1-STOP ASIA
EVERY WORD COUNTS

Pulse of Asia

Preface

Dear Esteemed Readers,

Welcome to the Winter Edition of *Pulse of Asia*, your gateway to the ever-evolving world of translation and localization. As we navigate the complexities of global communication, our mission is clear: provide profound insights and expert perspectives.

In this edition of *Pulse of Asia*, we present "The Year in Review," where **Gergana Toleva** offers a unique perspective on the evolving landscape of our industry. While AI has been stealing the spotlight the whole year, she's going against the flow and discussing sales strategy, marketing, and content creation—all in the context of a year both challenging and exciting.

As we delve into fascinating themes such as "Semantic Search in Asian Languages: Enhancing the User Experience" and "The Growing Relationship Between AI and the Japanese Language," we invite you to join us on a journey of exploration and discovery. Additionally, we explore the intriguing question, "Why do other LSPs need a reliable vendor in times of elections in the US?"—shedding light on the intersection of language services and geopolitical events.

To our valued readers, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and curiosity. Together, let's embrace the challenges, celebrate the triumphs, and embark on this exhilarating journey into the heart of global communication.

Thank you for joining us!

Enitsa Koeva
Global Marketing Manager & Graphic Designer

Contents

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…用于装填… 的小盒，材… 挂于车轿… 香囊可香… 辟秽。早…

香箸、香匙等香具

用于插放香箸、香匙等工具，瓶口常有分隔

香炭

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

《礼记·内则》："男女未冠笄者……栉纵… 孔雀东南飞》《定… 也言及香囊："红罗复斗帐，四角垂香囊。" 香囊也常用为爱情信物，如繁钦《定… "何以致叩叩？香囊系肘后。"… 放冠帽，又称帽架。在冠架的"冠承"…

SEMANTIC SEARCH IN ASIAN LANGUAGES: ENHANCING THE UX

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

The world wide web has become the world's largest source of information. Much like a giant library with information that's instantly accessible at the touch of a few keystrokes. According to sources, online searches have three main purposes: data, content, and applications.

But how do users find this information? The answer may seem simple at first—keywords. However, search engines are becoming much more sophisticated and keywords alone are not enough. In fact, user intent and context are starting to drive searches.

And with this comes the rise of semantic search. But what is semantic search, what are the most popular search engines in Asia, how do they cater to it, and what lessons can we learn? In this article, we explore the answers to these questions.
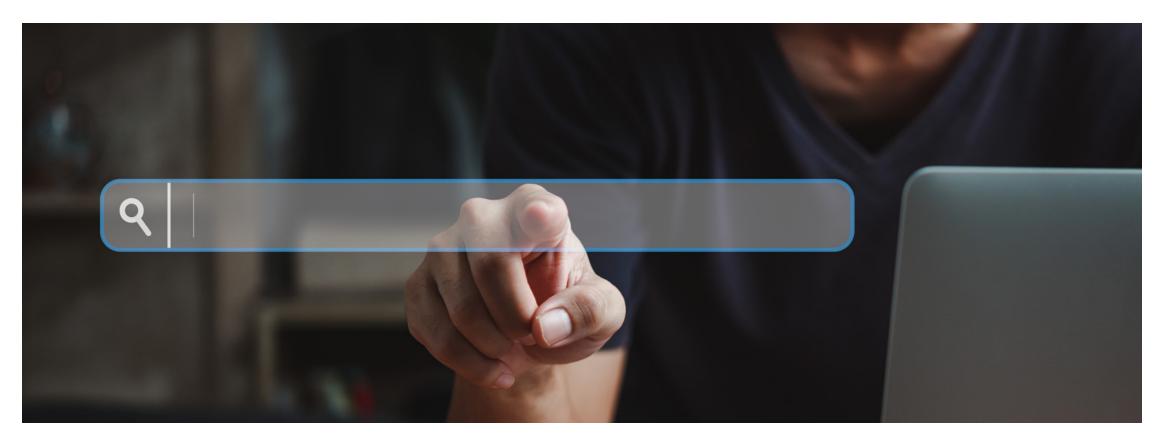
What Is Semantic Search?

In the days when search engine optimization (SEO) started coming to the fore in terms of having a website or your content rank on a site, it was enough to do some keyword research, pepper your keywords in the content, publish it, and wait for the search engine algorithm to rank your page. However, today semantic search comes to the fore with search engines like the West's Google and China's Baidu catering ever more finely to user intent.

This means that even if a user enters several keywords in a search engine search bar, the answer that arises may not even feature these keywords but will feature the answer that the user is looking for. It's all about the user intent when searching and this is where semantic search comes to the fore.

Google and other search engines are increasingly aiming to provide sharp and accurate answers almost instantly to their users by focusing not on keyword-stuffed articles or websites but on content that addresses the user's query.

Algorithms are trained to process large volumes of data and analyze this data to bring the most relevant search results. However, there has been a recent technological change in searches with the rise of voice search technology.

These voice searches are much more natural, using long-tail keyword queries to ask the search engine for information. Whether accessed on a mobile or desktop device, voice searches in Asia are on the rise because they are said to provide more accurate answers much faster than typing out the search query.

As such, the user experience (UX) with search is changing and it is becoming a much more natural way of searching and inputting data, akin to speaking your instructions to your PC or smartphone.

But with the changes in search, the user experience is driving changes in how search engines rank pages, what information they consider valuable, etc. These search engines' algorithms are constantly being redeveloped and updated to cater to more refined searches or to semantic search and this means a better UX.

While these machines are in the process of learning, we can expect natural search queries to continue rising while competition among search engines to deliver the most accurate results will also continue to increase.

What Are the Most Popular Search Engines in Asia's Top Markets?

With the rise of semantic search globally, we see search engines competing to offer users the most relevant, accurate, and authoritative information. But what is the breakdown of the search engine market across Asia? We explore the answer to this question in more detail next.

- **China:** China has a standalone search engine market because its "great firewall" has banned access to most Western sites and search engines such as Google, YouTube, and others. The most recent data from August 2023 indicates that the country's most popular search engine is Baidu with a 61.62% share of the market. Bing comes in a far second at 17.09%, Haosou at 9.14%, and Sogou with 4.9%. Let's focus on Baidu. As the country's largest and most used search engine, it has around 677 million monthly active users. In addition, its main audience is Chinese individuals although a small percentage of its users are from Japan and the US. Also worth noting is that although Sogou has a comparatively lower market share, it processes around 802 million voice requests a day from its mobile app.

- **India:** India's primary search engine is Google with 98.5%. This is followed by Bing with 0.96%, and Yahoo! With 0.3%.

- **Indonesia:** Google dominates here again with 94% of the market share. Bing has less than 1% of the market in Indonesia.

- **Thailand:** It's a similar story in Thailand with Google capturing around 98% of the market. As for Bing, it holds less than 1% of the market.

- **Philippines:** Google again dominates in the Philippines with over 95% market share in this country. Bing's market share here is 2.74% and Yahoo!'s market share is 1.66%.

- **Japan:** The market share of Google in Japan is 75.34%, followed by 13.83% for Yahoo! Japan, and 9.8% for Bing.

Despite Google and Baidu having the greatest market share across Asia, it's worth considering how other search engines are faring and what strategies they are using.

For example, although Bing has similar SEO best practices to Google, its focus is on more precise keywords. In addition, it places greater emphasis on websites with multimedia, and it rewards websites with a strong social media presence.

When it comes to Naver, the search engine results page (SERP) looks very different from Google because it is split into different sections. As such, a fully optimized website can appear in multiple spots in the different sections. Essentially, the layout changes depending on each search.

Conclusion: Lessons Learned

When it comes to processing more natural language search queries—or semantic search queries—across different search engines, it's essential to take into account the popularity of different search engines across different Asian countries.

A one-size-fits-all strategy will not be successful and it is essential to localize your website or app presence for a particular Asian country that you'd like to enter.

With the rise of semantic search globally, however, we are likely to see much more competition from search engines as they battle to bring users the most relevant answers—both from typed and voice search queries.

Technology will continue to evolve and the more natural your content is, while being localized for the local language, the greater commercial success you are likely to enjoy in Asia.

- **Taiwan:** Google's market share in Taiwan is 91.69%. This is followed by Yahoo! At 5.68% and Bing with 2.42% of the share. Baidu's market share in Taiwan is around 0.05%.

- **South Korea:** South Korea is another interesting market because although Google holds a 63.37% market share, the local Naver comes in second at 31.27%. Bing holds 3.57% and Daum's share is just over 1%..

How Are the Most Popular Asian Search Engines Doing Semantic Searches?

Although China's Baidu said as far back in 2012 that they had mastered the art of semantic search way before Google did, there are still many lessons to be learned about this type of search, and machines such as natural language processors are constantly being fed data to come up with the most relevant search queries.

Visit our blog!

How to Make Your Way Into the Japanese Website Design

CULTURAL ASSURANCE:

Japanese consumers seek assurance before purchasing. Use testimonials and success stories to build trust.

LINGUISTIC AWARENESS:

Recognize that Japanese uses a logographic-based writing system for effective communication.

ENGAGEMENT BOOST:

Incorporating "Kawaii" content can enhance customer engagement by up to 52%.

TEXT OPTIMIZATION:

Add lots of text and small fonts

IMAGE QUALITY:

Avoid large and high-resolution images.

LOST IN "LOCALIZATION": ANIME EDITION

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Anime is stylized Japanese animation that has taken the world by storm. With numerous titles being translated and localized for Western audiences, anime localization has become quite controversial.

