16 How to Write for Global Audiences

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Are you convinced that global companies are doing fine producing content just for one language, region, and audience?[1] And do you think that if it works in English, it'll work in other languages as well? Global content starts with translation, right? And the translator will take care of the needs of local audiences in other countries and regions. This situation is not always—or often—the case. The better you understand how such processes actually work, the more effectively you will be able to work on international projects for global clients.[2]

In this chapter, you'll hear about real-world examples and stories that say otherwise. You 'll learn why you should plan for global and write content that is "global-ready", i.e., that is suitable for international markets in terms of words, images, and design. You'll also learn how to create such content. Besides facilitating translation and localization processes, optimizing and preparing content for translation and adaptation to other languages and cultures has many advantages. The objective of the chapter is to help you understand how you, as a writer, can create texts that translators can easily work with and that can be read and understood by greater global audiences.

Writing in a translation-friendly manner not only directly impacts the quality of the translation. It boosts the quality of the source text itself (even if you aren't yet translating your content) and it affects reuse and accessibility. Texts written with translation in mind have been shown to be processed and understood more easily (also by native readers). They drive

2 I would like to thank the editors, Kirk St.Amant and Pavel Zemliansky, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful suggestions and their valuable and constructive comments on earlier drafts of the manuscript. I am also indebted to Ken De Wachter from Flynxo for providing me with real-life examples that are used throughout this chapter to illustrate the pitfalls and strategies outlined. I also thank Annie Halseth for her meticulous editing work.

user engagement, minimize mistakes and risks, save time and money and speed up time to market. This chapter reviews potential problems that may occur from inappropriately written source texts and offers you ways to identify and solve those problems (in terms of do's and don'ts) or to avoid these problems occurring in the first place. In short, it will teach you how to become a better technical writer or technical editor.

English in the Globalized World

So why would you bother about translation and localization at all? Because today's economy is global, and companies increasingly operate across the world. A 2016 survey by Wells Fargo found that a large majority (87%) of US companies seeks business opportunities in international markets (https://newsroom.wf.com/press-release/wholesale-banking/despite-weak-global-economy-us-companies-still-turning). Tapping into new markets is an excellent way for companies to grow, to diversify and to attract foreign investments and talent. If these companies want to launch their products and services globally and in language markets other than their own, these products and services must be accompanied by information for use in the respective local language (IEC/IEEE 82079-1 Edition 2.0, 2019-05, Machinery Directive).

Besides this legal obligation, users continue to prefer to access information in their own language. Companies are therefore strongly advised to make their content locally consumable by making it linguistically and culturally appropriate for the target country and language (*locale*). Even domestic markets are made up of growing numbers of non-native speakers and their respective cultures. For example, think of the large Spanish speaking community in the U.S., whose first language is not English. Or think of the different language communities in one country adhering to different cultural value systems (e.g., Belgium, Switzerland, and Canada).

The process of addressing local users' cultural and functional expectations and needs is called *localization* (or L10n[3] if you want to be cool). One way to understand localization is as follows:

> Localization is essential to effectively addressing global markets. Being able to communicate with your target market in

3 L10n is the common alphanumeric acronym for localization. 10 stands for the number of missing letters between the first letter l and the last letter n in the word.

> their language, with cultural context and incorporating industry-specific aspects can mean the difference between a blockbuster product and an also-ran. (Steve Davis in Lionbridge Definitive-Guide-to-Website-Translation).

So, the U.S.-English sentence "From the driver's position on the left side of the car, you can see the sign '20 miles to destination'" would need to be converted to (localized) "From the driver's position on the *right side* of the car, you can see the sigh '*32 kilometers* to destination'". The idea is to take all items that are specific to a certain culture and revise them to reflect the expectations and experiences of a different culture.

A prerequisite for smooth localization is *internationalization* (I18n[4]), which can be thought of as follows:

> Internationalization is the process of generalizing a product so that it can handle multiple languages and cultural conventions without the need for re-design. Internationalization takes place at the level of program design and document development. (LISA[5], cited in Esselink 25)

The goal of internationalization is to remove all culture-specific items from a text so the resulting document can be understood by individuals from a range of cultural backgrounds (e.g., An English-language text any English speaker around the world could understand.) For example, if not well-designed, product information such as date formats, numbers, currency, contact or product warranty information may cause localization problems.

