarita García, who is from Global Lingo, has extensive experience in the localization and translation industry across different roles. These have ranged from being a translator, reviewer, and post-editor to vendor manager. Garcia has worked in the vendor management realm for Capita TI, Deluxe Media, and Global Lingo, where she is currently the Resourcing and Quality Assurance Manager. Her passions lie in discovering how technology can drive innovation and help implement solutions to streamline processes for the benefit of what really matters: PEOPLE.

The second speaker at this talk was Toby Partington from Empower Translate, where he is a second-generation family business owner. Throughout the years, he has covered various roles in the company including Talent Hub Manager and his current role as Head of Operations. His hands-on experience in the business, alongside his passion for technology and people, gives him an excellent understanding of the pain points and mechanisms one should navigate towards a successful vendor management model. According to Toby, working for a company with an unconventional and innovative localization service often requires inventing one's own model.

What Is Vendor Management?

Vendor management, briefly explained, is the management of an organization's suppliers in such a way that their strengths build onto the primary organization's strengths through the supply of products and/or services as part of the organization's supply chain.

These "suppliers" need to be effectively streamlined into the primary organization's processes so that there is a smooth-flowing operation. As such, a vendor management system is often put in place to manage multiple suppliers.

But beyond this and possibly as a starting point, vendor management often involves the difficult process of vendor selection and vendor assessment to ensure the right partners are chosen for the organization.

Vendor selection, therefore, means choosing a supplier or partner who will produce a quality output, has a strong industry reputation, has the capacity to deliver, and offers affordable rates for a mutually beneficial relationship.

What Goes Into Successful Vendor Management?

In the language and localization industry, language translation vendors play a critical role in helping organizations achieve their business goals through translation and localization services. According to Margarita and Toby, there are four primary processes and factors for evaluation that need to be considered before embarking on one's vendor management processes. These processes and factors are: business maturity, technology and niche industries, relationships and emotion, as well as forming the right "dream team". Below, we explore each one in more detail.

1. **Business maturity**

   Business maturity is when an organization has grown to a large enough scale to need help from external partners. Oftentimes, this involves using the services of a translation and localization company so that the business can scale to new locations. When considering business maturity in the context of vendor management, Margarita and Toby say that the following questions are critical to ask and answer:

   · When do we actually decide to hire?

   · Does it pay off?

   · How do you measure that?

   When you have a clear idea of when and how you will hire your language translation and localization vendor, organizations and businesses also need to work out whether the move will pay off and how any key performance indicators will be measured.

2. **Technology and niche industries**

   The two speakers at this presentation quoted Sean Gerety when discussing technology and niche industries, who said: "The technology you use impresses no one. The experience you create with it is everything."

   As such, tehcnology should be leveraged in a way so as to build relationships and streamline operations. It's about determining the need for vendor management, scoping out whether there is sufficient talent, deciding on what special training needs to be undertaken by the vendor, and incorporating technology for a mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its vendors.

3. **Relationships and emotion**

   Vendor relationship management is not just about crunching numbers and using numerical data to help you reach a decision. It's also about building relationships and juggling multiple areas at the same time for a successful outcome. When an organization deals with different types of suppliers, including linguistic and translation suppliers, it is common to think that business is business but oftentimes this

needs to be supplemented with strong emotional intelligence as well as vendor support for optimal results.

The Dream Team

Finally, no vendor management system and no vendor relationship management would be complete without the necessary leadership that needs to drive relationships and organizations forward. As the ideal leadership formula, five "Ts" are brought together for the ultimate results and which contribute to ideal vendor management. These are:

- **Traceability:** traceability can help ensure excellence in vendor management by providing a clear record on performance, allowing businesses to make informed decision about which vendors to work with in the future. With traceability, businesses can track vendor quality & delivery times among other key metrics, which enables them to optimise vendor management processes and select the right vendors for each job.

- **Trackability:** trackability can enable excellence in vendor management by providing real-time visibility on progress and project statuses. This allows businesses to quickly identify and rectify issues that may arise, ensuring timely delivery and high-quality work. Additionally, trackability can help traceability and monitor performance over time, enabling data-driven decisions on vendor selection.

- **Teamwork:** teamwork supports excellence in vendor management by fostering collaboration and communication between all stakeholders, be it vendors, project managers, vendor management or sales. By working together as a Team, businesses can ensure that everyone involved in the project is aligned on goals, timelines, and expectations – leading to reduced errors and improvement on overall project quality. Additionally, effective teamwork can enable stronger relationships with vendors, promoting long-term partnerships and increased engagement.

- **Transparency:** transparency can help excellence in vendor management by promoting open and honest communication between all parties involved. By sharing transparent information on project goals, timelines and budgets, businesses can help vendors understand their expectations and work more effectively to deliver high-quality results. Transparency can also help to build trust, leading to stronger relationships and heightened performance and motivation.

- **Technology:** with technology, and the ability to use it to its fullest potential, vendor management can streamline workflows, automate repetitive tasks and gather real-time data insights. With the assistance technology, vendor management can support vendors better, track progress and monitor quality (among many other things), all of which can improve efficiency and productivity for all involved, whilst reducing costs and maintaining high-quality work.

