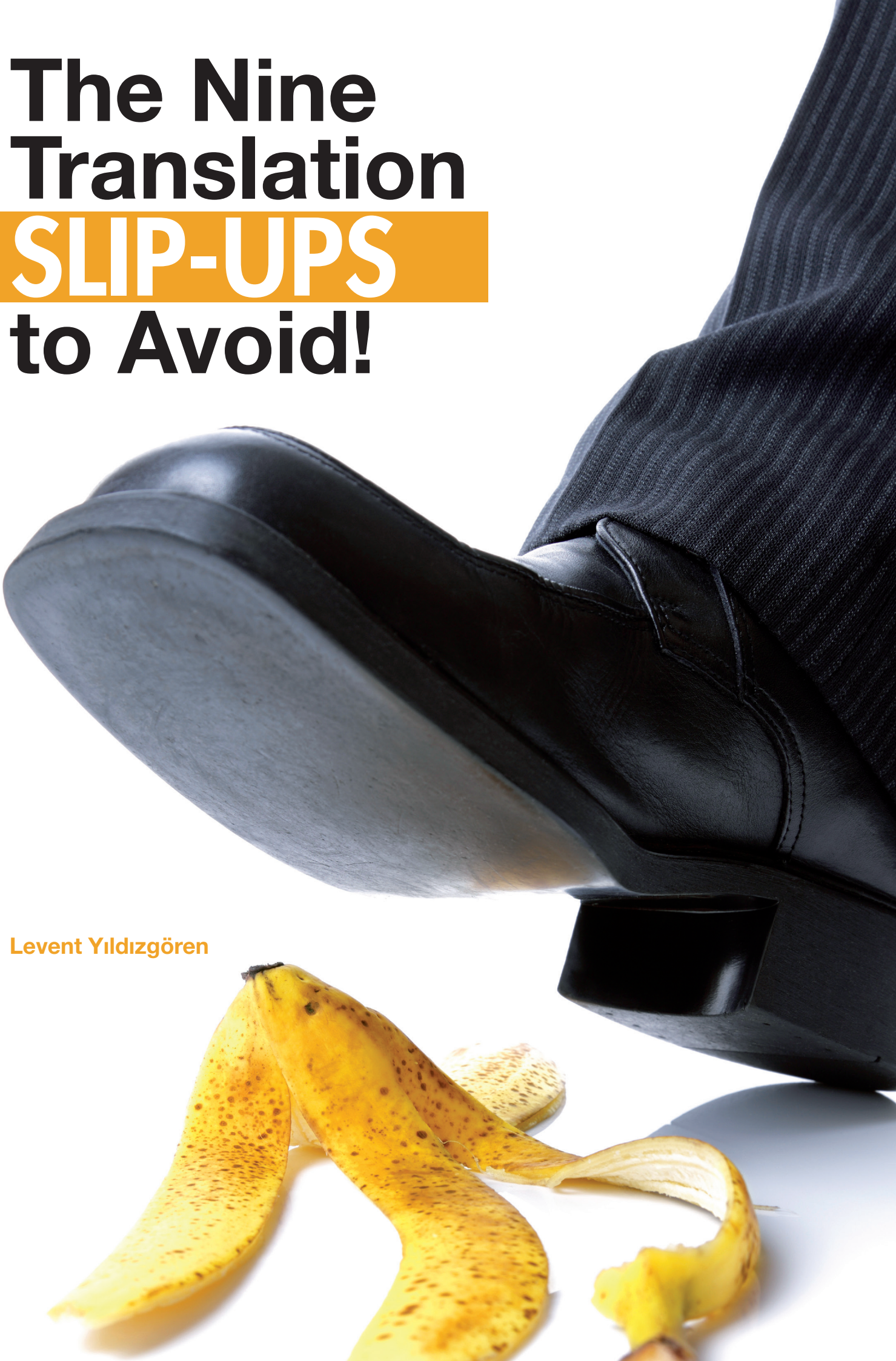


The Nine Translation **SLIP-UPS** to Avoid!

Levent Yıldızgören





Hello and welcome to **The Nine Translation Slip-ups to Avoid.**

I am Levent Yıldızgören, Co-founder of TTC wetranslate Limited, an ISO 17100 and ISO 9001 certified company, I help businesses to overcome language barriers.

I have been in the translation industry for over 30 years and these 9 mistakes come up time and time again when we work with companies.

If you want your business to succeed internationally, your communication needs to be geared to the global market. Whether you are in a challenging economic climate or a growing business, precise professional translations will ensure that your target audience gets your message.

