Creating An Impactful

eLearning
Localization Strategy

A Complete Guide For L&D Professionals

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"Translation is that which transforms everything so that nothing changes."

— *Günter Grass*

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The dominant language of the modern global economy is English. While English is the native language for companies headquartered in the US, most of the manufacturing, research, warehouses, and other facilities around the world communicate in other languages. Therefore, when these companies need to train or educate employees or their target audience in another country, the message must be conveyed in a language and style the learner can understand. This is proven to have the best engagement and comprehension. The best global companies realize this truth and are investing accordingly to assure that corporate strategies, policies, and processes are explained in their employee's native language. Why? Rule #1.

90% of People Want to Learn in their Native Language

Employees want to work for a successful company. They to want to contribute to the company's growth and prosperity. To do so, they will need to be educated on the company philosophy, best practices, processes, and desired outcomes. They must learn quickly how to perform according to company standards. Employees want to learn in their native language so that they can comprehend fully and apply information faster. To receive this information directly and not through the filter of a supervisor/interpreter is the purest form of learning.

Many companies expand internationally and require that their key managers be bilingual. Some companies, like the Japanese firm Softbank Mobile – who purchased a 70% share of Sprint-Nextel in the U.S., – immediately offered 1 million yen ($9,800) for employees who could master a new language skill. This option is clearly limited because it is quite time-consuming and expensive. The option to simply hire individuals who are already fluent in two languages AND have the right professional skill collapses the labor pool to a very small number to choose from. Even when a bilingual candidate is found and hired, they are first hired because of professional competency in management and/or technical skill. To then add the burden that they are expected to personally train and/or translate books of policies and procedures to all other employees is a no-win situation.

"What is the real impact of localizing training content for a global workforce - Is there any ROI?"

Localizing content is the task of transforming information from one language (source) into another language (target) in a way that the end-user will digest with maximum comprehension. The word "translation" is often used instead of localization. While these terms are similar in nature, there is a significant difference in the details, especially when graphic or images and non-text content is involved.

What is the impact and return on investment (ROI) of Localization?

One of the biggest questions many companies face is whether or not localization works and if so, is there a Return on Investment (ROI)?   ROI is not just about the numbers. Localizing training content has proven to accelerate productivity, reduce lost time, mitigate injury claims, and improve employee retention.

Employees respond positively to receiving learning content in their own language – sometimes dramatically.

In addition to the ROI described above, there are also 'soft costs' that can be dramatically impacted by localization vs. translation efforts. Here are some examples:

Case Study #1: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates that language barriers contribute to 25% of job-related accidents. DFW Airport took this to heart and offered safety practices localized into Spanish to its employees. Lost time dropped to a level of 83% below the Texas state-wide average and the Airport Authority enjoyed a period of 5 years with no fatalities.

Case Study #2: A U.S. food manufacturer found it difficult to train non-English speaking laborers. Their inability to speak and read English made it difficult for them to perform their jobs effectively. The solution was to administer training material in Spanish to 1,265 adult learners. Assessments were conducted by comparing scores before and immediately following training. The impact?

> **Outcome:** Scores concerning food safety knowledge and food handling behavior improved dramatically when training was conducted in the learners' native language.

> **Outcome:** Spanish-speaking participants averaged an impressive 96.60% on post-training scores. This clearly demonstrates the impact and ROI of localization initiatives, when presented in native languages.

Localization Proven for Marketing … So Why Not L&D?

Companies are mastering localization when it comes to marketing their goods and services to target audiences in different cultures – because it works. There is slower adoption for performing this same service for employees of these same companies … but why?

Nataly Kelly of the Harvard Business Review asserts that "There is an undeniably strong link between in-language content and a consumer's likelihood of making a purchase." Common Sense Advisory surveyed 2,430 web consumers in 8 countries and found that 72.1% of consumers spend most, if not all, of their time on websites in their own language. 72.4% of consumers said they would be more likely to buy a product with

information in their own language. 56.2% of consumers said that the ability to obtain information in their own language is more important than the price of the good or service. A study based on a Gallup survey of language preferences among web browsers in 23 E.U. countries revealed that 19% of Europeans never browse in a language other than their own. 42% said they never purchase products and services in languages other than their native tongue. Most Europeans are multilingual yet still display such preferences.

The global language services industry is big, reaching over $45 billion in 2018 and projected to grow to almost $56.2 billion by 2021! That's a lot of money dedicated to making sure content is available in different languages. There isn't hard data on what the L&D industry spends of that $45 billion, but it's estimated to be a considerable amount.

Global English may be the language of commerce, but the global economy has employees speaking hundreds of languages. To unleash these employees into the realm of high productivity, innovative thought, and high retention requires engagingthem in the language in which they are most comfortable. In our honest assessment, a confident, motivated employee is a huge return on investment in any language.

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At a recent international conference for talent development and learning professionals, we asked decision makers how they managed their company's localization needs. Surprisingly, many of the attendees were not familiar with the term, **localization**. Even as we started to relate the term back to the root definition of translation, our associates began to introduce other terms like **globalization, internationalization** which seemed to bring about even more interpretation. For our purposes, we want establish the difference between the terms **translation, localization, and globalization,** so we offer these three definitions:

Localization refers to the adaptation of a product, application or document content to meet the language, cultural and other requirements of a specific target market (a "locale").

Globalization (or internationalization) is the design and development of a product, application or document content that enables easy localization for target audiences that vary in culture, region, or language.

Translation is a subset of Localization where the service is only concerned with finding a word for word (textual) comparison between one language and another.

The fact that the definition for globalization includes the term localization is confusing to many. To application developers it is more obvious. Globalization is the design of applications such that content can be displayed and utilized in multiple languages and cultures. To achieve global-ization, developers must create the ability to display text in Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, and many other language alphabets. It also must be capable of managing the cultural differences of things like date formats: "dd/MM/yyyy" as opposed to "MM/dd/yyyy" and even the more drastic changes such as right-to-left conventions used in certain languages.

Adobe Captivate is one of the most popular authoring tools in the world. When developing the tool, Adobe developers designed the software so that elearning content could be created in many different languages. Yet, even their efforts to be "globalized" have not been perfect. Several years ago we were asked to transform a Captivate module in English into (14) languages, one of which was Thai. Our team completed thirteen new language and voice versions, but struggled mightily with the insertion of Thai text in the 14th language version. Frustrated, we called Adobe who informed us that Captivate was unable to properly display the double diacritics found in Thai characters. Adobe had not globalized the application to the extent of including Thai.

If you think of globalization as targeting a widespread number of sites and locations, then localiza-tion can be thought of as its opposite: targeting very specific and single cultures and locales. To "globalize" a marketing campaign would be an effort to make a brand acceptable to most cultures around the world. This is what Starbucks did several years ago when it "internationalized" its logo.

By eliminating the text within its logo, the brand is more suited for all non-English cul-tures. Conversely, when Apple wanted to market their MacIn-tosh computers into Japan the natural instinct may have been to use their highly success-ful American commercials of "Mac versus PC" where the PC was represented by the actor wearing a stodgy corporate suit

1992
We become a publicly traded company.

2011
We mark 40 years and begin the next chapter in our history.

and displaying an old-fashioned business attitude and the Mac actor as a progressive, modern, and free-thinking man. Some less-wise marketers may have simply translated and voiced the American advertisement word for word. After all the commercials were smash hits in the USA.

Fortunately, a marketing firm with cultural wisdom was hired. The concept was maintained but the script re-written for the Japanese market. In Japanese culture, it is tacky and distasteful to directly criticize a rival. It is also counter-cultural to think of companies as stodgy and out-of-touch. There-fore, in the modified script, the PCs were framed as something suitable for professional use, while the Mac was the right tool for having fun. The localized Japanese commercials were a hit as well.

*"How will I know
that content has
been localized
correctly?"*

**How Can You Be Sure Your Content is
Localized and Not Just Translated?**

Most good language service com-
panies (LSCs) will provide the basic
level of localization in their transla-
tion work. This means that dates,
times, terminology, acronyms,
idioms and fonts will be translated,
converted and formatted according
the target culture's norms. But if this
is all that they offer, then they are
coming up short of what we call an
Authentic Localization™ effort.

To engage this generation of learners, content must be visual with multi-media. When a lan-
guage company is asked to "translate" a Storyline, Captivate, or Articulate Rise elearning module,
are they asked and capable of reviewing ALL of the content – video, illustrations, photos, interac-
tions, and voice – to assure you that the totality of the content has been localized for the target
culture? Do they even mention such a service? If not, then seek a company that does.

Short video clips or still photos are extremely useful for engaging an audience and motivat-
ing them to accomplish something big. We have seen many instances where text metaphors are
supplemented by a picture that is meant to inspire. For example, a photo of Hank Aaron hitting
one of his signature home runs is used to complement the phrase "knock it out of the park!" A
good LSC or translator will never translate this phrase word for word – they would substitute a
suitable phrase that captures the same meaning. Yet, will they come to you and recommend that
the picture of Mr. Aaron be replaced with something more relevant? Most people in the world
have little understanding or knowledge of baseball to associate him with the motivation to go set
a new sales record.

Another example is voice talent. To simply contract the most affordable and/or available voice
talent for an Arabic voiceover project is not authentic localization. If the topic is leadership train-
ing, and the target audience is predominantly businessmen from Saudi Arabia, then it would be
unacceptable to use a female Arabic voice artist for the recording. The cultural anomaly would
cause the audience to cease any interest in the training module.

Tasks That Should be Included in A Statement of Work for Localization

- Review all photos, illustrations, and videos with an in-country native speaker
- Recommend substitutions of any visual content that would offend or confuse the target audience
- Review all on-screen text for potential issues in translation – emotional responses, humor, idioms
- Carefully select the appropriate gender and tone of the voice actor
- Provide directorial guidance to the voice actor to capture appropriate tone and energy expected by the target audience in order to accomplish engagement.

It is important to note that these are not time-consuming or expensive requirements to execute. Yet, they are critical to ensuring your content has a high level of comprehension and engagement. A reputable localization company, like Global eLearning, can take on these tasks and execute them to ensure your training content is authentically localized with the best possible potential to engage your audience.   Upcoming chapters will focus on additional areas for consideration when developing and localization content for a global audience.

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CENTRALIZED VS. DE-CENTRALIZED?