Closing Remarks

In the sphere of language translation vendors, it's critical to bring together all of the elements of successful vendor management and consequently, carry out accurate vendor assessments for optimal results. This can only help organizations grow, thrive, and compete more effectively on a global scale.

Contact us!

FIXING A LOW-RESOURCE LANGUAGE'S QUALITY ISSUES: BURMESE

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

As a low-resource language, Burmese is a language that is native to Myanmar and parts of Bangladesh, India, China, and Thailand. There are around 33 million people who speak it is a native language and around 10 million speak it as a second language. It comes from the Sino-Tibetan, Lolo-Burmese language family.

When it comes to translating Burmese, this can be a very challenging task for linguists, translators, and localization specialists because it forms a part of the low-resource languages for NLP (Natural Language Processing). This can pose significant obstacles in translation processes and with this in mind, we decided to share some of our experiences working with Burmese as a low-resource language. Take a look at our shared findings below.

What Is a Low-Resource Language??

In short, a low-resource language is a language that faces challenges in translations and localization processes because there is not enough data to input into an NLP system to get more accurate translations at a higher percentage of the time a translation needs to be done. NLP is a system of translation that gathers as much data as possible for a source language and then uses this data to translate the source language into a target language. However, when there is too little data on a low-resource language, what often ends up happening is poor-quality translations with many mistakes that an artificial intelligence (AI) program dealing with translation often cannot pick up on.

This is why expertise from human translators is so crucial in this process as the NLP for low-resource languages often lacks a large enough data set to process accurate translations. Examples of high-resource languages are French, English, and Chinese, whereas Burmese is a low-resource language because there is not much data to support quality translations.

Why Is Burmese Considered a Low-Resource Language?

Burmese is considered a low-resource language because there has not been sufficient effort put into building a strong NLP for low-resource languages. These languages are spoken by fewer people, there is less demand for these translations, and as such, AI and NLP databases do not have sufficient information about the language to process and produce accurate translations. This is why many errors crop up in the process of translating from and to Burmese.

1-StopAsia's Process for Fixing Low-Resource Language Issues for Burmese

At 1-StopAsia, we have first-hand experience with translating Burmese. However, at the outset, we noticed a couple of errors that had cropped up in the process of translating this language. It was not only that Burmese is one of the low-resource languages for NLP but also that this situation led to a less-than-optimal solution for several of our clients.

Because quality assurance is critical to our promise to our clients, we embarked on a way to resolve this issue. Two of the most common issues that we identified in Burmese translations were spelling errors and mistranslations by the linguists.

To address this issue, we undertook several important qualitative steps and created action plans to ensure that the translations were of high quality. For example, regarding the misspelled words, we created glossaries that were approved by the clients that we would build into our database of low-resource NLP for Burmese.

We also ensured that any mistranslations were sent back to the relevant linguists and we also expanded our talent pool of linguists for Burmese so that we would have higher-quality translation output going forward.

Ultimately, this resolved the client's issues and we ended up with a favorable solution for future projects that involve Burmese translation by ensuring that our existing low-resource NLP was boosted both on the AI side through glossaries and pre-defined terms and on the human side, but expanding and strengthening the quality of our Burmese translation team.

A Continued Commitment to Quality Assurance for Burmese Language Translations

To ensure that we consistently deliver high-quality translations in Burmese to each of our clients, we take important and critical steps to identify translation issues as and when they arise and to develop action plans to ensure that issues are not repeated in the future. We also strive to build onto our NLP database for Burmese so that it transforms from a low-resource to a high-resource language data set. This ensures continued quality assurance from our team as we factor in both the technological and human elements of Burmese translations to give every client needing such a translation the highest quality output that they can expect.

Learn More About Burmese

coLABoratory

THE RISE OF ZEBRA COMPANIES: A SUSTAINABLE PATH TO PROFIT

Or: How I waded through the jungle of corporate jargon and learned to love a striped donkey.

Andrew Hickson

Media Production Manager at *Ludejo*

In the first week of June, I was lucky enough to be at the opening of an exhibition at the Airborne Museum Hartenstein in the Netherlands. This is a World War II museum, focused on Operation Market Garden – a failed effort to clear a path through the Netherlands after D-Day and speed up the allied advance into Germany. The movie "A Bridge Too Far" is probably the most famous retelling. Ludejo has partnered with the Airborne Museum for the past few years to produce the audio for their exhibitions.

The exhibition "Fled to Fight", sheds light on a lesser-known chapter of history, focusing on the remarkable stories of twenty-one Jewish Germans and Austrians, all refugees, who were part of the British 1st Airborne Division during Operation Market Garden in September 1944.

The exhibition was opened by Colonel Rabbi Menachem Sebbag (Chief Jewish Chaplain at the Ministry of Defence in the Netherlands). In his opening speech, Colonel Sebbag quoted from scripture; "King Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 7: "a name is more beautiful than the best perfume"."