I would like to share with you a number of tips and thoughts that have been gathered from our experience of providing services to clients from many different industries. I hope that you will find the tips shared in this booklet useful and can implement them in your translation projects.

If you have any comments or questions after reading *The Nine Translation Slip-ups to Avoid* please get in touch.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'L. Yıldızgören' in a cursive script.

Levent Yıldızgören

Published author of '*Good Business in Any Language*' and host of '*Conquer New Markets*' podcast

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#1

Doing it yourself

Don't get us wrong, doing it yourself is a great way to work. When it comes to translation, however, you should not attempt to do this by yourself, unless you are a translator, have the relevant skills and experience, or have translators working in your company.

There is a misconception that if you are bilingual or know another language, you can also translate a document. However, being bilingual is not a guarantee that you will be able to write fluently or have the necessary translation skills.

Most lead translators have a minimum of 5 years of translation experience. They either have a university degree, relevant experience in a specialised field of work or the equivalent professional qualifications.

All reputable translation companies have to go through a strict vetting process before translators are enlisted and the work is regularly monitored. Translators should only translate into their native languages and it is important they have experience in the subject matter.

Then there is translation project management. Translations that are not managed by project managers often end in failure. This is because translation project managers play a key role in getting the project underway, lending their expertise and knowledge to both the client and the translator. They achieve this by being both the client's first point of contact and providing support to the translators.

Here are some of the potential mishaps that can occur if the whole process is not properly managed:

- Deadlines can be overlooked
- Budgets may get out of control
- The quality and readability of the finished product may be lower than expected

The quality of a document, regardless of the language it is in, has a direct impact on your brand.



#2

Relying on automatic translation

When you need to get just the gist of something for your own use, automatic translation can be useful. It is free and quick.

While automatic translation tools, such as Google Translate and Bing Translate, have come a long way over the years, resorting to these for your business communication may not be a wise choice. In essence, automatic translation is a quick way to get the gist or the overall idea of a document. However, such tools should not be relied on for any critical business matters.

Automatic translation should not be confused with computer-aided translation or customised machine translation solutions. Automatic translation basically substitutes words from one language with words from another. Here are some of the adverse effects of automatic translation:

- The tool generates one meaning of a word in the target language, but this word can be out of context.
- Sentence structures are rendered unrecognisable in the target language.
- The principles of grammar are generally bypassed. For example, a sentence in the past perfect tense might be relegated into the simple past form.

However, automatic translation can be a useful solution when they are used for internal communications.

Some areas where it can be useful are:

- The translation of emails, as this helps you to understand whether the communication is worth taking any further
- Quick translation of text from a website
- To get the gist of a letter you've received

Some areas where automatic translation should never be relied upon:

- When printing or publishing documents
- Court cases
- Corporate marketing
- Patent applications
- Submitting tenders
- Contracts/agreements
- Medical documents



#3

Not telling your translator what it's for

One common mistake is not letting your translator know why a translation is needed. By being specific about this, you will ensure that the translation is fit for your/its purpose.



You need to clearly state the purpose of your translation needs to your translator, as there are clear differences between documents that are needed for publishing, a blog post or for a court filing. Each of them will need to be handled differently, as the tone, degree of formality and vocabulary will vary.

Before you start off with a translation request, you should first consider the purpose of the translation. Is the material required for a short business email? Is it for publishing on a website or do you just want to understand the gist of the information within it? The translated document needs to be fit for your intended purpose, as the different requirements in quality have a direct effect on the cost and completion times.

Another question you will then need to ask is, who are you translating it for? You need to now who your audience is, as well as their age group and educational background. The target audience plays a vital role when it comes to making a decision on the style and register of the translation, as tone has a great impact on the way the text is received.

For most translations, it is more important to successfully convey the meaning of the text than remaining faithful to the original lexis. There are varying degrees of freedom in translation, so the translator has to make some difficult decisions with regards to grammatical and sentential issues, cultural transposition, tone and social register.

The amount of information that the translator has will determine the extent to which they can compensate for translation loss in the finished article. Professional translators are trained to recognise the requirements of a text and to make decisions that will effectively communicate the style and meaning.

#4

Not providing all the details to your translator

Consider your translation provider as part of your team and pass on all the necessary information to them before the project starts. Keep them fully informed of any developments during the project.