How will your company effectively train and develop a global workforce? What type of resources and investment is necessary? Should you manage the process at the hub of corporate learing and development or push this task to the local office? Does your company want to have a centralized or de-centralized localization program? We believe that to make these decisions, one must first "begin with the end in mind." There are really two approaches to take, so let's consider them:

Centralized Program – a company with international offices/facilities creates all multi-lingual versions of its training content from its central L&D location so that ownership and control of every language version remains in the hands of a central body.

De-Centralized Program – a global company with offices/facilities in multiple countries decides to hand off all training responsibilities to each international entity in order that they assume responsibility for communication, training, and development of local staff and employees.

We believe that a centralized program produces the most desired outcomes. Let's consider an example of why beginning with the end in mind is an important factor in choosing the right type of localization strategy.

David Kwong is a Harvard-educated magician and puzzler who designs and advises on illusions for film and TV, and writes crossword puzzles for The New York Times. His skills are fully on display in the "Now You See Me" films that were highly popular for their creative genius and story-telling. In 2016, David was a keynote speaker at The elearning Guild's Learning Solutions conference where he spoke on the story-teller's most important skill: "With the end result in mind, you must plan backwards all the events that will carefully orchestrate the big revelation, or outcome." The essential message was that the master illusionist maintains complete control of a set of seemingly random circumstances so that s/he can produce a guaranteed outcome. David demonstrated this impact over a 45-minute performance using the Guild's 3,000 attendees as live participants. At the end, he created a crossword puzzle that incorporated every piece of information discovered through a series of unrelated magic tricks during the presentation. The audience was stunned and wildly impressed at the conclusion ... the result David had planned for and knew he would accomplish.

So, you can see how this theory would apply to your localization strategy. The first step, the most critical step, in building a successful elearning localization strategy is to define the desired end re-sult. From this point, and planning backward, all individual components can be identified, organized, and executed such that an expected outcome(s) can be achieved.

As a quick illustration of how some companies decide on the de-centralized route, let's peer into the

Centralized or De-centralized? What is the best localization strategy?

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world of book publishing. For over a hundred years, book publishers have decided to de-centralize their marketing, sales, and distribution channels in international markets. Book rights are sold to international publishers from regions around the world. With this transaction, the original publisher has decided to take a simple royalty for the asset in exchange for leaving the inter-national publisher with the full ownership and responsibility to sell a localized version of the book to its own target audi-ence. This approach to global-ization has the financial benefit of gaining some additional

*A **centralized** strategy would typically provide control at the Corporate Learning & Development location; whereas a **de-centralized** strategy would put the responsibility at the local level, where L&D is not always given the same priority, because of other responsibilities.*

(small) revenue with no additional investment costs. The international publisher absorbs the costs of book translation, print, distribution, marketing, and inventory. At the same time, the international publisher captures 100% of profit from international sales realized -- less the small royalty fee.

But for the original publisher there are many lost outcomes in choosing this option. Behind the decision to sell book rights is also a decision to not engage and learn the global market. It is an admission that learning how to market, how to sell, how to deliver product in another country is too complicated, too hard. Yes, the learning curve may be steep and expensive, but the outcome of connecting with global users ultimately gives the publisher knowledge of not just selling a book, but thousands of future book titles. Amazon has chosen the route of knowing international markets and in so doing will probably dominate the publishing industry in years to come.

We have identified the following five benefits to embracing a centralized strategy for elearning localization. An entire chapter could be dedicated to each of these benefits but the following concise explanations may be sufficient for this discussion.

1. Engage and know your global learners, your global workforce

Leadership styles in many cultures do not include the desire to inform employees of "why". Local supervisors may simply demand compliance, and shortcut the explanations, when training is left to them to both design and deliver. To properly engage and equip an employee on how certain procedures will keep them safe from injury means to inform them of potential consequences when precise steps are not followed. An informed employee has a much better opportunity to become a motivated employee.

2. Control the accuracy of L&D content localization, and therefore, the purity of the instruction

A company's reputation is at stake everywhere it has operations. When specific policies are created in one language and then handed to an international office for their interpretation and translation, instructions often lose their purity. When policies involve sensitive or controversial subject matters (bribery, sexual harassment, equality, etc.) then certain cultures may deliberately alter descriptions and consequences for non-conformance. For precise sales strategies or data security measures, local translators may not grasp terminology or capture the true intent of the instruction. Whether sales or IT, there is too much risk in having confused, local employees.

3. Assure the standardization of processes across all operations – obtain consistent data

When a manufacturer has facilities in multiple countries and is exporting from each facility, the ability to make the most profitable export decisions will depend on understanding costs. If the reporting of costs is not standardized across all facilities then poor decisions will be made. Localizing training on processes and reporting standards within the control of a central L&D body gives a global company its best opportunity to standardize its global data.

4. Manage the speed of change

This factor may be the most overlooked of the five. In the modern global economy where dissemination of information and strategy is extremely time sensitive, does a company really want to risk providing on-time, localized modification instructions to a data security

policy? Or, does the company want any delay in getting localized sales training pro-tocols for a new product launch? Expecting international offices to localize training material for their local staff means it will get done when the individual(s) who are tasked with this responsiblity find the time - among their normal job responsibilities.

5. Understand the Return on Investment (ROI)

The effectiveness of any elearning localization strategy is very difficult to measure when the creation and delivery of the localized products are not our responsibility. Identify-ing true costs is a muddled endeavor. The product itself may be compromised. The results, positive or negative, may be difficult to correlate back to the training content.

These benefits make clear the advantages of a centralized localization strategy, specifically for elearning purposes.   It may not be as glamorous or amazing as David Kwong in front of a live audience, but hopefully, with a similar successful result!

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Most corporations take great care in developing elearning content for training purposes. Manufacturing processes, pharmaceutical sales strategies, and the administration of health care -- to name just a few -- require diligence to ensure that the overall message and intention of the training is accurate, compliant and effective. When it becomes necessary to translate and localize that content for a global audience, many companies struggle with the effectiveness, costs, and scheduling aspects of the localization process. In this article, we discuss the factors and complexities that drive localization costs and schedules and how you can manage htem effectively.

A successful elearning localization strategy must begin with knowledge of the work required to produce a new language version of L&D content. For customers who are new to the field of localization, there are many factors that should be considered when localizing content. First, we want to ensure our readers understand that eLearning content should not merely be translated. As described in Chapter 2, in order for elearning to be effective in the new language, each component of the elearning content must be evaluated to determine its appropriateness in the new language. Audio, graphics, images, animation, etc. must all be reviewed, with an eye (and an ear) for how the message is interpreted and understood in the new language.

As a caution to those unfamiliar, there may be a fair amount of sticker-shock when you receive quotes for localization services. The surprise may be when stakeholders realize that, on average, a 30-minute Storyline or Captivate module, with moderate complexity in design, may cost several thousand dollars per language to localize. If the project involves 5 or 10 languages, then

"A translator ought to endeavor
not only to say what his author has said,
but to say it as he has said it."
-- John Conington

it can multiply to a large number rather quickly. In addition, quotes from multiple language service companies (LSCs) may vary significantly. Indeed, the proverbial apples-to-oranges comparisons of scope or SOW assumptions will be the cause. To some vendors, the work is only to translate text, prepare a new language script, and maybe organize for the voice-over studio recording. They may never consider the engineering side of layout, synchronization, on-screen text manipulation, video editing, phrase synching, animation timing, and functionality testing.

Another surprise may be the time required to produce the localized versions. On the same project described above, the quote's schedule may come back in the range of 4-8 weeks. This can present real challenges when localization is an after-thought and the launch date is rapidly approaching.

Before explaining the many factors contributing to cost and schedule, it is important to note that there are companies (localization vendors) who simply translate and voice content and then there are companies who specialize in elearning content localization. This can create a wide difference in understanding the scope, and most importantly, outcome of the project. As we discussed earlier, it's important to choose a language company that is competent in the full scope of Authentic Localization™. As an incentive, these select language companies have processes and resources that should generate efficiencies that significantly reduce the cost and turnaround time of the project.

LINEAR DRIVERS OF COST/SCHEDULE

The start of this review is the most obvious (common sense) drivers of cost/schedule – those drivers with straight-forward linear relationships.

There are no economy-of-scale production tricks to overcome the linear nature of costs associated with volume. Beyond these common core cost variables, there are more advanced variables that impact the cost of localization in less significant ways.

ADVANCED VARIABLES THAT IMPACT COST OF LOCALIZATION

- **Module Complexity.** The quick indicator is the # of Layers. The number of layers per slide grows with graphical content, special effects, animation, interaction flow/detail, embedded videos, and other factors that increase the time of engineering.

- **Voice-Over.** The amount of voiceover audio recordings to be incorporated into presentation. This incorporates two variables – the number of slides with voice overlays and the number of recordings required per slide to accommodate special effects and interactions.

- **Voice Talent.** The requirement for multiple voices and/or a specific voice, accent or dialect may increase cost and may sometimes extend the schedule.

- **The Authoring Tool.** The engineering time to synch all components does vary among the authoring tools. Custom platforms can introduce additional time because of the learning curve effect in learning to maneuver through the platform.

- **Linguist Exclusion.** When stakeholders impose restrictions on resources used to contribute to the localization process costs will absolutely rise accordingly. Some organizations want to use only U.S.-based linguists or exclude linguists that are residents of certain countries (OFAC restriction within U.S. Government). Costs increase because of the smaller pool of available linguists with the right subject matter expertise and experience.

- **Quality Assurance.** If the organization sponsoring the creation of localized versions does not have a trustworthy internal reviewer in the target language (e.g., staff member in target country), they may try to add other QA measures which can drive a much higher cost – techniques such as back translations or contracting a second language company to check the work of original language company. Some rely on software tools for QA assessments that may yield confusing results (false positives).

- **Creative Source.** When content developers are extremely creative with the original content they may limit redundant terminology or phrases. Yet, it is redundancy (repeat) that acts to reduce the cost of translation and provides a more consistent translation.

- **Technical Source.** If the topic is exceptionally technical, then the linguist pool of people who are competent to translate, shrinks dramatically. Less supply = higher costs.

- **Accessibility Requirements.** 508 compliance and WCAG 2.1 requirements can increase costs by 20-40% depending upon the level of compliance required. These requirements are imposed when the target audience includes those with reading/hearing disabilities.

- **Content Involving Transcreation.** Content containing poetic verses, time-constrained or space-constrained translations, idioms, or contains considerable text that drives emotional responses will require a transcreation process instead of the normal translation process.