He explained that in our lives, we are given many names.

The name you receive at birth. The many names we gather throughout our lives. Writer. Manager. Migrant. There are titles and roles we grow into or have thrust upon us. They all have meaning and are worthwhile. But they fade.

Corporate Social Responsibility in the (Jaded) Digital Age

There's a cynical part of me that becomes suspicious whenever I hear anyone talk about corporate social responsibility (CSR). Talk is cheap. During my time at university we came to understand it as a public relations tool used by multinationals to generate positive press, attempting to offset the deserved heaps of negative attention they were receiving.

So often, when I witness companies seemingly "taking a lead" on social issues and showcasing how much they supposedly care, a little alarm starts ringing in my head, urging me to call out, "bullshit". We live in a world that has grown jaded on practices of *'greenwashing'* and *'sportswashing'*.

I'm sure many of you can relate to this sentiment.

In this article I'm going to explain what a **"zebra company"** is, why it has gained prominence in the realm of corporate social responsibility, and why the practice of naming business concepts after exotic (and mythical) animals is en vogue (and doesn't really matter).

Names Are but Labels for the Convenience of Mankind

For better or worse, as a species, we find it easier to quantify concepts and understand phenomena if we can give them a name. Assigning something a name allows for more effective identification and communication. By providing a name to a concept, we can establish a shared understanding and foster discussions surrounding it.

There have been countless companies, business divisions and economics theories named after animals. From Fox News, RedBull and Jaguar to the 'Butterfly Effect', the 'Elephant Curve' and 'Hawk-Dove Theory'.

Last year, when we relaunched our website at Ludejo, it included a page titled; "Ludejo is a Zebra Company".

What in God's name is a 'zebra company'?

Metaphors and Analogies Are Key Weapons in the Marketer's Arsenal

My immediate reaction was to jump on Google and search for 'zebra business analogy.' It might be weird to go directly to "analogy", but I wanted to know if there is a good story in there that we could link to. My background is in marketing. In my head a zebra is just a striped donkey.

The first example I found wasn't encouraging.

A couple of "business bros" in the US in their book used an analogy that compared salespeople to lions in search of zebras to survive. Not great. I'm not sure I want to be a zebra in that situation.

So I trudged back into Google and searched for 'zebra metaphor'.

In the late 1940's, Dr. Theodore Woodward, a professor at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in the US coined a phrase:

"When you hear hoofbeats, look for horses, not zebras."

When diagnosing a patient's symptoms, Dr. Woodward wanted to hammer home a simple point: common ailments should be considered as more probable than rare ones.

Again, this didn't do much to help me understand, or sell the concept, that "Ludejo is a "Zebra" company."

I mentioned this to a friend in Ireland, and she replied "aww... I prefer giraffes".

The problem with adopting a term from American corporate parlance, is that, without context it doesn't make much sense. So, let's add a little context.

What is a Zebra Company?

In recent years, the business landscape has witnessed the emergence of a new breed of companies that prioritise purpose alongside profit. These companies, known as "Zebra companies," strive to balance social impact with financial success, challenging the traditional profit-driven model. The concept of Zebra companies emerged as a response to the dominance and "move fast and break things" mentality of so-called **"Unicorn"** companies*.

A zebra company is both black and white — it is both profitable and works to improve society. In this way, zebra companies are defined as having a "double bottom line." Unicorns often focus on achieving a billion-dollar valuation, regardless of the cost. Zebras, on the other hand, measure success based on a variety of factors, including social impact, sustainability, and community engagement. Zebras also prioritise long-term growth over short-term gains.

That made some sense to me. Using zebras for analogies about black and white, profit and purpose helped me come to terms with what I felt was a stretched visual association.

Malon Hamoen (the founder and CEO of Ludejo) has employed a simple mnemonic device: The 6 P's of a Zebra Company

* A unicorn company is a privately held startup that has reached a valuation of $1 billion or more.

The 6 P's of a Zebra Company

- **Person**
  Every team member is equally important. Roles are less defined, and people can choose themselves in what direction they want to grow and how they want to deploy their talents and skills.

- **People**
  What impact do we have on society? Can we contribute to a more positive world, in which more people get equal opportunities? We are happy to do so! For example, we (Ludejo) do not work for the military–industrial complex.

- **Planet**
  We do the best we can to preserve this planet and handle it with due care. We do not work for large-scale polluters and take the train as much as possible when travelling abroad. Ecosystems and the importance of cooperative efforts to preserve them, along with finding sustainable solutions, are practical values that we hold dear.

- **Purpose**
  Ludejo was founded on the basis of good intentions. As a zebra company, we prioritise creating long-term added value rather than simply responding to short-term effects. We strive to align our intentions as closely as possible with the impact we make.

- **Prosperity**
  Making a profit is not the primary objective; it is merely a means for achieving sustainable goals. We invest part of our profit in charitable, sustainable, social objectives. We are financially independent, which enables us to take autonomous decisions about the allocation of our profit.

