

ARTICLES ON TRANSLATION

Provided by AIM Service Provider: Ralph Bosen TNB Language Service

Good communications Equal Profitable Exporting

Every one of us has experienced difficulties in understanding someone else at one time or another. Those misunderstandings might have had humorous to disastrous results. In our personal lives, we often remember the humorous ones and enjoy having a good laugh with others at our expense. However, in business, miscommunications often lead to serious consequences that can cost us time, money or even our jobs. Therefore, we all fully realize that our ability to communicate exactly what we are trying to get across is crucial. Equally as important, is our ability to understand what is being conveyed to us by others. The counsel, "Communication is critical in our success in life and business" is literally "Preaching to the Choir", right?

A common misunderstanding or assumption is that, naturally those whom we communicate with will understand me because they do speak or should speak my language. The fact is that we should never assume that anyone would naturally understand us. If we have something to communicate with someone else, then we should accept full responsibility for what and how we communicate. Doing this will allow us to maintain a mature attitude towards our communication methods and efforts. No matter what difficulties the "other" person has in understanding us; if we have a mature attitude regarding our communications, they will sense our sincerity and a greater respect will ensue from that person. With greater respect for both parties present, communication problems will be overcome and a better understanding will result. Thus chances for success of your goals will increase. In essence, that is all we each are hoping for in our relationship with others, success!

When communications with those who do not speak our, nor we speak their language is thrown into the equation, the risks become amazingly higher and the chances of failure become greater. Therefore it is imperative that we fluently speak the other person's or they, our language! However, being able to accomplish this takes literally years of dedicated effort. Often times, we do not have that time nor can we allot the necessary effort to accomplish this. For most of us, the only solution to circumstances as these is that we rely upon "others" who can communicate with those who we don't understand or they, us. Most of us simply assume that when such a situation comes up, all we need do is contact a "language service" provider and all will be well. Actually, that should be the solution but often times it just doesn't work out that way. We are well aware that each industry/business sector has much of its own "lingo". Words that on the "street" mean one thing but in the context of our industry/business mean something entirely different. A mouse in the Pest Extermination industry is quite different from a mouse in the Computer industry. Also, there are cultural differences pertaining to many situations that are different from one country to another. Hand gestures in the United States can mean positive and congratulatory expressions of feelings. However, that same gesture in another country can mean a negative and displeasure expression that will infuriate. So, how can we know that the person sent to communicate for us is sensitive to our and the other person's communicating terminology and cultural differences. Trial and error can be costly! Relying on referral is only valid if that referral comes from someone who is in the same industry/business. Problem here is that we usually do not speak with our competitors not alone ask them for advice and referrals. So what can one do to efficiently and effectively communicate with those from other countries and in doing so avoid the aforementioned pitfalls?

Experience has taught me that the best solution is one dictated by common sense. Solicit the service of someone who has lived and worked in both countries and has experience and/or training in your industry/business. This is easier said than done! However, there is a sure way! That is, enlist the recommendations of a "language service" provider from a trustworthy mentor, group or government agency who has a mutual interest in your success. One such agency is the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP). Such mentors, groups/agencies will have as their "Mission Statement" the success of industries/business within their geographical area in the field of Export Trade. They will have a knowledgeable staff, experience and facilities

necessary to implement a sound suggestion for a “language service” provider who will properly satisfy your every “language” need. The “language service” provider should come with credentials verifying that they can and do provide “language services” through individuals who are qualified and capable in both the industry/business and culture of both countries to fill your assignment.

If you are fortunate enough to find such a “language service” provider, oh how much better it would be if that provider would become familiar with you and your industry/business through their additional researches, personal visits and communications. Like your private physician, it would be much better if that “language service” provider takes the same interest in you, your industry/business? Such “language service” providers are available to work for you; you just need to find them! Again, I refer you to the preceding paragraph and wish each of you the best in your “Exporting” quests.

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All I want to do is sell abroad!

Successful selling requires many important components including product, service and market knowledge plus the ability to get and hold the client’s attention. We all know this and in my opinion, the USA produces the best Salespeople in the World. Why then do we have such difficulty when it comes to selling abroad?

People much smarter than I have come up with many reasons for our challenges in this area. When one attends higher education classes and seminars on Export Trade a smorgasbord of topics are covered. One could and many have written books on these myriads of subjects. All of them deserve our sincerest considerations and pondering! The vast majority of these sponsors, speakers and trainers have decades of experience related to their particular part of the “Export” (selling abroad) pie.