CLIENT CREATOR DELAYS

Finally, stakeholders themselves can be the cause of cost over-runs and missed deadlines. As a localization partner to many companies and federal government entities, we have to warn our sponsors of disruptive practices – almost all of which occur during the production process or in post-production reviews. Only the first bullet point below significantly impacts cost, but all of them impact schedule.

1. Source content changes mid-stream. The too-oft situation where the project begins with provided source content, and then mid-stream of project execution, a stakeholder/sponsor sends modified source content and says, "last minute change, use this instead".

2. Client requesting directorial input into voice recordings. Clients have the right to provide directorial input into the recording session but the extra time can add up when studios and voice talents charge by the hour.

3. Client spending extraordinary time approving translated script. Often LSCs will request stakeholder approval of a translated script before spending the money on studio recordings. When the stakeholder takes a very long time to approve or give feedback, studio schedules for the voice talent can get messy.

4. Client allowing multiple internal reviewers to alternate in review of vendor's translation. Language companies have horror stories of receiving feedback on a localized version, correcting the errors and re-submitting, only to receive a fresh set of new corrections. When stakeholders introduce a second or even third internal reviewer, the result is that reviewers will contradict each other in style preferences. This causes the language company to have a moving target on style alignment and endless corrections.

Hopefully, this insight into the localization process will deepen your understanding such that a more complete elearning localization strategy can be envisioned. In a future chapter, we will establish the best practices to implement in order to produce a cost and schedule effective localization process and strategy.

Given

CHAPTER 5:
Best Practices of a Scalable Localization Strategy

What makes something scaleable? According to Wikipedia, "scalability is the capability of a system, network, or process to handle a growing amount of work, or its potential to be enlarged to accommodate that growth. Scalability, as a property of systems, is generally difficult to define and in any particular case it is necessary to define the specific requirements for scalability on those dimensions that are deemed important."

So, in our opinion, especially when it comes to localization, nothing can be scaled until its base process is consistently churning out reliable output within a predictable time. Upon this foundation of consistency, most stakeholders can then do the math of scaling the identical process with additional trained resources to generate 2x, 3x, or 10x the volume of output. That brings us to an important question.

What is the biggest problem that companies face when it comes to localization?

A survey was conducted recently asking CLOs, instruction designers and elearning content developers what their greatest pain or frustration was with their language service provider? The overwhelming response was the issue of re-work. In fact, 67% of respondents listed this as a significant problem. So, although many language service providers guarantee on-time delivery, the expectations and final deliverables are often a far cry from on-time.

When you require a project to be delivered "on-time," what is your expectation? Some vendors believe that a project is delivered on-time when the project is delivered to the client by the pre-determined deadline even if it requires several rounds of edits and re-work. The majority of stakeholders apparently do not agree. Sending a "draft" copy with the intent of having the project sponsor perform the review to find all errors is clearly a sign of inexperience.

We believe that it's important to define what on-time means to you and your language company. We believe that if the deadline is met with a deliverable that is of acceptable quality to the client and requires no further work by the vendor, then officially it is on time; otherwise, the project is late by the

number of days it takes to submit a re-worked version 2 – that again must be deemed acceptable in quality.

A scalable localization strategy must include localization service providers who are absolutely dependable with quality and can meet required deadlines.

To identify the best practices of a scalable localization strategy, we want to first reverse engineer the situation of why so many language companies, and consequently the localization sponsors, struggle to deliver localized versions on-time.

1. Language company (vendor) is not experienced with Learning & Development (L&D) tools, content, or the unique quality assurance parameters of L&D platforms.

Localizing elearning content can be complicated, perhaps too complicated, for many companies. They have not developed the processes or the efficiencies to pull together the components of transcription, translation, voiceover, OST installation, animation, video adaptations, engineering, and testing. Often they may be very good at one or two components, but then struggle with integrating all the new localized elements back into the authoring tool or custom platform. It is the technology applications that doom many companies in meeting their deadlines.

Best Practice #1 – Partner with an experienced language service company who has ample experience with learning and development content, authoring tools, video adaptation skills, voiceover techniques, and a commitment to perform extensive QA as part of its localization process. Build a relationship with one or more of these companies such that they can help you stay current with technologies such as NMT, TTS, ASR, and other software tools.

2. Common Errors Found on First Delivery of Localized eLearning Module

Going back to our definition of "on time," the deadline has been missed if the customer rejects a

vendor's first delivery because of numerous errors. In our research, we found that clients reject localized elearning modules for a variety of reasons:

1. Customer's internal reviewer. Does not like aspects of the translation or script or both. If reviewer was not engaged in the localization process before delivery, this could be an expensive fix both in cost and schedule.

2. Language expansion not managed. Translation from one language to another usually involves expansion of text (more characters) and expansion of the script for voiceovers. Expansion causes problems with slide layout design and synchronization of voice recordings with slide content. If not managed well, the presentation looks/sounds sloppy and disjointed.

3. Voiceover errors. Mispronounced words/phrases or issues with the voice artist's pace or tone in reading the script.

4. Missing translations. Embedded text within graphical objects or other types of on-screen text are sometimes not captured by the vendor and then left in source language.

5. New language version fails to integrate interaction properties of the original source module, or, fails to function properly within the LMS. Again, if the vendor fell behind in their schedule, testing was insufficient or non-existent.

Best Practice #2 – maintain a single internal reviewer per language and have this reviewer take ownership of the translations, Translation Memories, style guide, and glossary created and maintained by the language service company.

Best Practice #3 – in conjunction with your internal reviewer and language service company, establish the quality standards for localization deliveries: text accuracy, layouts, voice recordings, synchronization/timing, video OST, and authoring tool functionality. Define unacceptable errors and have the vendor self-evaluate and validate overall quality before each delivery.

3. Customer Self-Inflicted Wounds

Yes, customers themselves are often responsible for delays in their language company's ability to meet a deadline. The truth is that content localization is usually one of the last action items in a service/product launch. In the client's project schedule, content creation schedule slips have consumed most/all programmed "slack" by the time localization is scheduled. With the launch window rapidly approaching, the client sends the source content to its vendor to begin the new language versions – but without a finalized source. As the language company moves from translation to recording to engineering within three or five or ten different languages, all of a

sudden they receive an email from the client that there are additional changes or modifications that need to be made. In the client's eyes, these changes may be minor, but the impact on the localization process can be major.

In these cases, the cost and schedule impacts become exponentially more significant, especially if the localization process is in the latter stages. Bottom line? Send final source content to the language services company and give them the opportunity to deliver on time. Changing content, after the final source content has been provided, will have a direct and sometimes significant impact on the costs and scheduling. Consequently, in this case, the language company cannot be held accountable for delayed projects.

Best Practice #4: Don't start localizing until the source content is 100% ready and no longer being edited.

A scalable elearning localization strategy expands seamlessly with volume when the localization process delivers products on-time, with acceptable quality, in a repeatable and reliable manner. At the same time, a successful localization strategy also achieves two long-term goals: (1) a reduction of localization costs, and (2) improvement in turnaround times. The next set of best practices concentrate on these aspects of the strategy.

Instructional Design/Content Creation

Several years ago our company was working with a client on expanding a service of real-time news alerts into a multi-lingual service as well. The process was already working in Japanese as 12-17 alerts a day were being translated through a custom, continuous translation process with a global network of linguists providing 24/7 coverage. However, to expand the service into other target countries, the customer needed the costs of localization to be lower in order to hit sellable price points. One of the key elements of the cost reduction analysis was the contribution of Translation Memory (TM) to each translation. Over time, it is expected that phrases used in previously translated content would be repeated in new content to which previous translation work could be applied. Whether a perfect match or a "fuzzy" match, the cost of translating the phrase again is a fraction of the normal cost.

Unfortunately, our analysis revealed that content creators within the company took pride in their creative writing skills and were purposely trying to express similar statements in a variety of ways. The contribution of the TM reflected this strategy – much lower than all of us had hoped after six months of translation work. The directive was established to reverse this practice and begin looking at standardized (repeatable) ways to write content. By the way, this will not stifle a company's ability to distinguish itself – having its own voice in the marketplace. What it means is to standardize that voice style and become consistent in expression of that style.

There are many recommendations we can offer to companies regarding content creation disci-

plines that will have the impact of lowering localization costs. The more languages that are targeted in the company's localization strategy, the more important and necessary it will be to implement content design discipline.

The more target languages involved in a company's localization strategy, the greater the necessity to implement discipline in the source content creation phase.

The software engineering term, "Extensibility" is as appropriate for our Learning and Development industry as it is to the engineering world. It conveys the meaning that in all aspects of developing an authoring tool module, think about every piece of content as being editable and easily substituted. In other words, maximize content flexibility and the capability to expand. For localization purposes, content such as graphic designs should have editable text embedded so it can be easily manipulated. Here are some specific items to check:

- **Text/Script Creation** – standardize expressions in source language and repeat as much as possible from one piece of content to another.

- **Graphic designs/images** - All embedded text must be editable within source graphics.

- **Video/Film #1** - Subtitles should be overlaid and not burned.

- **Video/Film #2** - Video background scenes should not rapidly change; new language audio and/or subtitles will be longer in length/time.

- **Plenty of White Space** – Tables of information especially will expand in any new language – leave white space around in source to absorb the expansion in new language version.

- **Length of Presentation** - Because of text and script expansion during the translation process, the overall module can be 10-25% longer in length (and time).

- **Complexity of Slides** - Although animation, interactions, and layered images should enhance the engagement experience of the learner, these complexities also add cost to the synchronization effort. If possible to simplify the presentation, this will produce savings in all multi-lingual versions.

- **Authoring Tools** - The ability of an authoring tool to manage certain multi-lingual versions like Arabic (right-to-left orientation), Thai (double diacritics), and the specific fonts of character-based languages. Some authoring tools (e.g., Articulate Rise) are difficult to work on integrating new language-content within.

Best Practice #5 – a solid localization strategy constantly thinks of ways to reduce the costs and schedules involved in the localization process. Keep a checklist of how the source content can be designed to minimize the cost and time of localization preparation.

THE 3 BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Challenge #1:

End-User acceptance of source strategy or process.

Challenge #2:

Knowledge of the target audience.

