

Interregional Interpreters Bank

Tips on working effectively with a translator*

A quality translation is the result of positive collaboration between the client, the reviser, the translator and the resource person. Collaboration becomes more important and preparation should be more meticulous if the document is to be published in print or electronic form.

A translator translates between 1500 and 2000 words a day. To do a good job, he/she may have to take some time to mull over the text before rereading and putting the final touches to it. Translators are not required to do final layout; this is the job of graphic designers or secretaries.

The steps presented below use a translation from English to French as an example. They apply to any kind of translation, however, regardless of language combination.

	Steps	Clarifications	Person responsible
1	<p>Check the relevance of having the text translated from English into French. Also, should the text be translated as is or should it be adapted?</p> <p><u>Relevance of message</u> (localization or internationalization)?</p> <p>Inform the translator</p>	<p>Readership targeted: Québec, Canada or the French-speaking world?</p>	Client
2	<p>Identify the addressees of the original text. Will they be the same for the translated text? In short, who will the readers be?</p> <p>Language level used</p> <p>Inform the translator</p>	<p>Should the original text be adjusted for the public targeted?</p>	Client
3	<p>How will the translation requested be used?</p> <p>Use of the translation</p> <p>Inform the translator</p>	<p>For example, will the translation serve in a process or will it be published or presented in PowerPoint format? Is the purpose only to learn of the main points in the original text?</p>	Client
4	<p>Check whether the text to be translated needs to be revised.</p> <p>Language quality</p>	<p>The quality of the source language has a direct influence on translation quality.</p> <p>Even if the original text is badly written, the translator's role is basically to translate it. He/she may try to improve it, but rewriting it is not his/her job.</p>	Client

	Steps	Clarifications	Person responsible
5	<p>If a text to be translated appears to require revision, a reviser should be called in, and he/she should be given the name of a resource person, who ideally should be the author of the document. This person should be easy to reach by phone or e-mail.</p> <p>Style revision</p>	<p>Style revision is learned at university (editing, translation programs).</p> <p>The reviser consults the resource person named by the client to discuss jargon and clear up any ambiguity.</p>	Reviser Client
6	Reread the revised English text.	The document is now ready for translation.	Client
7	<p>Find a translator and, when giving him/her the job, supply the name of a resource person who can answer questions and provide guidelines on vocabulary (particular jargon) and specific terms. The client may also give the translator a glossary.</p> <p>(See point 3)</p>	<p>The translator consults the resource person chosen by the client.</p> <p>Any changes that the client makes to the text lead to additional charges and possibly delays.</p>	Client
8	Translate the text into French and, if necessary, confirm terms or passages that are unclear with the resource person or the author. Do vocabulary searches if needed.	A translator translates about 1500 words a day.	Translator
9	Put the translation aside for a while.		Translator
10	Reread the text and make corrections.		Translator
11	Send the translation to the client, with comments if necessary.		Translator
12	Confirm the French translation by consulting the translator if necessary, especially if the original text is of poor quality.		Client
13	<p>Revise the translated version.</p> <p>If the translation appears to require revision, a reviser should be called in, and he/she should be given the name of a resource person, who ideally should be the author of the document. This person should be easy to reach by phone or e-mail.</p> <p>Style revision</p>	Style revisers are university-trained professionals.	Reviser Client
14	Inform the translator of the corrections made so that in the future he/she uses the vocabulary adapted to the client's field.		Client
15	Index the translation in a translation memory to ensure that the vocabulary used is consistent in future translations for the client on the same subject.	Translators use different reference works, computer tools and translation memories.	Translator
16	Print and distribute the translation.		Client
	<p>In conclusion: It is essential for the original text to be of good quality if the translation is also to be of good quality.</p>		

* Table based on the document called *Aux grands mots, les grands moyens. Guide des normes de pratique professionnelle en traduction*. Ordre des traducteurs, terminologues et interprètes agréés du Québec (2006).

A translator working into French supplied a couple of pearls found in original texts in English

Premature pregnant babies	What?
Internal prostate	The adjective implies the existence of another prostate that isn't internal!

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