

## Title

### Language Matters: The Impact of Language Services on the Global Market Research Industry

## Front-page

Engaging with a high-quality language service provider can be crucial for market research companies looking to grow in the global market. This paper demonstrates how a language service provider can make such an impact in the global market research industry and then shares the measures that can be adopted to maximise the commercial opportunity available.

### Key Takeaways:

- Appreciation of the obstacles involved when delivering global language solutions and their knock-on effect, not only to the market research data, but also the wider business activities of the end-clients
- Understanding language services best practice to overcome these pitfalls and deliver high-quality results

Using this knowledge market research companies can partner with the right language service provider, which will enable them to:

- Deliver accurate, high-quality, global data to their end-clients
- Strengthen the relationship with their end-clients and increase the potential for return business
- Demonstrate confidence and capability in the language element of their global market research projects, increasing the likelihood of winning project bids
- Improve their market position and increase revenue, as their reputation strengthens as experts in global market research studies

## Abstract

This paper looks to answer the question, 'What role do language services play in the delivery of market research data for global research studies?'

With global business comes the demand for effective language services. The [Common Sense Advisory](#) completed a review of the world's top websites and found that 60% were multilingual, often offering 30 or more languages. However, [Forbes](#) reports that American businesses alone have reportedly lost \$2 billion a year to language or cultural misunderstandings.

***Global market research studies need to deliver accurate, high-quality data to their clients to enable them to make informed choices and with that language services play an important role in gathering this information.***

***However, without best practice in place, language inaccuracies in market research data continue to have the potential to cause crucial misunderstandings and misinformed business choices, hindering brand strategies and leading to costly repercussions.***

This paper firstly identifies the potential pitfalls of the language service process and then details best practice measures that should be in place for successful collaboration between language service providers and global market research companies.

It concludes that if market research companies have a clear understanding of these processes within the language services industry, they will be empowered to select the right language service provider, who has these best practice measures in place to deliver high-quality language solutions with the appreciation of the importance that their role plays.

Working alongside a high-quality language service provider, market research companies can demonstrate confidence and competence in this key element of their global market research study to their end-clients.

This, in turn, has a positive, wider commercial impact, strengthening the relationship between the market research company and their end-clients and putting them in a favourable position to gain more work and generate further revenue.

## Introduction:

Market research forms an important element of any business activity, as it is this data gleaned from a target market that assists in companies making informed business decisions. But how can you draw decisive conclusions, if you are not able to communicate effectively with your potential customers?

**Effective market research relies on asking the right questions, in the right way and wholly understanding what the responses mean.**

Today many businesses are looking to go global. Technology has allowed us to open our doors to customers on the other side of the world with a simple click of a button. Many of the barriers that traditionally prevented a business from expanding have been removed and therefore the scope is huge. However, one barrier that does still need to be overcome is language. For many years, the international language of business was English, but organisations can no longer presume that this is enough to get a full insight into their global customer base. To complete a true and accurate global market research study and gain meaningful data, the native language must be used; following this, language services (translation, transcription and interpreting) usually then become an important factor in the process to allow analysis in English to take place.

The [Common Sense Advisory](#) completed an annual review of the world's 2,787 most prominent websites and found that 60% of these sites were multilingual, with big brands offering 30 or more languages. Companies with prominent websites, which included 33 languages or more, grew the amount of capital they carried over from 2012 to 2013 by 12.42%, almost double the amount as companies with fewer than 20 languages.

**It is evident that successful, globally-operating companies communicate in multiple languages, no longer relying on English to get by, and alongside this they demand clear insight into their markets on a native level in order to continue to trade effectually. Consequently, language services are no longer an add-on to a market research study. In fact, they should be one of the core processes within the whole global market research project.**