Different regulations in different countries are another case in point. Consider for example the famous German garbage disposal system (*Mülltrennung*). German citizens use four different color-coded recycling bins to sort and separate garbage straight at their homes: green, blue, yellow, brown, and grey ones. In many other countries, recyclable items are simply put in one larger container, without sorting them, leaving the sorting to the recyclers. When writing e.g. disposal information, you have to take into account that country and culture-specific regulations cannot be adopted in every language and for every target market. Compare in this respect the following instructions from a manual:

4 I18n is the common alphanumeric acronym for internationalization. 18 stands for the number of missing letters between the first letter i and the last letter n in the word.

5 The "Localisation Industry Standard Association" existed from 1990 to February 2011.

> If the product is no longer required, disassemble all components and dispose plastic packaging *in the yellow bin* and packaging made of paper and cardboard *in the blue bin*.

> If the product is no longer required, disassemble all components and dispose of them *in accordance with the applicable waste disposal laws in your country*.

The first instruction has not been properly internationalized and may therefore cause localization problems. It is only understandable by somebody who is familiar with the German waste disposal system, even so after translation. The second instruction, by contrast, has been made culturally neutral, which means that it has been written to serve a wide variety of markets, languages, cultures, and target audiences.

Localization and internationalization are complementary concepts, both of which are important to the overall localization process. They are two of the four interdependent processes that constitute the acronym GILT: Globalization, Internationalization, Localization and Translation (Cadieux and Esselink). Successful globalization (G11n[6]) is not possible without a firm localization strategy, which in turn relies on a proper internationalization and product design. Esperança Bielsa, a professor at the Universitat Autonoma de Barcelona in Spain, has been examining the relationship between translation and globalization for almost two decades. She sees translation as "a key mediator of global communication" (Bielsa). According to her, the role of language and translation in globalization has been systematically ignored. After all, globalization is dependent on translation for information to circulate globally. Translation is essentially about striking a balance between the local (users' language and culture respecting their habits, behaviors, frustrations, needs, and wants) and the global (brand consistency) (see e.g., Bielsa 138; Singh 86; Lionbridge; Wermuth and Meex 41). In the next section, we will see how globalization and digitalization have affected translation.

The Growth of Translation

In the previous section, we positioned translation as a crucial determinant of globalization. Digitalization and globalization have caused an exponential growth of the production of (mainly technical) content, and

6 G11n is the common alphanumeric acronym for globalization. stands for the number of missing letters between the first letter g and the last letter n in the word.

along with it, of translation volumes, both with respect to the number of languages involved and the number of standard pages per language. A recent survey (Meex and Straub) by tekom[7] among German manufacturing, software, and service companies revealed that on average, 11.0 different information products are created, which in turn are translated into 13.0 different languages.

According to the same survey, 46 % of technical documentation is translated into more than 10 languages. On its website, Alpha Omega Translations, a US translation company based in Alexandria VA, states that "English is the most common source language for translation in the world, but not far behind are French, German, Russian, and Italian. The most common target languages are German, French, Japanese, Spanish, and English" (https://tinyurl.com/3f8weyep). Source text quality is crucial, because issues with the source text can easily snowball into translation issues, next to usability and legal issues.

Understanding Source Text

Translation refers to "the process by which the meaning of a text written in a source language is communicated through an equivalent text in the target language" (Olvera-Lobo and Castillo-Rodríguez 34). The original language in which a text is written is called the "source language," and the original document written in that language (the document you will translate) is called the "source text." The language you wish to translate the text into is referred to as the "target language," and a text written in the target language is commonly referred to as target text. Also, the information you provide is often referred to as "content," so when we use the word content in this chapter, we are referring to the information you provide for others to read and/or translate.

In the case of technical documentation, technical writers create the source content (i.e., text to be translated), which is later translated and localized into other languages. Put differently, the work of the technical translator is preceded by that of the technical writer, who creates texts that are easy to translate and localize, or the technical editor, who revises source texts written to make them easier to translate and localize. Many aspects of content creation are relevant for later translation and localization, whether

7 Tekom is the largest association for technical communication in Europe. Its history dates back to 1978, the year tekom Deutschland was founded. The European umbrella association, tekom Europe, was founded in 2013 (https://www.technical-communication.org).

it be a human translation or a machine translation. Given that the vast majority of translators are native speakers of the *target* language, the quality of the source text becomes even more important.