My role in this vast enterprise of “Exporting” is a quantitatively small one. It is in the field of Language Services. However, I firmly believe that language is the major ingredient in the success or failure of any company’s attempt to achieve the successful selling of their products and/or services abroad. My reasoning for this is simple! Since Virginia based companies have the “latest, greatest and most up to datest” products and services in the world, we should be in the top no matter where we go on this planet. However, we often times, are not! Why? I believe that if we fail to “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”, we will oftentimes fail to sell abroad.

Most experts teach that we must “talk their talk” and this is true. If we cannot communicate with another country’s potential buyers, we cannot be successful. So what do we do to overcome this obstacle? We hire people who speak their language. We implement the services of interpreters. We utilize the efforts of translators. All of these efforts are a major step in accomplishing the overall necessity of communicating with others from another country. Problem is, we still do not “...do as the Romans do” All too often we do not give the necessary efforts to learning other peoples’ culture. How are we alike and more importantly, how are we not alike! Not knowing these answers prevents us from “...doing as the Romans do”.

A couple of years ago an upstart, progressive Virginia based company attempted to broaden their market by soliciting in Brazil. Through a trade mission they were introduced to several Brazilian manufactures that were interested in the products and services this Company had to offer. The initial encounter went great! They made a second visit with the hopes to further

move this effort to a successful conclusion. The second visit met with greater success than imagined and the American Sales Rep was ecstatic with the success of his efforts. However, he kept his exterior demeanor in the serious mode. After the handshakes but before the presentation of the contract, the American Sales Rep expressed his agreement to the "proposal on the table" by giving a big "Thumbs Up".

Those of you who have done business in Brazil know that this was the wrong gesture and couldn't have occurred at a worse time. Needless to say, the Brazilian counterpart was seriously offended and didn't stay around long enough to enable the interpreter on hand to explain that the American Sales Rep didn't mean what his gesture meant. The deal was dead and this Virginia Company lost a five-figure sale.

Every effort needs to be made to avail yourself of all necessary cultural differences between yourself, the locality, city, state and country of your next client. It is also imperative that we don't exclude our bordering neighbors in this equation! Not just the bordering neighbors of the USA but those in other towns, cities and states within our country.

As a once popular automobile maintenance advertisement used to say, "You can pay me now or pay me later". You can pay a little now to maintain your car or pay a lot later to fix it! In the arena of Export Trade, you can spend a little time, effort and money to prepare for the culture you're going to be working with or you can pay much more in lost revenues later and learn the hard way.

In conclusion, when you search for or begin to utilize the services of a language provider, determine whether or not they are currently offering assistance in preparing you for the culture in which you are seeking sales abroad. If not, it would be wise to find a service that does and is always prepared to help you. One of the few such companies is TNB Language Service who's many clients include but is not limited to the Virginia Economic Development Program. You can reach us any time by emailing tnb_ent@yahoo.com or calling 540-774-8949

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Translation (written) & Interpreting (spoken) Services

"Translate:.....to turn from one language into another" (Webster's Dictionary)

Today, in the world of translating and interpreting, there are many different views, methods and ideas. Most can be circumscribed into one whole with three distinct parts. Your translation or interpreting needs can be categorized as Informal, Formal, and Contextually Sensitive.

Informal is when informal personal documents or conversations (i.e. emails, memos, notes, phone calls, discussions, etc) are translated from the "source" language into a "target" language. A person bilingual in both languages could usually complete this.

Formal & Contextually Sensitive translations and interpretations require a fully qualified translator or interpreter. A vast array of individuals and companies claim to provide such services. However, in today's globalizing economy it is imperative that all written and spoken translations be appropriate, accurate and industry-specific. One might wonder why it's so important to "get the right" translator for the job?

The following paragraph was copied directly from a foreign website of a furniture company directed to the United States market:

"Duo speaks of a couple. And a couple is at the core of every home. And to get the most out of your main bedroom, you can't do better than buying a duo. Choose the base color: cherry-tree or mahogany; combine at will with red, green or blue. Then choose among the many hundreds of different pieces we have at your disposal and enjoy it?"

The following situation was reported by a Court Clerk:

Judge: (In Court English) "You have been charged with Breach of Close, how do you plead?" (* trespassing)*

Interpreter: Interprets, word for word, what the Judge says into Spanish.

Defendant: (Interpreted from Spanish) "I didn't tear his clothes. My clothes got torn and I want to be paid for them"

Judge: (In Court English) "Answer the question or you will be found in Contempt of Court"

Defendant: (Interpreted from Spanish) "I answered your question. You're right, I don't like you or anyone in this room!"

It becomes obvious that the Translator & Interpreter were not native to the U.S. Nor did they know the U.S. culture. Sadly, the result of their efforts however entertaining, create confusion & were costly. Always have an experienced and professional Translator or Interpreter "**Localize**" the translation! Even the big international companies and our government has run into trouble because of not **Localizing** their documents and interpretations. For example...