Challenge #3:

Engagement inhibitors & enhancers

CHAPTER 6:
The 3 Biggest Challenges to Creating A Training Content Localization Strategy

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Companies may spend in excess of $50,000 on developing a sophisticated, interactive and excellent elearning course. In 2019, the average cost is estimated to be around $22,000 for a 60-minute module. This cost may not even include overhead hours invested by Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) or other top-level managers. The process is meant to:

(1) capture and transfer knowledge accurately, and

(2) ensure that a measure of engagement is achieved so that the target audience can be motivated to learn and comply.

After completing this sophisticated module, some companies will ask their language services company (LSC) to localize this module for global consumption. Perhaps they want to disseminate the information to manufacturing or branch facilities in other parts of the world. They want to 'translate' the content into 4-6 six new languages within 3-4 weeks and expect that it will "sizzle" as a learning tool in every language – by just simply translating the words and re-recording the script. Yea, right ...

As discussed earlier in this book, the ROI of localized elearning content depends heavily upon the engagement of the end user who happens to live/work in continents that probably are very different than that of the content creators. More than just language, their entire culture is different. It is the mother challenge at the heart of localization effectiveness. Can we connect with an audience that not only speaks differently, but also thinks and learns differently.

Let's focus on identifying the factors involved in enhancing or disrupting the engagement experience.

Challenge #1 – End User Acceptance of Source Strategy or Process

> *"The ROI of localized elearning content depends heavily upon the engagement of the end user who happens to live/work in continents that probably are very different than that of the content* **creators.**"

A large e-commerce company approached us a couple of years ago with the desire of localizing 40+ Storyline modules into Japanese. In these modules, the company's most sensitive sales and marketing strategies and processes were being presented. They needed our most secure data management and data transfer methodologies to protect the confidentiality of the information. We complied with a strict security protocol all the way through our carefully selected linguists. We get it … this was critical information to our client.

After completing the first localized module and requesting feedback from the in-country Japanese reviewer, we unveiled a criticism that we could not solve. And, this criticism occurs more frequently than most companies like to admit. After establishing that the translation of original English text was accurate, the reviewer concluded that they simply did not agree with the process/strategy being translated. In her opinion, and the reviewer was a manager in the company's Japan office, the Japanese office needed to modify the sales strategy itself.

Ultimately, the issue was resolved by getting the Japanese management team to first modify the sales strategies and processes in English that they wanted to implement in Japan. Admirably, U.S. executives allowed these modifications and endorsed them. Only after new English modules were created (for application in Japan) did we re-start the localization process. The project was executed smoothly with this major challenged solved.

Challenge #2 – Knowledge of the Target Audience

From time to time, we hear our customers request localization support in which they articulate that the language needed is "just" Arabic or French or Chinese. This "just" presumption can be costly and lead to quite a bit of re-work. As an example, to request Chinese must be clarified. If the target audience resides in Mainland China then we need to translate text into Simplified Chinese and probably use a voice speaking Mandarin. But, there are areas of China that speak Cantonese. If the target audience also lives/works in Hong Kong or Taiwan, then we need to use Traditional Chinese text.

Customers and their localization service partners need to be precise about the target audience. The LSC should be driving out this information as part of its quote preparation or on-boarding session.

Challenge #3 – Engagement Inhibitors and Enhancers

One criteria that is universal to any learner residing in any country – if the elearning content is offensive or unprofessionally presented then engagement is lost. Below are some of the finer points of localization that will either connect with them or become an obstacle to learning. For simplicity, we will call these the short list of Do's and Don'ts that should be considered:

Offensive or Contradictory Content

Though we think it doesn't matter, the reality is that it only takes one phrase or one picture in a presentation of dozens or hundreds of slides to turn an audience off – a photo of a bikini-clad woman sun-bathing in an Arabic-speaking country or a policeman brandishing a gun in New Zealand. These pictures, like certain curse or slang words, will invariably cause many to dismiss the entire presentation.

Sloppy or Unprofessional Presentation

 If an elearning module comes across as sloppy with poor layout design of the new text, orphaned words and/or phrases, or voiceovers that are not in synch with screen effects or lip movements, then the audience will believe that it does not deserve the company's best effort. Presentations need to flow – just like the source does -- and be as flawless.

Localize all Important Details of Information

The date of September 11 is very important in American culture as of 2001. It is widely expressed as "9/11" in context references. Yet, for most of the world that date must be written as 11/9/2001 for them to read it correctly as "September 11, 2001". Otherwise, it is read as

"November 9". Localization means to put data in a form that is conventional for the target audience so that it is comprehended without error. Not just dates and times, but correctly identifying the local holidays, displaying contact information in the right order, and addressing local business customs make the presentation relevant.

Use Appropriate Voices and Correct Tone

Voiceovers in elearning modules or in training videos are super effective in enhancing the messaging of the new language presentations. Subtitles have a purpose, but it interrupts the flow of learning. In selecting voice talent(s) be sure to grasp the gender preference of the target audience in a professional learning environment. In addition, adjust the tone of the voice, the pace of script reading, and any displays of vocal emotional around the expectations of the target audience.

Earn Attention through appropriate cultural references

In American culture we like to encourage others by using the phrase, "knock it out of the park!" In presentations we may use a picture of Hank Aaron or Babe Ruth swinging a baseball bat and connecting for a home run. That baseball reference will be understood by maybe 8-10 cultures in the world – but its message to only one or two. Be appropriate in using visual references that are clear to the target audience. Soccer is a global sport and the exclamation of a "Goooaaalll!" is universally understood. In China, references to the Christmas holiday has little emotional appeal, but the Chinese New Year celebration – a week-long celebration -- is observed by all Chinese.

Much time and energy is taken, when producing original training content, to ensure the content is engaging, provides the necessary information and resources, and produces the desired outcome. When this content is then translated and/or localized for a new audience, these same concerns must be met. So, how can a company be sure they are creating engagement when localizing content?

Engagement Requirement #1: The localization process must incorporate the following four elements:

1.1   Utilize an in-country, native speaking *learning expert* to review the source content **before** starting the translation of text and/or script. This person will recommend how to manage certain ideas and illustrations to best capture the message in the new language. Be sure do this early in the process. Very few language companies perform a localization review at the beginning of the project. These experts review source content and define aspects of graphical design, images/ film, and text that may offend or cause confusion within the target audience. This gives clients time upfront to consider substitutions of visuals or textual content if necessary. Time and money can be saved by ensuring that the client's material is localized first and translated second. Otherwise, and too frequent in occurrence, a client's end user or internal reviewer screams "This isn't right!" once they review the final localized version. Finding out that your new Portuguese Storyline Module "isn't right" on the day it is supposed to launch to 500 Brazilian employees can- not be considered an on-time delivery by your language service provider!

1.2   Perform a terminology and acronym check with the client's internal reviewer. Key terms, phrases tend to be woven throughout a presentation and therefore need to be absolutely vali- dated in translation.

1.3   The Language Service Company (LSC) must use native speaking linguists (in target language) who have experience (5+ years) in the subject matter of the topic. Certain subject matters are more difficult to translate – insurance concepts, data security measures, etc. – and these must be addressed by expert linguists.

1.4   The LSC should employ a final step of Linguistic Sign-off (LSO) on the entire presentation. The new language elearning module is a conglomeration of many parts – on-screen text, embed- ded graphics, videos, voiceovers, and special effects or animations. A native-speaker needs to review the entire presentation to evaluate flow, inconsistencies, and poorly-timed transitions.

Engagement Requirement #2: Seek the counsel of the client's end user - a native speaker and client influencer-- and engage them in the evaluation of the source content

at the very beginning of the process to ensure the content, delivery, and the intended result are aligned for the target audience.

A difficult truth should be exposed very early in the process – the integrity of the source content and its relevance to the target audience. Too many times, an LSC has performed a complete localization of an elearning module to find out after delivery that the recipient and end user do not like the version … why? Because they didn't believe that the process depicted in the source was relevant to them. In other words, the localization effort was performed excellently, the ideas in English perfectly captured and translated into German, but the German audience simply rejected some of the ideas of their American counterpart. Certain steps being advocated would not generate success in their German culture.

Engagement Requirement #3: Relevance of games and/or interactions.

The resources indicated in points 1 and 2 above should be consulted as to the relevance of certain games, rewards, and interaction techniques.   There is a natural bias among instructional designers and creative agencies to capitalize on the popularity of a culture's television shows. For example, we have seen elearning modules with a Jeopardy-style game as its interaction to test comprehension. Another is based on the Great Britain/United States game show "Who wants to be a millionaire?" These may very well may work in other cultures, but there may be better game shows to imitate that are popular and more recognized in the target culture. Substituting a known game name and similar format may increase the engagement of the audience.

Additional Strategies for Improving the Impact of Localized eLearning Content

Even with a world-class localization effort behind it, a new elearning course targeting a rather large audience should include a round of sampling before its full launch – much like a new marketing program would require. In fact, the strategies listed below are off-shoots of typical market sampling techniques from conventional marketing firms.

> **Pre-launch Focus Group** – select a small group of end users, allow them to preview the localized content, and gather their immediate reflections and feedback.

> **Pilot Program with Discussion Board** – if the elearning content is to be seen and used by a large group of employees or members of an association (hundreds to thousands) over a period

of 2-3 years, then run a pilot program of two groups with a bi-lingual Discussion Board interface to capture the real-time engagement positive (and negative) ideas of the participants.

Continuing Feedback System with Upgraded Versions – naturally, every long-lasting course should be continually upgraded and improved with editorial comments and new visuals based upon the accumulative feedback by participants.

Feedback from the constituency of any elearning course is always uber-valuable. At the same time, no strategy or process can guarantee an enthusiastic response from an international audience. The original content may simply be uninteresting or dryly presented such that the localized version has little hope of getting anything more than what was achieved in the source audience. Yet, utilizing the localization process described in this ebook will give your target audience the information they need, in the language they can understand, and the opportunity to fully comply with its instructions – whether or not it the engagement factor is graded as high or low.

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Professor Geert Hofstede conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of how values in the workplace are influenced by culture. He defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others". The Hofstede model of national culture consists of six dimensions which are listed below. These cultural dimensions represent preferences within the collective culture that distinguish countries (not individuals) form each other.

Dimension of Culture	Issue/Challenge
Power Distance Index	How less powerful members of culture handle inequalities
Individualism vs. Collectivism	How do members of the society view the perspective of 'I' vs. 'We'?
Masculinity vs. Feminity	Assertive, competitive, cooperative?
Uncertainty Avoidance Index	Comfort level with uncertainty, ambiguity of the future?
Long-term vs. Short-term Orientation	The view of societal change: suspicious or opportunistic?
Indulgence vs. Restraint?	Gratification of needs - Indulgence vs. Suppression?