One single mistake or inconsistency in the source text is likely to multiply by a domino effect across multiple language versions in the whole life cycle of a document, resulting in a loss of quality and resources. We can illustrate this by means of two verbs for user actions in the context of software: "Remove" and "Delete." You may be familiar with Google Drive, an application which allows users to "create, organize, discover, and share content stored on Google Drive" (https://tinyurl.com/yc4j4d8t). If you want to get rid of a doc, you see the "Remove" option combined with the trash icon in the menu on the Drive User Interface (UI). This may be somewhat confusing for you as a user (or for a translator for that matter), knowing that trash can icons are commonly used for deleting. You may ask yourself whether there is a difference between "Remove" and "Delete" and if so, what the difference is. Things become even more complicated when you notice that in other Google applications (more specifically in Google Contacts) the "Delete" option is also used with a trash can. So, what is the difference, if any? Let me explain it to you.

If you *delete* something, the information will be gone forever. If you *remove* something, it still exists in the file system, but it is not visible for the user in the file manager anymore. However, it turns out that in the case of Google, both the deleted and the removed information can be restored![8] This is confusing and inconsistent and may cause localization problems along the software life cycle. Imagine that you were supposed to translate these action verbs into German, you would probably be uncertain about whether to use "entfernen" (= remove) or "löschen" (= delete) in German. By the way, in the German language version of Google Drive, "entfernen" (= remove) is used, thus preserving the same inconsistency as in the English source text.

To sum up: when writing, always make clear to your users what will happen with their items. Educate them what the difference is. And create a consistent experience for your users! As Leah Guren, an experienced technical communication trainer and consultant from Tel Aviv, puts it: "Bad original content leads to even worse localized content!" ("Where Minimalism").

To improve the source text and to facilitate translation, proofreading may be required. Proofreading is usually performed on the target text at the final

8 I'm indebted to Alex Zlatkus for this example. Alex is a product designer from Boston, MA. He shared his experience and story in *UX Magazine* in 2020: https://uxmag.com/articles/ui-copy-remove-vs-delete.

stage of the translation process, but sometimes also on the source text. By definition, proofreading comes after revision and deals with the surface-level of the text only. Spelling, punctuation, grammar, and terminology are checked, whereas aspects of style and correctness of content are not. In his 2020 blog article, Stany Van Gelder, an information designer from Brussels, correctly states that "the more digitization, the higher the importance of proofreading" (https://tinyurl.com/3sa2n7yr). In the case of machine translation, adjusting the text before it is translated is called pre-editing, whereas post-editing refers to "fixing machine translation output to bring it closer to a human translation standard" (https://tinyurl.com/t8bbnpd8).

Linguistic and Cultural Competence

The international horizontal standard[9] for the development of information for use IEC/IEEE 82079-1 (Edition 2.0, 2019-05: 28) postulates that "[t]he source text should be reviewed for accuracy, consistency, and usability before it is translated." To produce quality documentation for the global market that is "locally consumable," companies need to overcome language and culture barriers and cater their content addressing the cultural and functional needs of local users and customers (Wermuth and Meex 41), i.e. analyze their native languages, values, and behaviors (Singh 86) as well as rhetorical and usability expectations (St.Amant).

To ensure smooth cultural adaptation and customization (i.e. localization), writers and translators alike need to have cultural competence next to linguistic and textual competence, as explicitly stated in international standards and competence frameworks (Meex and Straub): ISO:17100 2015 (the International Quality Standard for the translation services sector), tekom Cross-Industry Competence Framework for Technical Communication (https://tinyurl.com/3ee2paej), TecCOMFrame (https://tinyurl.com/3uu85rjy).

How to Write for Translation and Localization: Tips and Tricks

In this section you can find a selection of ten top writing rules that you can easily implement in your writing. They reflect bundles of best practices from the workplace and are commonly found in guidebooks. The selection has been compiled and slightly adapted from the following sources, which I also

9 A horizontal standard is a broad, general standard that is applicable across industries and product sectors.

use in my technical communication class at KU Leuven: The Global English style Guide: Writing Clear, Translatable Documentation for a Global Market (Kohl), The Definitive Guide to Website Translation (Lionbridge), Rule-based writing: English for non-native writers (tekom), and two workshops that were given by Leah Guren at the Translation Technology Summer School at KU Leuven and at tcworld in Stuttgart.