- Scandinavian vacuum manufacturer Electrolux used the following in an American ad campaign: "Nothing sucks like an Electrolux."
- In Taiwan, the translation of the Pepsi slogan "Come alive with the Pepsi Generation" came out as "Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead."
- Also in China, the Kentucky Fried Chicken slogan "finger-lickn' good" read, "eat your fingers off."
- President Nixon, during his photo-op with China's Chairman Moa after the signing of the Trade Agreement gave his usual "raised hands with the 'V' sign". Shortly after words the agreement met fatal opposition from China. (The 'V' sign means "We F___ed them" in Chinese).

Only the right Translator can help you avoid these embarrassing & costly mistakes.

[Localization - more than just translation](#)

When you make the decision to localize your document, Website or what you say, there is more involved than just translation & interpreting. Localization requires a complete conversion from addressing one audience to addressing an entirely different audience. The written or spoken language translation is coupled with necessary format changes, the creation of correct links and finally, the adoption of a vital sensitivity to cultural differences. It's a daunting task. But with the right Translator or Interpreter, you can meet the global challenge!

[What are Localized Translations ?](#)

This refers to the process whereby a document or the spoken word is not only translated into another language but also optimized for that particular market - making it linguistically and culturally appropriate.

In terms of translation, there are many cultural factors related to your document, web site or software, its documentation and the target culture in general, which need to be taken into account.

Some examples of cultural differences...

Colors:

Colors should also be taken into consideration, even a 'stoplight'. In the US, the colors in a stoplight are **Red - Orange - Green**. In Japan the colors are **Red - Orange - Blue**. And in England they are **Red - Amber - Green**.

Only a Language Company with an experienced and independent set of native proofreaders and editors on the team whose job it is to review and cross check

the translated material can ensure that it is accurate and that low level errors such as grammatical, typographical and spelling are eliminated. They not only make sure that mistranslations are picked up but that cultural issues are also taken into consideration. Much of the same requirements are put into play when the spoken word is the platform from which the service is provided.

The result has to be a clear, fluent and error free translation or a interpretation that does not appear like it originated from a foreigner. This can happen only when it is actually handled by a professional native speaker of the target language.

Your question now should be... "How do I find a Language Company who possesses such abilities?" The answer, ask someone whom you trust that has knowledge of and/or experience with such a Company. One such Company is TNB Language Service of Roanoke, Virginia 540-774-8949 - WebSite (www.tnblanguage.com) or Email (tnb_ent@yahoo.com)

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May I suggest a couple of "tips" for those exporting, dealing with cultural issues one should have known:

1 - Invest in a updated, "Cultural Training Program" for all of your business representatives who will be traveling to and dealing with foreign nationals in the country you hope to develop export trade with.

People from all countries have cultural idiosyncrasies that change as infrequent as decades and frequently as monthly. Being briefed by a Cultural Expert of both the target country and the USA will be well worth his/her fee. Being briefed by an expert who is also versed in your business and/or industry adds polish to an already shiny prospect of export trade.

2 - If you do not have an "in-house" bilingual to travel with you to assist in the necessary interpretations, presentations and negotiations; hire one! Would you utilize your client's lawyer in your contract negotiations? Then why would you use their interpreter? Take your own! One who's loyalty is unequivocally to you and your Company because their fee and reputation depends upon it.

You suppose it would cost too much to "take your own"? I wouldn't cost any more than taking a normal traveling companion. Which could be worth more?

3 - Demonstrate your desire to "when in Rome, do as the Romans do" by insuring that all of your documents and printed materials are translated by a seasoned professional and "localized" to your target market utilizing all necessary words, phrases, etc. peculiar to your industry. "When in Rome, talk as the Romans talk"!

Determining what Language Service provider to utilize for any or all of the above can be complicated at best. Word-of-mouth referrals are always the best way to find the right service provider. Price is no more important in finding a Language Service provider than it is in finding the right car! Experience in using the service is second to none!

Thanks,
Ralph Bosen
TNB Language Service

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How to Use an Interpreter by Nanci Tangeman

My colleague was sitting outside our hotel in Moscow, waiting for a ride, when a street person approached him, apparently asking him in Russian for a handout. My colleague ignored him, hoping he would wander away. The street person asked again, this time in French. Again my colleague ignored him. Next the question came out in Italian, then in German. Finally, with an exasperated expression, the street beggar said to my colleague in flawless English, "Geez, don't you speak any European language?"

Living, working, and writing across borders means communicating with people with whom you don't share a common language. That's when it's smart -- and sometimes scary -- to work with an interpreter.