That's partly because the process of localizing anime often dilutes the intended meaning. What's more is that in many cases, due to media policies and censorship, it's necessary to fundamentally change the anime localization to prevent young viewers from being exposed to excessive violence or content of a mature nature.

With that being said, anime localization comes with a number of challenges. That's exactly what this article will explore, including some key case studies of actual anime localization fails. Keep reading to find out more!

Some of the Main Challenges That Come With Anime Localization

Anime localization may be viewed as the process of localizing anime content for an intended audience, with anime localization being the process of taking anime content and its words and going beyond translating the text word for word, but enhancing and sometimes changing the meaning so that it fits a particular cultural context. With this in mind, there are some significant challenges when it comes to anime localization that should be seriously considered. Here are just a few of these.

- **Media policies:** many countries have specific media policies regarding their audiences and audiovisual content that comes from other countries. For example, American television has specific policies on the type of content that children can be exposed to. In the 1960s, for instance, taking foreign audiovisual content such as anime required that themes around death or other mature content to be completely removed. As such, viewers were left with gaping plot holes and incomplete content because many scenes were removed or were outright wrongly localized for anime.

- **Jokes and puns:** beyond media policies, there are also issues with translating and localizing jokes and puns in anime. Of course, jokes and puns are hard to translate on any occasion but with anime, it becomes even more challenging because there is no literal translation for a joke and often, if a literal translation is used, its meaning will get completely lost for the audience.

- **Dubbing:** another important anime localization challenge comes with dubbing. Here, the number of syllables in each line is often counted as is the number of times that a character opens their mouth in a scene. Then, the translation is matched to the mouth movements to reflect the original meaning so that it appears natural to the new audience. However, with anime, this is often not done correctly, resulting in a poor viewing experience.

- **Culture:** culture is another fundamental challenge when it comes to anime localization. Many Western countries use variations of censorship when it comes to certain scenes in an anime series or program. Taking American audiences as an example, violence or themes around death often have to be completely cut from the scene to ensure that sensitive viewers are not exposed to more mature themes. This, and other cultural differences can make anime localization difficult and cumbersome, especially in maintaining the original plot idea.

- **Unnatural translations:** finally, when it comes to anime localization, there are sometimes issues encountered in terms of unnatural translations. There are often no direct word-for-word translations and a meaning that's as close as possible to the original needs to be used. However, this often results in a diluted meaning and can confuse audiences.

Case Studies of Failed Anime Localization

Unfortunately, when it comes to anime localization, there are many case studies where it has failed or where its intended meaning has gotten lost on its audiences. Below are just a few examples of anime localization fails that are worth mentioning.

- **One Piece:** while the original version of this anime was aimed at older children and teens, the localized version was aimed at younger viewers. Naturally, the dark themes of violence resulted in scenes and episodes being eliminated, leading to plot holes that confused the audience. In addition, this anime's dialogue often completely deviated from the original meaning.

- **Demon Slayer:** in this case, fans of this globally popular anime were baffled by the nonsensical English title for the show's second season, calling it "egregious" and "no good". That's because the original title was too adult for the English localized version.

- **Ghost Stories:** here, dubbing problems quickly arose as the English dub was completely different from the original. The result was called a "parody".

- **The 4Kids' Yu-Gi-Oh:** in this case, we see problems with mature content being shifted and localized for a younger audience, dubbing problems, the Americanization of Japanese names, etc.

- **Naruto:** with the popular Naruto, many of the intense fighting scenes and a lot of blood had to be removed. As for the dubbing, this was also problematic because it resulted in trading the original opening theme for a new original English dub.

- **Pokémon:** as one of the biggest franchises in anime, a Pokémon episode made some localization errors related to culture. Here, jelly doughnuts were used instead of rice balls, under the assumption that young American audiences would not know what rice balls were. However, in the scene, it was clear that there were no jelly doughnuts at all and as such, this localization gaffe is worth mentioning, too.

- **Speed Racer:** from completely changing the series title name to the terrible lip-syncing, many audience members felt that the sentence sound was sped up and incoherent.

- **Sailor Moon:** examples of challenges with localizing Sailor Moon include changes to the original including Westernizing names, altered dialogue, dated slang, and excessive censorship.

- **Cardcaptors:** in addition to the title change and the Americanized theme song, there was also heavy censorship here with practically all traces of romance being removed so much so that some episodes were entirely cut out.

- **Glitter Force:** the problems with Glitter Force extend to so many changes being made that the original is barely recognizable. Moreover, the dialogue was considered "cringy" and elements of Japanese culture have been removed.

- **Mew Mew Power:** with this anime, all the characters were given new, unsuitable names, major plot points were left out, heavy censorship was involved, and the theme song's dub was considered a complete failure.

Final Thoughts

Anime localization can be absolutely powerful and effective, reaching new audiences across the globe. However, poor anime localization can certainly leave a bad taste for audiences that want to experience the original vibes, plot, theme, music, character names, and cultural nuances. With this in mind, anime localization must take into account a series of factors in order to create a streamlined and pleasant viewing experience as opposed to alienating audiences through gaffes such as incorrect dubbing, excessive censorship, literal translations, and more.

The Main Challenges That Come With Anime Localization

AB✓ DUBBING

🌐 CULTURE

😆 JOKES & PUNS

⚖ MEDIA POLICIES

A文 UNNATURAL TRANSLATIONS

LOCALIZATION OF ASIAN e-LEARNING CONTENT:

Meeting Educational Standards

The onset of Covid-19 ushered in a new era of learning. Schools, colleges, and universities around the world implemented study-from-home policies to continue students' educational journeys while keeping them safe.

For foreign educational institutions operating in Asia, this meant a need to adapt quickly through e-learning localization. Adapting to challenges such as determining which content would need to be localized, these educational institutions are now experiencing a high sign-up rate for their courses even though many stay-at-home orders have been lifted.

With this in mind, what does the e-learning landscape look like in Asia? What are some of the challenges foreign and local educational institutions need to overcome to deliver quality content to their learners? And how are some Asian countries adapting to e-learning? These are the questions we answer in this article, so keep reading to find out more!

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

A Brief Definition of e-Learning Localization

A brief definition of e-learning localization entails localizing educational content for online learners who rely on digital tools and non-physical educational facilities to study course content online while pursuing specific educational goals.

Such localization necessarily looks at translating educational content not only in terms of gaining the accuracy of the content's meaning but also tailoring that content for specific Asian audiences.

This takes into account factors such as local customs and cultures, linguistic nuances, the use of expressions and idioms, marketing content, frequently asked questions (FAQs), tests and quizzes, colors and fonts, and so much more.

The Rise of Asian e-Learning and e-Learning Localization: Opportunities and Challenges

There are multiple opportunities for e-learning in Asia. Factors influencing this landscape include high internet and smartphone penetration and adoption, which are critical elements for a successful e-learning course.

However, the landscape is not as equitably distributed as it could be and what appear as opportunities can also mean challenges for many educational institutions.

Examples include low English speaking rates or language barriers, students living in rural areas with a lack of access to technology, and limited numbers of IT experts to implement e-learning, in addition to the need for fast and adaptable e-learning localization.

What Elements Require e-Learning Localization in Asia?

For any online educational course material to be delivered with precision, timeliness, and high quality in Asia, there are several e-learning localization elements that will require translation and localization. Educational institutions—both local and foreign—delivering educational materials, it's essential to consider factors in their localization efforts that focus on both the course material itself and the marketing aspects related to promoting one's educational courses. These include:

Course material localization

- Units of measurements, dates, and currency
- Spellings and local expressions
- Names, examples, references, slang
- Idioms and abbreviations
- Colors and fonts
- Images, illustrations, and gestures
- Music and accent
- Images and graphs
- Study and reference material
- Tests and quizzes
- Video subtitles
- Video on-screen text (OST)
- Audio

Marketing factors localization

- Website or application
- Course information and FAQs
- Reviews and testimonials
- Community section and comments
- Marketing material and supporting legal documentation

Considerations Involved in e-Learning Localization

With so much to localize in terms of materials, educational institutions must have clear goals and timeframes in mind to ensure that they deliver their content to market in the fastest and most accurate way. For this reason, it's necessary to consider elements affecting e-learning localization, including:

1. **English proficiency:** if an Asian country ranks high on the English Proficiency Index (EPI), course materials may only need to be partially localized and vice versa.

2. **Cultural match:** any cultural references must be understood by the learners and some will require adaptation or recreation to fit the local culture.

3. **Cultural sensitivity:** there are many cultural nuances in many Asian countries and as such, course material should not offend the learners. This includes references to examples, names, gestures, and others.

4. **Strategic decision:** moving into a new market and testing it out can be daunting. If you are merely

aiming to see if your efforts will be successful, it may be worth only localizing some of your content. However, if you're planning a full-on market entry, all your content assets will need to be localized.

5. **Age of the target audience:** depending on the age of your intended learners, you will need to adapt your content accordingly. For example, K-12 students will fare better with local language voiceovers and translation of on-screen text as opposed to using subtitles.

6. **Budget:** e-learning localization efforts can be expensive. This requires doing a careful evaluation of your most valued assets that have the potential to deliver faster and higher returns on your investment. Also, audio and visual materials are much more expensive to localize than text-based content.

7. **Time frame:** depending on when you want to launch your e-learning course in an Asian country, you'll need to consider the time it will take to localize your content. This means you should carefully evaluate the offerings of different service providers to ensure you get your content out on time.

8. **Compliance:** many countries have legal requirements for accurate translation and localization. This includes legal documents, policies, and other related information. In addition, some partners may also request that you localize certain aspects of your course content and supporting documentation.

Case Studies: China, India, and Malaysia

e-Learning localization is nowhere best analyzed than through actual cases of the process in certain Asian countries. Below, we briefly explore the e-learning landscape in China, India, and Malaysia.

