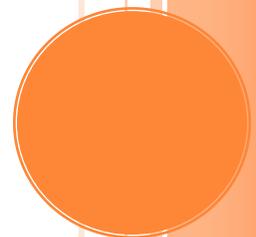


HOW TO CHOOSE A TRANSLATOR

Selecting the right translator that meets your needs

This informal guide, in Question and Answer format, aims to help those new to the hiring of a translation service professional.



How to choose a translator

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What are important factors in selecting a translator?

A translator must be a native speaker of the target language, that is, the language that the original document is to be translated into. A translator must have an intimate familiarity with both cultures of the source¹ and target² languages, and be able to convey a meaning-based translation that is clear and precise.

What are the key benefits of a Professional Human Translator?

A Professional Human Translator has a profound knowledge of the source and target languages, as well as the cultures involved. Professional translators successfully bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps between two groups who do not speak the same language. Regardless of modern technology, computers cannot replace translators. Translation software provides a basic literal translation, delivering at times an ambiguous and even unfitting meaning to the original text. A Professional Human Translator can read in-between the lines, interpret levels of meaning, and navigate cultural nuances, grammar, and idiomatic expressions.

What is a specialized translator?

A specialized translator is a professional translator with a specialized education (example: engineering, medicine, law, etc.) A specialized translator brings their wealth of knowledge into their translation service making them proficient translators in their field of expertise. A specialized translator has extensive technical vocabulary in both languages in addition to an intimate familiarity with both cultures.

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¹ Source language is the document's original language

² Target language is the language the document is translated into

How can I gauge a translator's competency?

Some clients use a pilot project³ as an assessment tool to evaluate the prospective translator's skills to determine if the translator is a match for their translation needs.

What is the difference between a translator and an interpreter?

Although translators and interpreters may perform similar tasks, the settings are different. A translator converts written material from one language to a different language, known as the target⁴ language, while an interpreter converts spoken language to a different spoken language.

What is the difference between translations by a Machine Translation vs. a Proficient Human Translator?

A Machine Translation is a translation done by a translation software program (for example: Google Translate) that generates a literal, word for word translation from the source⁵ or original language into the target language (for example: English to Spanish). A Machine Translation fails to accurately convey figurative language, colloquial expressions, jargon, and words that have multiple meanings. On the other hand, a Proficient Human Translator bridges the gap between linguistic and cultural barriers that exist between the original document and the target language final product, a process that does not merely translate individual words but involves translating concepts, and delivers the core message to the target audience.

A quality translation can make the difference between success and failure when reaching your target audience.

What makes a quality translation?

A quality translation is accurate, reads smoothly as though it was the original document, consistently uses the correct industry-specific terminology, and conveys the true meaning while effectively reaching the target audience. While a quality translation achieves a positive effect, on the other hand, a poor translation can leave a negative first impression on your target audience, making the difference between success and failure.

³ A pilot project is a small document submitted as a paid trial run.

⁴ Target language is the language the document is translated into

⁵ Source language is the document's original language