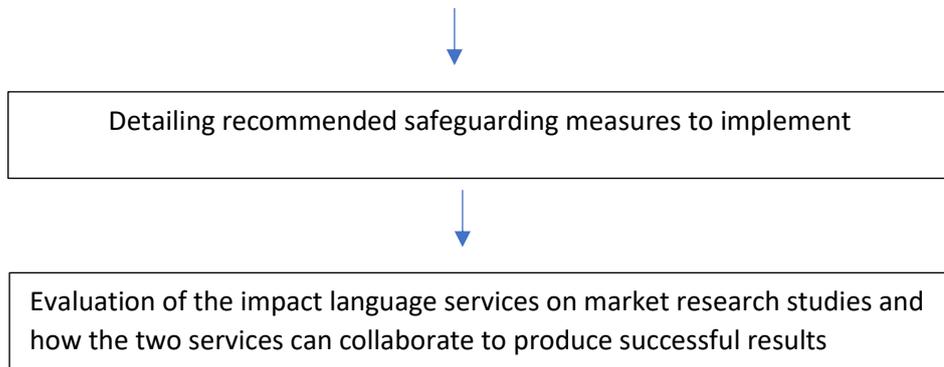
Not investing in the right language service provider (LSP) can cause huge issues for a study. Inaccurate translation can lead to meaningless data and in turn, misinformed decisions that can impact not only the market research company but also the relationship with their end-client and their business strategy. Conversely, implementing best practice when using language services will assist in delivering market research data that enables the end-client to engage successfully with a multilingual customer base and bring to market the most effective products and services.

The advantages to the market research industry of effective language services may often be overlooked. However, armed with the knowledge of its best practice, the potential pitfalls, the opportunities and the ways in which language services correlate with a successful end result will give market researchers the tools to assist in delivering meaningful research in any global market.

**From the perspective of the market research company, having the knowledge and demonstrating competence in global language solutions to their end-client will give them the edge over their competitors and maximise their own business potential.**

This paper aims to be a best practice guide for market research organisations who engage with language service providers and is structured in the following way:

Addressing the potential obstacles when dealing with a multilingual study



## Background – The Obstacles

As reported by Forbes, the [U.S. Committee on Economic Development \(CED\)](#) suggests that American businesses lose more than \$2 billion a year to language or cultural misunderstandings.

**Initial investment in effective communication clearly generates long term value.**

Communication in one’s native language is the only way to guarantee that the details of a study are fully understood and participants in a study are able to express themselves freely, without any language restraints. Therefore, first and foremost, studies in foreign markets should be conducted in the native tongue.

If data analysis is to be completed in English, this presents the requirement for language services and this additional stage itself can present pitfalls if the process is not managed correctly. Meaning can be lost or data misinterpreted, which can significantly skew the conclusions drawn.

**Being aware of these potential obstacles from the outset, understanding their impact on a market research study and having the strategies in place to avoid them will assist in the smooth running of the project, a high-quality product, delivered on time and happy end-clients.**

The potential obstacles that impact the results of a market research study are outlined below:

**Quality:**

**With a high-quality translation, the questions will be conveyed in the original, intended manner, without bias, and all the subtleties contained within the responses will be fully captured.**

Accuracy in translation is key; not just when focusing on the individual terminology within a study, but also when to communicate a clear understanding of the goal of the research and its full responses.

An accurate translation of a question will enable the participant to fully understand what information the study is looking for. The phrasing of the question must remain as objective as the original, as the creation of a leading question could then produce a bias in the answers.

*For example, if a question asking 'Do you like anything about this product?' is translated to 'What do you like about this product?' it is inviting a positive response. If the participant actually doesn't like anything, they may try to come up with an answer anyway in order to answer the question.*

The responses gained also require careful attention to the subtle details to ensure all data is fully and accurately captured.

In a quantitative study, if multiple choice answers are slightly misrepresented in the translation, participants may consider different options than what reflects their true opinion and this will result in the data being skewed.

*For example, correct and clear distinctions in the use of 'great', 'good' and 'okay' will impact the data collected.*

In a qualitative study, every small detail could contain meaning that may affect the analysis.

*For example, a hesitation may allude to uncertainty, whilst a repetition could reflect confidence and conviction; potentially important aspects to a market research study.*

*Furthermore, depending on the nature of the study, participants may not feel confident to answer questions in a direct manner; they may skirt around an issue or provide hints about something they are not happy about without directly addressing the issue.*

Only with an accurate translation of the data presented, with close attention to such subtleties, can valid conclusions can be drawn from the analysis.

Even prior to the research commencing, care must be given to using the right language to recruit participants. It is likely that market researchers will have a specific demographic needed for their

clients' projects and an inaccurate translation of the project brief could result in not recruiting the right people or simply not attracting enough people at all.

The impact of misinterpreted data can have drastic results for the end-client. For example, inaccurate data provided when researching an advertising campaign in a local market could lead to that campaign being poorly received, potentially damaging a company's reputation.

A famously [mistranslated tagline for Pepsi](#) has gone down in marketing lore. The initial campaign was "Come alive! You're in the Pepsi generation". However, it has been reported that the subtle change to "Come alive with Pepsi!" led to the misinterpretation in China that this was suggesting the drink brought back ancestors from the grave! There have been various claims on how this was translated to the Chinese market, including:

- Come alive out of the grave with Pepsi.
- Pepsi will bring your ancestors back from the dead.
- Bring dead ancestors back from heaven.

