

Revising German to English translations and editing English texts

Universitas Workshop

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ITAT Graz



Content

Part One

Definitions: Revising, editing, reviewing, proofreading

Different types of texts

Strategies – Create your own personal strategy

Part Two

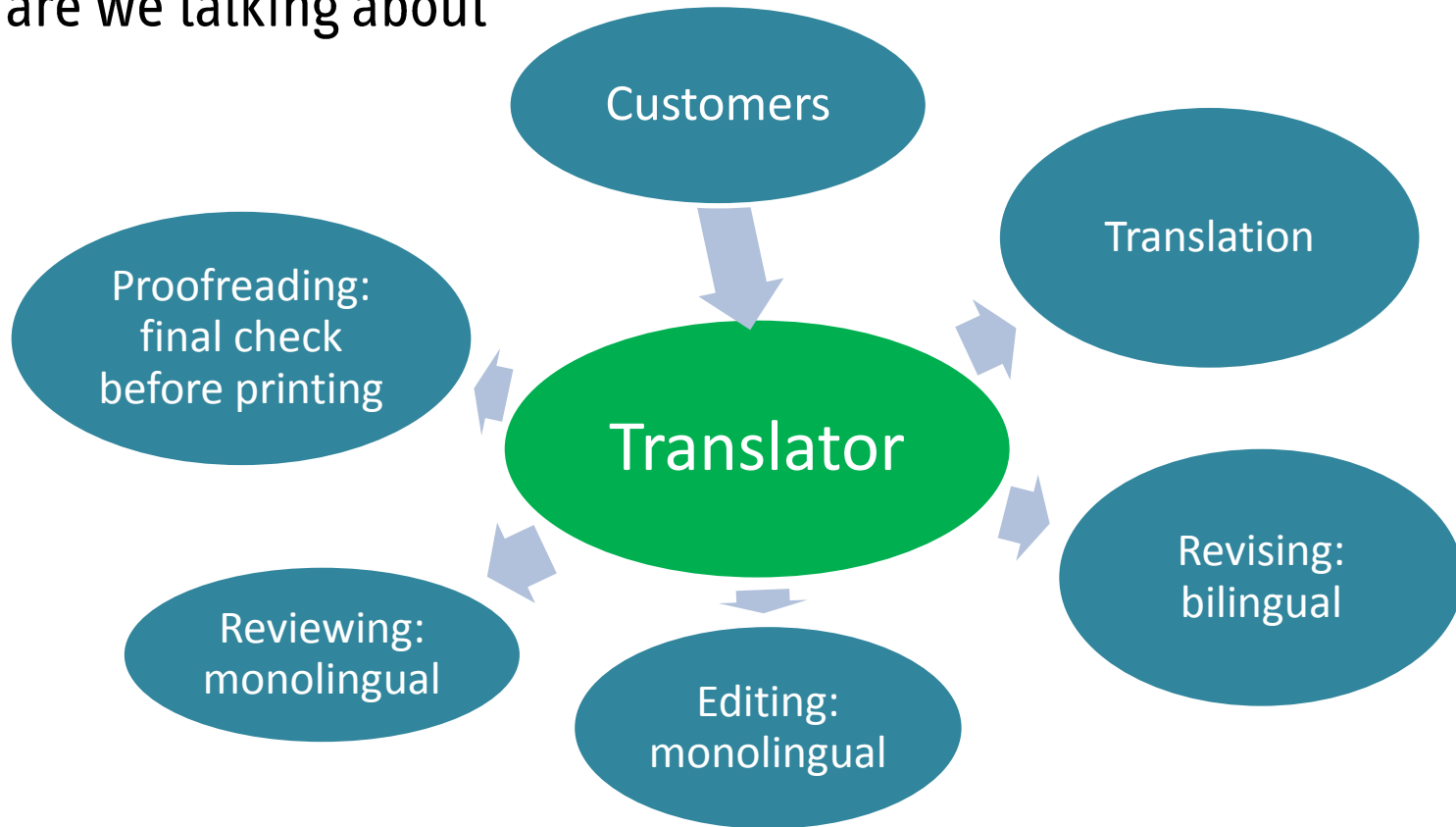
Examples and exercises

Part Three

Resources, style guides, reference works

Introduction

What are we talking about



Introduction

This presentation is based on **my experience** and what has worked for me in the past.

Trend: More editing

Why: Less money for translations

The texts

- Translations: your own and the work of others
- Texts written by non-native speakers
- Requests for texts based on information provided: copywriting
- Texts written by the IT department for the website

Introduction

Goal: To produce clear, natural-sounding texts

Before starting

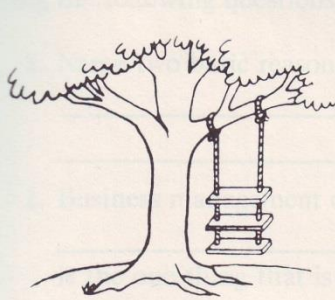
- Before you accept an assignment ask questions. Is it a translation, an original text or a text translated using MT?
- Who will be reading your texts?
- Ask for related materials, read about the topic before starting.
- Agree with your customer on what they want.
- Ask if they have their own style guides or glossaries.

