

Chapter 6

Abbreviations and acronyms

The primary motivation for using acronyms and abbreviations is brevity and to avoid repeated use of the same words.

- ▶ International organizations → EU (European Union)
- ▶ National organizations → BSI (British Standards Institution)
- ▶ Name of companies → AIB (Allied Irish Bank)
- ▶ Technical entities → GP (General Practitioner)
- ▶ Geographical locations → USA (United States of America)
- ▶ Latin → i.e. (id est)

Strategies:

- ▶ Transfer: keep the original if it is well-known.
- ▶ Reconstitute: translate the full name into the TL and use it to create an acronym in the TL.
- ▶ Define: you can replace it with a definition.
- ▶ Combine: use both, transfer and definition strategies.
- ▶ Write out SL: you may replace an acronym with its full name in the SL.
- ▶ Translate: if there is one official translation of the full name and a corresponding acronym, use them.

Formulae and equations

Any equations which appear in a text do not need to be modified by the translator.

Strategies:

- Copy and paste.
- Be careful not to confuse symbols.
- If you cannot see what a particular symbol is, try changing the font.

Quantities and units of measure

Strategies:

- Convert the quantities: do this when the exact quantity is irrelevant or when the text is for non-specialist audience
- Use a combination: provide original quantity followed by an approximate equivalent.
- ▶ Check the unit: double checking the unit can help you finding the correct symbol.
- ▶ Check the spelling: ensure that the units of measure are spelled and capitalized correctly.
- ▶ Use proper punctuation: or follow the client's preference

Currencies:

Strategies:

- Convert the currencies: do this when amounts are presented for general information purposes.

- Use a combination: provide original currency followed by an approximate equivalent.
- Client's style: the location of currency symbols will be determined by your client's style.

Culture and familiarity

Different languages and different target audiences may have different expectations as to how familiar or formal they want their texts to be.

Strategies:

- Use direct forms unless there's a strong reason not to. Avoid being overly familiar.
- Unless there's a compelling reason, humour should be written out. If you keep it, make sure it's appropriate.

Errors in the ST

Strategies:

- ▶ Find out if the text is instrumental or documentary. If instrumental, fix errors wherever possible. If documentary, preserve errors and translate faithfully.
- ▶ Linguistic errors: Simple ones → misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, unclear language. Correct them. More serious ones → when meaning is incomprehensible, ask client for clarification.
- ▶ Factual or subject errors: to detect them depends on your knowledge of the subject area
- ▶ Fix definite errors: if you spot a serious error and you're sure you can fix it, still contact the client.

Sample text and computer code

Strategies:

- ▶ Don't assume everything has to be translated: not all text in computer codes has to be translated
- ▶ Don't translate compounds: such as phrases linked by an underscore or which are written as one word (File_Description)
- ▶ Look for quotation marks: usually it contains texts that needs to be translated, however, proper nouns such as font names or variable names may also appear in quotes but they shouldn't be translated
- ▶ Preserve punctuation: if a word has trailing ellipses, don't delete them. They indicate menu options. (Print...)
- ▶ Don't change variables: don't delete, modify or rearrange variables in a string
- ▶ Make sure the translation matches the software: if it contains examples of actual software you need to ensure the translation matches what appears on screen

Graphics, screenshots and menus

Strategies:

- ▶ Provide a glossary: When labels are embedded in the image, create a glossary of terms/labels and their translations.
- ▶ Contact the client when dealing with screenshots that have not been localized, to know if you have to translate the terms in the body text.
- ▶ Unlocalized software: sometimes the client has no plans to localize it and so the original SL terms are retained.

Product names:

Strategies:

- ▶ Retain: Write product names the same way, no matter how ungrammatical or funny it looks.
- ▶ Replace: When a substitute is needed, make sure the equivalent product is comparable.
- ▶ Remove: if the specific product name is not absolutely essential, replace it with a generic description.

Contact details

Strategies:

- ▶ Personal names: Add Mr. or Mrs. if it's not clear whether the person is male or female.
- ▶ Email addresses: if the address doesn't consist of a person's name, suggest translation to client but do not change it.
- ▶ Websites: When they point to content in a foreign language, don't change them but suggest a suitable TL link to client.
- ▶ Telephone numbers: Add international dialling codes and prefixes.
- ▶ Postal addresses: if a document doesn't provide the name of the country, add the international country prefix to the post code.

Scenarios and examples

These are used in products or procedures in a way of explaining how to use sth or how sth works

Strategies:

- ▶ Culture-specific examples will need to be replaced with scenarios and examples familiar to the TL audience.
- ▶ Language-specific examples may involve significant adaptation in order for them to be comprehensible and acceptable for the TR.
- ▶ Context-based examples should be replaced with corresponding TL culture examples or modified to comply with the TL environment.
- ▶ Examples which are constrained by technical factors need only minimal modification, unless different technical regulations apply.