In regards to corporate learning, Hofstede's work is quite relative in that much of the data was collected and evaluated while he was an IBM employee. The research has evolved into various certification programs for inter-cultural and global management certifications for both executive leaders and consultants.

Global eLearning has used Hofstede's research, combined with other assessments provided by trainers in other cultures to formulate some learning tendencies within target cultures. We appreciate that individuals within each culture can behave within a diverse spectrum of attitudes and preferences. Therefore, we caution ourselves and our readers to building to strict of a stereotype.

According to Hofstede, "In most collectivist cultures, direct confrontation of another person is considered rude and undesirable...Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster."

We have chosen three cultural examples to share in this chapter. These are selected because of the demand for these particular languages/cultures our company receives from customers.

Connection with a Brazilian Workforce

Brazil, like the United States, is large enough to boast tropical heat, heavy snowfall, and its land area could house the entirety of Europe west of Russia. Its people are very diverse, making it difficult to make a one-size-fits-all guide to training Brazilians.

Within Geert Hofstede's 6 dimensions of national culture, Brazil has average scores in all 6 dimensions and does not occupy the extreme ranges of the studied dimensions, making it a difficult country to define. Relatively speaking, Brazilians are more accepting of higher power distances than Americans, meaning they are more accepting of authoritative government or managerial systems. Brazil's evaluation in uncertainty avoidance indicates they are more cautious in the face of ambiguity than Americans, but they are more tolerant of uncertainty than Russians, for example, or their neighbors in Chile and Argentina. Brazil skews slightly monumentalist regarding long-term orientation, so they will lean on the past to provide a moral compass— but not to the extent that most Middle Eastern countries do. Brazilians are more collectivist than Americans but less so than Chinese. The takeaway is that Brazilians adhere to a more strict hierarchy that discourages questioning of one's managers.

Brazil-compass.com suggests that Brazilians do business with people, whereas Americans do business with companies. To work with Brazilians one must get to learn their colleagues or partners on a more personal level if you want to cultivate company loyalty. Expect to spend time socializing with new Brazilian employees as you work to gain their trust. This flies in the face of how many Americans separate their personal life from their business life and may require adjustment, but it is a key aspect of working with Brazilians. Due to their preference for face to face conversation, Brazilians may perform better with personalized, hands-on training instead of videos.

As stated, Brazilians operate with a stricter hierarchy in business, which may clash with the "open door" policy of many American companies. While being referred to as Mr. or Mrs. by an entry level employee seems tolerable, keep in mind a Brazilian worker will expect respect upon

assuming a managerial position and will not enjoy being questioned by their subordinates. Brazilians will also pay more attention to etiquette and protocol than their American counterparts, as it denotes class. Everyone in Brazilian culture is expected to know how to eat properly and carry themselves in a classy way, even those at lower pay grades. Etiquette carries more weight in business since Brazilians, again, do business with people instead of companies. Remember that you may be having more conversations at restaurants with colleagues than usual, and the expectation of etiquette continues after work hours.

Communication in Brazilian Portuguese depends heavily on nonverbal motions and context, so note your employee's mannerisms, particularly with yes or no questions. "No" is somewhat of a dirty word in their very sociable society. The O.K. sign is very vulgar to Brazilians. Give them a thumbs up to offer encouragement.
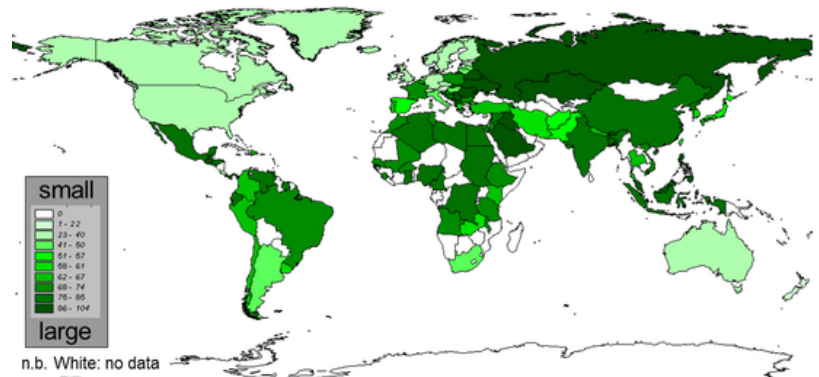
If Americans live to work, Brazilians work to live. While most Americans do not use all their paid time off in a year, Brazilian workers will utilize all available vacation time. And family takes precedence over work. Americans may think Brazilians don't take their job seriously because of this, and Brazilians may feel American's don't respect personal time. Find common ground.

Power Distance World map

Another aspect of Brazilian culture that may take some getting used to is how laid back they are with time. Lunches and dinners with colleagues may run 2-3 hours long. American meetings usually start with agendas, and the participants work down the list. Brazilians will also start with an agenda but will address the various points as the conversation naturally arrives at them, regardless of their position on the agenda. Brazilians can also lack punctuality. Perhaps you can explain that punctuality goes hand in hand with etiquette, convincing them to arrive on time if such an issue develops.

Training Guidelines for Employees in China

Chinese schools are like American schools in many ways, but the campuses are smaller, and the number of students per teacher is higher. The Chinese hold education in high regard, and students will complete homework even when bedridden in a hospital. Less serious individual needs are ignored—the group, not the child, is paramount. From the third grade onward, each subject is taught by a teacher who specializes in the subject. Chinese teachers have more freedom and don't coddle their students; they demand high performance from all kids, regardless of their background, and help kids achieve it. The Program for International Student Assessment scores show that the 10% most disadvantaged 15-year-olds in Shanghai have better math skills than the 10% most privileged students in the United States.
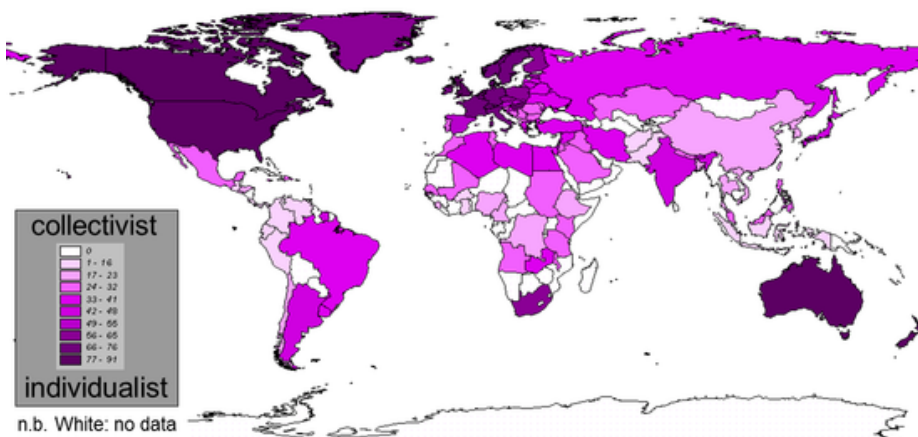
Chinese students are encouraged to have many interests, but education takes priority. For middle schoolers, homework takes about an hour to complete, but students willingly participate in extracurricular activities, which include supplemental classes as well as sports. Most schools have uniforms, and much of the learning is rote, memorization through repetition. Of particular note, only 4% of the nation's secondary education graduates are admitted to universities.

Based upon Hofstede's research, China is similar to Russia in being a collectivist society, meaning that the individual knows their place in society. Individual decisions are less expected. China is a masculine society, wherein the citizens are more openly gendered in their roles than feminine societies. Since China is considered a short-term orientation society with low indulgence, Chinese people typically respect tradition and believe that adhering to the past is morally good. For instance, Confucian thinking, valuing perseverance, self-control, and frugality, still pervades, and many Chinese respect symbols and omens.

Collectivism – Individualism World map

collectivist
0
1 - 16
17 - 23
24 - 32
33 - 41
42 - 48
49 - 55
56 - 65
66 - 76
77 - 91
individualist

n.b. White: no data

As a restrained society, Chinese citizens see duty, not freedom, as the normal state of being. Oddly enough, China ranks very low in uncertainty avoidance, lower even than the United States. Chinese people are less likely to be anxious and distrustful in the face of the unknown and are more willing to take risks. China also ranks high in power distance acceptance, meaning that they are more accepting of uneven power distribution—a consequence of a communist government. However, in the last 20 years, Chinese workers have grown more individualistic and place a higher value on quality of life.

China is very nationalistic. When training Chinese workers, it is normally unwise to say they will be learning the "American way" of doing things. However, our company has experienced some departure from this at the non-managerial levels of employees. In one certification course offered by a U.S.-based nursing association, we discovered that Chinese professionals within a pilot program responded with some doubts that their localized elearning courses were providing everything they needed to achieve competency. Because they knew the certificate was from an American organization, they expected more references to the American marketplace and style of delivery in order to feel comfortable it was authentic. In other words, Chinese nurses wanted some proof they weren't receiving a watered-down curriculum.

It is best to explain things in a matter-of-fact manner that convinces Chinese employees of the authenticity of unfamiliar protocols. Many of them will be accustomed to tough workloads but will also expect available training tools, just like the weekend classes they took when in school. Due to their power distance acceptance, be sure to explain what position they will assume in the company's hierarchy and who they will answer to. But remember this caveat: it can be devastating for a Chinese worker to lose face or be humiliated in front of others. Deliver criticism in private. Establish clear guidelines and expectations for their work. This will not overburden them with rules, as it will actually reaffirm that they are on the right track and give them more confidence. Do not ask if they have questions; test their knowledge and correct. Again, do this in private if possible.

It may take time for employers to earn the trust of their Chinese employees or potential business partners, especially if they differ in nationality. Some Chinese hold foreigners in contempt for the exploitation of China that has occurred over the past 200 years. Fortunately, once a strong relationship is formed, Chinese professionals tend to be very loyal.

Key Learning Attributes in the Japanese Workforce

In Japan, the family, school, and community teach children how to be members of Japanese society. In home and at school, a child learns to develop self-discipline (hansei) and hard work. The effort and persistence exerted toward a goal is considered more important than achieving said goal. Children will learn the phrase yareba dekiru, meaning that if you try hard, you can do it. Japanese society is built upon the principle of Kata, where established roles ensure balance and harmony.

