RECOMMENDED PROTOCOLS FOR THE TRANSLATION OF COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Contents

These protocols have been developed for the benefit of all organisations that may be involved in the commissioning of translations of information or materials for the benefit of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in Australia.

The document outlines what needs to be considered when creating content in community languages. In order for community translations to be effective, it is important for commissioning organisations to plan ahead and to have clear communication objectives that go beyond translating for the sake of translating. These objectives need to be clearly communicated to the Language Service Provider or translators that are engaged directly in order to carry out the translation project.

1. WHAT TO CONSIDER BEFORE COMMISSIONING TRANSLATIONS

A. AUDIENCE

- **Use available data to identify your target community groups**

Once you know which community groups to target, identify the languages and dialects they speak. If possible, identify relevant details about the target audience. Such details may include factors relating to age, gender, or religious considerations.

- **Understand your audience**

Take the time to understand each of your target community groups. To do this, organise one-on-one consultations or focus groups. Aspects that can affect the effectiveness of your translated resources includes:

- information already available in their language
- other information that the community would like to know
- literacy levels (how well can they read/write in their own language?)
- average time the target group has been in Australia (which will impact on the way your source message is written)
- cultural barriers that might prevent them from engaging with your content
- how they like to access information (for example, reading a fact sheet vs attending a community event)

Consider the likely reading age of your audience and the readability of the resource in relation to this.

B. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

- **Use plain language**
  - Keep sentences short
  - Use simple and clear messaging
  - Use visual aids to support key points
  - Break up complex actions with step-by-step instructions

- o Avoid jargon
- o Avoid use of uncommon idiomatic and colloquial expressions

- **Only include practical and essential information.**

- **Include the date of publication of the document, the document version number, and the name of the commissioning organisation.**

- **Consider co-design principles for the resource**
  Consider consulting with bilingual community members or workers on appropriateness of content prior to translation, particularly for the languages of new and emerging communities in Australia.

- **Messages are more effective when they are relatable.**
  Use real-life examples that your audience can identify with.

- **Include next steps**
  Explain what the audience can and/or should do after reading the content. For example, include the contact details of service providers where they can get further information.

- **Make the information available in a way that will be easily accessible to the targeted community group via the chosen distribution mode.**
  For example, distributing the translations at community events may be required if the community does not typically search for information online.

- **Use a clear document structure that includes headings, subheadings and bullet points.**

- **Introduce the most important information as early as possible in your resource.**

- **Consider use of visual aids/images to clarify messages if appropriate.**

- **Dissemination channels**

Online	Print	Audio	Video
• Ask for the translations to be written in Unicode. • Consider mobile-friendly file formats: translations available in PDF/Word may need to be made available in HTML as well. • Make sure the translated resources are easy to find. • Consider website publication, email distribution and social media promotion.	• Have enough empty space to allow for 30% text expansion. Some languages will take more space than English (e.g., Vietnamese, Greek, Arabic, Spanish). • For accessibility purposes, consider having a font size of 12pt or more • Be mindful that some languages read from right to left.	• Audio is a very accessible format for communities with low literacy levels. • Ensure the speaker uses a pleasant voice and engages the audience. • Make sure the audio is recorded at an appropriate pace.	• Consider working with the community in the filming of your videos. • Make sure the images and content of your videos are culturally appropriate. • If using translated material in a standard language, make sure the speaker can read the content correctly. • If the material is in a dialect, make sure the speaker's dialect is widely understood in the target community.

2. COMMISSIONING TRANSLATIONS

- **Provide a translation brief: Advise your translation provider on the purpose of the translation and how you intend to use the translated resources.**
  Mention target audience details, distribution channels, broader project information and reference materials such as previously translated content and glossaries.

- **Ensure that the documents are translated and checked by qualified NAATI-certified [1] translators.** Make sure that the Language Service Provider (LSP) you engage has stringent quality control measures in place. There is a large supply of translators in some languages, and it is important

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[1] Professional translations for Australian community purposes must be completed and checked by translators with the appropriate certification issued by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters – www.naati.com.au

to ensure that the LSP engages the best practitioners for the project. If training and tertiary qualifications are available for the target languages you require, request that the LSP engage translators that hold formal qualifications as well.

- If possible, consult with **community members** or community review panels that are native speakers of the target language about the readability and acceptability of the translation. This review process also builds engagement and will make the community part of the project, making them more likely to access, share and use the materials.

- **For languages of new and emerging communities,** where there might not be trained and/or duly credentialled translators yet, consider raising this concern with the translation provider. If possible, suggest that the translation provider engage senior translators from well-established languages to act as mentors and assist the translators of these languages in navigating translation challenges and with information relating to the goals of the communication. Encourage tandem translation for the translation of new and emerging languages.

- **Have a system to label the language of the translation in both English and LOTE.** This will help to avoid processing mistakes further down the production line.

- **Provide a central point of contact to discuss any issues that arise during the translation process.**

- **Ask your translation provider to perform in-context checks.**
  For web content, this means that the translations need to be checked once your IT team has loaded the text onto the website. This is also relevant if you are internally performing in-language graphic design.