This example firstly demonstrates how a subtle change in a phrase can have quite disastrous effects when translated and secondly questions how there was not local research carried out to pick up this pitfall before the campaign went live. It is reported that sales in China took a dramatic downturn following the campaign, but with no confirmed data from Pepsi, the real effect is actually unknown.

Innocent (fruit smoothies) is a good example of a brand that has gone through a journey of appreciation in how to research their local markets in order to produce successful marketing campaigns. The branding of this company is known for being quirky, chatty and a little offbeat. This style of marketing has worked well in the U.K., leading to the brand being valued at [\\$500 million](#) in 2013 and selling its last remaining stake to Coca Cola. However, in the European market they learnt quickly that market research, quality translation and localisation is required for a successful campaign. At their [first French trade show](#), Adam Balon, co-founder, describes how they were getting plenty of interest in their products, but not for the right reasons. It transpired that one of their key selling points, no preservatives, had no direct translation in French and what their GCSE French had actually created was a slogan advertising 'condom-free' drinks.

The brand has come a long way since then and now their [creative marketing teams throughout Europe](#) are initially trained in the brand's ethos, but at the same time are trusted to translate and localise the campaigns in a way that reflects local preferences, whilst still retaining the Innocent personality – an ideal target for a brand going global!

It is not just market research for advertising campaigns where the language is so critical. Product development also requires accurate translation of market research data for a successful launch. Inaccurate conclusions drawn on a new potential product could lead to the launch of an incorrect or unsuitable product and it subsequently failing because it is not received well by the target demographic.

For example, Coca Cola made a costly product launch error through asking the wrong questions during their market research. In 2004, they were looking to target a growing American market segment of 20-40-year-old men that liked the taste of Coke but were looking to reduce calories. This target demographic had been identified as not liking the taste of diet coke, as well as its brand perception, so were looking for an alternative diet drink.

The result was the creation of [C2](#); a mid-calorie, low carb alternative. The marketing cost of the product was reportedly \$50 million, but it still failed. Why? The taste was mediocre, the calories were not that low and it was more expensive than Coke's other varieties. The consumers were therefore not impressed.

Coca Cola had failed to understand that this market at the time was looking for big taste, no carbs and no calories. The market research had been completed, but the right questions had not been asked to get this information. This highlights the importance of adopting the right phraseology in a question to ensure a full understanding of a participant's opinion is gained.

This brand is English-speaking, running a campaign for an English-speaking market and still failed to get the right data. When working in global markets, translation adds a further stage where there is the potential for meaning to be lost. Linguists must fully understand the objectives of a project and ensure the translation of the project's questions and responses are in line with these goals to achieve a complete understanding of the target market.

A success story on a company launching the right product in the right market, using language solutions to understand the market, is that of [Costa Activa](#), a Spanish real estate agency. The timing of their initial launch was not ideal, as it was in the midst of the property downturn in the late noughties.

With their traditional markets of Northern Europe undergoing a crisis, Costa Activa focused its sights on the Russian market. However, they had little experience in this target market. To overcome this obstacle, careful, quality market research of the local target customer base, using accurate and high-quality language solutions was required. By gaining this understanding, Costa Activa were able to connect effectively with their new Russian target market. Using this market research, they observed the difference in mentality in Russia when purchasing property and adapted their approach to succeed in their product launch. Subsequently, Russian buyers now account for nearly 10% of the Spanish property market.

The campaign proved to be so successful that they applied the same strategy of thorough local market research via language solutions for other 'non-traditional' markets such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Germany, China and the UAE and successfully launched their campaigns in these markets too.

**The quality of a translation or transcription of a market research study has the potential to hugely impact the participants' understanding and thus their answers, the analysis that is completed and the conclusions drawn.**

The above examples illustrate how these inaccuracies in the market research then has the potential for critical knock-on effects for the end-client. Wasted budgets, loss of confidence from their customers that effects sales from the campaign and potentially also long term for the brand, combine to impact the future activities of a business. Equally, a full understanding of a local market via high-quality language solutions has the potential to turnaround the fortunes of a business and its impact on the global market.

**By demonstrating competency in the quality control of the translation or transcription of a global market research project to the end-client, a market research company will have the edge over their competitors and is much more likely to be engaged for carrying out this research.**

Word for word or literal translation has been shown to be ineffective for anything more than very simple communication. It is one of the main reasons why Google and other machine translation technology are still struggling to provide satisfactory results.