What's an interpreter?

An interpreter is not necessarily the same thing as a translator. A translator translates written work. Interpreters translate spoken communications, such as speeches, presentations, conversations, meetings, and interviews. Interpreters come in two general categories: Simultaneous and consecutive.

A simultaneous interpreter relays conversations, speeches, and presentations as they happen, in real time. Usually, this is done through electronic equipment (you wear headphones and only hear the speech in your language), but it is also often done with an interpreter whispering in your ear while your other ear picks up everything happening around you.

Consecutive interpreters are the most common type used by journalists in interviews, and are much less expensive than simultaneous interpreters. When using a consecutive interpreter, the speaker (or interviewer/interviewee) pauses after each phrase to allow the interpreter to relay it in your language. This is more often used in small groups or one-on-one interviews.

What CAN'T you do when working through an interpreter?

When using an interpreter, you cannot conduct a quick interview. When you're working with a consecutive interpreter, the interview always takes at least twice as much time: There are two sets of questions and two sets of answers.

Nor can you convey twenty years of experience in journalism to (or through) an interpreter who is barely twenty years old. Your interpreter will not be able to interpret the nuances of pauses, hesitations, or stammerings. For example, you will not always know if the interviewee backtracks and changes his answer; you will usually hear only the translation of his final, cleaned-up answer. You may not be able to sense whether to probe a subject further when hearing only the translated answer. Your quotes will not be as colorful as they would be in your mother tongue. Your interpreter's vocabulary might be good, but it may not contain the breadth of words you've cultivated over the years. Maybe it was the "shimmering azure sea" that brought your interviewee to Phuket, but your interpreter may translate this as "blue ocean."

Where can you find an interpreter?

When you're traveling, hotel business centers are a good source of interpreters, as are embassies. Commercial services can book you a specialist as well. If you're working within a specific industry, you can usually get a recommendation from a company within that industry. Often, the person being interviewed will bring his/her own interpreter -- a nice money-saver for you and a good insurance policy for the interviewee. In this case, the interpreter is more likely to be familiar with the industry and the interviewee.

How much will an interpreter cost?

Prices vary in different locations, from different sources, even with regard to the language required. For instance, in the US, you can expect to pay \$600 per day for an interpreter for a common European language. For less common languages, that price could range to \$1,200 per day. This is the high end of the range. When you're abroad, you will pay according to the local rate, taking into account the source of your interpreter. In Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for example, an interpreter for Russian will ask from about \$75 to \$150 per day if you hire through the business center connected to the US Embassy. If you hire through a major hotel, expect to pay more. You may also be expected to pay travel expenses, food and lodging, depending on the circumstances. In addition, you may want to tip the interpreter, especially if hired through a hotel or agency.

How do you choose an interpreter?

Recommendations are important. If you can, ask for a few references, and check them! You never know who you'll get, especially if you're working in an unfamiliar city.

Check qualifications. If you're working in a country with a professional interpreter classification, this can be a good indicator of quality; however, don't rule out interpreters without this qualification, especially if they have good recommendations.

Talk to the interpreter. Make sure the interpreter is fluent in both languages. This may seem elementary, but remember, your interpreter has to be able express himself or herself well in both languages. Have the interpreter orally translate written samples into both languages, in both directions. (If you cannot understand both languages, have a bilingual colleague sit in.) You're not only checking the translation here, but also getting a picture of the ease with which the interpreter handles both languages.

Listen to the interpreter. Can you understand his or her pronunciation clearly and quickly? Remember, you will be taking notes (some cultures shy away from tape-recorded interviews), reacting to the answer, and thinking of your next question, all at once. There's no time for deciphering a thick accent!

How can you prepare your interpreter for the interview?

Provide background information beforehand. Send brochures, a copy of your publication, and any other information that might help the interpreter prepare. If you have a list of questions, provide it to your interpreter ahead of time.

Meet before the interview. Spend at least half an hour reviewing your questions and technical terms. Try to schedule this directly before the interview; it will help you "warm up" to the interpreter's accent and also establish rapport.

Warn your interpreter about your interviewing style. If you are typically confrontational, if you rephrase your questions when you're not happy with the answer, if you deal with highly detailed or confusing data or descriptions, be up front about it. I worked with one timid interpreter who hated confrontation. Throughout interviews and negotiations, she would leave out all the "bad news" in order to avoid arguments!

Working outside your language abilities, even with an interpreter, is not easy. It takes more concentration, stamina, and patience than almost any other interview situation. It's difficult to describe the frustration you feel when your open-ended questions are met with "nyet" or "non" or even "s'." The best advice, however, is to find a good interpreter, prepare him or her, and keep your sense of humor.

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