China: although China has a high smartphone usage rate and strong internet connectivity, there are hundreds of millions of people living in rural areas where this is not the norm. Previously, education was carried out through radio and television programs for such audiences but today, efforts are being made to ensure that greater portions of the rural population get access to quality education as a way of equalizing the playing field.

India: India is another country that is seeking to level the educational playing field. Despite the country having numerous official languages (excluding English), and Hindi being spoken by a majority of the population, e-learning content needs to be localized for local learners while access to mobile technology and the internet will become major focus areas.

Malaysia: among one of the Asian countries with some of the fastest-paced efforts aimed at e-learning and delivering educational materials to a wider segment of the population, Malaysia has a high pre-tertiary education enrolment rate but is aiming to make Massive Open Online Courses more easily available to people living in rural or underdeveloped areas.

In Conclusion

e-Learning localization is a complex process that requires consideration of multiple different factors simultaneously.

Both local and foreign educational institutions seeking to penetrate the Asian market will need to take into account their target audience, budgets, and ultimate goals when deciding on an e-learning localization partner.

There is great potential to bring education to hundreds of millions of people in Asia. However, the process must begin with accurate and timely localization for e-learning that is in line with cultural and societal norms.

Contact us!

OPTIMIZING UX FOR CHINESE AUDIENCES: INSIGHTS & STRATEGIES

The massive size of the Chinese consumer market makes it attractive for Western companies to enter it. But entry is one thing. Once the legalities are in place, a whole world of challenges opens up.

For example, many Western companies have assumed that merely translating their offering into the target language will be sufficient. However, localization and designing with the user experience (UX) in mind has become essential.

In this article, we specifically explore advanced strategies for facilitating a great Chinese UX. Let's take a closer look.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

What Is a User Experience?

A user experience can broadly be considered the user-friendliness of an app, website, product, or any other point of interaction between your customer or intended audience and your brand. From the call-to-action buttons on your website, the text size you use to the colors on your site, the use of local models, local prices, and more—each of these elements come together to create a user experience that can make or break your business in a foreign market.

Advanced Strategies for Designing a UX to Resonate With Diverse Asian Cultures

When it comes to Chinese UX specifically, there are many advanced strategies that can be employed for the successful deployment of a product or service offering in China. We take a closer look at these below.

Language
The first and perhaps most obvious difference between China and the West is language. The Chinese language is considered logogrammatic. Through rectangular shapes and varying strokes, we have Chinese characters that can symbolize a range of different meanings. Meanwhile, in the West, we have comparatively shorter alphabets with which words are created. Perhaps one of the most important things when it comes to designing for Chinese UX is to consider the language.

Physically, Chinese characters can take up less space on a website than English words, for example. But this taking of less space shouldn't mean that space isn't optimized. In fact, Chinese users prefer to receive a lot of information on a single page to make an informed decision. This greatly contrasts with Western websites that have a minimalist design.

Furthermore, because a single stroke in the Chinese language can change the meaning of a character, it's advisable and a best practice to enhance the user experience, a font size of 12 or more should be used with your online assets. Furthermore, there is no spacing in Chinese characters, there are no capital letters or italics, plus there is a much smaller variety of fonts to choose from.

Color psychology
Another cultural aspect to consider is that of color psychology. In China, certain colors have different symbolism attached to them. And when these colors are combined, they can create a great user experience. Colors that are associated with luck, wealth, and happiness include red, yellow, and orange.

Other favorable colors include purple, green, and blue. In addition, they speak to the Chinese users' superstitions and beliefs and that's why, although the use of many different colors on a site or app may seem chaotic to a Western user, it actually enhances the user experience for a Chinese consumer.

Interface elements
Other aspects to consider are the interface elements of your user experience design. For example, gamification is a big part of Chinese culture where there's great emphasis placed on luck and winning. If your website or app can incorporate such game-like aspects into the user interface, you'll be much better able to draw in a wider Chinese audience.
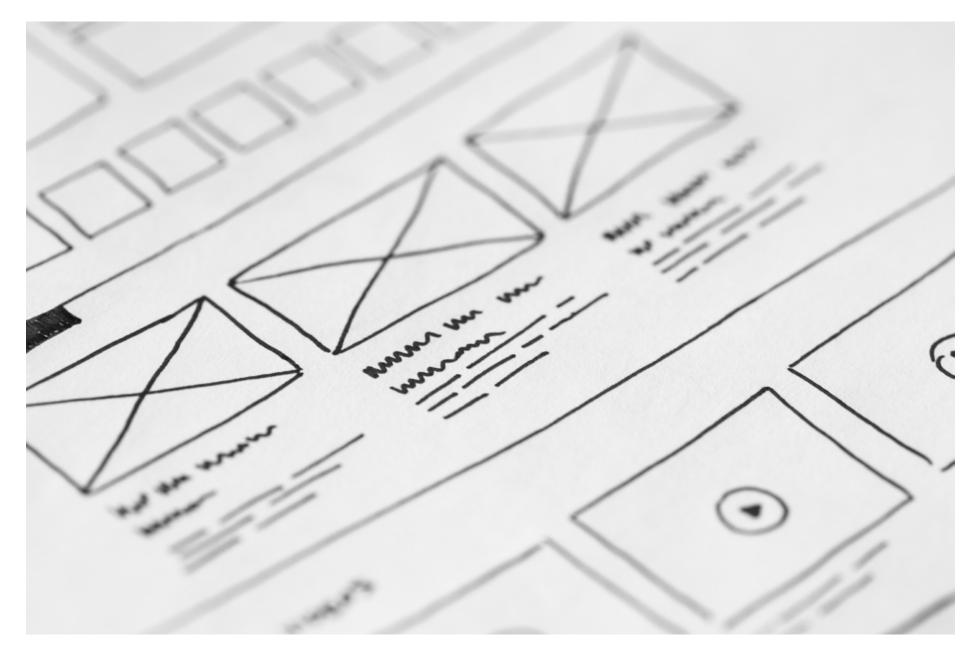
UX research
As part of your user experience research for Chinese UX, you also need to factor in that Chinese users prefer a high-context product and interface as opposed to a minimalist one. Although this can add greater levels of complexity to your offering, it's one that will also ensure your users in China are properly communicated to. This necessarily means providing greater levels of context, animations, seemingly "cluttered" design, and more.

Furthermore, optimizing your Chinese UX should also factor in the collectivist as opposed to the individualistic nature of Chinese society. Where social sharing, chats, communities, and reviews play such a major role, it becomes necessary to have space on your website for these reviews to be placed as well as chat facilities that enable seamless communication. This is something that must be built into your site offering to please the average Chinese user.

In addition, the trend in China is for users to rely on a single app to perform a plethora of activities. Also called "supper apps", they can enable a user to watch a video, hail a taxi, or even go shopping or do online banking. A

great example of this is WeChat, which offers all this and more with 1.24 billion monthly users.

Your Chinese UX should not overlook the fact that in China, most online activities are done via a smartphone. It's also more common to use phone numbers as opposed to email addresses for registration to certain sites, meaning a mobile-first design will be essential. Other mobile-related developments that have gained in popularity include the widespread adoption of QR codes.

And finally, Western companies seeking to enter the Chinese market should be aware of the Chinese firewall. This means that much of the internet is censored and as such, many global websites and apps around the world are blocked there. Examples include Google, Facebook, YouTube, and many others. Consequently, organizations need to tailor their search engine optimization efforts in a completely new way by ensuring that they focus on the local search engine—Baidu—instead.

Conclusion

When it comes to tailoring your offering to meet Chinese UX best practices, the advanced strategies and insights mentioned above will help you gain a head start.

It is vital to remember that when catering to Chinese users and boosting their user experience, you need to go beyond mere translation and localize instead.