- **Partnership**
  The last 'P' stands for Partnership. Zebras are gregarious animals, and similarly, we recognize the power of collaboration and actively seek partnerships with other zebras to achieve shared objectives.

Seeing the word **"gregarious"** written out led me down another wormhole. I had to look up the word to make sure I was using it correctly. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary: "The origin of gregarious is from the Latin noun grex, meaning "herd" or "flock."". Then I did a

Maria Malykhina (Technolex Translation Studio) and me at the 1920's themed fundraiser for Translators without Borders that Ludejo organised in Dublin, March 2023, at GALA

quick check back on Google: "What is the collective noun for Zebra?" A dazzle!

*'A dazzle of zebra'***

Now that's a noun I can work with!

"A Name Is More Beautiful Than the Best Perfume."

Colonel Rabbi Menachem Sebbag, in his opening of the exhibition "Fled to Fight", thanked the museum curators for bringing the remarkable stories of twenty-one Jewish Germans and Austrians back to life. For honouring their memory. He finished by pointing out that names fade. Ranks fade. Titles fade. "A name is more beautiful than the best perfume."

Essentially, the phrase emphasises the power and importance of a name as a reflection of a person's essence, reputation, and legacy, highlighting its intangible beauty that surpasses the appeal of any tangible or sensory experiences, such as the pleasing scent of perfume, which lingers once a person has left a room.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter if you call yourself a zebra, or a unicorn, or a striped donkey. The name is not important. What matters is your essence, reputation, and legacy. You can't greenwash that.

** A herd or a zeal are probably more common collective nouns for Zebras... but less fun.

The *Waterfall* Process of Localization

Source received → Translation → Target delivered

LANGUAGE SERVICES NEED TO LEVEL UP

Language services play a crucial role in connecting businesses with diverse audiences across linguistic and cultural barriers. However, the typical service that language service providers (LSPs) offer falls short of addressing the complex needs of businesses as they are often solely focused on linguistic aspects. It is time for language services to level up and redefine their approach to meet the evolving demands of the outside world.

Mathijs Sonnemans

Product Owner
at Blackbird.io
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Not Just Language

Traditionally, LSPs have focused on offering translation as their primary service. While translation is undoubtedly at the heart of our services, it does not provide complete solutions to the problems that businesses face before they can effectively communicate with global audiences.

If you look around, you'll see LSPs of all sizes continuously reiterate how language and translation are more complex than people think and that therefore only they can offer the expertise needed. However, from an outside perspective, this narrative is in stark contrast to the 'complexity' of the actual service they offer: "send me a file and I'll send you a translation back in X days while it costs you Y cents per word". How can a client believe in an LSP's narrative if it's the same as the narrative of 10.000 other companies while it only differs on X and Y? This is the perfect recipe for a race to the bottom.

In an increasingly competitive landscape where machines provide a similar service, 'translating a file' will be perceived as a less and less valuable service offering. That is the true strain, risk, and effect machines have on the localization industry: the **diminished perceived value of translation**. In this regard, I feel that many LSPs are asleep at the wheel. We merely pride ourselves on
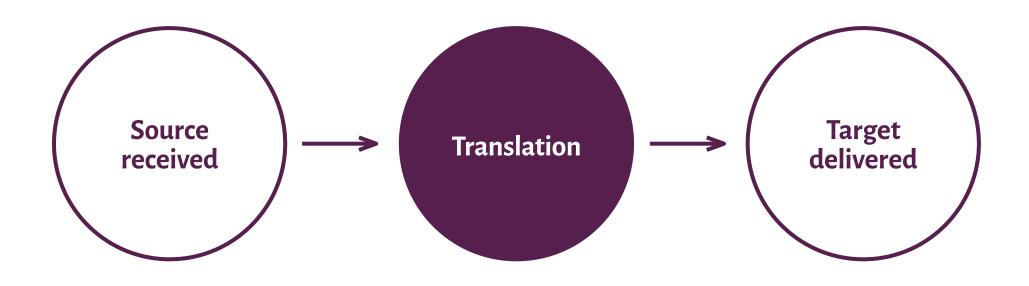
being good with languages but we are not making any effort to broaden our actual service offering.

Changing the Service

To break free from the race to the bottom based solely on pricing, LSPs must redefine their role and embrace a more comprehensive service model. Rather than treating language services as a transactional process, LSPs should position themselves as **trusted consultants and advisers**. By taking a proactive role in understanding the linguistic assets of clients, implementing bespoke and efficient translation processes, and leveraging technology, LSPs can deliver a service that goes beyond translation and adds tangible value.

Language is so many things: always changing, situational, local, cultural, and even legal. The environment in which linguistic content lives fluctuates: new laws are implemented, wording changes because of cultural shifts, even client strategies and target audiences change. How should linguistic assets change over time based on changes in their context and environment? These are some of many interesting complexities of language that I simply do not see addressed by the service LSPs offer today. That is because the process we adhere to is by definition finite and momentary in time. We

offer you a translation and we don't look back (in software development we call this *waterfall*). That's such a huge waste of opportunity! Instead, you could offer to take care of a client's linguistic assets, manage them, and offer bespoke services based on the client's budgets and needs. Advice, consult, use analytics data to validate and change strategy, go the extra mile. Use your linguistic and cultural expertise to monitor and apply changes to previously translated content when necessary. That's when you offer a real service that hopefully also removes the need for the per-word pricing paradigm we have been stuck with. You will offer what I see as real *Language Operations* so that your client can focus on what they do best.

