

# 5 Things You Need to Know About How Translators Work

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Until recently, most of us worked in organizations that were largely local. We interacted with colleagues who were there with us, culturally similar to us, and could find meaning in shared language.

Now, identifying the dimensions of difference - in expression, culture and speech - is part of an exciting reality we embrace as global citizens and professionals. To give everyone a voice in a multinational collective, you need clear, quality communication across native languages.

We gathered a few of our experienced Spanish translators to talk through how they produce their best work, and what they need in order to accomplish it; as well as where and why they see things getting lost in translation.

## 1 Getting Started: How to Set Up for Success

Not only do translators need quiet and peace of mind to contextualize their work, but rely on access to their software and dictionaries of choice to cross-check references, specialized terms or turns of phrase. This means referring to any previous similar translations to check vocabulary for parallelism. More than word-for-word substitution, professional translation is a problem-solving exercise where “a crowded place, no access to resources or lack of comfort to work,” hinders the ability for a translator to apply themselves properly.



## 2 The Importance of Process, and the Power of Proofreading

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## 3 When Translation Means Transcreation

Transposing authenticity from English to Spanish can also involve generating unique content to make it culturally relevant. Although translators will never “omit, add or falsify,” translator Alexandra says that “sometimes [she has to] go and look for synonyms to say what’s needed.”

Translation isn’t black and white, but hangs in the balance between precision and creativity, to establish shared meaning across contexts for a specific audience and purpose: “I try to identify the tone of the language being used, that is, is it formal? Is it informal? I also identify the objective of the text: is it for parents? Is it for administrators? For example, in a translation for an American school, I know that the variety of Spanish expected is the Mexican Spanish, so I have to adapt the language I use in terms of idioms or words.”

There’s also no single way to translate into Spanish “accurately” or “well.” Depending on the stand point, style, vocabulary and background, several slightly different translations could still be “right” - but just as many could be wrong without experience or contextual understanding.

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**It’s so interesting to see how our minds work while we translate. So many processes occur in our brains and it’s great to be aware of that. We all use translation strategies and techniques depending on many things, for example our own style.**

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- Translator Alexandra



## 4 Journeys from Bilingualism to Translation

As a sought-after skill in an increasingly globalized America with multicultural roots, bilingualism is an asset in many areas of life and work. But today's professional translation communities also reflect on how bilingualism isn't necessarily enough to translate with quality. The "aha" moment is often described when translators can begin making informed decisions on an appropriate approach to apply, according to the purpose of a translation. The extra care in producing a natural and coherent piece of writing also drives translators to use the right tools to give their work a stamp of quality:

**“Preparing at University through specializing in translation changed my view about it as a professional practice. It's an amazing place to be when you have such a deep knowledge of both source and target language, and of a process where you need to be prepared for the countless, complex journeys you're embarking on - in order to give meaning and create understanding across cultures.”**

*- Translator Clara*

## 5 The Cost of Compromising Quality

A “rush job” should never compromise quality, but translators explain what's at stake for multilingual businesses, when they forego the due care and attention needed for a translation.

William emphasizes that *“a great translation should position a company as a center of excellence,”* especially when it comes to communicating meaning to an audience - which directly impacts the value delivered across the business.

Efficiency can be balanced with quality by technology and machine translation, but not at the cost of a human translator's authority over the final meaning.



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**I think new technologies applied to professional translation create good opportunities to grow. I see humans working together with machines, with a translator’s ability to give meaning to his/ her interpretation of the text - and technology as a tool to support the process. The combination means that excellent translation is developed as language continues to evolve.**

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*- Translator William*

As businesses in a growing global context, we are responsible for bridging understanding between native Spanish-speakers and those who are English-proficient - and beyond, into the world’s many evolving languages. A great translation requires not only accuracy in the most basic sense, but quality also means contextualization and transcreating for cultural understanding, to give greater meaning.

For our translators who work behind the scenes to give our schools and businesses that meaning, their roles will continue to evolve and diversify.



## About Bilingual Communications

Bilingual Communications is a people-based translation agency - putting humans at the core of translation services again, facilitated by the digital world. We believe in the power of building a bridge with language across your most valued communities, combining the smartest technologies, with translators that are native speakers and have degrees in linguistics or translation. We're changing the way schools, governments, and businesses work - from SMEs to enterprises; using affordable, efficient and effective translation to connect minds, and grow channels of communication.

### Our clients say nice things about us:




A++: fast, efficient, and accurate in translation and format.  
Bilingual Communications has expedited communication to our employees - 40% of whom are non-English speaking.



- **Jim Shaw, Personnel Manager, Little River Inn**

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