We all saw what happened to eBay when it tried to enter the risk-averse Japanese market. It ended up pulling out in a matter of years. To avoid wasted resources and precious time, make sure your Chinese UX efforts accurately meet Chinese user demand.
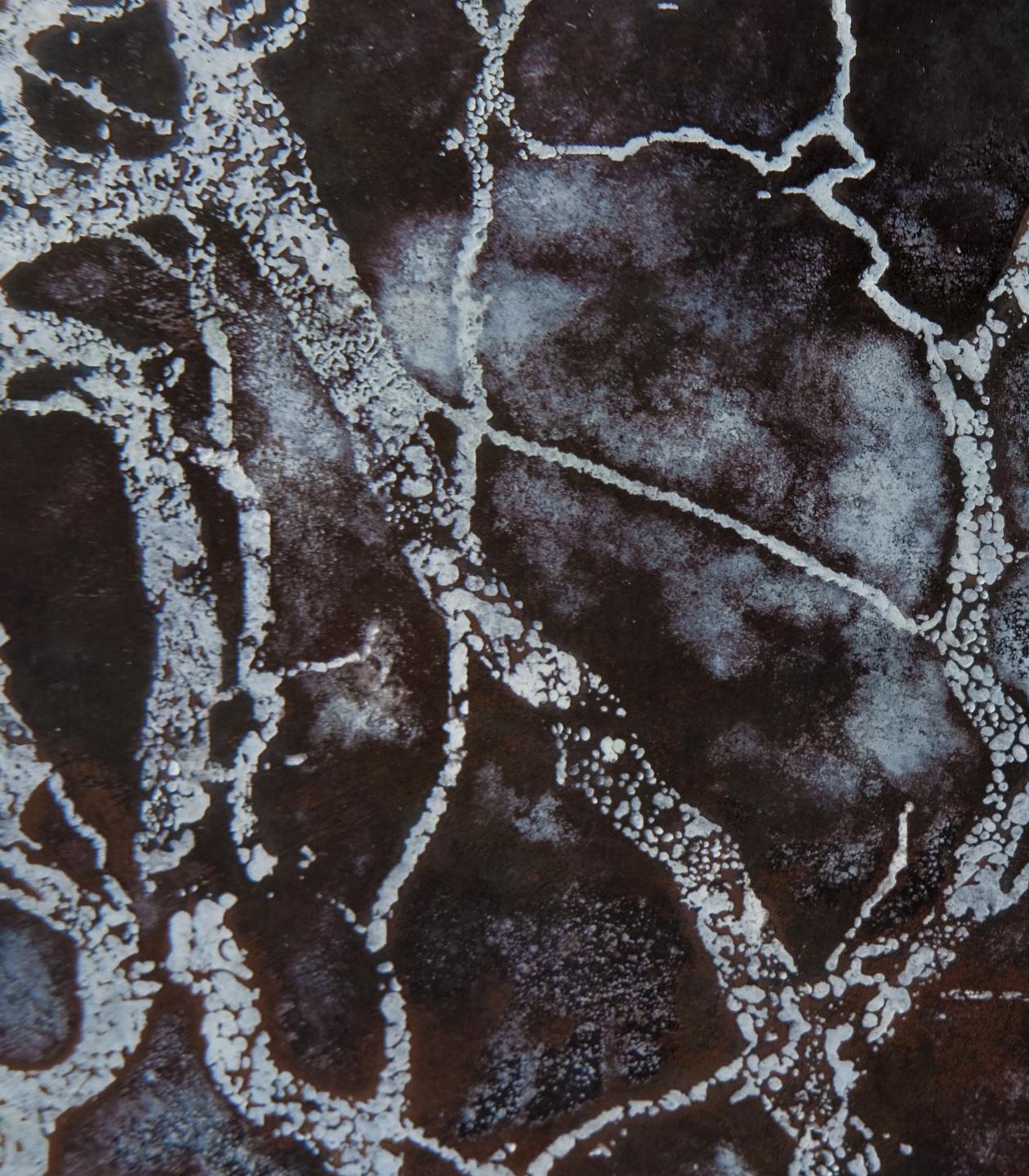
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THE GROWING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AI & JAPANESE

When OpenAI released the ChatGPT chatbot in November 2022, artificial intelligence (AI) became one of the most talked about topics in the world. The implications for organizations are enormous and research according to Goldman Sachs indicates that AI has the potential to fuel a 7% increase in global gross domestic product (GDP), or almost $7 trillion, over the next decade.

But what does the world of AI translation hold for Japanese translations? In this article, we explore the development of AI software in Japanese, look at how AI is used in terms of AI for Japanese translation, and explore some of the regulatory and other challenges that come with such developments.

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

The Development of AI Software in the Japanese Language: Accuracy and Opportunities

There's been much talk about AI over the past year with large language model (LLM) development becoming the talk of the town. Apart from ChatGPT, there's Bard, Bing, and Deep L, among others that are making waves. But in terms of Japanese LLM, there's still a lot of work that lies ahead. Some of the reasons behind this are issues of accuracy.

In a July 2023 article, the Japan Times conducted an experiment in which it placed four AI platforms next to each other, comparing them for accuracy in terms of translating from Japanese to English. The results showed that there were numerous challenges in translating some Japanese texts (including a speech, the national anthem, and an excerpt from a Nobel laureate's work) with regard to accuracy. The main reason behind this is that LLM development, especially for Japanese, is still in its infancy. And there are several reasons for this, which we'll cover in more detail below.

However, in terms of opportunities, AI for Japanese translation has a long road to cover but it has been said that with human input, can simplify and speed up translation processes, meaning greater efficiencies and more accurate output. Despite linguistic nuances that AI sometimes cannot cover, and the absence of strong LLM development for Japanese, there are ample opportunities for further developments in this area.

How Are Japanese Companies Pursuing Generative AI?

Although some companies in Japan have prohibited their employees from using generative AI, there are many companies and industries that have used AI prior to the launch of generative AI. These industries include finance, manufacturing, infrastructure, healthcare, and nursing care, as well as services such as inspection, maintenance, and call center operations.

These companies and organizations within industries are increasingly starting to apply generative AI in a variety of areas of work, including both routine work as well as work that has opened up new opportunities for innovation: from the creation of images of completed buildings to be constructed and coding and debugging.

Regulative Measures in Japan Regarding Generative AI

According to sources, generative AI is being rapidly implemented in Japanese society. However, there are some risks that the Japanese government and various high-level policymakers are concerned about. Examples of these risks include, but are not limited to:

· Third-party copyright infringements

· Use of incorrect information

· Leaks or improper use of confidential and personal information

· Misuse of generative AI

Nevertheless, the Asian nation is currently focusing on implementing "soft" as opposed to "hard" laws such as the EU has done with generative AI, in order to ensure that innovation by AI is not impeded. This has been achieved by building a framework for governance and guidelines instead of imposing obligations through laws and regulations. As such, the private sector has been left to conduct the governance voluntarily. An example of such a guideline is the "Governance Guidelines for Implementation of AI Principles" published by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) on 9 July 2021 (as amended in Version 1.1 of 28 January 2022).

However, calls have been made by Japan's Liberal Democratic Party to develop a new national strategy and to review previous measures as soon as possible, with regard to the Japanese government's existing AI strategy.

Challenges That Generative AI Poses and Obstacles to Full Implementation in Japan

When it comes to the challenges posed by AI and the obstacles that Japan faces with regard to this new development, it's important to consider what the country has to deal with in order to ensure greater transparency, fairness, and respect and upholding of human rights in relation to implementing generative AI on a wider scale.

Among the first challenges is the limited availability of a robust community of **software engineers** to develop the necessary infrastructure and applications. For example, Japan is expected to face a deficit of 789,000 software engineers by 2030.

Apart from software developers, there is also the challenge of **hardware**, as LLMs need to be trained using AI supercomputers. Currently, no private company in Japan possesses its own machine with the requisite capabilities. The alternative, of course, is to use government-controlled supercomputers in Japan's pursuit of LLMs.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of ensuring **accurate translations** of the Japanese language itself. Japanese is a language in which sentences sometimes lack a subject and, as such, natural translations into English are often difficult to achieve. Literature, for instance, is one of the most difficult tasks for generative AI to translate, because it requires a translation of the nuances of a story in an eloquent manner and it requires a more in-depth understanding of the time period being described, which is something generative AI does not yet have the capacity of doing.

In addition to this, there are **different prompts** that can be given for the same task, producing different results.
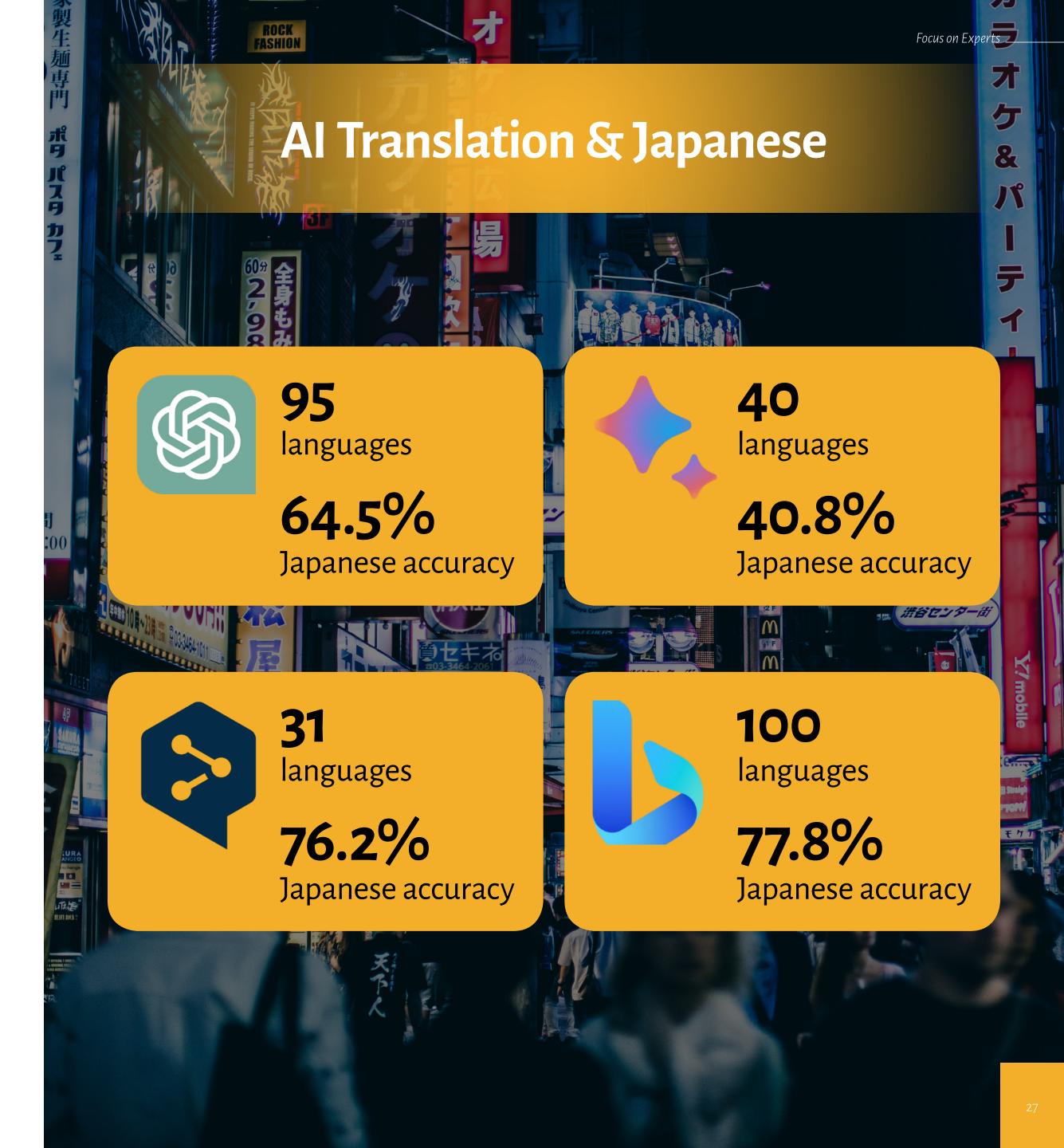
Another issue is that generative AI tools can be **weak in practical and detailed areas**, such as explaining grammar and spelling and doing arithmetic.