- **Graphic design & translation layout**
  Be aware that some languages will expand up to 30%, so leave enough white space when designing a document for translation.

- **Timelines**
  Give your translation provider reasonable time to prepare and complete the translations.* If you need to translate a 2-page fact sheet or a DL size (1/3 of A4) brochure into several languages, a reasonable timeline would be:

  - 3 days for translation
  - 2 days for independent checking
  - 4 days for desktop publishing (DTP)

*Please note that these are intended as guides only and that what might be considered a reasonable timeframe may be considerably reduced, particularly in emergency or urgent circumstances.

- **Create an internal glossary to keep terminology consistent in all your translated material.**

3. ONCE THE TRANSLATIONS ARE READY

- **For the translated information to effectively reach your audience, you need to have a distribution plan. Consider**:
  - o **who** should be charged with distributing the information:
    - ethno-specific community organisations
    - credible community leaders[2]
    - directly, in-person whenever possible
    - through the use of interpreting services if necessary
  - o **what** will be distributed (e.g. flyers, links to website content)
  - o **how** it will be distributed (e.g. TV, radio, written correspondence, ethno-specific social media such as WhatsApp, WeChat)
  - o **when** it will be distributed (e.g. timing and intensity)

- **Maximise exposure of the message.** For example, post translated content on your social media accounts, rather than reposting English content, as the message in the community language will stand out.

- **Consider evaluating the effectiveness of the communication strategy and translations.** Has the campaign reached the intended audience? What impact did the translated material have on the community? Identify areas for improvement and revise your processes to avoid making the same mistakes in future translation projects.

4. PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

- **Translator:** A professional translator is a translator who has undertaken training in translation and/or demonstrated translation and language skills to become accredited or certified. In Australia, professional translators are

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[2] The concept of engaging with "community leaders" should be addressed with caution to ensure the practice does not propagate notions of inequality inherited from countries of origin or sow divisiveness. It is important to confirm that such leaders do not hold personal opinions or beliefs that go against the objectives of the campaign, and/or act as gatekeepers. It may be best to rely on the properly translated official messages and to ensure broad community representation.

certified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI). However, there are languages for which NAATI certification is unavailable. For these languages, an alternative credential, Recognised Practising Translator is available. A Recognised Practising Translator "has satisfied the minimum training requirements stipulated by NAATI and has recent and regular experience as a translator and/or interpreter. Recognised Practising credentials do not have equal status with certification, nor do they stipulate a specific level of transfer competency"[3]

A professional or qualified translator understands source texts in their context, including the translation brief provided by the client, and transfers the intended meanings into another language. They are guided by the function of the translation, rather than the words or sentences used in the source text. The translation they produce must be both accurate (consistent with the meanings in the source text) and appropriate (consistent with the stylistic and grammatical norms and conventions of the target language)

- **Post-editor:** A post-editor is a professional with language and translation skills who revises a machine translation. The purpose of post-editing may be to ensure a 'good enough quality' or 'quality similar or equal to human translation', depending on the sensitivity of the text and the priorities of the client. A 'good enough quality' usually involves tolerance of unusual structures and unidiomatic expressions, as long as the meaning is accurate overall. 'Quality similar or equal to human translation' requires thorough revision to ensure not only content accuracy, but also language and writing style appropriateness. For public messaging this should be the aim if machine translation must be used.

- **Reviser:** A reviser is a qualified professional, preferably a certified translator, who checks another translator's translation in order to identify any accuracy, language or style issues. They suggest the necessary corrections or improvements to meet the standard of quality applicable (in light of the text type and the translation brief). A reviser may work with the translator as part of a team in the same organisation or may be an external contractor. The reviser's feedback and recommendations should be forwarded to the translator to make the necessary changes or provide a response. Unless working in a small team where the identity of the translator and reviser is known, feedback should be provided anonymously.

- **Community Review Panel:** Also referred to as 'community feedback' or 'focus groups', a community review panel consists of members of the target community (i.e. people who live locally and speak the target language) who

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3 https://www.naati.com.au/become-certified/certification/recognised-practising/

provide feedback on a draft or published translation. They panels constitute a sample of the relevant population (potential end users of the translation), recruited from diverse demographics and literacy levels. A professional translator will participate and co-ordinate the review panel process. The type of feedback expected of community review panels relates to translation reception (how the translation might be perceived and received by the target community), comprehensibility (the extent to which the translation is readable and understandable to an average community member) and cultural appropriateness (whether the translation, examples, and visuals are culturally appropriate). However, they may also be able to identify language issues that the translator and reviser might have overlooked. The community feedback should be forwarded to the translator or relevant committee to consider.

- **Proof-reader:** A proof-reader is someone with relevant language skills who reads texts (including translations) monolingually (without reference to the source text) to identify any errors or inconsistences in presentation (e.g. page design and typesetting). They may also provide feedback on language and expression – usually minor issues that might have been overlooked in the translation process.

