



A Translation Ace Radio – Show Notes

Episode No.: 2

Title: 7 Elements of a Good Translation

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Hello and welcome to the Atranslationace.com Radio Blog, Episode 2 – *7 Elements of A Good Translation*.

I'm Professor Winn – a certified English instructor, and certified translator from Spanish, Portuguese, and French to English for more than 10 years.

Access any links mentioned in this broadcast and read the full article - *7 Elements of a Good Translation* - at atranslationace.com/p2.

What makes a good translation is well-known.

Achieving a good translation with calmness is a different story.

However, as a company or individual, a smart consumer like you can use the following seven (7) elements to ensure you receive a good translation.

Some of these ingredients depend on the client and others on the translator.

These elements are divided between a translator's background and the translation project.

Your Translator's Background

#1. Choose a translator who is a university-educated native speaker of the target language – that is, the language of the final document.

In my case, as a university-educated US English native speaker, a client would expect all my documents translated into English, my mother tongue.

Rarely, a translator who has spent a significant amount of time in the country of the source language (Spanish, French, Portuguese in my case) can translate into those languages.

#2. Inquire about the language proficiency and specializations of the translator.

Language study, time spent living in a country where your language is spoken, and experience using the language are three (3) key elements.

In my case, French language study at my university and travel to France, living more than a total seven years in Argentina and Colombia for Spanish, and living two years in Brazil for Portuguese demonstrate my language competencies.

As well, most translators show a distinct preference for a subject area and continue to translate in that area of expertise.

A specialist is not always required depending on the sophistication and type of document in the translation project.

I specialize in business, tourism, legal, real estate, defense/foreign affairs, and technology translations.

Each of these areas reflects either my interest, direct or indirect experience and education.

Your Translation Project

#3. Tell your translator who is the target audience. Your translator needs to know who is going to read the document.

Some papers, like contacts or medical records, may be obvious.

However, business documents translated from Spanish, Portuguese, or French to English may have diverse audiences.

Knowledge of the expected consumer can help provide direction in the word choice, vocabulary, style, and tone of the translated document.

#4. Give your translator time. Good translations take a reasonable amount of time.

The average amount of words translated per day is around 2,000 words.

Of course, urgent translations are sometimes unavoidable.

On a case by case basis, companies or individuals can consult a translator to negotiate a deadline acceptable by both parties.

Often, to please a customer, translators seek to deliver a project before the deadline!

#5. Good translators focus on meaning, not mere word for word equivalence.

Literal translations are rubbish.

When a client reviews a translated document, a text that appears to be a word-by-word translations should raise red flags immediately.

Real translators focus on transferring the meaning from the original document to the new translated document – no exceptions.

#6. Your translation should be well-written.

Rendering one document in one language (for example, Spanish) to another (for example, English) is essentially a culturally-appropriate rewrite of text.

Translators are writers at heart.

The best translation is a document that does not appear to be a translation at all!

Sentences should flow without any apparent choppiness in the prose.

The language should be natural, not forced.

While converting a document between languages, a translator erects an invisible bridge where an equivalent meaning is conveyed.

A university-educated native speaker should be able to easily produce such a text.

#7. Your translation should be culturally apt. Language is culture.

Given the unique work of translators, cultural equivalence is a primary concern over and above meaning.

Will the reader of the translated document be able to understand it?

If the answer is “yes,” then the translator has completed his or her mission!

Any cultural references should not offend the reader.

Cultural norms, beliefs, values and expectations are not the same from country to country or language to language.

Conclusion

Use the seven (7) elements of a good translation to get your project completed promptly and precisely.

Let’s recap the 7 elements of a good translation:

7 Elements of a Good Translation

- 1 Expect a certified, university-educated native speaker of the target language.
- 2 Know the language proficiency and specializations of the translator.
- 3 Tell your translator who is the target audience.
- 4 Give your translator time.
- 5 Note that professional translations are not word for word equivalence.
- 6 Verify your translation is well-written.
- 7 Accept only a culturally-apt translation.

<https://atranslationace.com/p2>

Together companies and individuals can be best prepared to locate the best translator for their assignment and help him or her produce an accurate, clear, and culturally-appropriate translated document.

Please visit my Facebook page at [facebook.com/Atranslationace](https://www.facebook.com/Atranslationace).

I am Professor Winn and thank you for listening to Atranslationace.com Blog Radio.

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Professor Winn