Femininity - Masculinity World map

feminine
0
1 - 21
22 - 34
35 - 42
43 - 47
48 - 54
55 - 62
63 - 73
74 - 88
89 - 110
masculine

n.b. White: no data

Progressing into elementary school, Japanese children are taught to be strong, be kindhearted, and to be diligent in study. Their teachers frame classroom rules and enforce those rules depending on the children and their relationships. The students are often divided into small teams for activities, including cleaning the classrooms, halls, and yards. Their cleaning duties are so extensive that many schools have no janitors or custodians. The first
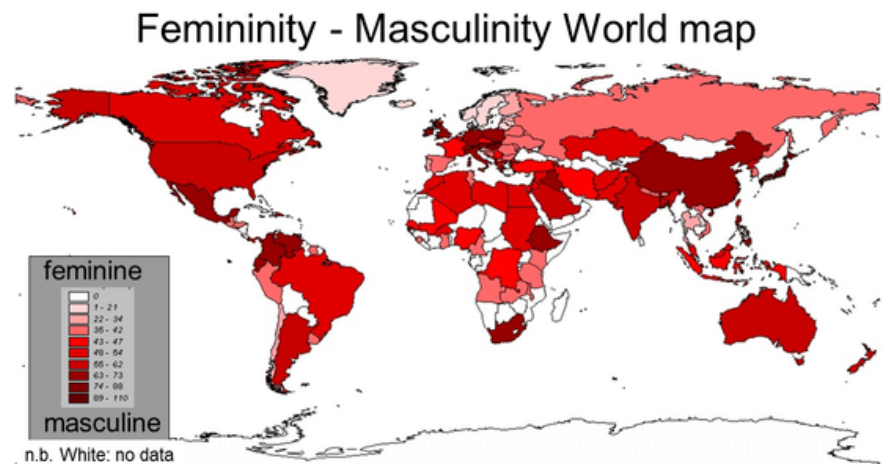
three years of school are for establishing good manners and developing characters. Students will take small tests but will not take exams until they reach 4th grade (age 10).

Most Japanese students enter preparatory schools or attend after-school workshops to improve their chances of earning admission into a good junior high school. Almost all students wear a uniform, and in general, learning is a far more serious matter than in the United States. 85% of students feel happy in school, and most never skip class.

Japan is a "masculine" society according to Hofstede's dimensional studies. As a feminine society—relative to Japan—American employers cannot consider age, race, or sex in hiring decisions, which, combined with the greater ethnic diversity, creates a heterogeneous work force. A homogeneous workforce, in regards to basic knowledge, willingness to learn new skills, and ability to function as team members, is ideal.

Considering other dimensions of national culture, Japan ranks high in uncertainty avoidance and short-term orientation but ranks low in indulgence. So Japanese citizens tend to prefer fixed habits and rituals, and they value long-standing traditions that provide a moral compass.

Masanori Hashimoto, professor of economics at Ohio State University, studied the efficiency of American and Japanese autoworkers, the latter of whom builds a higher quality car in fewer hours. Hashimoto argues that technical training must include training in employment relations. Training in employment relations aims to teach employees how to better share information and responsibilities, how to teach colleagues, and how to deal with conflict. Japanese workers tend

to be inherently better at these things because of their rigorous curriculum and cooperation in schooling. Another benefit from their schooling; Japanese workers are more likely to nurture inexperienced workers, since their school teachers were rewarded for producing capable students. That tradition manifests in the work place, helping to lower the cost of technical training. However, that tradition relies on the intelligence of new workers. A manager at a Japanese car factory in the US stated that he cannot rely on self-study for technical training, partly due to the diverse levels of basic knowledge of the workers.

American companies favor applicants who already have the necessary expertise for a job, theoretically reducing training to a minimum. Japanese companies will overlook inexperience if an applicant is intelligent, has high energy, and is malleable. In some cases, Japanese managers in an auto factory thought it better to train than retrain new employees to meet company standards.

New recruits in Japanese companies attend orientation sessions in safety and culture. Thorough technical training follows. Yet as stated, training never truly ends, as experienced workers mentor them. Additional formal training may also be supplemented. To facilitate employment relations training, Japanese workers are more likely to socialize with their colleagues than American workers.

When training Japanese workers it is important to offer all available training tools. They will expect an in-depth training program that brings them up to speed and informs them of every aspect of their job. Summaries are not enough—they want to understand the details and nuances. This is why so many micro-elearning courses are not received well. Japanese learners expect longer training sessions since the presumption is that no details are being left out. Combine the technical training with clear information about the company's policies and culture. Ensure the company's hierarchy and expectations are clearly defined. Make any new employee feel welcome and include them in a small group of experienced workers who they can turn to for support and information. Japanese workers consider it a duty for managers and senior workers to train new team members.

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This chapter is dedicated to a deeper understanding of the software capabilities that are rapidly evolving and developing into legitimate tools for L&D localization assistance. To start the discussion, the table below indicates the potential cost savings that can be obtained within that component if the individual technology has adequate data and A.I. training with both a language and domain (subject matter). In all four technologies, a human editor is required to produce satisfactory output, but this is reflected in the savings estimate.

TECHNOLOGY	LOCALIZATION COMPONENT IMPACT	POTENTIAL SAVINGS*
Neural Machine Translation (NMT)	Translation	35-40%
Text-to-Speech (TTS)	VoiceOver	60-70%
Auto Speech Recognition (ASR)	Transcription	50-60%
CMS/LMS Platforms	Engingeering, Synch, Accessibility	20-25%

It is noteworthy that the demand for instantaneous speech-to-speech translation is global. The investment effort is intense with the world's largest companies – Google, Amazon, Microsoft, IBM, and Apple --investing in the race.

The Role of Neural Machine Translation in eLearning Localization

Creative agencies and Instructional designers are constantly set against deadlines and deliverables that seem impossible. At one end is "make it great!" and they press to create great imagery that may be beyond their ability or simply cannot be constructed in time. No problem, designers have been sourcing graphics, fonts, animations, and video clips from various stock libraries for decades and have developed some scrappy solutions to the resource problem. One way or another, designers turn their storyboards into engaging scenes and interactions – on time – by drawing upon tools and inventories of content.

However, this cycle of finding creative solutions in the midst of tight deadlines becomes very complicated when the sponsor wants this L&D content also produced in other languages as part of the process.

The desire of corporations to communicate with international audiences has never been greater. However, transforming content from its source language into content of another language and adapted for another culture (full localization) is not easy. In a modern era where the visual content

means as much or more than text, localization must include audio voiceovers, manipulation of graphics, and synchronization efforts for the expansion of text and audio time after the base translation efforts. Unfortunately, in this arena, tools and stock libraries that make the process fast, free, or cheap are very hard to find.

Machine translation is a tool to ease some of the cost and schedule burden for eLearning authors required to provide multi-lingual versions of their content. Many language companies will caution about the quality of Machine Translation – a reputation ranging from "bad" to "terrible" since it's been widely misused as a "one size fits anything" solution. The results while an object of great humor for the target audience, end up being embarrassing mistakes and a giant miss on communication for the provider. Words like unintelligible, gibberish, and nonsense are commonly associated when Bing or Google Translate are used. This has been the case since Google Translate launched in April 2006.

In the past 5 years there has been a major revolution in computational linguistics—in fact, the revolution is bigger than that—there is substantial buzz about something called Machine Learning a.k.a. Artificial Intelligence and Neural Networks. In November 2016, the first Neural Machine Translation [NMT] engines started coming out from the research lab. In a little over 2 years the entire premise about translation engines being bad is now up for serious discussion. Google, Microsoft, Amazon and others are using these new technologies to cover vast amounts of content they could not previously translate. In some topics, these translations are reaching a status of "acceptable". In eLearning, we need better than that—but we can still make use of the raised baseline.

Google's Advances in NMT a Threat to Google SEO Metrics?

The latest generation of NMT output is fairly good given that some important criteria are followed: the engine has sufficient training in (1) the subject matter (terminology), and (2) the natural language nuances in the target language. No better proof of this than in Google's confession of how its own NMT engine is being used for website translations that can fool its complicated and precious SEO algorithms (fool Google's Search Algorithms). Since the origin of internet search in the 90s, this has been the technological arms race in digital space: how to be found and get to Page 1 of popular searches. Google has always devalued machine translation found in websites, but it is a new ballgame if it cannot distinguish between NMT output and human output.

NMT Applications within elearning

Imagine that instead of website advertising, the content is an eLearning course. Are there applications where NMT output can be used for multi-lingual versions?   Short answer, no. Machines still lack the creativity and inspiration to capture and translate the meaning of most creative phrases or any type of relevant cultural idiom. Yet, while you can't get human-level results from an engine—you can get fairly close. The practice of Post-Editing is needed – a human editor to edit and clean up the rough translation.

The new paradigm is to let the NMT engine take care of the basics, and let the experts in culture and nuance add that last bit of linguistic accuracy. This 1-2 approach cuts down on overall time, and most of the time, can reduce the cost as well. We have mature engines that have saved our

clients up to 40% of their translation cost in 50% less turnaround time.

Today, a good engine needs to be more accurate than verbose. Previously, you would need 1 or 2 million words to train the machine. The older engines were statistical, based on numeric frequencies and customized algorithms. This required lots of data, lots of patience and trial and error—all time-consuming activities that didn't always result in a successful implementation. As language labs incorporated A.I. learning concepts within neural-based machines, this process became much faster and more productive. Most of all, NMT engines are creating more natu-ral sounding sentences in the target languages. All of this means less time for a Post Editor to smooth out the rough edges of the translation.

People are still very much a part of the process—but those people are now doing things faster, with fewer obstacles and in less time. That allows for 1 person to do the job of 2. We recommend post editing after an engine is mature and knows it's "domain" well. These are learning systems, so we have to teach them appropriately and maintain them. Curation of content going into the engine is as important as what the output should be—the neural network learns by example, so it is wise to bring your best content to the training sessions.

Consequently, after you have performed a translation from the Engine—you can feed it back to it so it can learn from "an even better" example. If we continue this cycle of continuous improve-ment—the output will soon be very attuned to the needs of the target audience and a custom translation is much more useful than a generic translation.

In what situations does NMT engine use make sense? When a customer has (46) courses it wants localized into the same languages, an NMT engine starts to make sense. If the topic (domain) is relatively narrow for a significant number of modules, and that topic has a strong base of past translations (Translation Memory), then an NMT engine can be trained in that language pair. For example, if my courses are all on various instructions using the Microsoft Office Suite then all modules will use a common terminology base, a common style of communication, and there will be existing translation memory.