Finally, AI chatbots are known for **imagining facts and making reasoning errors**. LLMs have been accused of being able to "hallucinate" and present inaccurate information as fact, which many have warned about.

Final Thoughts

LLM development, and especially Japanese LLM require a lot more work for more accurate AI translation and more accurate and factually correct output. Although there are some legislative steps being taken towards a "soft" regulation of the industry, much remains unknown as to how generative AI will be regulated in Japan. What is clear is that AI for Japanese translation is essential if Japan wants to maintain its status as a high technologically developed country and as competition between the United States and the EU continues.

Learn More About Japanese

AI Translation & Japanese

95 languages

64.5% Japanese accuracy

40 languages

40.8% Japanese accuracy

31 languages

76.2% Japanese accuracy

100 languages

77.8% Japanese accuracy

CYBERSECURITY TRANSLATION IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Although the internet and world wide web are major sources of information and communication, they have also opened up pathways for malicious actors to take advantage of vulnerable or unsuspecting individuals. This happens when the cybersecurity efforts of organizations that have websites are not as strong as they could be.

Protecting private data, financial information, and even access to sources of funds is crucial for many organizations. And because of the fact that there is an increasing growth in international cybersecurity threats, it's necessary for there to be collaborations between countries to ensure that cybersecurity efforts are strong and protect innocent people.

With this in mind comes the question of what is the role of cybersecurity translation. And what is the case and importance of cybersecurity translation in Asian countries? In this article, we explore the answers to these questions while focusing on two major Asian countries – China and Japan. Let's take a closer look.

What Is Cybersecurity?

If you were to imagine an organization's website and all the data the organization stores as a physical building, security would involve armed guards around the building, continuous monitoring via cameras, electric fences, and more to ensure the safety of the people and data in that building. In the same vein, cybersecurity is the protection of valuable and sensitive data on the web by organizations, ensuring that this data does not fall in the hands of malicious actors.

Examples of ways that a malware developer can attack their victims include accessing as much private data online as possible. Other examples include spam and phishing. With phishing, a user uses a website that appears to be trustworthy but actually isn't. As such, people can enter their credit card, bank, and identity details on it willingly and unsuspectingly, while handing over this data to these malicious actors. Preventative actions are therefore highly necessary when it comes to cybersecurity.

What Is the Role of the Translation Industry in Cybersecurity?

There are numerous cases of individual online users who come across adverts or content in a foreign language. This can immediately raise the suspicions of a trained eye, but to the untrained individual, they may be inclined to click on these ads and be taken to a malicious site or link where malware or even ransomware can be installed on their computers. This ransomware encrypts the hard drive of the user's computer, effectively locking them out of their system and being unable to access their files unless they pay a ransom to the hacker.

This is where cybersecurity translation plays an important role. These translators can help with the following:

- They can decode foreign languages to get insights into specific websites
- They can increase their knowledge of "bad" websites on the internet
- Cybersecurity experts can benefit from translators to help them better understand the content in a language that is familiar to them
- Translators can also help cybersecurity experts and white hackers understand foreign languages on websites, systems, or applications
- Furthermore, these translators can ensure that the files and data in their possession are secure, contributing to secure systems – this should protect the client's privacy and the safety of their data.

Lessons for Implementation

There are a number of lessons for implementation when it comes to cybersecurity translation. Among these, some of the best practices that cybersecurity translators should bear in mind include the following:

- **Including culture:** Translators working in the cybersecurity space in Asian countries must be aware of the cultural nuances when communicating with clients to ensure that communication is as detailed and accurate as possible, to see to it that they win the trust of these Asian clients.
- **Educating the workforce:** it's essential when attempting to help your Asian clients with cybersecurity translation that your workforce is well-educated in online and offline malpractices by malicious actors. This can help improve the client's security of data and sensitive files.
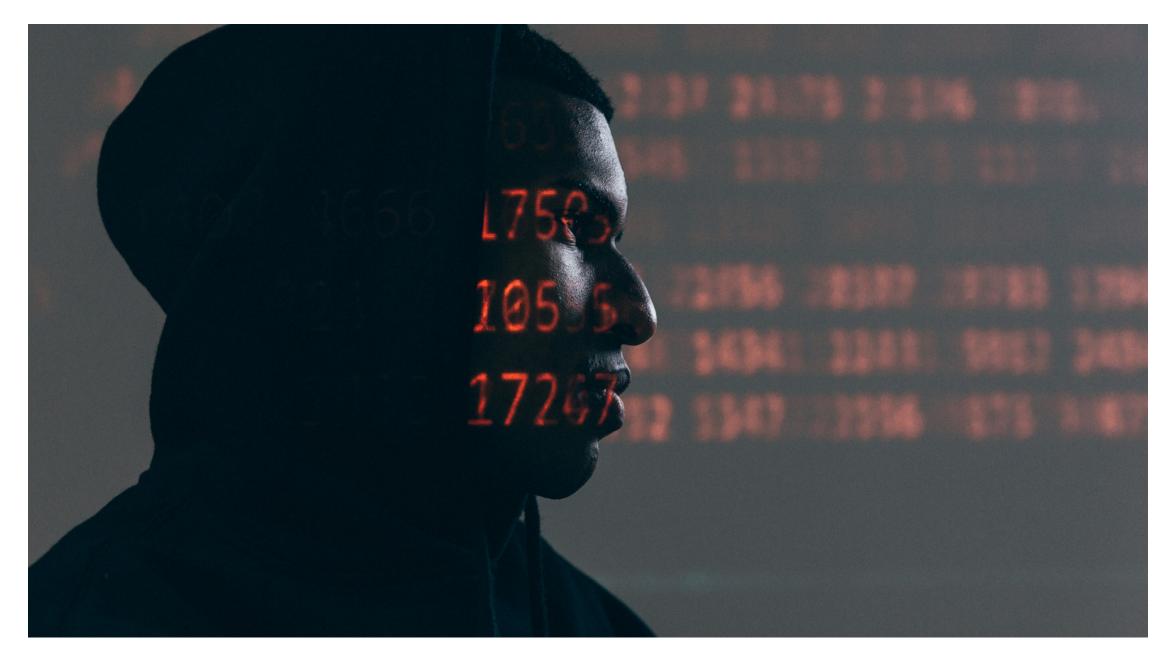- **Translating user interfaces and mobile apps:** you need to be able to cater to the demands of the local markets and ensure that your client's user interface is translated accurately and properly localized for the local market so that your clients do not fall prey or victim to malicious ads or click on links that can take them to an unsafe site.

Case Study of Cybersecurity Translation Challenges: China

When it comes to cybersecurity translation in China, one helpful example is that of blockchain development. Although the country banned over 80 cryptocurrency players in the early stages, it was in October 2019 that China's President announced that the country would invest in blockchain, aiming to lead the way in the industry.

While foreign players entering the Chinese market are likely to face some uphill battles, the local players also need to be aware that blockchain has a lot to do with data privacy and protection. In addition, China's number of blockchain developers is at a mere 5,000 at present, much lower than the US or India, and the country will require international help with its cybersecurity translation for blockchain in order to keep Chinese nationals' data safe.

Case Study of Cybersecurity Translation Challenges: Japan

Japan is another Asian country where cybersecurity translation will be necessary. Although Japan has led the way and has tried to remain up-to-date on the latest technological innovations, the country does not have a sufficient number of local players and is willing to welcome Western players to speed up its adoption of this technology.

Interesting to note is that with the hack on Coincheck in 2018, Japan definitely felt the need to protect its customers and is seeing sufficient evidence to be cautious in the online space. As such, Japan is forcing protective measures that are considered "road bumps" on the journey forward, meaning that the role of cybersecurity translation will be crucial.

Case Study of Cybersecurity Translation Challenges: Other Asian Markets

Cybersecurity translation will also play a major role in many emerging economies such as the United Arab Emirates (UAE), India, and Malaysia, which are considered to be in the development phase of developing their blockchain industries. Meanwhile, countries like Singapore, which is quite well-developed in terms of blockchain, should ensure that its cybersecurity translations meet international standards and benchmarks to ensure that its population is well-protected.

The Bottom Line

Cybersecurity translation has become the need of the hour in Asia, partly because of the developments surrounding blockchain and partly because of the growing proliferation of malicious actors, who are going across borders to infect and steal private and sensitive data. The role of cybersecurity translators has never been more crucial and as such, will continue to play a major role in keeping the world's population safe. Online safety is critical but with so many ways to steal private data, it's essential that cybersecurity translators show private individuals how to stay safe online, while collaborating with cybersecurity experts to prevent incidents where losses can occur.