Introduction

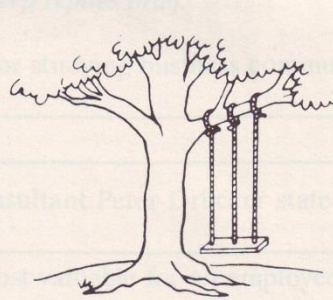
Goal: Communication

FIGURE 1.4
A communications brain drain.

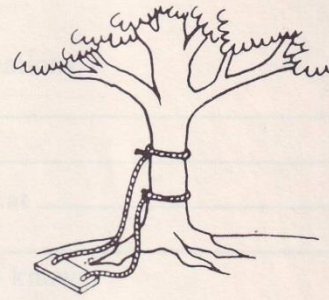
BRAIN DRAIN: TYPICAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT



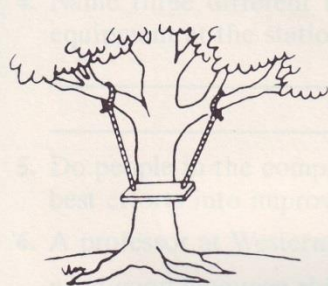
As Marketing Requested It



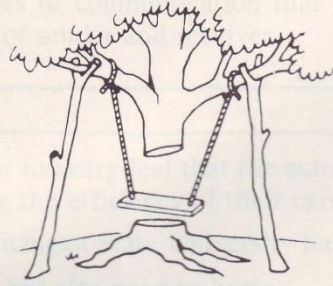
As Sales Ordered It



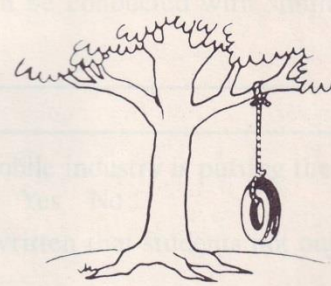
As Engineering Designed It



As HQ Manufactured It



As Maintenance Installed It



What the Customer Wanted

Part One



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid
Miami, Florida, U.S.A.

Part One – Definitions - Revising

1. EN15038

Revise – Examine a translation for its suitability for the agreed purpose, compare the source and target texts, and recommend corrective measures.

2. ISO 17100

Revision

- Bilingual examination of target language content (2.3.3) against source language content (2.3.2) for its suitability for the agreed purpose.
- Note 1 to entry: The term bilingual editing is sometimes used as a synonym for revision.

Part One – Definitions – Editing

Editing is not defined in the standards

For me, it is about making changes to texts to correct errors, improve readability and make the meaning clear.

- Find out **who** will be reading your text
- How far should you go

Discuss how much **freedom** you have to change the text. Be careful about changing meaning; if you have doubts talk to the author (if possible), mark the text or do whatever is necessary to clarify the meaning or point out a problem to your customer.

Part One – Editing

A few tips when editing texts translated by your colleagues

The principal aim is to produce a good result. When you change someone else's work, you need to be careful and use tact. Talk with them to find out exactly what they want or need. Should you change as little as possible or are you free to rewrite entire paragraphs?

Translators need to learn to accept corrections and improvements without taking them as a personal affront.

Ideal situation – group of translators who work together and help each other produce good translations.

Idea: Time bank

Part One – Definitions – Reviewing

Review (CEN 15038)

To examine a target text for its suitability for the agreed purpose and respect for the conventions of the domain to which it belongs and recommend corrective measures.

Review (ISO 17100)

Monolingual examination of target language content (2.3.3) for its suitability for the agreed purpose (Note 1 to entry: The term monolingual editing is sometimes used as a synonym for review.)

Part One – Definitions – Reviewing

Reviewing as defined in the standards is intended to be done by **domain specialists** who are not translators or editors, but ideally experts in their fields.

In my opinion, this task can also be done by translators specialized in certain fields who are able to immediately recognize the technical terms and identify the right context. Translators also need this skill to survive.

Part One – Proofreading



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid Somewhere in Georgia, U.S.A.

Part One – Definitions – Proofreading

CEN 15038

Proofreading

Checking of proofs before publishing

ISO 17100 Proofread

- Examine the revised target language content (2.3.3) and applying corrections (2.5.4) before printing.

Part One – Definitions – Proofreading

Proofreader's marks

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_proof.html

Useful, but the person who actually makes your changes to the proofs must understand them. This is not always the case, so ask.