When speaking to a different target audience, with a different cultural background, an appreciation of their culture and the context is very important. Manipulating a translation so that it speaks appropriately to a new audience in a different global location, whilst still retaining the meaning of the original piece is known as localisation. A successfully localised translation will connect with the local market in the manner it was intended and evoke the desired response.

**Failing to localise a translation for a new target market could result in a lack of understanding of a concept or, worst-case scenario, causing offence.**

Localisation is not simply about the words in a translation. Localisation includes checking the images, the colours and the formatting, as illustrated in the examples below:

[Orange](#), previously one of Britain's largest mobile phone networks, had to rethink their advertising campaign when launching in Northern Ireland. The familiar slogan 'The future's bright, the future's Orange,' was understandably culturally inappropriate when the brand was looking to increase its market share in 1996. This case study demonstrates that localisation is not simply about language, but equally colour, images and formatting, which all have a role to play when targeting a new customer base.

Innocent smoothies again prove to be exemplary in their localisation of their content according to the relevant target market. Their [website](#) is not only multilingual but also multicultural, in that they have identified differences in the best way to engage with their English, Irish and Australian target markets despite each of them speaking the same language. Furthermore, each country website has

used different images and structures within their pages, suggesting that local market research has taken place to consider these preferences and the appropriate localisation has been implemented.

This localisation of the Innocent brand continues on their social media activity too. For example, on [Twitter in the U.K.](#) a winter campaign was run with their smoothies wearing woolly hats and images of these were shared. In [Ireland](#) instead of woolly hats, the local term 'Irish Big Knit' hats was used and in [France](#), these woolly hats were pictured at the Eiffel Tower.

A recent successful example of language localisation specifically was a campaign by Coca Cola, who added names to their cans to personalise the product. The tagline to the campaign was "[Share a Coke with...](#)" The U.K. market embraced this idea and it was hugely successful. Coca Cola then took this success to a new level when addressing other global markets. Their market research and localisation of the campaign was unfaltering. In Ireland, the names were adjusted for local preferences, e.g. instead of John, James and Sarah, names such as Aoife and Oisín were used. Furthermore, in China, it was realised that it is not culturally respectful to address people by their first names, therefore instead the names on the cans were replaced with terms such as 'close friend' or 'classmate'. This resulted in the strategy being well-received in all of these different target markets. Coca Cola stayed true to the original marketing campaign but had localised it successfully for a new global market.

### **Adherence to deadlines:**

Timelines in market research studies are very important and by adding language services to the project, there is another cog in the wheel that must run smoothly. Having more people and more processes involved will always increase the risk of something falling out of place.

If the delivery of a translation or transcription is delayed, the study may be held up and potentially so is delivery of the analysis to the client.

**The impact of this delay for the end-client could be a postponed or cancelled campaign or launch of a product, negatively impacting their revenue and again possibly their reputation.**

A language service provider should have procedures in place to minimize the risk of a delayed delivery. When the market researcher receives the translation or transcription on time, they are able to proceed with the next step in their analysis and deliver a satisfactory result to their end-client. A punctual delivery from the language service provider, therefore, has an impact on the relationship between the market research company and their client and furthermore can have a knock-on effect on the campaign as a whole.

### **Coding:**

With many market research companies creating surveys online, translating files that contain coding is common.

The potential pitfall that this causes is the translators having to work around the coding correctly.

**Any errors placed within the coded text will lead to a file not uploading correctly or creating an error when it is in use online.**

This error may not even be immediately apparent and when the issue is found, it will again cause delays in the project, accumulating further costs to the client.

A correctly formatted file that contains coding can be uploaded without issue. The participants in the study are able to navigate around the survey with ease; selecting their responses in quantitative studies or inputting more lengthy information for a qualitative research project, and moving from one section to another, with ease, in the way the survey was designed. The researcher will then be able to download the participant's information, if required, and take it to the next stage in their analysis.

### **Working with audio files:**

A frequent method of data collection in the market research industry is via interviews. These could be in-depth interviews (IDIs) or focus groups. Data collection can then involve the creation of a transcript of the recorded audio and if completed in a foreign language, translation for analysis.

A common issue with transcription is finding sections of the audio that are inaudible.