Language = Technology

The most significant reason many LSPs are currently not able to provide these kinds of services is because they often lack a conscious strategy for addressing the technical aspects of the translation process. As a result, clients are left to handle the extraction, processing, and delivery of linguistic content by themselves, leading to inefficient and disjointed workflows.

The reality is that most linguistic content that is handled by an LSP lives in some kind of software system owned by the client. If you want to consult on, own, and control the process of extracting and processing this content then you need to come in with a confident **technology strategy**. Technology shouldn't be something that you use as a tool while you focus on language. Providing

language services is providing a technology service. They are simply intertwined. The beauty of this industry is that we have to interact with all industries and companies from all sectors. And given that every single one of them is different means that you need to offer a technological solution that still fits each client perfectly.

Having worked with many LSPs, I've seen that there often is no such conscious strategy to tackle this problem. Usually, a very passive attitude is taken: whatever the client thinks is most convenient we should adapt to. And this is how we end up with clients emailing us documents every week. It's not the client's business to actively come up with a solution to this, it is the LSP who should take a **consulting role**, acknowledge that there are technical aspects to the translation process, advise and implement solutions that heavily benefit the client (and of course the LSP as well) since linguistic content can be served quicker, with more accuracy and cheaper. That is a service that clients would significantly benefit from and would want to pay for.

Improving the Process

The current waterfall approach to language services, where source content goes in and translated content comes out without revisiting or optimizing the process, is no longer sufficient. LSPs must shift their mindset and adopt a more holistic approach that acknowledges the complexities of language outside of their limited time engaging with it.

Your client most likely doesn't actually want a translation, they want to have their linguistic assets reach a wider international audience. This is because they have a business reason to do so and their assets have a purpose. So you shouldn't just implement a simple back-and-forth translation workflow, you should **provide a technology solution** that lets you validate how well the assets fulfill these purposes over time, and use that information to make informed decisions about the assets and the way you process them. Is the content not performing well? Perhaps switch from NMT to human translations, monitor, and repeat. Reflecting on your results and process and making improvements to it is what the software industry embraced as *agile* in order to level up from the waterfall methodology.
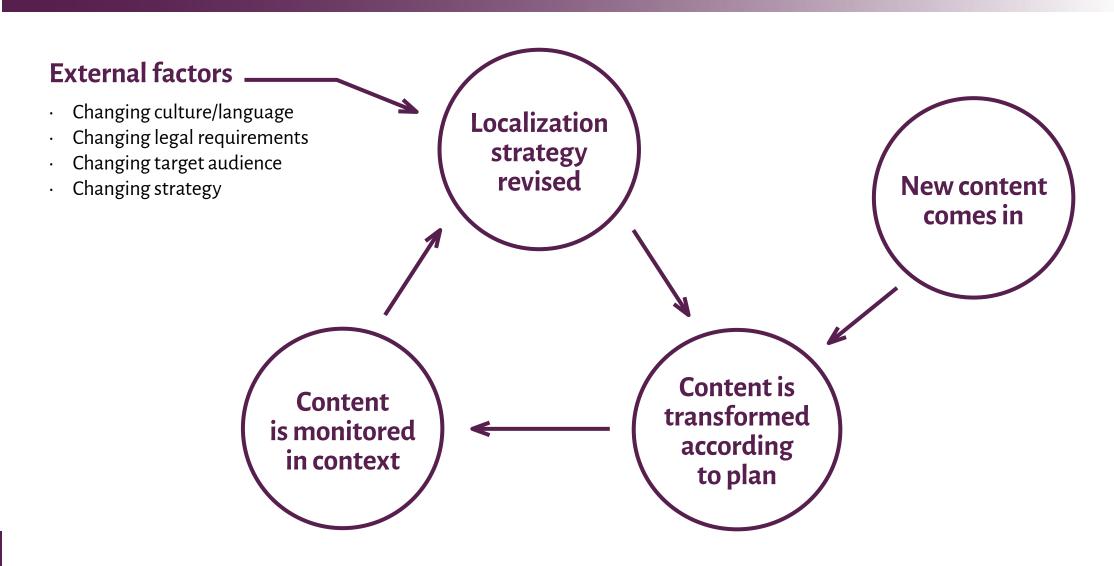
Technology plays a vital role in reshaping the language services landscape. LSPs need to recognize that providing language services is inherently intertwined with providing a technology service. Linguistic assets are deeply integrated into various software systems, and LSPs must develop a confident technology strategy to extract, process, and manage these assets. A successful LSP should offer a technology solution that aligns

seamlessly with clients' requirements, ensuring their linguistic assets fulfill their intended purposes and reach a wider international audience.