5. TRANSLATION WORKFLOW CHART

Workflow strategies can differ from project to project depending on the type of information being translated and the needs of commissioning organisations, translators, and the audience. However, the following chart gives an example of a common and recommended order of processes for a community translation project:

6. MACHINE TRANSLATION, CAT TOOLS AND POST-EDITING: DEFINITIONS[4] AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. DEFINITIONS

- **Machine Translation (MT):**
  automatic translation of text from one natural language to another using a computer application.
- **Human Translation:**
  translation performed by a translator.
- **Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT):**
  translation performed by a human translator using software to support the process. The term "CAT tools" is used to describe software and applications that are often used by translators to support human translation. A key feature of many CAT tools is a database called a Translation Memory (TM) that helps to enhance consistency with previous translations.
- **Post-editing:**
  the editing and correction of machine translations. Post-editing skills are increasingly considered an important skillset in their own right, separately and in addition to the skills required for translation.
- **Light post-editing:**
  process of post-editing to obtain a merely comprehensible text without any attempt to produce a product comparable to a product obtained by human translation.
- **Full post-editing:**
  process of post-editing to obtain a product comparable to a product obtained by human translation.
- **Revision:**
  bilingual examination of target language content against source language content for its suitability for the agreed purpose.

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[4] All definitions from: ISO 18587:2017 (Translation services — Post-editing of machine translation output — Requirements)

B. RECOMMENDATIONS: MACHINE TRANSLATION AND POST-EDITING

"...machines cannot make conscious, ethical decisions, nor can they evaluate risk."[5]

The use of **machine translation** for general purposes (for example, Google Translate) has become commonplace in wider society. Machine translation is useful as an everyday linguistic reference process. It can be employed to support cross-linguistic communications in low-risk situations, when there is no time for a professional translation to be carried out, and other situations where a **human translator** is not able to be engaged. However, without post-editing performed by qualified human translators, accuracy and suitability of the raw output of the machine translation may be unclear, incorrect, and potentially harmful or misleading.

Wherever possible, **human translation** should be used in order to improve accuracy, ensure quality, and mitigate risk. Budgetary and time considerations should be made to account for the cost of human translation. It is acknowledged that in certain situations, for example, due to the impracticality or costliness or translating all sections of a website into a great number of languages, organisations may feel that they need to choose between using machine translation or no translation whatsoever. As such, some very limited situations, for example, a simple landing page section of a website primarily used for navigation or redirection purposes, may warrant solutions involving the use of a machine translation tool to produce an automatic translation. Even in such a scenario, unedited machine translations do not comply with standards set out by the Australian Government Language Services Guidelines[6] and the International Organization for Standardization.

These standards set out the need for human translators to undertake **full post-editing** of all machine translation output in order to improve and verify its accuracy and comprehensibility. These requirements also describe the skills translators need to possess in order to carry out post-editing. If machine translation is to be used at all, organisations should engage appropriately trained and NAATI-certified translators to post-edit machine translation output. For situations where any form of specific, sensitive or important information (such as legal, health or financial information) is to be translated, machine translation should not be used.

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[5] Dr Joss Morkens, 'The roles of humans and machines in translation: legal and ethical considerations', In Touch—Magazine of the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, Volume 25, Number 3, Spring 2017, p.8

[6] Department of Home Affairs. (2019). Australian Government Language Services Guidelines: Supporting access and equity for people with limited English. https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settlement-services-subsite/files/language-services-guidelines.pdf

7. PLAIN ENGLISH VS EASY ENGLISH: DEFINITIONS[7] AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. DEFINITIONS

Plain English:
A direct writing style for those who can read reasonably well. Its use is encouraged where information needs to be read and understood quickly. It is synonymous with plain language, 'Everyday English', and layperson's terms. Stylistic features include a focus on simple, everyday terms and the avoidance of unnecessary jargon or terminology.

Easy English:
A writing style for those who experience difficulties reading and understanding English. It is sometimes called easy-to-read or 'Easy Read'. Stylistic features often include short sentences, explanations of difficult words and visual aids.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

The use of Easy English is relevant for government and community organisations wishing to produce informational English language content that is easier to read and understand for a variety of users, including people who speak English as a second language. The production and availability of material written in Easy English is useful for members of CALD communities who experience difficulties reading English. This is especially the case when translated materials are not available.

In terms of writing and adapting English language materials for the purposes of translation into other languages, however, the aims of Plain English are more relevant. The goal of writing in Plain English is to attempt to ensure that the reader can comprehend the information the first time that they read it. This is particularly useful for a translator in terms of facilitating efficient comprehension of the source text. It is also likely to enhance the readability of the translated material for end users.

Writing short sentences of around 15 to 20 words, short paragraphs, using headings which are easy to understand, and avoiding complex terminology and uncommon jargon wherever possible should all be aims of anyone writing English to be used for the purposes of translation. As Community Translation materials are often informational and instructional, it is important to ensure that the reader or listener should be able to make informed decisions and take informed action based on the content provided.

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[7]Centre for Inclusive Design (2020). 'Easy English versus Plain English: A guide to creating accessible content.'