Human Voiceover (VO) vs. Text to Speech (TTS)

Before we examine the advantages of humans vs. machines for speech, we should ask why we are adding speech to our eLearning content to begin with and the pros and cons of each method and advances in the field.

Audio & Writing In eLearning

Let's first consider why we add audio to eLearning content. The premise is simple: adding another mode of communication can enrich the experience of a learner. Adding color, graphics and sound can give cues and reinforce concepts that are sometimes ambiguous or too densely packed into words. Phrases such as "Sounds good, I hear you" inadvertently add speaking as a variant of understanding.

Commonly it has been taught to "write how you speak", but good writing is distinct from good speaking, the rules are different. You don't just write a script like you write a passage in a book, at least if you want to make it sound the least bit engaging. The main culprit is punctuation, a comma versus a period versus a hyphen – all are distinct in the "spoken word", most are not

in eLearning. In writing, we tend to be unaware of how these little changes affect meaning and speech. However, speaking has a clear intent and outcome – that makes our eLearning more engaging and, for most audiences, it's not-negotiable. Now you have two modes of communication working together to produce an even better output; more engaging and richer with meaning. It's also easier to get away with a "bad" script if you happen to be both the author and the narrator.

Scripts for eLearning are not exceptionally difficult to author or produce as a voice over. You must pace the delivery of the content, make sure the person who does the voice over sounds like they know what they are talking about, and hopefully has even taken the time to learn how to pronounce things; that, a good cardioid microphone, and a quiet room are all you need.

The Cost Of Professional Touch

Whenever something has so few simple requirements, it usually means that it is nearly impossible to do well. The difference between someone casually recording on their desktop versus a booked studio artist is night and day – it's obvious to the casual learner. Voice artists don't just magically appear; they train, go to coaches, learn accents, unlearn accents, take breathing lessons and acting lessons and train and practice, for years. They are rare, they are expensive, and many deserve the recognition for their talent and hard work. They are also not likely to be used on most training courses, as the project can't afford them, or they aren't available. So, people typically go with a slightly less qualified (less prestigious) talent, or someone who can speak Japanese next Tuesday at 10 AM; because, while we respect the art, deadlines are real too.

The voice talents are typically available online as home-recorders (cheapest) up to the professional studio (most expensive) with the fanciest equipment which requires a physical trip to the studio. There's a subtle cost gradient between individuals, their infrastructure until a sudden spike into "broadcast" territory. This is because a very talented artist can make a living off a series or commercial broadcasting rights; sometimes, eLearning courses just take too much valuable time for some talents. The gamut of resources is part of the reason why most companies engage in voice overs with a very limited scope – it's quickly revealed to be a complex and costly environment.

The Factor Of Availability

Adding to this mix of variables is the simple availability factor – people have limited schedules and get sick or go on vacation. So it's always best to have at least one alternate voice in mind, just in case. On the positive side, it can be said that courses with some variation in speakers can use that to keep learners engaged. It's not the same person as last time, it's slightly different than expected, what else is new? This again is best planned and not encountered. A typical voice artist can do about 3-4 hours before they need a break; in longer engagements (multiple courses, for example) they might need rest-days or risk real damage to their livelihood.

The challenge usually ends up being finding the right talent for the job where cost, availability, accent, gender, and language all intersect. It is not easy but perfectly doable, it's also possible to avoid extra costs if you are able to source with a studio and get a negotiated flat rate pricing – this works particularly well if you are not "picking the voice of the brand" or engaged in marketing efforts; which in eLearning, you aren't. Choosing talent shouldn't be a big Hollywood casting call with dozens of rounds and qualifying conditions – most if not all voice over artists are professional and capable enough to do an eLearning course, and with the right directorial guidance, it's easy to do it right.

The Instructional Designer Is The Voice Talent: Pros And Cons

Sometimes the voice talent is the Instructional Designer – they know the subject and what to convey and sometimes they practice too! Many companies and departments are completely fine with not using a professional studio; there's no time, or budget constraints – and the record button is right in front of you.

Where this approach falls short is when you must expand the audience to other countries. Who's going to learn Japanese in a weekend? How will you know if the French talent's accent is highly regional and the Paris office will laugh at your presentation because it sounds "funny". Maybe you are lucky and have offices where someone owes you a favor and speaks the language, but there is a better way.

The Machine Solution

Before we leave the Human world let's recognize that with the proper directorial input, an actor can pretend anything – doubt, fear, sarcasm, and any emotion properly described – it is an infinite pallet of technique; perhaps mechanically repeatable; but not yet able to be spontaneously generated.

What Will The Use Of A Human Voice Actor Bring?

Voice acting is a learned skill; it's been done since the first radio broadcast, since the first time someone got on a stage. This is more like acting in general. It's an art form, a talent, and a skill – animation is generally where most of the lucrative work is. Animation, like comic book heroes, is no longer niche backwaters – it's a large industry with many traditional actors also doing voice over work; the skills transfer and they don't have to wear fancy makeup unless they want to. The quality of output from these actors is as variable as their experience and background – plus the director can make a huge difference in the output. The director can help steer the recording session and make things sound "like a radio commercial" or solemn like "a serious message" and many things in between. One thing to think about is the actor and director need guidance – how is this supposed to sound? What is it for? These requirements are sometimes not captured in a script or even in a general request – it's sometimes "just record these slides". Consider saying instead "record these slides so that people know the rules that keep everyone safe at our company" or "record this training about how to use the new system that saves everyone hours of work" – a brief summary, position statement, tone or anything else that the end listener (your learner) will appreciate. Using skilled talent without direction is an underutilization of a valuable

resource and very simple to address with a few short sentences.

We've talked about how human voice talent is expressive and able to be molded into almost anything in the range of emotion and output; but what about those robot voices, the TTS?

How TTS Technology Enhances eLearning Initiatives

Let's step back and look at the history and evolution of voice technology. TTS is a relatively ubiquitous technology in the world of telecom. It was first introduced in 1939 at the World's Fair by Bell Labs. The New York Times wrote, describing the machine's operation, "My God, it talks." Talking machines have been evolving ever since. In 1962, John L. Kelly created a "vocoder" speech synthesizer and recreated the song "Bicycle Built for Two". Arthur C. Clarke happened to be visiting a friend at the lab, and caught the demonstration; it made it into his novel and the subsequent screenplay for "2001: A Space Odyssey" where the iconic supercomputer, the HAL9000, sings it as he is deactivated. The machine voices have at times fascinated us and as they got better at imitating our voices, sometimes they terrified us.

Speaking machines are no longer science fiction. Some of us have daily interaction with intelligent agents like Siri and Alexa, and Google's driving directions aren't just for getting around Silicon Valley. It's a part of our lives. Interactive Voice Response [IVR] systems have really been the foundation for Machine Voice. They replaced operators in call centers, they now can listen, talk, repeat bank statements, take payments over the phone, and just about anything a human employee can. For eLearning we really need to ask "Are we ready to replace voice actors with machines?"

They are not perfect, they have been at times deeply flawed and, in the past, sounded primitive. It also seems that we tend to forget how technology advances on its own very rapid scale. We still treat items such as Machine Translation and Text to Speech [TTS] as if we had just landed on the moon, we forget that this technology is almost 80 years old. A public pay phone is a rare sight these days; telephones are in our pockets. In short, it's a good time to re-assess the state of technology around voice-systems. Talking machines were improved by way of Artificial Intelligence programs in Telecom. TTS had a "normal" development cycle until 2015. Then it converged with Machine learning and Big Data in the old problem of generating speech was revisited by AI practitioners. Natural Language Processing and lots of data in 2016 made TTS smarter. More has changed in the last 3 years than in the past 75 in TTS.

Focusing on the phone for a moment, and both Android and iOS have entire languages setup to understand you and talk back to you. Unfortunately, you have probably received unsolicited calls and the entire operation was machine-run, including the amazing new offer, you stopped listening to the second you realized it was a recording. There are some that stop and say "Can you hear me?" or wait for your reply like a human would. That type of automated/scripted interaction is a mix of AI and TTS. But is that good enough for eLearning?

Why Voice Matters

Let's set aside the AI-logic [which makes an interesting subject on its own] and focus on the delivery vehicle: Voice.

If we go back to the main premise of having communication on at least two fronts, voice and text, then yes, it checks the box where you have spoken words. But there are many components to voice:

- Should it be Male or Female? Should it be recorded in both, or have a voice that is indistinguishable?
- What kind of tone? Should it be excited, relaxed, or flat?
- What breathing pattern and pace? Fast, slow, or rhythmic?
- What type of pronunciation or accent? Southern, Canadian, etc.?
- Think back to the early days of driving with Google as your navigator. Remember when the voice would mangle the names of streets or totally mispronounce cities? Or, what about when the navigator says "Recalculating" and you feel as though the app is mad at you for not taking that left turn. It is often preceived as personal because the TTS system is overly impersonal.

Speech Synthesis Markup Language [SSML]

TTS has a solution for that, it's called Speech Synthesis Markup Language [SSML] and it allows for emphasis, substitutions and the use of phonemes and other tricks.

With modern TTS systems, telling the machine how to pronounce "tomato" is easy. You simply tell it to "Toe-may-toe" or "Toh-ma-tah." In the southern US, a pecan tree pronunciation may be taught this way:

<speak>

You say, <phoneme alphabet="ipa" ph="phone me">pecan</phoneme>.

I say, <phoneme alphabet="ipa" ph="pi.kæn">pecan</phoneme>.

</speak>

The tool is the phoneme, which is best defined as a building block for sounds made by people. The funny alphabet is the International Phonetic Alphabet; it captures the sounds that human voices [mouths, lips, etc] make. You can encode just about any human-made sound and play it back.

If that's a name of a company, a brand, or a person it's important to be able to have a pronunciation guide for what it is that they "should" be called. Sometimes the TTS system will guess at the pronunciation of a word based on its training and that can be bad if it's a well-known sound. Also, some words are pronounced depending on how you use them: "Bass" is a fish or a type of musical instrument. You can now distinguish to a very specific degree how things should sound.