김치 **Kimchi**, Korea

Korean people eat kimchi at every meal. Full of healthy, gut-healing probiotics, the benefits of eating kimchi are endless. This authentic kimchi recipe is vegan adaptable, gluten-free and can be made as spicy or as mild as you like!

Get the recipe!

GIANTS MASTERING LOCALIZATION IN ASIAN MARKETS

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Asia may be one continent but the sheer diversity it contains in terms of languages and culture, among others, is astounding. We may have one country such as India but the variety of languages spoken and the cultural nuances there indicate exceptional levels of diversity.

That's why localization in Asian markets should be approached carefully by brands seeking to enter the Asian market. In this article, we look at several case studies of where major global brands have carefully applied localization strategies for the Asian market, resulting in their success. Keep reading to find out more.

Case Studies of Giant Brands Successfully Applying Localization in Asian Markets

Localization in Asian markets is subject to many different challenges. Among these are different bureaucratic and payment systems, different consumer habits, modes of e-commerce, the cost of living, religions, languages, and a whole lot more. However, some global brands have absolutely excelled in their efforts to localize for the Asian markets. And below, we will explore a few case studies of exactly these brands and how they have applied localization in Asian markets successfully.

1. Spotify

The global music streaming giant Spotify entered the Asian market with a unique approach. And that is to not have a "cookie-cutter strategy" across each market. Whenever the brand seeks to enter a country in Asia, it doesn't just promote international artists. It also focuses on promoting the big local artists there. Some of the strategies that Spotify has used in Asia include:

· Starting from ground zero in every country

· Carrying out thorough market research

· Building a marketing story

· Choosing the most appropriate channels (taking advantage of mobile adoption as well as using social media for distribution. Examples include LINE and Facebook for countries in south-east Asia)

· Testing and experimenting with different advertising channels to see which ones are most effective (video ads in Singapore have been rolled out as a method of testing)

· Conveying relevant content to the unique user base

· Also critical is to speak the local language

· Building strong and experienced local teams that understand local cultures and customs is another crucial step taken

· Staying on top of what's trending and producing great local content

· Offering local payment systems and solutions

· Adjusting pricing based on local expectations

· Keeping future users informed

· Figuring out new product fits for new markets

· Ensuring strong brand positioning

· Testing localization with the brand's first local users, and

· Thinking long-term.

2. Starbucks

Another example of successful localization in Asian markets refers to the case of Starbucks in Japan. During the initial phases, Starbucks opened its first store in the country with a 50/50 partnership with Sazaby League, which is a popular retailer and restaurant chain that was already a big name in the Japanese market. Once the brand became more confident that it could run things on its own, it then took complete ownership in 2004.

Because of this partnership, the brand's localization efforts were a success. Here are some of the reasons behind this and the localization steps taken by the brand:

· Partnering with a regional brand decreased the risks of entering a new market without being properly informed

· It also helped Starbucks better understand the local market

· It customized its menu to cater to Asian audiences (this meant introducing more teas on its customized menu, ensuring smaller serving sizes, making the drinks less sweet, and providing exceptional customer service)

· Starbucks in Japan, instead of writing customers' names on the drinks, uses a numbers system to respect the customers' need for greater privacy

· Japanese Starbucks cafes also have a quiet and peaceful ambiance when compared to other global locations

· The architecture of Starbucks buildings was also completely localized to fit in with the Japanese environment, taking inspiration from Shintoism and amalgamating designs that are a combination of contemporary and traditional styles

· The brand also used social media localization to see what's trending in the region and to further promote its products online. With this in mind, all their social media accounts in the country are localized in Japanese

· As part of seasonal promotions, Starbucks Japan added cherry blossom beverages to their menus as well as AR experiences in-store as part of their seasonal promotion.

3. Hyundai Motors India

Our third case study of successful localization in Asian markets is Hyundai Motors Company (HMC) in India, entering the market in 1996. Here's what the South Korean brand did to ensure its successful entry into this diverse market:

· Market entry started with a wholly-owned local subsidiary, Hyundai Motors India (HMI)

- Appealing to the government by proposing massive production in India along with over 70% localization of parts and the transfer of technology to India

- By sincerely contributing to the vision of the Indian government and the development of India, HMI gained the trust of the government and its key stakeholders

- HMI focused on CSR campaigns to increase awareness of traffic safety. With India's national actor Shah Rukn Khan, Hyundai launched its traffic safety campaign and visited five major cities in India to hold traffic safety classes for children. Along with TV airing, HMI designed a special website called 'Kids Hyundai' to further educate children in traffic safety. This campaign has made a great contribution towards earning the trust of Indian consumers.

- Santro was the first strategic car that Hyundai developed and the name of the Santro was created with the initial 'S', which Indian customers like. Ground clearance (height from the ground to the bottom of the car) was increased in consideration of poor traffic conditions, due to many unpaved roads. In addition, the Santro was designed to be easy for women who wear turbans or saris

- Through market research, Hyundai found that it is important to consider socio-cultural voids such as the consumers' caution towards India's weak road conditions, the rising trend of female drivers, and hot weather

- Due to the unique culture that is derived from the caste system, Hinduism, and English colonialism, Indians display a characteristic of having low loyalty towards the company with high absenteeism. HMI applied the cognitive structure that lies behind the caste system to manage employees and tried to increase employees' sense of ownership towards the company. The company offered high payroll standards and managed local employees through in-depth site management. They also recruited employees with a 'soft' personality and divided the type of work according to the level of education and age.

Final Thoughts

Localization in Asian markets, when approached correctly, can help a brand stand out from the crowd and ensure greater local uptake, acceptance, and adoption.

With Spotify, Starbucks Japan, and Hyundai Motors India as just some examples of great efforts in terms of localization in Asian markets, brands seeking to enter Asia will be well-positioned to ensure that their localization efforts are as close to the ground as possible in terms of meeting their customers where they're at.

As was the case of Spotify, using a "cookie cutter" approach should be the last method used. Instead, every brand needs to ensure that they accurately localize for the particular Asian market and market segment they are aiming for to have greater local success.

Levels of English Proficiency in Asia

Very High English Proficiency

#2 Singapore

High English Proficiency

#22 Philippines
#24 Malaysia
#31 Hong Kong

Moderate English Proficiency

#36 South Korea
#52 India
#60 Vietnam

Low English Proficiency

#62 China
#65 Nepal
#66 Bangladesh
#70 Pakistan
#71 Sri Lanka
#72 Mongolia
#80 Japan
#81 Indonesia
#87 Afghanistan

Very Low English Proficiency

#89 Uzbekistan
91 Kyrgyzstan
#93 Myanmar
#94 Cambodia
#97 Thailand
#99 Kazakhstan
#106 Tajikistan
#111 Laos

WECHAT'S DOMINANCE IN CHINA: A CASE STUDY

Desi Tzoneva
Content Writer

Because much of Western social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Google, and YouTube are blocked from Chinese servers, the country's tech and business giants essentially developed their own networks as a way of keeping people in touch. But these social networks are more than that. It's where people share opinions, ask for product recommendations, and connect.

To put the size of the Chinese social media market in perspective (it is the largest in the world), it's worth noting that there are 802 million active internet users in the country, accounting for around 57.7% of the country's population. In addition, around 98% of people in China who use the internet do so through mobile devices.

With so much online diversity among the Chinese population, one platform has come to the fore and is in the spotlight for its ability to penetrate massive segments of the Chinese market — WeChat. In this article, we explore the case study of WeChat in China and discover some important lessons for brands seeking to enter the Chinese market.

Case Study: WeChat's Dominance in China

Before we discuss what WeChat is and its implications for brands and businesses, it's worth noting some important facts and figures about this social media platform. Here are a few highlights from this year that you need to be aware of as you embark on your journey to penetrating the Chinese market:

- 1.26 billion monthly active users (with the first 100 million users acquired in 15 months, compared to Facebook's 54 months)
- 38 billion messages exchanged daily
- 20 million official accounts
- Over 95% of brands have a WeChat store in a mini-program

- 68 million videos are uploaded daily
- The average user spends 82 minutes per day on the platform
- There are 70 million mini-programs
- 330 million active users watch videos monthly

What is WeChat?

Developed by Tencent and released in 2011, WeChat is a major Chinese social media player. But apart from social media, it is known as the "app for everything". Some of its numerous functions include:

- Instant messaging (including voice messaging) and communication
- Commerce and shopping
- Payment services

- Entertainment platform
- Live streaming
- Playing games with friends
- Reserving a taxi
- Downloading mini-programs within the app's ecosystem
- Recommendations, testimonials, tips
- Video chats
- Ticket sales

Putting it into perspective, WeChat is like the equivalent of multiple Android or iOS apps merged into one. What's more is that users do not need to leave the app to access any of the platform's services. That's because everything is built into one app.

Wondering how one can use WeChat? One example is to photograph one's food to find out related information about it. Another example is at live concerts. People shake their phones and the more phones are shaken on a particular song, the higher the chance that the song will get selected and played by the band.
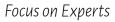
Despite all of these benefits and some amazing features, WeChat may be free to use but signing up for an account isn't so simple. To create an account, you will need to find an existing user and scan a QR code they provide to you.

Lessons Learned: The Importance of Content Localization in China and Implications for Business

There are many lessons to be learned from observing what is taking place on WeChat. Brands seeking to penetrate the Chinese market not only need to carry out careful social listening and track and observe exchanges on a major social platform like this one but also build a deeper understanding of local perceptions and values, which is then expressed through accurate content localization.