I have seen many LinkedIn posts from LSPs that try to emphasize the values that they add. However, I must say that these are exactly the same value propositions that good linguists would add themselves, e.g. asking for style guides and glossaries, collecting reference material, and verifying the target audience and service. LSPs should offer a service that is different from what freelance linguists offer (and already do very well!): organizing and orchestrating this technical process in a way that combines multiple disciplines while providing continuous services.

In conclusion, language services providers are at a critical juncture. They must shed the outdated narrative that reduces their value to mere translators and embrace a more comprehensive and consultative approach. Because if they don't, others will! By understanding the complexities of language, offering proactive management of linguistic assets, and leveraging technology, LSPs can redefine the industry and deliver the language services that businesses actually need.

A Potential Leveled Up Localization Process With Feedback Loops

External factors

· Changing culture/language
· Changing legal requirements
· Changing target audience
· Changing strategy

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Localization
strategy
revised

New content
comes in

Content
is monitored
in context

Content is
transformed
according
to plan
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> " *Providing* **language services** *is providing a* **technology** *service.* "

WHY AI WILL MAKE THE LANGUAGE INDUSTRY MORE HUMAN THAN EVER – IF WE LET IT

Fabio Schmuki

Chief Marketing Officer at
Supertext

With all the fuss about ChatGPT and AI, you could be forgiven for thinking that translators and copywriters are facing certain extinction. But what do large language models (LLM) really mean for our beloved industry?

Five days. That's how long it took for OpenAI's ChatGPT to reach a million users. And it didn't stop there: according to analysts, the service hit 100 million just two months later. These incredible stats put even industry-shaking giants like Instagram (1 m users in 2.5 months), Spotify (5 months) and Netflix (3.5 years) in the shade.

So while we can laugh about ChatGPT and other large language models' hallucinations, biases and natural-sounding yet nonsensical content, that won't stop them from dramatically changing the world of communication – which includes the language industry.

In fact, this transformation is long since underway. Browsing the internet, you'll now find everything from job postings for "AI Editors" – with the successful candidate expected to produce 200 to 250 articles per week – to reports that "AI is tearing Wikipedia apart". Meanwhile, in the translation sector, there are already plenty of use cases where LLMs appear to significantly outperform the major MT engines.

Welcome to the age of abundance! Now that content can be produced and translated into any language in seconds, every company, brand and marketer can flood the world with words. If you already felt like a tiny fish in an ocean of content, you might want to start thinking about yourself as a single piece of stardust in an entire galaxy.
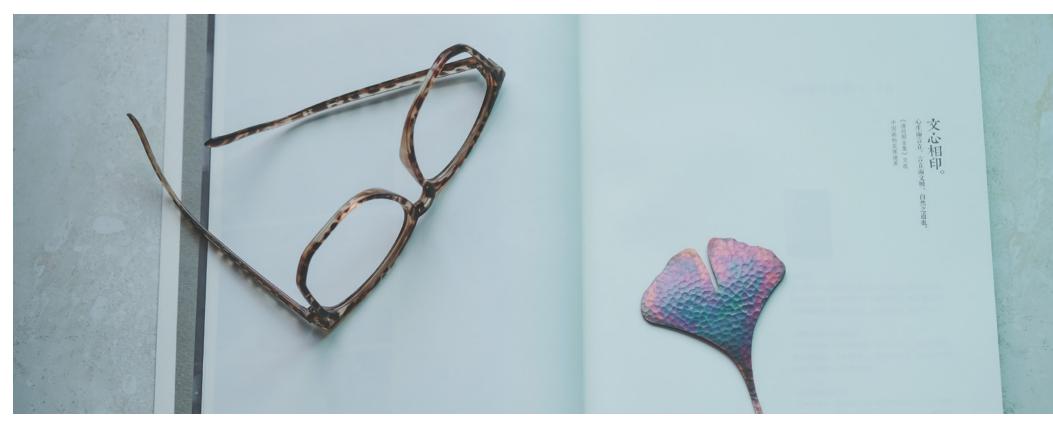
Where does this leave us? While alarmist headlines – and our own concerned parents – suggest that copywriters and translators have just taken a major hit, this could in fact be a blessing in disguise. Because one thing is for certain: the world of content is entering an up-or-out phase. People will become increasingly lost in that galaxy of (at best) average content. More than ever, they'll be looking for brands that are thought-provoking and dare to be different. And human creativity will be the decisive factor in this race to the top.

Great Writing Isn't About Writing. It's About Thinking.

Having a heart doesn't make you a cardiologist. And putting pen to paper doesn't make you a wordsmith. Only the gifted can craft content that's truly persuasive and leaves an impression. So, what is it that sets the great writers apart? Funnily enough, it's very rarely the actual writing.

Just do it. I'm lovin' it. Think different. Almost all of the greatest ads and slogans could have been written by a 10-year-old. They aren't great because of their lyrical prowess, but because they get into our heads. They make us stop for a second – and that in itself is one of the greatest challenges of our time.

