

Free Online Translation

Can Your Business Really Afford It?



Adarve Translations

The Path to Open Communications

Am I pulling your leg here? If it is free, why would I ask you if your business can really afford it? Free is free, isn't it? There is nothing to pay, right? I would say, "Probably there is, probably there isn't!" Let's look at this matter into more detail then.

"In today's global business environment, the stakes are high. From ridiculous headlines to awkward or sloppy use of the local language, translation mistakes can be costly, embarrassing, and even disastrous." – Taken from the American Translators Association Website

Let's be honest though, Why would you, or anyone else for that matter, pay for a professional translation job when there are so many easily accessible and varied ways to do it for free on the Web? Web applications, such as like Google Translate, Bing_Translator and Systran, clearly make life so much easier without wasting money unnecessarily, right?

Well... not exactly. Or so it has been proven time and time again. Can you be absolutely sure that the money you "are NOT wasting right now" will not mean a major loss for you and your business down the road?

Let's just take a look at some bad translations we can find at anytime on the Web and think of the potential repercussions to you, or your business, if any of these cases were applied to you:

ENGLISH (target text)

MOKA EXPRESS is made of an aluminium alloy suitable for the food use and right for the gas cooker, the electric plate and the pyroceram.

First time you use it, wash carefully only with water and make some coffee to throw away.

CAUTION! Do place MOKA EXPRESS in the microwave!



Example found in a case study of Language QA at Lionbridge as reported by TranslationQuality.com.

A professional translation done by a human would read like this: "MOKA EXPRESS is made of an aluminum alloy adequate for food use and suitable for gas stoves, electric plates and glass top stoves. Before first use, wash carefully with water only; discard first batch of coffee.

CAUTION: Do not place in microwave!"

What would happen if we simply take the machine translation for this product and DO place the Moka Express in the microwave?



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We also need to be careful not to hurt the sensitivity of our potential clients, especially when it comes to race, culture and religion. What do you think of this translation? Would you use it as a description of your product if you were in the furniture industry?



Photo: Jim Wilkes, Toronto Star, 2007; Witiger

A black woman from Toronto holds a label showing a racist color term that was used to identify a sofa made in China. The "N" word sparked a great deal of controversy among the black community in Canada. Some blamed the Chinese for outright racism against Blacks. The Chinese manufacturer was quoted by Associated Press as saying, "we got the definition from a Chinese-English dictionary. We've been using the dictionary for 10 years."

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Let's take a look at some "precious gems" found on the Web:

Orange New! 2006-02-16 (Thanks to Janet O'Sullivan)

During its 1994 launch campaign, the telecom company **Orange** had to change its ads in Northern Ireland. "**The future's bright ... the future's Orange.**" That campaign is an advertising legend. However, in the North the term Orange suggests the **Orange Order**. The implied message that **the future is bright, the future is Protestant, loyalist...** didn't sit well with the Catholic Irish population.

- The following examples are taken from: <http://joe-ks.com/English.htm>

In Taiwan, the translation of the Pepsi slogan "*Come alive with the Pepsi Generation*" came out as "**Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead.**"

In an advertisement by a Hong Kong dentist: **TEETH EXTRACTED BY THE LATEST METHODISTS.**

Outside a Hong Kong tailor shop: **LADIES MAY HAVE A FIT UPSTAIRS.** Outside a Paris dress shop: **DRESSES FOR STREET WALKING.**

In an Acapulco hotel: **THE MANAGER HAS PERSONALLY PASSED ALL THE WATER SERVED HERE.**

In a dry cleaners in Bangkok: **DROP YOUR TROUSERS HERE FOR BEST RESULTS.**

In a Czechoslovakian tourist agency: **TAKE ONE OF OUR HORSE-DRIVEN CITY TOURS - WE GUARANTEE NO MISCARRIAGES.**



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- This "Pearl" comes directly from our neighborhood, and I could not avoid including it here:

In a store window in Asheville: "OFERTA DE EL MES: COMPRE UNA CAMA Y NOSOTROS LE DAREMOS UN CONSOLADOR LIBRE", which, translated back into English, literally means: "**Offer of the month: Buy a bed and we will give you a free dildo,**" while the original English text was: "*Offer of the month: Buy a bed and receive a free comforter.*"

Would you really want such a mistranslation from a Free Online Service?

Though I am only sharing a few examples with you today, there are actually thousands of them on the Web, and, unfortunately, companies and individuals continue to use them without being aware of, or some of them not even caring about, the actual damage they are doing to their own business and public image. Some of these samples even have a "double entendre" (as seen on the Asheville example above) that will be found to be quite offensive by many clients, if not most of them, like a story for Finance Asia by Nick Lord: "*Rudi Pecker taking the head job and top slot at Misys*" (the originally intended text)... which was in fact translated and published on the Web as "**Misys gives Pecker head job.**"

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Let me close this short list of Machine Translations with what I call, **The cherry on top of the cake...** My absolute favorite example of what a bad Machine Translation looks like:



Taken from Deseret News, by Adam Wooter

Sign from a Chinese restaurant where the restaurateur used a machine translation program to quickly translate the name of his restaurant for the benefit of English-speaking patrons.

Unfortunately, the machine translation application was out of order at that moment, and now Internet users worldwide are aware of the restaurant's English translation, **Translate server error!**



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Let's talk a little about poor grammar and spelling

Machines are definitely not "trained" in foreign languages grammar and spelling rules, and thus follow the grammar of the source language, or the language they are translating from. The resulting target, or translated, text comes out to be gibberish or very close to it, the instances of actually semi-readable translated material being close to 1%, and those of perfectly translated material, following all the rules of grammar and spelling of the target language being literally equal to 0%!

Let's look at some examples, shall we?

Some American business owners, without denying their actual good intentions to serve their Spanish-Speaking clients, use signs for their businesses attempting to state "*Spanish is spoken here*" (se habla español [the correct translation of the English sentence]) that are sometimes misspelled as "se hablo espanol", (Which actually means "**It I speak Spanish**").

Some popular English examples include signs reportedly seen on a Majorcan shop entrance declaring, "English Well Talking" and "Here Speeching American."

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Let's face it, a computer is never likely to have a human-like 'feel' for the context of what it's translating, and this is a paramount reason of why translations will always be performed better by humans.

Once again, unlike the human brain, machines cannot understand context, and they are not able to distinguish between different meanings of the same word, meanings that depend on context, or mood. Machines simply copy the word order of the source language, when in fact each language has its own word order that only native speakers, people well trained in the language and nearly native-speakers have command of. This lack of the proper word order intrinsic to the machine often leads to awkward, even unintelligible sentences in the target language, which the translation tool is unable to rewrite.

Are you ready to obtain real value translations, written by knowledgeable, professional translators or would you be willing to risk your name and reputation, as well as the name and reputation of your business by using Free Online Machine Translations?

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Adarve Translations only uses highly qualified translators, native foreign language speakers, each professional working into his/her native language, accredited by a local translation association or holding a degree in the field of the project at hand, to provide you with the most accurate translations in the market and endless benefits.

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"Adarve Translations has been a great resource for us, and we can always count on their timely professional work."

– Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity

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