**Too many marked 'inaudibles' in a transcript will mean that important data could be lost and affect the conclusions drawn.**

When a transcript contains too many inaudibles and analysis is not able to be completed, significant time and budget in the market research project will have been wasted. It is near to impossible to 'recreate' the interview and achieve the same responses, so this data is essentially lost.

A number of steps can be put in place to ensure the best possible transcript is delivered, no additional participants need to be recruited, the analysis is not hindered and a high-quality result is delivered promptly to the end-client.

As well as inaudibles, the way an audio is transcribed can vary quite significantly.

**A researcher must decide whether every word and utterance should be transcribed; known as full verbatim or whether a transcriber should complete 'intelligent verbatim' transcription.**

Intelligent verbatim involves removing anything deemed as insignificant to the discussion, including 'errs', 'ums', hesitations or repetitions. The benefit of intelligent verbatim is that a much easier to read, concise and clear transcript is created. However, the issue lies with ensuring that the right information is removed and not anything that could affect the results. For example, a hesitation may be viewed as unimportant in one instance, but in another scenario, this could be demonstrating a participant's uncertainty about a particular response.

When a transcript is completed full verbatim, each and every utterance should be transcribed. This can make for more difficult reading but provides the assurance that no detail from the audio has been omitted.

The market research company and their end-client will determine how the transcription should be completed. Communicating these instructions fully to the language service provider will ensure the transcript is completed correctly from the outset and no further amendments, potentially requiring a lengthy second review of the audio, are required. Data is received in the manner required and analysis can begin promptly.

## **Interpreting:**

**Using a face-to-face interpreter during an interview or focus group session is sometimes preferred, as subtle hints, such as tone of voice, facial expression and body language will then also be picked up.**

The biggest obstacle to overcome with using this language solution is physical location. If the market research company is based in the U.K. and the target market elsewhere, making arrangements for all members, including the interpreter, to meet can be costly and time restrictive. The longer the travel, the higher the percentage chance of delays and any such delays in arrivals could potentially lead to cancellations or postponements, then causing further costs.

Using an interpreter will also have many of the pitfalls as those described above for translation and transcription work:

- The information must be accurately and effectively conveyed between the moderator and participant to avoid misunderstandings and invalid conclusions.
- Appropriate localisation of the dialogue must take place instantaneously, so the discussion is successful and the flow is natural.

Other considerations include:

- Determining the need for the use of booths with headsets and microphones and the technical requirements this entails
- The suitability of the space
- The position of the moderator, interpreter and participant (s) to ensure an obstructed view

Having made these necessary considerations and implemented their solutions will enable a successful research session, providing valuable in-depth data, including the interpretation of more subtle cues from body language and facial expressions.

## The Solutions

Working with a good quality language service provider can make the difference to the success of a global market research project due to their complete understanding of their clients' objectives and full appreciation of the impact of their involvement in the process.

They will recognise that the work they deliver will affect not only the results of a market research study but goes further to impact the relationship between the market research company and their end-client, as well as the wider commercial success of their business activities. A successful global market research study, therefore, equals not only a satisfied market research company but a happy end-client, who have maximised their return on their investment (ROI) in their new campaign.

***In short, working with a high-quality language service provider strengthens the relationship between the market research company and their end-clients, promotes their reputation as a real global influencer in the market research industry and ultimately generates the business more revenue.***

### Insert image 3

A good language service provider will have proven processes in place to avoid the pitfalls outlined in this paper, to exploit the potential opportunities and to maximise the success of each and every global study. Furthermore, they will appreciate the uniqueness of each client's project and be able to be flexible to adapt their processes to accommodate these requirements.

***Having full respect of the wider impact of their contribution to a study and its knock-on effects will drive a language service provider to implement best practice and ensure a successful delivery.***

By gaining knowledge of the best practices in language service delivery, market research companies can make informed choices on which language service provider to partner with. They can select a language service provider who has the proven capability to deliver the most effective language solutions on every level, and who take up that responsibility of the importance that their service brings not only to the research project but to the market research company's relationship with the end-client and their further business choices.

These best practice processes in language service delivery are detailed below.

## **Quality**

To achieve the best possible quality in a translation or transcription project, there are a number of principles that should be in place.

### ***Use of native translators to fully convey the intricacies and colloquiums of the language.***

To achieve the highest quality translation, the translator should be native to the language they are translating into. Studying a second language to a high level will enable a translator to be fully fluent and able to provide a good quality translation, however living with the language day-to-day provides a thorough understanding of all the subtleties used in the language.