Addressing translation needs involves writing in ways that help translators better understand the meaning of the words you use, the objectives of the texts you create, and the contexts in which technical documentation will be used. Doing so often involves following certain kinds of strategies that clarify meaning and avoid confusion when writing texts—factors that enhance the usability of text for both native and non-native readers of a given language as well as for translators. Creating texts that are easier to understand and to translate often involve ten core strategies:

Strategy 1. Keep It Short and Simple (KISS Principle)

The core idea of the KISS principle is to use as few and simple words as possible to get your message across. Addressing this principle involves doing the following.

- **Use short words.** Avoid nominalizations and long noun strings.
- **Use short sentences and use simple sentence constructions.** Ideally, English sentences shouldn't have more than 15-20 words. So, break up sentences and use bullets and numbered lists.
- **Use a verb-centered writing style.**

Leah Guren ("Where Minimalism") advices to write according to the principles of *minimalism* and to remove all *fluff*. She defines minimalism as "the philosophy of providing just the right information as briefly and simply as possible." With fluff she means:

- Extra and unnecessary words and information
- Complicated vocabulary
- Overly formal writing
- Vague writing
- Incorrect repetition

Remember that "[a] good technical writer reduces the word count to just the right brevity without being obscure." (https://tinyurl.com/y386wfy9) Keep also in mind that English sentences tend to get longer when they're translated. See also 10. Plan for text expansion.

Example (Lionbridge 21):

- Negative: the computer monitor sun glare
- Positive: the sun glare on the computer monitor

Strategy 2. Be Direct

Directness is important to writing in general and to writing for translation in particular because it is lean and efficient. It facilitates understanding in both the source and target languages and is easier to translate. This is especially relevant for procedural information, where you want to reach out to your audience and explain to them how they can use a product or service in a safe, efficient, and effective way. To be more direct when writing, consider doing the following things:

- Directly address your audience.
- Use the imperative for instructions and read-to-do content.
- Use the active voice in instructions and warnings. However, don't demonize the passive! Passive constructions are useful to describe automatic processes, for error messages and troubleshooting information and to give general information in tutorials. In these cases, the agent of the action is unknown or not relevant.
- Write in the simple present tense.
- Avoid modality (e.g., modal verbs and modal adverbs).
- Write positively. Avoid double negations.
- Don't be polite! It's uncommon to use the word 'please' in technical instructions.

Negative example passive voice (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing" 125):

- The software is updated on a regular basis. (user instruction)
- Positive examples active and passive voice (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing" 125):
- Update the software on a regular basis. (user instruction)
- The software is updated on a regular basis. (automatic process)
- A mistake has been made. (user error message)
- Phone calls are made by dialing the telephone number. (general information)

Example passive voice with modal verb (Kohl 42):

- Negative: The following steps should be performed to modify the Initial Contact Date.
- Positive: To modify the Initial Contact Date, perform/follow these steps.

Strategy 3. Be Specific

Specificity helps avoid confusion and error in translation by spelling out relationships between items (words, clauses, and sentences). Say exactly what you mean and don't leave out connecting devices such as conjunctions, relative pronouns, and prepositions. To be more specific when writing, focus on the following factors:

- Avoid incomplete constructions.
- Avoid unclear references across sentences.
- Don't omit functional words. Use syntactic cues: determiners (definite and indefinite articles), relative pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs. They make sentence structure more explicit.
- Formulate complete constructions: use conditional clauses with if . . . then, use sentences containing verbs, use articles, use complete words, and always start relative clauses with a relative pronoun (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing").

Negative examples:

- If the red light stops blinking, push the START button (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing").
- Pre- and post-editing (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing").
- The software he licensed expires tomorrow (Lionbridge 21).
- Ensure the power switch is turned off (Kohl 13).