Today, proofs are sent as PDFs. You need software with a mark-up function. New trend: Customers simply use Word, also for the final version, because most publications are no longer printed, but published online in PDF format.

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Part One – Types of Texts



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid Somewhere in Georgia, U.S.A.

Part One – Types of Texts

Translators and copywriters deal with the same types of texts, but their assignments are completely different. Customers are often not aware of this. Talk to your customers to clarify what they expect.

Copywriters produce	Translators translate
Website content	Website content
Newsletters, letters	Corporate communications, internal: staff newsletters, circulars, updates on changes
Annual reports, brochures	Corporate communications, external: press releases, speeches,
Press releases	Translations of press releases are not always the best way to go. It is better when they serve as input for the press release drafted by a public relations expert.
Speeches	What is different for translators here?

Part One – Types of Texts

Look at **an entire text** before changing anything. If you are not familiar with the subject, read about it, find relevant literature and make sure you understand the context.

Some types of texts are easier, because they are more standardized, others need more preparation.

- Manuals and instructions
- Government policy papers
- Academic texts
- Legal texts, contracts

Part One – Strategies



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid, somewhere in Georgia, U.S.A.

Part One – Strategy

Prepare

- Set up your ideal workplace

For example, two screens, comfortable chair, etc.

Try out what is best for you.

- Read

Read parallel materials to get a feel for the language, look up key terms on relevant websites, clarify the big picture, identify anything you do not understand

Part One – Strategies

My personal strategy for revising a translated text

First: Content and meaning

Read the translation and compare to source text to check if the meaning is correct and the text is complete.

Second: Readability

Read the text to see if sounds good, if the style is right (e.g. speech vs. press release), flow.

Third: Errors

Read for typos, spelling mistakes, compliance with style guide, missing words, commas

Note: I read on the computer and use two screens.

Part One – Strategies

My personal strategy for editing a text

First: Read to understand

Read the text and identify anything that is not clear to you, clarify terminology; what may sound strange to you may be correct. Don't introduce mistakes.

Second: Readability

Read for flow and style, change awkward-sounding phrases, only rewrite parts when you are clear about the meaning.

Third: Errors

Read for typos, spelling, compliance with style guide, missing words, commas, point out any inconsistencies to the author.

Note: I do not use “track changes“. I send the customer a “compare documents“ file together with the clean one.

Part One – Strategies

Tips

- Always remember the reader
- Try to avoid jargon
- Short sentences
- Be concise if possible

To improve your writing, translating and editing skills, you need to read, read, and don't ever stop reading.

Part One – Checklist – Example

Editing - Basic

- Correct spelling, grammatical, and punctuation errors
- Check for problems in tense and conjugations
- Eliminate improper language and poor word choice
- Make the document sound natural and professional
- Review the use of terminology within the document
- Consistent use of British or U.S. English

More time needed

- Correct spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation errors
- Improve syntax, style, and flow
- Change improper language
- Suggest alternate phrasing
- Alter awkward or unnatural-sounding sentences
- Point out confusing parts that need to be rewritten
- Review wordy and awkward constructions
- Improve transitions and flow
- Ensure consistent style

Create your own checklist and use it.

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Part Two – Examples and Exercises



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid Somewhere in Georgia, U.S.A.

Part Two – Revising

Tip

Sentences joined by 'and'

This is correct when the two parts are equally important.

Example: Volume has increased, and profits have rebounded.

When the relationship between the two parts are more complex (causal, conditional, time sequence) avoid 'and'.

Example:

No: Profits increased 15% last quarter, and we'll get a bonus.

Yes: Because profits increased 15% last quarter, we'll get a bonus.

Source: Effective Business Writing, p. 35

Part Two – Editing

Tip

- Keep the subject and verb close to one another

Production increases resulting from the growing use of digital technology, electronic switching, and fiber optics, coupled with a projected 6% gain in telephones in service, will aid profits.

Improvement

An increase in production and a projected 6% gain in telephones in service will aid profits. The increase in production will result from the growing use of digital technology, electronic switching, and fiber optics.

Source: Effective Business Writing, p. 36

Part Two – Exercises - Revising

Workgroups

- 4 groups, one person stays at the table
- The others rotate after 15 minutes
- Rotate three times

The groups discuss texts for **revising** and suggest changes and improvements

Part Two – Exercises Editing

Workgroups

- 4 groups, one person stays at the table
- The others rotate after 15 minutes
- Rotate three times

The groups discuss texts for **editing** and suggest changes and improvements

Part Two – Useful Phrases

at first glance	at first
whether or not	whether
a specific example	an example
a general principle	a principle
they managed to use	they used
a wide variety of different models	a variety of models
expert specialists	specialists
this can help you	this helps you
on an annual basis	annually, yearly
in the form of	as
as you may or may not know	as you may know
Source: The Copywriter's Handbook, see references	

