



# TTS eGuide

## Will Machines replace Translators?

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## Introduction

The majority of the world does not speak English. Therefore, if you have any plans to sell or buy from the non-English speaking world it is extremely helpful if you can promote and engage in local languages i.e. translate your messages, web pages and documentation.

The technological developments in Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) in the last 10 years have resulted in Machine Translation becoming a more efficient and increasingly accurate tool for language translation. However, the robots may not have beaten us just yet. Humans have a more comprehensive understanding of how language is reliant on context, tone, and register, factors that machine translation often misinterprets.

Any business's engagement rate relies on the use of an engaging style and tone that not only calls the user to action but reflects the character of the brand itself. AI Language models can create convincing text with a specific function yet are unable to do so with a unique tone of voice that connects audiences specifically to your branding.

In this eGuide, we cover the three translation options listing their practical pros and cons and practical applications:

1. Machine Translation.
2. Hybrid.
3. Human.

**N.B.** Whichever option you choose, it is critical that the English text is well constructed. Badly prepared text will be simply made worse once translated. We have therefore added a final section on the importance of copywriting.

## Machine Translation

AI-powered machine translation has come a long way in recent years, making it seemingly easier and more affordable for businesses and individuals to communicate with people who speak different languages. But as with any new technology, it is important to understand its limits.

When preparing text for translation, you should use:

- Simple words where there is an alternative to “complex” words e.g. “can” rather than “has the capacity to” and “show” rather than “elucidate”.
- Very simple sentences e.g. avoid the use of subordinate clauses.
- Short sentences - no sentence being longer than 1 line in the text box.
- Bullet points to list key points you want to make.
- Short paragraphs to separate different concepts you want to communicate.
- Digits to express numbers rather than write them e.g. “1%” not “one percent”.

You should not use:

- Complex business terms e.g. “Dead cat bounce”, or “Golden share.”
- Cultural or sporting references e.g. “Simples” or “You will be bowled over”.
- Foreign words e.g. “caveat” or “alma mater”.
- Metaphors e.g. “America is a melting pot.”
- Slang or jargon e.g. “Gotcha” or “Gazumping”.

eGuide: Will Machines replace Translators?

- Idioms. These rely completely on contextual understanding e.g. “over the moon”, “the penny dropped etc.

If at all possible, you should also avoid:

- Acronyms e.g. “PDA” or “EBITDA” (unless you are sure that they are used and understood internationally)
- Similes e.g. “..... as gentle as a lamb”.
- The passive tense e.g. “We deliver goods within 7 days” is better than “Goods are delivered within 7 days.”
- Using the word “you”. Many languages have different forms representing not just “singular” and “plural” forms but also different degrees of formality – which the English word “you” does not convey. Apart from showing the “wrong” form, there is a risk that different forms will be used in the same document.
- Any sentences or phrases which could be ambiguous e.g. “Katy and Sharon were in the restaurant and Katy picked up her handbag.” In this sentence “her handbag” could refer equally to Katy’s or Sharon’s handbag.

**N.B.** If you draft your description taking the above into account, not only will the translations be more accurate, but will actually make it easier for English speakers to absorb your message.

## Pros of Machine Translations

- You can use them both for translating text you have received and text you want to send.
- They are inexpensive – usually free of charge.
- They are easy and fast to use – just copy and paste to generate the relevant translation.
- They cover just about any language.
- They can be used for spoken translations as well as written text.

## Cons of Machine Translations

- There are still significant limitations in translating complex text.

## Practical Applications for Machine Translations

- Translating incoming and outgoing emails and DMs.
- Chats, short blogs and social media posts.
- Short, impromptu Speak & Translate exchanges.

## Machine Translation Service Providers

Two major AI translation services are:

- [DeepL<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Google Translate<sup>2</sup>](#)

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<sup>1</sup> DeepL covers 29 languages, less than Google Translate but claims to be a better translator – and provides offline services.

<sup>2</sup> Google Translate currently covers 133 languages.

For speak & translate apps, these are available for your smart phone on both Google Play and Apple Store.

## Hybrid Translation

Hybrid translations are first translated by machines and then checked by a qualified translator.