Positive examples:

- If the red light stops blinking, then push the START button (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing").
- Pre-editing and post-editing (tekom, "Rule-Based Writing").
- The software that he licensed expires tomorrow (Lionbridge 21).
- Ensure that the power switch is turned off (Kohl 13).

Strategy 4. Be Consistent

Consistency is essential to helping translators who work with source texts because it facilitates their work a lot: it is less time-consuming and results in better matches in translation memory in that the source terms match the previously translated terms in the TM. For example, the translator doesn't have to spend precious time figuring out whether a different term in the source text refers to another concept or whether it is 'just' a means to vary language, that is a different wording to say the same thing. Consistency also results in higher quality of the translation (translations are less error-prone) and in better consistency in the target texts too. To be consistent in writing, try to do the following:

- Use the same wording for the same content type (e.g., in headings).
- Avoid variation of sentences, formulations, terms, and tone for identical statements.
- Use consistent terminology. Avoid synonyms: use one term for one concept.

Positive example from Apple Support (https://support.apple.com/iphone):

- Set up your new iPhone
- Manage your Apple ID
- Customize your Home Screen

Examples for synonyms (from Philips Hue):

- conventional lighting/traditional lighting/classic lighting
- Bridge/bridge/Hue bridge/Philips Hue bridge (with and without capitalization and reference to product line or brand)

Strategy 5. Avoid Ambiguous Words and Constructions

Ambiguity causes translation problems because it is not always obvious from the context which concept is intended. The context may even be missing. You can do the following things to avoid these problems when drafting texts:

- Avoid homonyms. A homonym is "a word that is spelled and pronounced like another word but is different in meaning" (Merriam-Webster). Or put differently, homonyms have the same external form but refer to different concepts. They may confuse both the user and the translator.
- Use nouns as nouns and verbs as verbs.
- Avoid ing- (gerund) constructions.
- Avoid phrasal verbs.
- Avoid jargon.
- Avoid idioms

Negative examples:

- Flying planes can be dangerous (tekom "Rule-based Writing").

- → It can be dangerous to fly planes (tekom "Rule-based Writing").
- Prostitutes appeal to pope.
- British left waffles on Falkland Islands. (former news headline)

Decontextualized sentences may be ambiguous to the extent that they become humoristic!

> **Example for homonym:** An SME (subject matter expert) at Collibra came across the following homonym in a user interface (UI) text during revision: "Update your business terms." This sentence had been translated incorrectly into other languages. The Dutch translation "Update uw zakelijke voorwaarden (English: 'terms and conditions')" was edited out and replaced by "Update uw zakelijke termen (English: 'expressions, words').

> **Example for jargon:** A case study on the quality of translations of Google Help content revealed that not just highly technical terms may cause problems. Also "basic" tech terms, such as browser and URL, may confuse users (Lindsey and Swisher). It is a good idea to give an example to illustrate what the term means, for example: browsers, such as Chrome and Firefox (https://tinyurl.com/2cnub5ua). Whether or not to translate English terminology such as "wearable", "selfie", "got it" is another issue and depends on the market.

> **Example for idiom:** Imagine, for example, the U.S. English expression "The product is a homerun." It was rendered literally as "The product quickly returns us to our home environment" in some translations but was translated metaphorically as "The product is an amazing success in others. "Be on a roll" is another example. It is highly informal and its specific, metaphorical meaning of 'to be having a successful or lucky period' cannot be derived from its constituent parts. Therefore it is likely to cause comprehension problems for non-native readers.

Strategy 6. Use A Clear Structure

By clear structure, I mean that the information is arranged in a logical order and hierarchy. A template or information model may help you draft your ideas into a meaningful collection down from the macro-level of an information product to the micro-level. A well-organized and consistent structure facilitates both the writer's and the translator's tasks. With everything in place, you can fully concentrate on drafting or translating the content and don't have to think about what to put where. As Val Swisher puts it: "when all hardware installation guides follow the same structure, the translations also follow a consistent structure" (Swisher). To structure texts more clearly, you can do the following:

- Structure your text with headings. Place the relevant information at the beginning.
- Structure the parts of a sentence according to the learning and situational logic (iconic principle). Mention the goal before the instruction. For example: "To make the text bold, click the Bold button." Avoid as soon as, prior, previously, and before. And mention the location where you have to perform the action before the action/instruction. For example: "On the ribbon, click the Underline button."
- Use standard English word order: subject – verb –object modifiers (Lionbridge 21).
- Avoid complex structures. Do not use nested clauses. Do not break the flow of a sentence with a list.