Giving warnings and advice

Strategies:

- ▶ Always use the same terminology as the official regulations and descriptions.
- ▶ Use warning notices consistently throughout the document.

- ▶ Always try to find the official translation in your TL rather than producing your own translation

References to other documents

Strategies:

- ▶ Paraphrase: If the precise name of the document is not important in the TL document, the name can be replaced with a descriptive phrase.
- ▶ Retain: On the contrary, if it's important and the precise meaning is unimportant or apparent from the context, the SL name can be retained with any form of explanation.
- ▶ Retain and paraphrase: When the name is important but its meaning can't be immediately inferred, retain it and explain it.
- ▶ (In the case of academic publications, it's not necessary to translate the names.)

Partially translated ST

Strategies:

- ▶ Be tactful when you ask a scientist for clarification
- ▶ If a scientist uses a different term for a concept to what you would use, take into account that the scientist knows more about this subject than you do and they are probably correct in their choice of terminology.

Latinisms and scientific nomenclatures

Strategies:

- ▶ Retain: the most appropriate strategy; it ensures that the concept is identified accurately. Use italics.
- ▶ Explain: When the TL doesn't have the same background, use the latin term to identify the common TL name, in parentheses or as a explanatory phrase.
- ▶ Replace: When the target audience or TL isn't familiar with Latin, replace the original term with its common name in the TL.
- ▶ Finding translations: If you need to find out what a Latin term means, type it into a search engine along with one or two related words in your TL.

Instructions that do not make sense

Use words that the reader will understand.

Be consistent in your use of terminology.

A useful way of learning how to translate instructions is to try writing some yourself. This task not only helps you develop your writing skills but also gives you an insight into how and why written instructions can go wrong

Strategies:

- ▶ Do your research: Try to find out what the product looks like. If necessary, modify the instructions.
- ▶ Rebuild the instructions: If not presented in a logical or chronological sequence, rearrange the order of individual steps.
- ▶ Give the reader some space: If the SL instructions are packed with information and might be confusing, split complex sentences into smaller units.
- ▶ Give the reader a hint: If the instructions are vague, provide any additional clarification needed.
- ▶ Contact the client if the instructions do not make any sense or if you cannot figure out what it is you are describing.

Tables of contents and indices

- ▶ It is always best to wait until you have read and translated the rest of the text before tackling tables of contents, so that you have a better idea of what the text is about.
- ▶ Be very careful if you decide to translate the index and use it as a glossary because you may end up wasting time using the wrong terms and having to fix your translation.

Formatting and layout

Strategies:

- ▶ Use short, simple words and sentences
- ▶ Use abbreviations where necessary: Ideally the ones already used by the company or in the general subject areas. Do not overuse them.
- ▶ Avoid sticking too closely to the ST: Do not be afraid of using a different grammatical or syntactic structure if it allows you to produce a shorter translation.
- ▶ Where appropriate, use imperative verb forms: These are invariably shorter and easier to understand than passive constructions.
- ▶ Be flexible and creative: Be prepared to try several possible wordings and use modulation, transposition and adaptation strategies.

Managing and naming files

Storing your files:

- ▶ Create a master folder for your project
- ▶ Create one folder for your source files and one for your target or translated files
- ▶ If necessary, create separate folders for reference materials or translation memories
- ▶ Set up your computer to create daily back-ups of your files which should be stored on a separate hard drive or another computer

Translating your files:

- ▶ Overwrite the ST with your translation: Use it as a template to obtain the same format. Do not type up your translation in a blank document without the formatting.
- ▶ Never work on the only copy of your source file: When you open a file to translate it, save it under a different name to your target file folder.
- ▶ Give your translated files clearly identifiable and unique names: You should retain the original file name but append the ISO language code for your TL to indicate that it is a translation, e.g. ES for Spanish.

Using the internet

Strategies:

- ▶ Find parallel texts: they help to explain the subject material and are often a rich source of terminology. Use the advanced search function to restrict your search to a particular format.
- ▶ Use synonym searches: In Google, type a tilde ~ in front of a search term to find similar terms.
- ▶ Exclude useless information: You can type a minus symbol - in front of whatever term appears in the pages you do not want.
- ▶ Finding terminology: Try searching for the SL term along with a word in the TL related to the subject or your best guess at what the SL term means. You may find a translation or a glossary.
- ▶ Using translators' forums: You should exercise extreme caution when relying on answers from others.
- ▶ Websites belonging to international organisations, government bodies or state organizations → reliable source of subject information
- ▶ Company websites → specialized terminology
- ▶ Personal websites hosted by free website services → least reliable resource
- ▶ Wikipedia → try to identify other sources to corroborate any information you find here before you use it