### Pros of Hybrid Translations

- They are less expensive than “pure” human translations.
- Errors, awkward phrasing, and incorrect contextual interpretation are removed.

### Cons of Hybrid Translations

- It can be difficult to find translators for every language of interest.
- Language should still be kept as simple as possible to limit the time required for human checking and correction.

### Practical Applications for Hybrid Translations

- Translating web pages.
- Basic, short factual documentation.
- Instruction manuals.

### Hybrid Translations Services

PAB offers a hybrid translation service which uses the benefits of machine translation with the expertise and thoroughness of their trained multilingual linguists who will assess the accuracy, tone, semantics, and contextual accuracy of the copy. Pricing depends upon: (a) the length of the translation (b) the languages involved and (c) the complexity of the text. For a free, no obligation quote, just [click here](#), Once you have your quote you can then decide whether to proceed.

## Human Translation

These are translations where no machine translation is involved. A native-speaking expert will cater to cultural nuances, styling and always ensure a natural and engaging reception in a new market. Each piece of information and call to action will benefit from an international content strategy that is informed by multilingual experts who understand what phraseology will best suit their country's population.

### Pros of Human Translations

- They are the only accepted versions for certain legal documentation.
- They guarantee accuracy both in terms of terminology and communication “intent”<sup>3</sup>.
- They can provide culturally accurate translations – so that the overall sense of the message is accurately conveyed to the reader.

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<sup>3</sup> It is also worth bearing in mind that you mind that US and British English can be considered different languages. If you are preparing documentation intended for the US market, it is worth having this checked – there are horror story examples of where things have gone wrong.

- They work much better as Speak & Translate services in face to face meetings.

## Cons of Human Translations

- They are the most expensive option.
- They are slower than AI based services, so they can be problematic for documents you expect to change often and with close deadlines.
- In the case of face-to-face meetings, the interpreter has to be booked for a precise time (and often location).

## Practical Applications for Human Translations

- Notarised documentation – which can only be translated by certified translators.
- **All** legal documents. You should be aware that when translating legal terms e.g. “reasonable efforts” these can be translated from a linguistic point of view but they may have no legal meaning whatsoever under another legal jurisdiction; therefore you may also require [independent legal advice](#) when translating legal documents.
- Formal documentation e.g. proposals.
- Key marketing documentation.
- Key face-to-face meetings and presentations.

## Human Translation Services

Again, pricing depends upon: (a) the length of the translation (b) the languages involved (c) the complexity of the text and (d) whether it has to be notarised. For a free, no obligation quote, from PAB just [click here](#). Once you have your quote you can then decide whether to proceed.

## Conclusions

There is no doubt that Machine Translation services have progressed dramatically in quality over the past few years. They provide a perfectly adequately no\low-cost service for translating simple, basic texts in over 130 languages. However, when:

- More complex and culturally sensitive translations are required; or
- Face to face discussions are planned

then, human translators are still required – and are likely to be required for a considerable time to come.

## Other Considerations:

### Copywriting

The common theme for all options is that the original text is fundamental in achieving good translations. In the case of high-level marketing collateral where you are conveying “emotional” concepts, often the translation cannot be literal and you will need to discuss with the translator(s) what message you want to convey.

This is also true for Speak & Translate situations. The more you can prepare your messages for these situations the better.

## Check List

This short Check List that will help translators understand what you want to communicate. This is helpful both for hybrid and human translations.

Source Language: Target Language

Deadline:

Text or Speak & Translate service?

Content Type:

- Standard
- Certified\Notarised
- Technical
- Marketing
- Legal aid customer
- Other

General Briefing Comments:

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## About PAB Languages

At PAB Languages our award-winning translation, interpreting and localisation services bring people of different cultures and countries together. Using our team of native speaking experts, we support an organisation's ability to communicate in 200+ languages. While businesses can get by on the functionality of using English as a lingua franca, there is no doubt that engaging audiences or workforces using their native language will always achieve a more positive response and inclusive cultural reception.

For over a decade, we've been recognised by private and public sector organisations for our expert translation and interpreting services.

Get in touch to see how we can help you – <https://www.pabtranslation.co.uk/contact-us/>

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