

Monday, December 31, 2007

Quick Tips

Translation Technology: Ready for Prime Time?

Translation software and online translation services abound. But, are any of them good enough for "prime time;" i.e., good enough for use in your classroom. Of course, if you need to communicate, even a poor translation that gets your point across; or helps you understand what the parents or student is trying to say, is beneficial.

As a "down and dirty, quick fix;" it is hard to fault free translation software and free translation services.

But, what is the catch? Language plus Culture = Communication. The first issue is that "word for word" translations seldom communicate the precise meaning. So, if the communication is super important (maybe even legal) such as Special Education Students' Individual Education Plans, grievance forms, failure notices, anything that can come back to bite you... get a professional person to translate for you.

For other stuff, decide if the trade off of "quick vs. quality translating" is worthwhile. Online Translation Services

Babelfish (at [Altavista](#));

Google; Translator (at [Google](#));

Translate (at [Paralink](#));

Translator (at [WorldLingo](#));

Translator (at [Dictionary.Com](#));

Multiple Translator (at [Omniglot](#));

Of course, if you have time to burn, you can examine each any of the 9.9 million search result links for "online translation" …

Google; Search for "Online Translation" Of course, you get what you pay for, and this stuff is "free."

Also note that if you search using Google; and you find a resource that is written in another language, Google;'s search listing offers to translate the page (or resource) for you. Good luck if you demand accuracy, though. Translation Software Translation Software is not much better than online translation software.

However, there is one exception.

The one program that does a "noble" if less than precise job is the program, SEER;

But, SEER; is different because it requires user input to identify the part of speech and the usage that need to be translated.

But, this requires "human intervention" that takes thought and time." Of course, "thought and time are what you pay a professional translator to do.

And, SEER; is pricey, at about \$300 USD. The product is also available for an annual subscription of about \$100 USD.

And, SEER; recommends that you employ a professional translator, or at least a native speaker of the language that you want to translate to (the target language).

SEER; offers a free download, but you might be better off purchasing the trial CD since the trial CD gives you 70 days of use before it stops translating for you. If you use the trial CD and then purchase the SEER; product, all your translation work will remain available and usable! Link to the SEER; Site

Link to the SEER; Download Page

Link to the SEER; CD Order Page

Remember that Culture is Crucial For Translation

Word analysis (vocabulary) is important, as is grammar, syntax and spelling. But, the culture that the language is embedded in is also important to the translation process.

In addition, native English speakers are generally unaware of just how difficult English is to translate.

While the sentence structure and grammar rules of English are easy, English … Spelling, synonyms, homonyms and exceptions are horrendous

Has more words than other languages, over 900,000

Co opts words from other languages at a frantic pace

Uses slang and idioms (also at a frantic pace) in lieu of structured conventions

Modifies daily with expressions that are gleaned from the broadcast and film media Phrases that didn't exist yesterday can come to prominence in a short time, and be listed in the Oxford Dictionary to the surprise of everybody. Sidebar Link to a description of how words are added to the Oxford Dictionary

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