Below are just a few lessons learned that brands should apply in their marketing strategies:

- Carry out a thorough premarket analysis before defining your marketing content localization strategy to differentiate yourself and gain a foothold in the market. Local competition should not be underestimated. A premarket analysis should start by building an ideal buyer persona to understand the expectations and needs of your users and customers.
- Choose your local Chinese platform, such as WeChat carefully. This will mean identifying a platform that aligns with your industry, audience demographic, key performance indicators (sales, branding, lead generation), and end goals. For a more close-knit community, WeChat is a good platform that can be used as a branding tool or as a source of valuable information about your brand.

- Ensure you follow the official Chinese Business Licensing protocols for setup before entering the market to ensure you are fully compliant with policy and regulatory issues related to your chosen social media channels, such as WeChat.

- All content for China needs to be in Mandarin and formatted and amended for Chinese platforms, search algorithms, and keyword sets in characters and pinyin. This means developing a wholly new marketing strategy: new keywords, banners, creatives, logos, and visuals to be considered highly relevant.

- Consider the fact that China's largest search engine – Baidu – has a 75% market share. It should be an important component of any web development project. This will require a website audit and optimization for Mandarin keyword searches. As such, you will most probably need to build a dedicated Chinese website.

- Use the multiple features of WeChat to reach out to your Chinese customers with local content optimized to appeal to them. Some of the steps you can take include publishing weekly post feature text, videos, and audio, or joining the WeChat channel and sharing short videos regularly. Other steps may include designing a mini-program to promote a new product and/or service.

In Conclusion

Penetrating the Chinese market should not be done without considering the reach and implications of WeChat as a massive social media platform that has been described as a "Jack of all trades". If this platform aligns with your target market and business objectives, it is now time to engage in content localization so that you signal to locals that your business is legitimate and that you understand the market well. However, your content localization efforts need to be a part of a holistic and comprehensive strategy as opposed to an ad hoc one, which considers the wider ecosystem of Chinese entertainment, shopping, communication, and commerce.

More Case Studies

Most Used Social Media Platforms in China

Platform	Percentage
WeChat	81.6%
Douyin	72.3%
QQ	61.6%
Baidu Tieba	57.6%
Xiaohongshu	49.5%
Sine Weibo	49.3%
Kuaishou	47.9%
Qzone	31.8%
Meipai	23.0%
Douyin Huoshan	22.4%
Imessage	18.6%
Facebook	14.9%
Inke	13.9%
Twitter	13.5%
Line	11.0%

The Year
in Review

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: THE NON-AI TALK

Gergana Toleva

Global Strategic Development

This article encapsulates our journey. Here we stand at the precipice of a new year, looking back at 2023 and anticipating what 2024 holds.

By now, you've seen the title and know my intent. If you're seeking another piece on artificial intelligence, this isn't for you. My goal is to delve into the significant, yet overshadowed, events of our industry this year. Amidst the overwhelming AI buzz, it's easy to overlook other vital developments in our field. How many times can we juxtapose AI and humanity in conversation?

The truth is, our industry had to evolve more robustly, work harder, adapt quicker, and ensure seamless operations throughout the year. This is no mean feat. When I say 'we,' I refer to the entire localization industry, not just our company. Marketing continued to evolve, consumer behavior shifted, and we gained fresh insights into sales and business development. Successes were celebrated, and some plans didn't materialize. In the cacophony of AI, it's all too easy to lose sight of these achievements.

But there's much to share and review...

We never ceased planning, researching, strategizing, or adapting. We consistently pursued sales excellence and workflow improvements. Yet, these endeavors often go unnoticed.

In this article, I aim to highlight key areas: Business Development, Marketing, and Content Creation, and how they've shaped our industry this past year.

The Scope of Business Development

Business development has emerged as a critical trend in recent years. It's more than just having a salesperson; it's about crafting comprehensive strategies for growth, customer retention, and client support. Our six-year focus on business development has seen us experiment with various strategies and customer approaches.

Recently, we've fine-tuned our methods to align with current realities. Key takeaways include:

1. Clear Goals and Management

Effective growth strategies hinge on well-communicated objectives across all departments.

2. S.M.A.R.T Goals

Simple, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals are vital. Sales reports should be straightforward and actionable.

3. Inclusive Decision-Making

Strategies should consider the entire production chain for practical workflows and sales generation.

4. Unified Management

Coordination is crucial for meeting customer requirements. All teams should be informed and strategies deployed cohesively.

5. Tailored Salesforce Training

Training should align with customer needs and the broader company structure, ensuring smooth delivery in partnerships.

Implementing these strategies isn't straightforward. Industry-wide challenges include finding experienced salespeople familiar with the LSP industry, a lack of structured internal sales training, and difficulties in smaller companies to either hire salespeople or readjust their unique selling propositions (USPs).

Despite these challenges, many companies excel in marketing, sales, and process efficiency and here I am pointing out some of the above with the single aim to share insights and start a conversation.

Marketing Strategies and How They Changed

Marketing in our industry varies based on company size and target markets. Smaller LSPs often rely on personal branding or influencer marketing to gain recognition. LinkedIn has become a prevalent platform for social media marketing, though the quality of content is diminishing. Larger companies typically have internal marketing teams or outsource this function. Key trends we've observed in 2023 include:

1. Emphasis on Website Quality

Simple, smart, and fast websites with quality content are increasingly important.

2. Automation and Optimization

These are key for adaptability in a dynamic market.

3. Engagement Tactics

Events, webinars, newsletters, and conferences remain popular, though content quality is crucial for audience engagement.

The Value of Content Creation

In my six-plus years in the localization industry, I've learned the importance of smart, usable content. A balanced approach combining online presence, social media, and thoughtful content creation can build a lasting legacy. Quality video content production, better PR for teams, and more creative time are future aspirations of mine.

In conclusion, this article reflects my honest observations for our industry's processes and looking into the future I wish for a dynamic and less challenging year ahead. I can only finish with the words below:
What a year! What's next?

2024: The Year of the Dragon

In the Chinese zodiac, 2024 marks the Year of the Dragon, a symbol deeply rooted in mythology and cultural significance. As we step into this auspicious year, the dragon's dynamic presence promises a period of profound transformation and energetic renewal.

Renowned for its mythical attributes, the dragon symbolizes strength, wisdom, and good fortune. This celestial creature, representing the fifth sign in the Chinese zodiac cycle, is believed to bring about positive change and opportunities for growth.

In Chinese tradition, individuals born under the sign of the dragon are considered charismatic, ambitious, and endowed with natural leadership qualities. As the celestial dragon takes its place in the cosmic narrative of 2024, its influence is poised to shape a year characterized by innovation, resilience, and the pursuit of excellence.

Join us on this journey through the Year of the Dragon, where ancient symbolism converges with contemporary aspirations. Embrace the dragon's spirit as we navigate a year filled with promise, propelling us towards new horizons and a future marked by prosperity.

THE ART OF SALES IN THE LOCALIZATION INDUSTRY

Sam Hardy
Director of Regional Partnerships

Connection. Authenticity. Trust. With over 10 years of experience in numerous aspects of sales, I have discovered that these are the crucial ingredients for sales broadly and in the localization industry specifically.

Having recently been invited to present a webinar on the art of sales in the localization industry, hosted by the Globalization and Localization Association (GALA), I was both a little nervous and excited to share my thoughts and experience with an amazing audience.

Below, I share my thoughts with you. Let's get started!

Sales Philosophy

Sales is a profession that I am proud to be in. And it has changed dramatically over the years. No longer the domain of "sleazy vacuum cleaner salesmen", sales is an art, a science, and a craft that requires careful thought and a powerful strategy to yield successful results. But what are the foundational principles for successful sales? I have narrowed them down to the following:

- **Connection:** connection goes beyond merely reaching out to decision-makers. It's about a sustained approach founded on building rapport with them so that you become top of mind when they are looking for a new service provider. Patience is key here and it means nurturing the relationship.

- **Trust:** Building trust is a widely spoken-about topic. Yet, to me, it is a crucial ingredient of successful sales. Some of the principles that guide building trust include being transparent and willing to answer any questions or concerns your prospective clients may have as well as having a strong moral sense, which quickly shines through and determines whether

you are looking at the client as a mere "piggy bank" or a valued partner. Trust defines the quality of our relationships and sales is no different. Be empathetic to clients and determine how you can address their pain points, needs, and concerns.

- **Communication:** choosing the right channels of communication, being available when a client has a question or a concern, and addressing these honestly and transparently means that small issues that could have grown bigger will not hinder the professional relationship.

- **Authenticity:** being authentic means truly believing in the product/service you're selling and liking the company you work for. This often comes through to the prospective client. Doing things differently and being authentic to stand out from the crowd is not about sending an email with a funny meme. It's about a genuine interest in the client, a passion for your product, and being positive about the relationship. Anything short of that and the client will immediately get the sense that you are not a reliable service provider.

Selling Translation Services 101

Selling translation services is very far removed from a purchasing decision to choose one chocolate bar over the next. It's a big decision that clients make that holds a high amount of risk for them. That's why each project needs to be given the right level of respect and attention. Here's how I would outline my approach to the sales process we've built at 1-StopAsia:

- **Stay focused on the big picture:** selling translation services is a long-term game. You need to think of the bigger picture in the long run and not focus on short-term gains. Sometimes, smaller compromises now can lead to big returns in the future and it's better to focus on those than a short-term gain that may lose you the client in a short space of time. Always try to think a few steps ahead and remember the importance of every reaction. No matter how small, it can be either positive or negative for you.

- **Position yourself in the number one spot:** it's rare for sales efforts to be successful from the very first attempt. That's why positioning yourself in the number one spot on the client's list of vendors is essential. Some tips for doing so include:

  - Making a good first impression using the sales philosophy outlined above

  - Sending regular follow-up emails within a reasonable time frame

  - Congratulating the client on any notable achievements

  - Wishing people happy birthdays (but keep the value in your gesture and don't try to sell to them)

  - Sharing your own news of achievements or product developments

The ultimate purpose is to keep your company fresh in the client's mind so that they have a positive feeling when they think of you.