How do they do this? By providing insights people hadn't thought of themselves. By concisely presenting use cases and benefits. By framing people's needs in a new way. And sometimes by being disarmingly honest and vulnerable. There are many roads to success, but all of them are human to their very core.

Mediocrity. Now 500x Faster.

ChatGPT and its friends take a profoundly different approach from a writer or transcreator making a genuine connection with the reader. They don't understand or think. They simply generate, repeating ideas that are in their dataset rather than coming up with new ones. And that data comes from all over the place – which is also how you might describe the quality of the output.

For low-visibility content at high speed, an LLM might just be the right tool – good enough for a lot of use cases, but definitely not a dealmaker. For anything that goes beyond that, it'll still be humans playing the starring role.

The True Revolution: Combining Human Brilliance With the Efficiency of AI

Doomsday scenarios for the language industry are nothing new: we're used to receiving condolences from our friends and family every time a new machine translation tool is released. And yet here we are, creating and localizing content as passionately as ever. Because coexisting

with machines is not only possible, but profitable – if we choose to embrace it in the right way.

Drawing on our copywriting and transcreation experience, we at Supertext have spent the last few months experimenting with generative AI. And we've learned first-hand how differently human professionals and tools like ChatGPT approach a writing task:

Copywriter	ChatGPT
Comes up with their own ideas	Comes up with others' ideas
Empathizes	Calculates
Thinks in stories	"Thinks" one word at a time
Isn't afraid to ask questions	Isn't afraid to provide answers… even incorrect ones
Usually works sober	Has been known to hallucinate on the job
Needs an overall goal	Needs crystal-clear instructions
Pretends to enjoy feedback	Pretends to understand feedback
Writes accurately	Writes fast
Has their price	Has its limits

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Sure, it's a little tongue-in-cheek, but the conclusion is still crystal clear: combining human brilliance with the efficiency of AI is the way to go for both content creation and translation.

As with any tool, an LLM's output is heavily dependent on the input it's given. Figuring out how best to prompt it might be what defines the great wordsmiths of the 21st century: it all comes back to creativity. Add editing skills on top to iron out the output's bumps, and language professionals are looking at a very bright future.

Change Is Upon Us. Let's Do It Right.

The best way to embrace the new tech obviously looks different depending on what vertical you are in. LLMs might become a go-to productivity tool for medical, legal or sworn translations, but consumers will still want the reassurance of knowing a human professional was involved to ensure accuracy and consistency across language barriers.

When it comes to more creative projects, though, users rarely care about the source text, or even whether a piece of copy was translated at all. All that matters is whether it makes the right impact on its target audience – and that's something that good copywriters have excelled at from day one. Here's how to take a page out of their book and make the most of ChatGPT's capabilities:

Step 1: Get rid of the source text constraints

Let's face it: most translation projects, even the ones that call for creativity, currently take place in rigid environments like Trados. A copywriter, on the other hand, usually starts out with no more than a blank page. The only limit is their imagination.

Step 2: Or maybe get rid of the source text altogether?

Generative AI opens up entirely new pathways for multilingual projects. Why not try kicking things off with a monolingual source prompt (aka the briefing) instead of a source text? If you prompt the model to create original content in each target language, every text will be different – and, in many cases, better suited for the target market's needs. And isn't that what we've wanted all along? Clients currently tend to choose translation over multilingual copywriting because of its lower price. But with LLMs in play, this isn't necessarily the case anymore. So why not make use of it?

Step 3: Keep experimenting

Generative AI moves fast, and by the time you're reading this, these approaches might already be outdated. The most important thing is to stay open to new strategies and keep your imagination and writing style sharp. Because the translator of the future might just be a copywriter.

No Doom, Full Bloom

Finally, success always comes down to the right mindset. It's important to remember that there's a reason why the language industry has persisted – and even flourished – through generation after generation of new technology.

What we do is, at its core, very human. Disruptors and robots may be capable of producing vast numbers of words in the blink of an eye, but really connecting with the audience takes emotion, inspiration, and personality. Getting inside the reader's head and finding the perfect phrase to capture a message is something AI won't be able to do for a long time yet.

This is what will set us apart. It will challenge us to work even harder to find ideas worth writing about in the first place. And, ultimately, it will make us more human than ever.

How to Make the Most Out of ChatGPT's Capabilities

1 Eliminate source text constraints

2 Try briefing instead of using source text

3 Experiment. Experiment. Experiment

Takeaway

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

At 1-StopAsia, we fully understand the need for an effective complaint management system in place. Just like in any organization, feedback and complaints from customers are a natural occurrence. However, the difference between successful and unsuccessful organizations lies in how complaints are handled and whether there is a quality outcome to them.

In this article, which is part two of our series, we will discuss how we have created a successful complaint management system to ensure greater customer satisfaction and more positive and productive outcomes for them. Take a look at our processes and systems created and all the efforts we make to ensure this happens.

