







Terms to Know

Language is our profession. As in any other technical field, some terms assume specific meanings within this context. Here are some key concepts you will encounter when communicating across multiple languages and cultures:

 **INTERPRETER:** a professional who transforms VERBAL communication from one language to another. Interpretation can either be “simultaneous” (in real-time, as it is spoken) or “consecutive” (after each sentence or group of ideas, the speaker pauses while an interpreter repeats that entire section in the other language). ASIST routinely provides interpretation for business and trade meetings, conferences, medical facilities, legal proceedings, etc., as well as a 24-hour telephone interpreting service.

 **TRANSLATOR:** a professional who transforms WRITTEN (or recorded) communication from one language to another. Whenever you are providing text, audio, or video content in multiple languages—product instructions, software, Web sites, manuals, materials for teaching, patient information, interactive training or a Power Point presentation, for example—you require the services of a translator.

 **SIMULTANEOUS INTERPRETING SYSTEMS:** These electronic systems provide multiple headsets for your audience members or meeting participants. Receivers can be tuned to any one of various channels, according to the language each individual wishes to hear. Interpreters provided by ASIST usually sit at microphones in cabins or booths at the rear of the room or auditorium. As they interpret in real time, transmitters broadcast their voice out to the earphone receivers in the audience. One or many languages can be interpreted simultaneously, while your event proceeds smoothly as if there were no linguistic barrier at all.

 **LANGUAGE vs. DIALECT vs. VARIETY:** All right, we’re pretty sure you know what a language is! It has distinctive rules of grammar and a recognized oral tradition or written literature. But what about dialects that might be considered regional variants or sub-languages—that is, they are mostly identical, but with a significant number of grammatical differences and variations in vocabulary? And what if more people actually speak the “dialect” than the original, or “standard” language? (For example, consider Mexico and Spain, or the USA and England.)

Modern linguists prefer the term language “variety,” rather than “dialect.” This helps avoid popular

Famous Quotes

William Safire’s Rules for Writers

- Remember to never split an infinitive.
- The passive voice should never be used.
- Do not put statements in the negative form.
- Verbs have to agree with their subjects.
- Proofread carefully to see if you words out.
- If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing.
- A writer must not shift your point of view.
- And don’t start a sentence with a conjunction.
- (Remember, too, a preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.)
- Don’t overuse exclamation marks!!!
- Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided.
- Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors.
- Last but not least, avoid cliches like the plague.

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We always look forward to hearing from you. To e-mail comments or suggestions for future issues, click:
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Comment Corner

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misconceptions and cultural or historical bias when distinguishing between “main” languages and their “dialects” or close relatives. Therefore, we might say that distinct varieties of English are spoken in New Delhi, Chicago and Glasgow, or varieties of Spanish in Madrid, Buenos Aires and Mexico City. Knowing which variety is your target for translation makes a difference!

So, if you translate installation instructions to Portuguese, for example, you might assume that they can be used in both Brazil and Portugal—both countries speak Portuguese, right? Not necessarily! The effect of inappropriate usage or vocabulary can be relatively minor (like “gasoline” vs. “petrol” between English varieties) comical, or even downright offensive. At ASIST, we’re acutely aware of these cultural issues. We use only native speakers of the target language variety to produce natural-sounding and culturally-appropriate translations of your original content. For some documents, for example, a single translation that’s relatively “neutral” may be usable for many different Spanish-speaking countries.

However, there’s more to translation than simply knowing correct language varieties—our objective is Intercultural

Communication. Legal systems, currency, labor practices, weights and measures, voltages, business practices and vocabulary must all be considered to create a version of your document that’s truly appropriate for the target language and culture.

Your first step when beginning a translation project with ASIST is to identify where the translated documents are going to be used. We will guide you through the rest!



FYI...

Spanish is the first language of at least 364 million people (including 28 million in the USA, according to the 2000 census) and spoken as a second language by another 60 million or so. Spanish (español) is also called Castilian (castellano)—particularly within Spain itself, where several other major languages are also spoken, including Catalán, Basque and Galician. In the western hemisphere, many people colloquially refer to “good” Spanish (i.e., without slang and regional expressions) as “Castilian.” However, this can lead to misunderstandings about which variety of Spanish is actually being requested. It is always best to simply indicate where the translation must be used; ASIST linguists will help you identify the best variety of Spanish for your project.



Travel Tips

Exchange currency locally before traveling abroad; you often get a better exchange rate and lower commissions. In many countries, your best effective exchange rate (net of bank commissions, etc.) will be through making purchases directly with your credit card—as long as you pay off the balance as soon as you get back!

Essential Items for the Business Traveler

- Currency conversion calculator that allows you to store conversion rates.
- Calculator-style translator (or program for your palmtop computer)—especially if you haven’t mastered the language.
- Travel-size toothbrush and toothpaste, which fit in your purse or jacket pocket.

Cou-Cou (Caribbean Polenta)

2 cups cornmeal
1/2 pound fresh okra (cleaned)

1/4 cup butter
1 teaspoon salt

black pepper to taste

1. Dice the okra. Bring 3 cups of water and the salt to a boil in a large saucepan. Add okra. Boil for 8 minutes. Remove pan from heat. Drain reserving liquid.
2. In a large bowl, mix cornmeal with enough cold water to moisten. Stir the cornmeal into okra in the pot along with 2 cups of reserved liquid. Return pot to stove over medium heat. Cook and stir about 15-20 minutes.
3. Insert spoon into center of the cou-cou. When spoon stands up in the pot and is easily removed, the cou-cou is done. Cou-cou should be firm. If the mixture is loose and creamy looking, let cou-cou stand uncovered over low heat until proper consistency is achieved. When Cou-Cou is done, turn the entire mixture into a buttered serving bowl. Serve warm.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Are you in Central Ohio?



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