The Lifespan of a Sale

As a sales professional, you will be in contact with many different companies, each at various stages of the negotiation and you cannot afford to miss anything. That's why being organized and focusing on time management are so essential. For this purpose, there are two steps that I encourage during this phase:

1. **Step one:** find the exact person you need to be approaching;

2. **Step two:** research the company beforehand to see if there are any opportunities you can use during your initial approach.

Ultimately, the method of approach boils down to email, calls, and LinkedIn. However, in my experience, email is the best choice. With cold calls, it's become even harder to reach out to decision-makers who may be working remotely. As for LinkedIn, although it's popular, it should be used for research or approaching specific people about a specific thing and not just general sales.

If you choose to use email, always have an ultimate goal in mind. In my case, the goal is always to schedule a meeting. Now, let's explore the anatomy of the email and its constant aspects that lead to a higher success rate. It should contain a simple and professional subject, a polite greeting, an introduction of yourself, the magic paragraph, and a call to action.

What do I mean by the magic paragraph? This is where you showcase your research skills while tailoring the email for the person and company you are contacting. This is where being authentic really matters. Examples of some aspects you could cover include:

- Pain points vs solutions

- Standout facts about your company

- Empathizing with the company's position

Always Be Closing

- What do you like about your own company (as a part of authenticity), and
- Keeping it simple and professional.

Closing the Deal

Once you've reached out to a prospect through any of the channels mentioned above, it's time for the real magic to take place. My goal of scheduling a meeting is now met and it's time to put my skills into practice.

The real secret, from my experience, is to simply have a casual conversation that shows an interest in the person you are talking to while trying to find common interests to establish a connection. For me, a perfect meeting will be 60% talking about non-work-related topics and 40% talking about work. The best in the industry typically have a 70/30 breakdown.

For a successful call, we now need to go back to the sales philosophy mentioned earlier. It's all about investing time and building trust with the client, establishing a connection, and demonstrating your passion. The chances are that they will have a positive reaction to you. Make sure you are not fake interested in them as this will immediately show.

As for the technical aspects, be sure that you outline the next step after the meeting. It's essential to remember that getting a client to send you work after the first meeting is rare. You need to nurture the relationship like you would an orange tree that is grown from seed. And finally, like the great Michael Scott's A-B-C, you should **A**lways **B**e **C**losing.

Follow-Ups

Follow-ups are crucial for every salesperson. You need to do follow-ups within a reasonable time frame. In reality, the first follow-up should be done after around two weeks. The second one should be after a month. The third should be after three months. After this, it's best to leave it for at least four to six months, depending on the situation.

Of course, follow-ups could be done via different methods and platforms. However, during this time, you should still send non-sales-related emails whenever the opportunity arises. The ultimate goal is for the client to have a positive feeling when they think of you.

Post-Deal Work

Post-deal work is possibly even more important than the initial sales work. That's because experience shows that partnership development is what really increases your value. Partnership development done properly will ensure repeat sales, which is always our long-term aim.

In Conclusion

Wrapping up, passion, and authenticity are a necessity no matter what you are selling. It's essential to focus on building relationships with clients for long-term success. For this purpose, effective communication is crucial, and creating channels for open and honest feedback is essential to building a successful partnership.

Finally, companies with sales teams should trust them and encourage their individuality, which will shine through during the relationship-building phase. This is essential for achieving the organization's long-term sales goals.

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Takeaway

THE NEED FOR A RELIABLE VENDOR IN TIMES OF ELECTIONS IN THE US

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The US is a country that's a melting pot of cultures and languages. Although there have been some movements to recognize English as the official language, no such decision has been made as yet. Instead, what has happened is that laws have been passed to help people with Limited English Proficiency (LEPs) access "vital documentation" translated into their own language.

In particular, this is done through Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on national origin, and 2000's Executive Order 13166, which affirms Title VI's language access requirement and outlines additional requirements. When it comes to language service providers (LSPs) who work with government tenders, legal clients, and government and state institutions, translation agencies play a pivotal role in this regard.

This is especially important during election time, with the next elections to be held in November 2024. Wondering why LSPs need a reliable vendor in times of elections in the US? Keep reading to find out more.

Where Do Vendors Come In and Why?

There is so much information that needs to be translated and so many different languages to consider that working with freelancers is not sufficient. In addition, government agencies working with LSPs often require highly specialized work for large-scale projects that often entail massive volumes of work that need to be done on weekends.

All this is supported by the need for technology at scale. In essence, an LSP needs multiple licenses, should adhere to the government agency's security requirements and be able to fulfill those, have storage regulations in place, and assurance of timely delivery of the materials.

What's more is that language vendors and translation agencies can provide swift replies and immediate responses. They also have a language force available that ensures QA, LQA, and follow-ups.

Why Won't Using Freelancers Work Out Well?

There are several reasons why using freelancers is not appropriate for government translation projects.

Firstly, freelancers are unable to scale up as quickly as an agency that is prepared to do so quite efficiently because they have the necessary resources at hand.

Secondly, freelancers often do not work on weekends. What is more is that they are not flexible on their pricing policies, staggered payments, etc.

And finally, the volume of work that needs to be translated for a federal government client is sporadic and appears during certain periods only. As such, a freelancer with regular clients is less likely to freeze their work with their regulars to work on one big project for a short period of time.

Making a Wise Choice: Choosing the Right Vendor

Choosing the right language vendor is the wise choice for government agencies seeking to be compliant and to ensure that their documents are translated in a timely yet professional manner. However, choosing the right vendor requires prior preparation and a few steps to follow in the process. These steps include:

1. Selecting you vendor
2. Having a kick-off meeting
3. Discussing the process
4. Negotiating pricing
5. Creating a clear payment plan based on the government's planning
6. Starting the project

Recognizing a Reliable Vendor

The process above may seem simple but you could struggle with it at step one. That's because choosing and recognizing a reliable vendor can be a tricky thing to do. In order to ensure you find the most suitable vendor for your language processing and translation needs, look out for a vendor that answers your questions and responds to your request immediately.

Next, your vendor should invite you to a kick-off meeting where you'll discuss the prices and processes you have in place for the duration of the project. During this kick-off meeting, the government agency should also show you the processes they work with while you need to assure them of quality assurance that you already have in place.

Every client of an LSP expects quality translations and the case with government agencies is no different. That's why quality expectations should be discussed as should the computer-aided translation (CAT) tools and workflow that will be used for the duration of the project.

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Also important to note from your LSP is whether they have the resources to handle the large volumes of work starting immediately while remaining consistent throughout the process. Your LSP should also advise you on any additional work that may arise, if needed. And finally, they should have a dedicated team for the task to match your request.
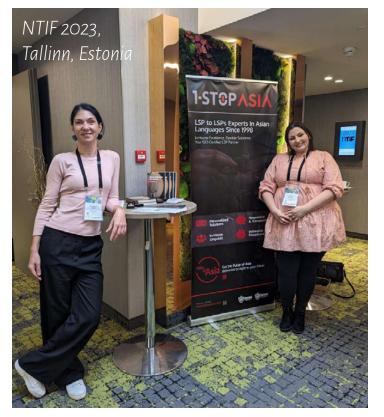
Concluding Thoughts

Government agencies that need translations done of their important and vital documents need to work at scale. In such cases, a reliable LSP vendor is of the essence. You need to choose your vendor wisely based on the criteria we identified above for greater project certainty and success.
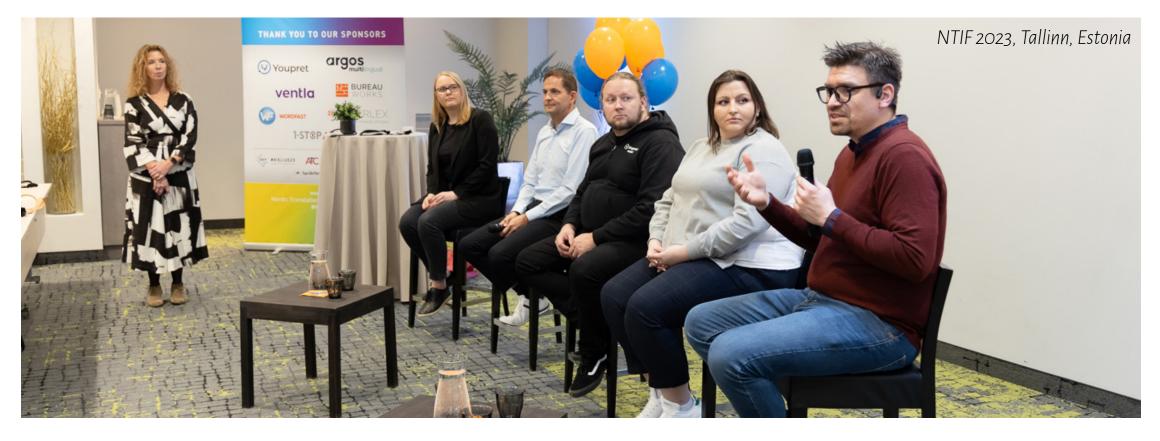
As such, you need to be able to discuss all your requirements and the project's details before the translations begin so that you can secure more work in the future for your agency as well.

With this in mind, choosing the right LSP vendor is a critical requirement during election time in the US and you need to partner with the right service provider for greater accuracy and quality assurance. Avoid scattered work from freelancers that doesn't guarantee quality output and choose the right partner to meet your needs.

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