Examples:

- Negative: Perform these steps to modify the Initial Contact Date (Adapted from Kohl 42).
- Positive: To modify the Initial Contact Date, perform these steps (Kohl 42).

Strategy 7: Avoid Manual Formatting and Text in Graphics

Manual formatting means that you format your text manually by selecting formatting options for e.g., Font and Paragraph instead of using Styles. You can also use spacings (tabs, hard returns, soft returns, page breaks) to separate text manually. Such manual formatting can cause problems for translators because it creates several segments in the translation memory. Also, text in graphics is a pain for translators because it complicates easy access to the text. To avoid such problems, consider doing the following things when creating texts:

- Do not use extra tabs, extra spaces, and hard returns.
- Do not use manual page breaks.
- Do not use hard-coded variables.
- Do not use ASCII fonts instead of Unicode.

- Do not use embedded graphics and text in graphics. Use a separate layer instead.

These are bad examples of tool usage that negatively impact translation memory systems and the final formatting of your translated content.

Strategy 8. Be Neutral

By "neutral," I mean globally understandable and accessible. Being neutral makes texts easier to translate and to localize because they lack concepts that might not work or cause problems in the target language or the target culture. Cultural-specific concepts or expressions may be completely meaningless in other languages and hence difficult to localize. To create texts that are more neutral and easy to translate you can do a number of things when writing texts.

- Avoid culturally-specific wording, concepts, imagery (e.g., hand icons, metaphor icons), maps and flags, and humor. This also includes colloquial English and regional registers.
- Use inclusive and non-evaluative language. Write gender-neutral.
- Use metric and imperial values consistently (Guren "Is Your Content").
- Use a 24-hour time designation without AM or PM and add UTC for universal reference (18:00 UTC -3) (Guren "Is Your Content").
- Use modified ISO date format (08 June 2018). Never use number-only dates (08/06/18) (Guren "Is Your Content").

Some negative examples (taken from tekom, "Rule-Based Writing" 142, 144):

- The area is as big as ten football pitches.
- Please collect the organic waste in the brown bio-waste container.
- The usage of the software is so simple that even John or Jane Doe can work with it.
- The risk assessment has to be carried out in accordance with the standard specified in VDE 0050-1.
- Laymen (instead of laypersons), old versions (instead of previous versions)

The Google case study mentioned above found that users perceived US content as too friendly. They also felt that it contained too much empathetic and reassuring language. Phrases such as the following are not meaningful to local needs:

- Don't worry, your emails aren't lost.
- It's OK, you can still do this or that.
- Remember that Google will never ask for your password.

  In short, respect the conventions of the locale.

Strategy 9: Write in Topics

The basic information unit in technical communication is a topic. Writing in topics means you should split up large blocks of content into smaller chunks to make the information more accessible and digestible. Writing in this way helps with translation because topics are easier to manage and translate than lengthy chapters and documents. Topics are usable in diverse contexts and content and format are separated. To write in this way you can do a number of things.

- Write once, reuse, and link many times.
- Don't write prose and big blocks of text. Use structured authoring methods instead: create small chunks of content that stand on their own and from which larger pieces of content can be built.
- Standardize your topics to divide and create your content.

  Example: task, description, example, entry for glossary

Strategy 10: Plan for Text Expansion

When content is translated from one language to another, we may witness what is termed text expansion or text contraction. Text expansion is when the target text involves more characters, words, and/or space. It often occurs in translation because languages differ with respect to the space they occupy, and it can be problematic because nowadays content is increasingly delivered and consumed on smaller screens with limited screen size. Just think of text appearing on buttons, in menu items and in check boxes. You can use certain approaches to plan for and address text expansion when writing.

Plan in advance for expansion of the translated content. If texts are translated from source English text to other Western languages such as German and French, plan for text expansion by up to 35% (The Definitive Guide to Website Translation, Lionbridge). This is especially relevant for user interface texts and navigation menus.

