

Be a Professional Translator and Deliver Great Translation Services

If translation services were an easy thing to deliver, automatic translators would be kings...

Translating and translation services do not just consist in replacing an English word by a French word. If it were that simple, automatic translators would be kings. Fortunately, at the moment, and I believe that it will always be the case, they are not good enough for the job. An example of this was the automatic translation of an article about the wife of the American president, Laura Bush. Even if automatic translators are set to recognize some expressions, every and each expression can not be entered in the translation software. So "Laura Bush" had been translated in French by "le buisson de Laura". "Bush" was taken literally as a noun by the machine instead of as a family name. The funny part is that in French, "buisson" can have a sexual connotation and be understood for female parts. Not quite adequate for a newspaper...

As long as automatic machine translation will be subject to this kind of misunderstandings, human translation will be needed. I outlined in the first paragraph what translation services are not, let's see now what translating really is like. The first idea that comes to mind is one of a crafter. A translator is a crafter. Some of you, dear readers, may be incredulous. A translator no more than a baker, than a smith?

Let's take the case of a smith making a sword. From scratch to be exact. He takes pieces of iron, turns them red in order to shape them into a blade. During this step, he can achieve different levels of quality, different levels of sharpness. At this stage, the pieces of iron look like a sword, but a blade made of iron easily breaks. That is why there is another step afterwards. The smith adds coal powder on the hot blade in order to turn iron into steel. Once the blade is strengthened, the smith may sell his work. However, the client will still see hammer impacts on the blade. Would you buy a sword that is not smooth and shiny? Polishing the blade is indeed the last step to be carried out by the smith. Not that simple, eh?

Well, the translator is acting similarly with the source text. At the start, he writes a draft. It could be enough at this point, as for the sword now the text is translated. Nevertheless, it lacks the "coal powder" or as we say, proofreading. We verify that there are no misunderstandings nor incoherencies. But then again, it is not finished. The translation is not smooth, or fluent. The real task for a translator is to hide the translation marks. The reader must conceive that the target text is not the result of translation services but an original document. As for Excalibur, can we suppose that at the commencement it was no more than pieces of iron?

Once all these steps have been carried out, this professional translation will be as sharp as the sword and achieve what it was made for. I like to consider translators as smiths of the words. Do not underestimate the power that is given to translators and translation services for the pencil will always be stronger than the blade.

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About the Author

About the Author: Armando Riquier has been participating in the Tectrad control team as a freelance expert translator and writer. The Tectrad group comprises various agencies delivering high quality translations in the area of finance, legal and business writings. Use their specialized [translation services](#) to expand your customer base to Europe's markets.