### ***Use of fully qualified, professional translators***

All translators used should have studied to an industry-recognised translation qualification or degree. This provides a full understanding of the technical aspects of translation over and above being fluent in the language.

### ***Industry-specialists for a complete and up-to-date understanding of technical terminology***

A translator working on a project should also be experienced in the relevant industry sector. Within the market research industry, there are a whole range of subjects that are addressed; from medical to financial, commercial to legal and more. A translator would struggle to have complete knowledge in all of these areas. Therefore, employing a translator that is a specialist in that industry sector will ensure that they are completely up-to-date with any technical terminology, processes and trends, as well as the contextual understanding of the subject matter to use the vocabulary appropriately.

### ***Proofreading and editing by an equally-qualified linguist as a failsafe***

Even with the utmost of care, there is still the possibility of human error in a piece of work. By recognising this and using a proofreader for every project means any error is caught and rectified before delivery to the market research company.

**A good language service provider should be offering proofreading as standard, not as an add-on service.**

The proofreader should be equally-qualified and experienced. They should be provided with the original source document, the translated version and the project brief that was given to the translator.

A proofreader should evaluate the quality and style of the language used, assessing if it accurately achieves the aim of the brief, as well as checking the file for correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.

### ***Quality-control measures for proofreading***

A language service provider should be putting measures in place to check that the proofreader is 100% thorough with their examination of the document. For example, a few 'deliberate errors' could be inserted throughout the translation. Checking that these errors have been picked up will demonstrate that the translation has been meticulously checked.

Once the feedback from the proofreader has been compiled, it should be sent back to the original translator to resolve any queries. There may be some back and forth between the linguists at this stage if any of the queries are particularly complex. However, between them, they should aim to finalise the document to a standard that successfully achieves the client's brief.

*Sometimes there is disagreement...*

Occasionally, the translator and proofreader struggle to agree on a final version of the translation. In this case, a 3<sup>rd</sup> independent translator should be engaged to check the translation, provide another perspective and agree on a final, best version.

### ***Recruitment and screening***

The quality of translation or transcription relies heavily on selecting the right linguists for the project, as detailed above. A good quality language service provider should have robust processes in place to recruit and screen their linguists to their database.

Work history, qualifications and references should be verified and all linguists should undergo a language test to ensure their suitability for the projects. Feedback from clients, proofreaders and the internal project management team should be logged to monitor consistent high-standards and drive any improvements required.

### ***The market research company has a role to play too***

The client or market research company can also assist with the accuracy of a translation of a study and its timely delivery.

A good language service provider will want to fully and clearly understand their client's brief before embarking on a project.

**The goal, the context and the demographic are key elements of a study that a language service provider should be asking for before commencing.**

*For example, if a study is targeted to ask older adults about their opinion on their television viewing, the language used, its phraseology and tone adopted, can be different to that of a study researching the television viewing habits of teenagers.*

*Equally, in a qualitative study, when using a discussion guide for an in-depth interview in a business context, the language used will be professional and formal. In contrast, a focus group session for young people, in a less formal environment, the conversation is likely to be more open, honest and less restricted.*

The care and thought put into the design of a study, its objectives and the phrasing of its questions to achieve these goals should be appreciated by the language service provider and replicated as closely as possible in the translation. With a clear brief provided, the translators can ensure this is achieved, the project is translated effectively and the best possible data is obtained.

**Without accurate, high-quality translation or transcription, the meaning behind the data is lost and conclusions are no longer valid. Implementing quality-control measures is therefore critical to the success of any global market research project.**

*Image 1*

## **Localisation:**

Localisation is also an important aspect in the quality of translation. If a translation is not localised to the specific target market, it may not be fully understood by the new customer base, or worse, could cause offence.

***Effective localisation requires the use of native experts with local knowledge to assess that the communication is appropriate.***

Within the translation process, all linguists involved should be native, so their combined knowledge of the local market will ensure the translated file is received in the best possible way by the target audience.

Local experts will have a full understanding of not just the linguistically correct words, but also the manner in which their culture communicates. This understanding of the culture and not just the language can have a huge impact on a study.

*For example, one crucial aspect of the way Japanese people communicate is their reluctance to be confrontational or negative in their responses. In their culture, they will strive to avoid upsetting the social harmony. As such, Japanese participants are much more likely to respond with something along the lines of 'I will think about it' or 'That could be difficult' when their actual opinion is much stronger. A local expert will appreciate this and be able to make an informed judgement on the meaning behind the responses.*

Cultures, where communication is less direct, is sometimes referred to as a high-context culture and is common among the Asian communities. Subtleties in the language and cues from facial expressions and body language then become very important to obtain a full understanding of these participants perspectives.