Part Two – Useful Phrases

absolutely complete	complete
are of the opinion that	believe
at a later date	later
attached please find	attached is
despite the fact that	although
at the present time	now
during the year 2009	during 2009
during the course of	during
for the reason that	since, because
in order to	so
made the announcement that	announced
pursuant to our agreement	as we agreed
Source: Business Communications, see references	

Part Two – Useful Phrases

reached the conclusion	concluded
until such time as	until
we are in the process of	we are
consensus of opinion	consensus or opinion
costs the sum of	costs
for the purpose of	for
in regard to	regarding; about
in the event that	if
in the meantime	meantime
in the near future	soon
in view of the fact that	since; because
in a satisfactory manner	satisfactorily
Source: Business Communications, see references	

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Part Three



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid
Fienberg-Fischer K8 Miami-Dade County Public Schools
36

Part Three – Style Guides

A few general comments on style guides:

- Style guides are useful tools, but they are never the last word.
- If your customer gives you a style guide or guidelines to follow, do it. If you have improvements or additions, find the right person and make these suggestions.

Part Three – Style Guides

Tips

- Avoid all gender-based stereotypes

This has been standard usage in English for at least 20 years now. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. There are lots of sources for finding out how to do this correctly.

Examples:

- 1) Styleguide_English_DgT_en2015Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/basics/management/day_to_day/dgt/index_en.htm

- 2) OeCD Style Guide Third Edition 2015

<https://www.oecd.org/about/publishing/OECD-Style-Guide-Third-Edition.pdf>

Part Three – Style Guides

Tips

- Prepare a style guide for regular customers. You can do this on your own if no one is available at the customer to help. Let the customer know. Ideally, prepare it together.
- This will help make your own work consistent
- Examples of content:
 - All names of organizational units and job titles
 - Defined designations for products and services – check on website or ask the marketing department (they should know)
 - Customer preferences: U.K. or U.S. English, dates formats, and similar notes

Part Three – Style Guides

Tips

- Create a quick style guide for each customer, max. 2 pages

Extensive style guides are useful, but only feasible for in-house language translation teams, some may have more 100 pages. Some companies have both short and long ones for their in-house team and specific ones when outsourcing translations.

Part Three – Tools

Don't rely blindly on Word's **autocorrect** and spell checker functions.

Comment:

Microsoft uses statistics-based algorithms to define what goes into its dictionaries. “Autocorrection is no longer an overqualified intern drawing up lists of directives; it's now a vast statistical affair in which petabytes of public words are examined to decide when a usage is popular enough to become a probabilistically savvy replacement. The work of the autocorrect team has been made algorithmic and outsourced to the cloud.” (Source: <https://www.wired.com/2014/07/history-of-autocorrect/>)

Part Three – Tools

PerfectIt

It becomes a function in Word and can do a lot more than Word.

<http://www.intelligentediting.com>

PDF-XChange Editor

<https://www.tracker-software.com/product/pdf-xchange-viewer>

Part Three – Reference Works

Books

- 1) Business Communications, Phyllis Davis Hemphill, ISBN 0-13-092255-2
- 2) The Copywriter's Handbook, Robert W. Bly, ISBN 0-8050-1194-3
- 3) Dos, Don'ts & Maybes of English Usage, Theodore M. Bernstein, ISBN 0-517-20340-5
- 4) Effective Business Writing, Maryann V. Piotrowski, ISBN 0-06-273381-8
- 5) Chicago Manual of Style, ISBN 0-226-10389-7
- 6) Elements of Style, Strunk and White, ISBN 0-205-19158-4

Online

<http://www.dictionary.com/>

Part Three – Resources

EU sources

- The English Style Guide, a handbook for authors and translators working in English for the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf
- Misused words and expressions in EU publications
http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/EN_TERMINIOLOGY_PUBLICATION/EN_TERMINIOLOGY_PUBLICATION_EN.pdf
- CLEAR ENGLISH - Tips for Translators:
http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/clear_english_en.pdf
- EU jargon in English and some possible alternatives: http://ec.europa.eu/ipg/content/tips/words-style/jargon-alternatives_en.htm
- Europa Glossary: http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/index_en.htm
- Writing for the web: www.ec.europa.eu/ipg/content/tips/index_en.htm
- More guidance on writing specific types of documents is available to European Commission staff:
https://myintracomm.ec.europa.eu/hr_admin/en/drafting/Pages/index.aspx

Part Three – Resources

Useful websites

Universitas website

<http://www.universitas.org/de/information/publikationen/fortbildung/>

Plain Writing Initiative

<https://www.sec.gov/plainwriting.shtml>

[A Plain English Handbook - Securities and Exchange Commission](#)

<https://www.sec.gov/pdf/handbook.pdf>

Clear_writing_tips_en_EU

http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf



Photo Credit: Michael Schmid

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A.

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