Prerequisites for a Successful Complaint Management System

From the outset, a good customer complaint system is proactive and not reactive. This means that certain prerequisites must be in place to ensure that a customer complaint gets handled effectively and efficiently. This is why it's necessary to ensure that your goals and expectations for quality control are clearly defined, that you have the right team assembled to deal with customer complaints, and that there is a feedback policy and guidelines in place.

But in addition to this, different teams require feedback training, there are different processes and stages that must be followed, records must be kept, the implementation must be carried out, and of course, success and effectiveness need to be measured. We'll cover each of these aspects in some more detail below. Let's dive in.

1. QC goals definition & expectations

They say that hindsight is 20/20, but we didn't want to approach our efforts in a reactive manner but rather in a proactive manner. This is why we started by testing out one language (Japanese) and our output for it by striving to deliver better quality right from the beginning of the process and not at the end. This enabled us to detect issues quickly and prevent them from reoccurring. We also strove to control quality at the initial step and not just at the endpoint.

2. QC team assembled

Once the goals of the process were clarified, we assembled a team that would ensure quality control throughout. This team consists of a Feedback Officer, a Team Leader of APM teams, QA and Linguistic Department Manager, a Production Director, as well as an HR & Admin Representative.

3. Feedback policy, guidelines, & training

As part of our complaint management system, we created a feedback policy and guide and also created a profile and guidelines to be followed by the Feedback Officer. In addition to this, we created feedback training for AMs, PMs, and linguists. We further created a feedback process and multiple stages in order to match the operations within the company.

4. Keeping records & implementation

As part of the record-keeping and implementation stage of our complaint management software, we created a designated Google Drive and workspace. The entire production process is based on a job number and record keeping takes place in a structured shared Drives policy with limited access based on documentation requirements.

The record-keeping and implementation phase involves five separate stages, which will be covered in more detail below, as well as involves the participation and involvement of client and internal communication, regular QC meetings, a CRM, and a workgroup.

The breakdown of what really happens behind the scenes for each stage is as follows:

- **Feedback received:** feedback is immediately assigned to the Feedback Officer. AM/PM confirms to the client that feedback has been received and they summarize all the files and communication and upload them to the relevant Drive folder, which is shared with everyone involved. The AM/PM then registers the feedback in the CRM and adds all the relevant people. The information is sent to the Feedback Officer who engages with the client immediately and gives clear deadlines for actions to be taken.

- **Added in F1:** as part of the Feedback Management Policy, the feedback is added to F1 for further analysis and statistical evaluation. This is later used to assess the progress of the matter and the quality of the process followed.

- **Investigation:** different people from the teams are assigned different tasks. In addition, information is assessed, clarity is sought from the client and reports are prepared and evaluated which are then delivered to the client. Any production issues are supervised by a Production Director while linguistic quality issues are supervised by a QA and a Linguistics Manager and the QA team. The Feedback Officer is involved in all levels of communication to enable them to transmit proper questions and messages to the client. APMs and APM team leaders follow the information and then update everyone accordingly.

- **On hold:** this is the final stage before the investigation is closed. Here, we have sent our position, proposals, and measures and are awaiting the client's response. In terms of deliverables, which we refer to as a "Feedback Pack" can include custom processes suggestions, a full investigation feedback report, a custom production schedule, full audit of assets per client and end-client, a post-translation feedback form, root cause analysis, and linguistic quality improvement measures.

- **Feedback closed:** once the client has come back to us, we will mark the deal as closed. It can have two outcomes: positive or negative.

5. **Measuring Success & Effectiveness**

   The final prerequisite as part of our customer complaint system revolves around measuring success and effectiveness. However, this wouldn't be possible if we didn't have a set of deliverables for each type of feedback received. This involves using Google Drive job folders and creating a feedback workgroup. In addition, we implement all the introduced measures at all levels.

   However, we also need to measure the quality of the process and the quality of the language. But quality is not only related to these two aspects. Instead, it can expand to feedback on the quality of the service and project management and even a complaint about the boss. To us, it's all about understanding what the client wants, how they operate on every level in their company, and what business "language" they use to talk to you.

   All this is measured through client happiness and partnerships, regular follow-ups on issues that have occurred, and taking internal preventative actions as opposed to taking a reactive stance

Where Can Things Go Wrong With a Complaint Management System?

Despite this five-step process with sub-processes involved in some of the stages, things can sometimes go wrong. Luckily, we have identified the potential challenges that may arise due to an absence of a complaint management system and these include lack of recognition when we have an issue, failure to recognize complaints from the team, lack of escalation of the issue, slow/no communication with the client, lack of transparency for the client, a lack of understanding of the client's processes and priorities, and a lack of flexibility in finding a solution. This is why customer complaint software is so crucial to ensure a quality and effective result for the client.

Gion Matsuri 祇園祭
1 to 31 July

Held annually in July, this grand celebration in Kyoto is a testament to Japan's rich cultural heritage. The air is filled with the rhythmic beat of traditional music, the streets adorned with magnificent floats, and the atmosphere buzzing with excitement. The grand event of the festival – the procession of floats 山鉾巡行 (Yamaboko Junkō) – is taking place on July 17.