**The way in which different cultures speak, the language which they consider to be appropriate and what they mean between the lines can massively change the outcome of a market research project, making the localisation a crucial aspect of the study.**

## **Adherence to deadlines:**

When designing a market research project for a global target market, language services are likely to become a core element within the process. Ensuring that this aspect of the project hits the required deadlines will prevent any delays in the next stages.

There are a number of principles that should be implemented to assist in keeping to deadlines:

- Realistic targets
  - An experienced translator 3,000 words per day, or for transcription four hours for one hour of audio
  - For audio files, consider audio quality and technicality of file
  - Factor in time for proofreading and editing and the communication that this involves
  - Consider the time zones of the linguists and the delay in communication this may cause
- Pre-booking linguists, where possible, so they can commence as soon as the file is available
- Having other linguists on standby, as back-ups for any issues encountered
- Building in extra time when communicating deadlines to linguists to allow for checks any potential delays, e.g. if a file is due back to the market research client at 5 pm, a suggested deadline for the linguists may be 1 pm (depending on its length)
- If a lengthy project is required that is being worked on over more than a few hours, agree on milestones with the translator/transcriber, where work is sent back in sections. This allows the proofreader to get started and work simultaneously – speeding up the process, and also providing a safeguard of having portions of the work on file if any problems in delivery are encountered

- Regular communication between translator/transcriber and language service provider, as well as between the language service provider and the market research company, so that any queries can be identified early and resolved before they become a hindrance to the

**Keeping a project on track is crucial to maintaining good quality business relationships between the market research company and end-client, remaining within the overall budget of the campaign and maximising its commercial opportunities.**

## Coding:

Coding within a file is becoming more frequent, as market research projects adopt online surveys as a method of gathering data for both qualitative and quantitative research. Files containing coding need to be handled in a different way to standard files for translation, so that they can be uploaded successfully.

It is therefore recommended that the following measures are taken:

- Use of linguists who are experienced and fully confident with handling files containing coding
- Issuing clear instructions on what elements require attention
  - Communication, if possible, with the original coder from the market research company
- Provision of a link-checking service by the linguist, when the file is uploaded, to ensure all functions of the file work correctly

**Working on a file that contains coding is relatively straightforward, as long as the linguist fully understands its requirements. The resulting translated file then provides the market research company with a swift and relatively easy method of large-scale data collection.**

## Working with audio files:

### *Avoiding inaudibles*

Inaudibles in a transcript of an audio means incomplete data and the inability to draw fully-informed conclusions.

This can be minimised if the following procedures are in place:

- Obtaining the best possible quality of audio

- Consider the equipment used
- Avoid background noise and interruptions
- Consider the position of the moderator and participants
- Use of experienced transcribers; just because a linguist can translate, it does not automatically mean that they can transcribe. Transcription is a very specialist skill.
- Ensure transcribers are using transcription software, including audio enhancement and tools to enable easier navigation and manipulation of the audio
- Ensuring transcribers take care to go over the file, relistening to capture inaudibles and checking that all dialogue is correctly transcribed

***Provide clarification on the terms full verbatim and intelligent verbatim***

With more than one way to transcribe a file, for a researcher to receive their desired output, specific instructions should be provided. Be clear, as the understanding of the terms full verbatim and intelligent verbatim can vary across the industry. Instead, it is worthwhile specifying exactly what type of dialogue to include and omit.

**Audio is a frequently-used method of data collection for in-depth interviews and focus groups and the full transcription of its contents permits careful analysis.**

**Lost audio data is often unreclaimable!**

**If a participant expresses themselves and it is not captured, it is unlikely that this response can be recreated.**

**Ensuring the language service provider implements these necessary measures to ensure that as much of the content as possible is documented will enable fuller and more accurate analysis.**

## **Interpreting:**

The physical logistics of setting up a face-to-face interpreting session can prove challenging and costly. However, if it is evaluated to be worthwhile, then all measures should be put in place to ensure that the interpreting session is a success.