To implement these and other rules, companies create a term base and a style guide that can greatly help the translation process. According to a Lionbridge blog post, a translation style guide is:

> "[A] set of rules for how your company presents itself textually and visually. Think of it as a guidebook for your language service provider (LSP) that includes rules about voice, writing style, sentence structure, spelling, and usage for your company." (https://tinyurl.com/227zckmj)

Developing such a translation style guide is actually the first step in the translation and localization process (https://tinyurl.com/227zckmj). In your future work as a technical writer, you may be involved in creating these important tools central to creating effective translations.

Conclusion

In today's globalized world, the demand for high quality localized content is growing. Localization entails:

- Translation of source content into one or more target languages
- Adaptation of the translated content to the needs and cultural specificity of the local market (locale)

Source text quality together with internationalization is crucial for successful localization. Source text quality serves as the foundation for translated content for different target languages, markets, and locales. As the number of target languages into which an information product is localized increases, so does the impact of the source content. However, besides international audiences also native readers benefit from translation-friendly writing.

In technical communication, quality content is lean, structured, clear, neutral, retrievable, maintainable, understandable, accessible, exchangeable, reusable, and above all consistent and translatable. Then: "consistent source content produces consistent translated content" (Swisher). By deploying a number of writing strategies, you as a writer can contribute to achieve all of these! The creation of tools such as style guides, and glossaries can help you handle your content creation. And last but not least: developing your writing for translation skills can help you succeed in the globalized job market of today.

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Teacher Resources

Overview and Teacher Strategies

I approached this chapter with three goals in mind. First, this chapter wants to provide a context for understanding the importance of source text quality as a prerequisite for successful translation and localization in today's growing global environment. Second, given that students will likely write for audiences around the globe, they should understand why it is important to draft content that is global-ready and know which methods they can use to facilitate translatability and with it, consistency, comprehensibility and usability of technical content. Third, this chapter offers students a selection of writing rules, which they can easily implement in their own writing.

Faculty may use this chapter in teaching hands-on technical writing courses. In these courses, students need to learn and practice the core fundaments of good source content creation. In my technical communication classes at KU Leuven, I usually ask my students to first analyze and then rewrite an existing manual. For first year composition students, an instruction manual for household appliances, consumer electronics or daily medical devices is accessible and not too technical. Students discover the many inconsistencies that the manual contains and report their findings in an oral or written assignment.

This chapter is particularly suitable for teaching with the flipped classroom approach. In this blended learning approach, students read the chapter and review additional course material at home. They practice working in class. This approach has the advantage of leaving more room for collaboration, discussion, and direct feedback. Alternatively, faculty may use the chapter to introduce students to the subject and assign them tasks (analyzing, rewriting, and composing) that they should complete at home. Finally, instructors of writing may also participate in academic bilateral or multilateral writing/editing-translation projects with faculty from neighboring disciplines such as translation and usability studies to give their students experience in preparing texts for translation and localization and in working with translators. The partners in the well-established Trans-Atlantic & Pacific Project (TAPP) have been cooperating in bilateral writing-translation projects since 2001 (https://tinyurl.com/mr2ebxb9).

Discussion Questions and Sample Activities

Discussion questions that can help students further explore these ideas on language and translation could include the following:

1. Have you ever used a style guide? Which one(s)? For which purpose?
2. Consult English style guides and guidebooks for information on how to create effective source texts (for example, Kohl's Global English style guide or tekom's writing rules if you are a non-native writer of English) for more writing rules. Different students may use different style guides. Review the rules and make your own selection (one that fits your specific purpose and situation) and compilation of rules. Look for additional real-world examples to illustrate your compilation or use examples from your own writing.
3. Now it's time to attack and rewrite an existing text! Bring a manual from home. Analyze and evaluate the content. Look for unnecessary information, inconsistencies, and other shortcomings. Also describe what is good. Rewrite and optimize the content by implementing the writing rules in this chapter.
4. Consult the list of the top 50 websites from the latest version of the Web Globalization Report Card: e.g., https://www.bytelevel.com/reportcard2023/. Visit and compare the global website and one localized version of the website of a company of your choice. Present your findings to the class.
5. Build a tandem with a student in translation studies. Discuss the problems you are experiencing when writing technical texts. Listen

to the issues that your partner is having when he or she is translating a text. In the next stage, you can provide your partner with a source text that you have prepared for translation and localization.