These systems are completely customizable in several ways: Models of language, voices, and sounds generated, and modelling around other speakers. Speech Synthesis Markup Language; this allows several customizations around:

- Pauses in reading
- Rate of speech
- Pitch of voice
- Length of vocal tract [deeper voice]
- Language used [useful for when reading English or foreign names]
- And pronunciation "fixes" with phonemes using Phonetics
- Visual sync with lip movements [visimes]
- Parts of speech ["will you read the book" vs. "I already read the book"]

How do you choose between the two?   The factors that typically push one into TTS are simple; Demand is greater than Capacity. Meaning, the amount of voice over work is greater than the ability to hire human actors. This doesn't mean that all jobs are split up this way; only that some jobs only can be served by TTS.

The TTS systems tend to be customized for the lexicon [dictionary] and a few hours of engineering time is spent fixing "bugs" for each 30 min of audio. Still, this rate is substantially less than the traditional booking of talent.

The flipside is that humans have prosody, that is the term used for naturally variant speech patterns and differences in intonation, pitch, speed, loudness, etc. The things that give richness to the voice. This is 100% available with a studio session. However, it's not so available in TTS unless you put in hours of work on minutes of audio.

The recommendation is to ask an expert in eLearning and also validate the cost/benefit from being in more languages. Most learners will probably forgive the TTS if it means they can listen to the lesson instead of reading a transcript.

In other cases, a professional voice over gives the lesson a certain level of polish that's hard to replace; but this comes at a cost. One important observation that should be shared is that these things cost less with scale to a point.

Book ten minutes of studio time, the talent will be there for an hour; so, why not 25? Or 30? These additional minutes get "bundled" into the basic "show up" fee and as a cost per minute the rate goes down the more you do. It's like when you buy an extra-large pizza and share it with everyone. You end up with bulk savings. For individual Instructional Designers, this could mean bundling up 2-3 courses at a time; for organizations, learning how to coordinate language launches this is common practice. If you record all the Japanese courses at once and you pay less overall than if you had done it one by one.

Unfortunately, getting the stars to align on multiple projects doesn't always happen but it's still a valid cost optimization strategy. As for TTS? That's not really the same. It's a flat rate almost, the more minutes, the more engineering. Maybe optimization happens but there's never a booking fee to deal with and adding bits and parts doesn't give you the same initial costs.

The Future Of TTS Is Now

For the last few years Google and Microsoft have been experimenting with custom language variants, where you can provide a voice model and it's grafted onto a TTS. Imagine a way to re-take and redo scenes in movies after the actor has left the production, or correct flubs that would otherwise be perfect. Adobe in November of 2016, unveiled a technology called "VoCo" at an event with a guest actor. At this event they took the voice of the presenter, actor Jordan Peele and showed him "photoshop for voice". The technology could imitate the actor saying anything. This technology faced a large backlash from people concerned for its potential for misuse. Mark Randall, VP of Creativity at Adobe replied saying:

"That's because, at its core, technology is an extension of human ability and intent. Technology is no more idealistic than our vision for the possible nor more destructive than our misplaced actions. It's always been that way."

There hasn't been anything else published on the project since then.

Also, in September of 2016, Google released Deep Mind WaveNet, which unlike the traditional "ransom letter" style of TTS voice outputs, snippets of audio jumbled into words, it was actually modelled after real speech and sounded like it. This Neural Network speech generation technology is what the most modern TTS are used for today. But cloning voices, altering normal speech by typing in different words are yet to come. There is also work on lip-sync and dubbing side when you add computer vision [reading lips] to transcription or take the "faked" clone voice to clone "lip movements" and further erode the ability of humans to be the gold standard for voice over.

Recently, we have been able to "patch" audio by using TTS to fix small errors in a voice over with an edit. This is nothing new for audio editing, but it is new since we no longer have to bring in the talent to rerecord a line in the eLearning course. Stand-alone words like "Next" or "Question 2" are also safe enough in an eLearning test environment that TTS is perfectly suited to deliver in 1 hour what it would take a studio 2 hours + the time to find a talent [days]. These patches are limited since if it's a long utterance a voice actor still outperforms TTS.

It's also changing the overall landscape for voice artists. A startup in Montreal has been developing a "voice banking" tool. Imagine if the all your eLearning catalog was voiced by your charismatic training director. How could you keep making more voice overs than her schedule allows? How about after she's long-gone and you still want to use her voice? It's now possible to create a model of a real person's voice and then use that in TTS. Like the Adobe example, it's open to ethical questions which we are barely starting to ask. Does the compensation model become a royalty model? Does the voice of the artist become intellectual property for the business that created it with total rights?

Currently, the solutions for voice banks involve preserving people's voice when they are facing

cancer where they would lose their ability to speak. Famously, the movie critic Roger Ebert lost his voice but through an early version of this technology it was able to be rebuilt with hours of audio that he had produced. These projects used to be monumental efforts of months of recordings and engineering. With the advances in the last 2 years, it's now only 2 hours of voice recordings and a few hours of processing.

Summary

For eLearning voice overs, it will be the status quo for the next few years until TTS technology becomes ubiquitous and "voice repair" options become mainstream for "retakes". This, much like it's done with other automatable tasks, calling the voice actor for a "redo" will be less likely. In addition, premium voice banks will be sold or made for niche markets and they will sound like real people. Those actors will still have a profession and an ability to license their voice.

Some TTS systems today work on a license model [think automated systems like elevators] where the same recording will be used a million times. For eLearning, these external elements won't make a huge difference except to reduce the cost of entry to certain markets and make maintenance of annual mandatory training less expensive since the same voice can be edited and the new details added in minutes for all languages.

Many courses today are perfectly happy to have TTS included not just as an assistive [think screen reader for the blind], but more of a standard voice. Eventually, it will be better quality and good enough that narration will become as ubiquitous as "color graphics" or "air-conditioning" or anything else that was once future high-tech from the world's fair.

CHAPTER 10:
Conclusion & Summary

GLOBAL
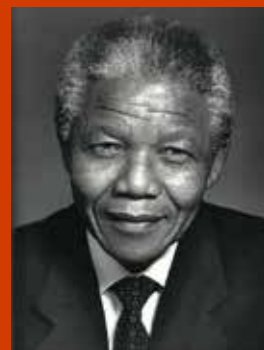*e*Learning
A Compass Languages Company

Several years ago, our company had the privilege of translating the script of a documentary about Nelson Mandela's life – into his native language of Xhosa. By 2014, Nelson Mandela's life accomplishments were world-renowned and we had already celebrated the end of this life. Yet, someone thought it wise to make sure that this man's unique perspective on life, his cumulative wisdom, should be captured in the language that 17 million indigenous speakers in South Africa. Why? So that the hearts of native speakers could be influenced by a life worth imitating. Having a few more Nelson Mandelas in the world is certainly a goal worth investing in. Let's believe there will be an ROI.

The mission of localization in the elearning field is to fully transfer knowledge from one language/culture into another so that this knowledge can be comprehended, embraced, and applied. When performed successfully, the return on investment is demonstrated through any combination of results:

- Accelerated Revenue
- Lost/injury time reduction
- Higher Productivity
- Higher Retention
- More compliant, engaged workforce

Global eLearning advocates that global companies assume full control and responsibility of developing all language versions of its training content. We call this a centralized training strategy. We outlined the advantages primarily in the areas of speed of delivery and assurance of message. Too often, in our experience, a de-centralized approach leads to long delays in execution and conflicting interpretation of original content.

In order to achieve the outcomes listed above, a globally-aware company must embrace some basic truths about the people who form their global workforce. In our experience, there are 5 factors that must be implemented into any successful global training intiative. We offer these **"Global Training Rules"** for your consideration:

"If you talk to a man in a language he understands, **that** *goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his* **heart."**

-- Nelson Mandela

Global Training Rules

1. People want to learn in their native language

2. Learners respond positively, even dramatically, to localized content

3. A scalable localization strategy is built upon a process that produces a reliable, "on-time" quality product consistently

4. The greater the scope of languages, the more disciplined a company must be in controlling original content design

5. Engagement is achieved through knowing the target audience's perspectives, culture, and learning patterns

Based upon these global training insights, a company can build a localization strategy that seeks to accomplish its specific L&D objectives in each target location. Strategies will vary depending upon the outcomes sought and the target audiences involved. Some principles, or best practices, are described below that will go a long way towards accomplishing the goals of: reliability, scalability, and lowest total localization cost.

Best Practice #1 – contract with an experienced language service company who has ample experience with learning and development content, authoring tools, video adaptation skills, voiceover techniques, and a commitment to perform extensive QA as part of its localization process. Build a relationship with one or more of these companies such that they can help you stay current with technologies such as NMT, TTS, ASR, and other software tools.

Best Practice #2 – maintain a single internal reviewer per language and have this reviewer take ownership of the translations, Translation Memories, style guide, and glossary created and maintained by the language service company.

Best Practice #3 – in conjunction with your internal reviewer and language service company, establish the quality standards for localization deliveries: text accuracy, layouts, voice recordings, synchronization/timing, video OST, and authoring tool functionality. Define unacceptable errors and have the vendor self-evaluate and validate overall quality before each delivery.

Best Practice #4 – don't start localizing until the source content is 100% ready and no longer needs editing.

Best Practice #5 – a solid localization strategy constantly thinks of ways to reduce the costs and schedules involved in the localization process. Keep a checklist of how the source content can be designed to minimize the cost and time of localization preparation.

Best Practice #6 – keep abreast of localization technologies and the potential application of them to shorten turnaround time and costs. In conjunction with your localization partners, perform cost/benefit analyses on implementation. Certain costs can be significantly reduced if quality standards are more relaxed ... but all stakeholders should carefully measure the risks associated.

Finally, the backbone of the localization strategy is a localization process that produces a dependable localized product on-time, every time. Global eLearning designed a process that we call Authentic Localization™ that includes (4) components (in blue, numbered) outside of a traditional localization process. These components give our process a robust ability to enhance the engagement of the elearning content to the target audience, and, deliver localized products faster than any other system. If "on-time" has the meaning to you of a product delivered by a deadline AND without errors that require re-work, then our process is the choice for getting it "right the first time".

GLOBAL
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Authentic Localization™

No other language service company has spent so much time engineering the process of eLearning localization as Global eLearning. Our unique Authentic Localization™ process is designed to drive down costs, create efficiencies in turnaround, and increase user engagement – concepts we found to be lacking in most localization efforts. Our in-country learning experts provide critical input to clients who want their training and learning development projects to be acceptable and engaging in the new language.

For More Information on Localization of Learning & Development,
Contact the experts at Global eLearning today!

www.GlobaleLearning.com