A language service provider should:

- Allocate the booking to an experienced, qualified interpreter, who specialises in the relevant industry sector
- Provide the interpreter with clear booking details and assistance with travel arrangement

- Supply the interpreter with background information on the study that will allow the interpreter to be fully prepared. This should be requested from the market research company at the time of booking and may include:
  - Its goal or purpose
  - The number of participants
  - Glossaries of specialised vocabulary that may be used. This could include company-specific terms such as brand names.
- Make reminder calls to ensure the interpreter is attending as planned and there are no potential complications
- Offer an alternative solution, such as video conference interpreting or telephone interpreting, if required
  - If this option is taken up, ensure all technology is checked to avoid disruption

### ***Choosing the appropriate interpreter for the scenario***

#### *Consecutive Interpreting*

A consecutive interpreter should be used when interpreting back and forth between the two languages is required. This would normally be between a moderator and participant(s) and could be during an in-depth interview (IDI) or focus group session. The linguist will interpret when a natural pause in the discussion occurs.

#### *Simultaneous Interpreting*

If the discussion is taking place in just the target language, where the client or moderator (speaking the 2<sup>nd</sup> language) is behind glass or in a separate room, a simultaneous interpreter should be used. This type of interpreter will interpret the dialogue at the same time as it is taking place and should be native in the language spoken by the participants.

Simultaneous interpreting is a highly-skilled job and therefore the interpreter should be fully qualified and experienced in the role. This is not a skill that a 'standard' interpreter could complete impromptu.

A simultaneous interpreting session will normally require a specific set-up with a separate room or booth for the interpreter and client, with microphones and headsets. This type of equipment will need to be booked in advance and if the venue does not offer this type of facility, then the language service provider should be able to assist in providing them.

**Face-to-face interviews could be considered one of the most valuable methods of data collections because as well as the dialogue, all subtle non-verbal cues can also be picked up. However, the costly nature of providing interpreters for such sessions means that language service providers should have key procedures in place to ensure that they run smoothly and are successful in their goal.**

*Image 2*

## **Conclusion**

This aim of this report is to evaluate the impact language services have on the global market research industry and to share best practice guidance of language processes, so market research companies are able to make informed choices and plan strategically for their projects.

The potential obstacles that have been identified when engaging with language services are issues of quality, appropriate localisation, hitting deadlines, working with files that contain coding and effective transcription of audio files. The pitfalls when working with face-to-face interpreters were also addressed. Each of these obstacles, if not successfully overcome, have the ability to disrupt the successful running of a market research project, impacting the delivery and accuracy of the analysis.

It has been recognised that the knock-on effects to the end-client and their campaign can be detrimental to their ongoing business activities. Delays and inaccuracies may incur wasted budgets, loss of revenue and damaged brand reputation.

**Working with a good quality language service provider where best practice is consistently implemented is crucial to the successful delivery of a global market research project, improved relationships with the end-clients and a positive commercial impact across the board.**

To achieve the best possible quality language solution, including appropriate localisation, language service providers should have robust measures in place to recruit and screen linguists for their database and then manage the projects or bookings that are allocated to them.

These linguists should be native to the language are working in, fully qualified and experienced in the industry sector of the project. This applies to translation, transcription and interpreting work. Throughout the project, the language service provider should have careful, quality control measures in place, such as proofreading, use of deliberate errors and an up-to-date system of monitoring feedback, to deliver consistently high-standard results. Each of these procedures have been detailed within this paper.

The language service provider has a key role to play in project managing a task to ensure deadlines are met and bookings completed successfully. From the outset, realistic targets, that factor in all the processes, should be set. The language service provider needs to communicate regularly with all of the linguists involved in a project and relay any necessary information back to the market research company. Clear instructions should be issued to the linguists via a project brief that includes regular milestones for them to achieve. Pre-booking and using standby linguists assist with the time management of the project.

With the frequency of the language requirements increasing at a remarkable rate, there is the opportunity to build long-term, successful working relationships between market research businesses and language service providers, where the language service provider becomes almost a part of the in-house market research team.

**Having the knowledge of language services' best practice will empower market research companies to engage with a service they can trust to fulfil their requirements**

They should aim to select a language service provider that can demonstrate the capability to handle global market research studies, who follow best practice procedures and has a complete understanding of the importance that their role plays. In making an informed choice in this way, market research companies have the means to deliver high-quality, global data, improving the relationship with their end-clients.

Furthermore, by partnering with a good language service provider, a market research company can demonstrate confidence and competence in the language element of the market research project to their end-client. This will strengthen their position as a bidder for any global market research projects.

**Ultimately, a market research company that demonstrates awareness of good language practices will have an increased chance of winning bids, and in seeing the benefits of these principles in action, end-clients are more likely to return. Market research companies can build their reputation, offering a highly-effective, global solution to their clients and generating more revenue for all involved.**

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