Below is a list of some of the key questions that need to be answered before the project starts:



- Will post-translation work, such as typesetting, be required for the project? It is often possible for a well-equipped translation company to undertake typesetting as well, which will save you time and money.
- Is the translation required for a speech or is it going to be recorded?
- What age group is the translation targeted at and what is the educational background of the target audience? This can sometimes be clearly understood from the content, but with other texts, it might be more difficult and, as a result, will take a lot more work for a translator to be on the mark.



In order to get your message across, the translation needs to be in the correct form of the target language. If you need to get your corporate brochure translated into Spanish, let your translation company know which country you are targeting, otherwise your message will be lost in translation. For example, European Spanish is very different to Latin American Spanish.

When it comes to regional variations within a language, anything from colloquialism, choice of words, sentence structure or even grammar can be different from one variation to another. An experienced translation company project manager will question you about this at the very beginning. It is also important for you, as a client, to be clearly aware of who your target audience is.

#5

Not agreeing on the quality criteria

There is tremendous potential for disappointment when the quality criteria is not clearly defined and questions are unanswered prior to the start of a translation.



It should be clear, right from the start, what type of quality assurance is needed and who will implement it. Will a second translator be involved in editing or proofreading? Will this cost extra or affect the deadline? Even though these stages may sound similar, they are quite different and can have various consequences on the quality of the finished translation.

The quality assurance options applied to that particular project need to be suitable for your translation's purpose. Revision by a second translator is a must if your translated document is going to be published or printed. Unless these have been explicitly agreed in advance and included in the price and timeframes, there will be no guarantee that your final translation will be 'fit for purpose'.

Just like any other text, the quality will improve when a second translator goes over it to make sure that the customer's message is conveyed correctly.

However, if you only need the translation for information purposes (for your internal requirement), revision by a second translator is not necessary, which will save you time and money.

It is the translation company's responsibility to let you know at the quoting stage the list of services that will be included in the price.

Here are a list of queries that, if discussed and answered beforehand, can resolve a lot of unnecessary rounds of feedback and revisions for both the client and translation company:

- Who will go over the translation if it is to be published? Is it the client's responsibility, or will a separate reviewer be assigned?
- Is the overseas distributor/agent going to have a look at it as well?
- If yes, at what stage of the process would this take place?
- Is there any existing glossary of terms to be followed?
- What will be the format of the final file, and how will the translation company deliver the file?
- Who will ensure that all the corrections are incorporated?
- Will the translation be checked before or after the typesetting stage?
- How many "correction rounds" are included in the price?

#6

Not using previously translated documents

Your previous translations can be your biggest assets for protecting your brand, as they save money and ensure consistency.



When it comes to branding, consistency is essential. For a company to hone and polish its image, the last thing it needs is the message to be lost in translation, as inconsistent translations will confuse readers about the product and the brand.

Why reinvent the wheel? It can take many long hours of labour to create powerful brand messages, so it is particularly helpful for the client to provide any existing translated material to the translation company when a corporate document is being translated. If there is a translation memory from previous projects, this should be given to the translation company at the quoting stage. Any text in the new document that exists in the translation memory will be utilised. This can provide an excellent saving in the translation's overall budget.

However, translation memory (TM) should not to be confused with machine translation. A translation memory system stores the source text and the corresponding translation in segments. In this way, any matching text is only translated once within the same document. This provides consistency, time and cost savings.

Whether your previous translations exist in electronic or paper format, any such relevant information can still be utilised to ensure consistency, while also providing ease and clarity to the translator and cost savings to the client.

If you have not had any previous translations, this is your chance to do it right. Get to work on a glossary... and insist that your translator creates a translation memory for you.

#7

Choosing the cheapest translator

The translation industry is a competitive industry and the quality of different service providers can vary greatly.

Choosing a translator needs to be done with due diligence. Ask for samples of their previously translated documents and a list of satisfied clients. Are they a professional translation provider? Are they a member of any professional organisation? What sort of quality standards do they follow? Do they offer any guarantees?

Being a member of a professional organisation and following their professional conduct is entirely voluntary. However, organisations, such as the Association of Translation Companies (ATC) and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), have strict membership criteria, and only qualifying companies are accepted as members.

This means companies that are members of ATC and ITI can be held accountable and have a sound financial standing. Members must strictly follow the professional code of conduct of these organisations and have professional liability insurance.



In summary, when it is time to choose a translation provider, ask the following questions:

- How will I be charged? Do you charge by the line, per page or per 1,000 words?
- Do you charge on the word count of the source language or the target language?
- Are there any additional costs, such as 'urgency' charges or 'same day delivery' charges?
- Is project management included in the price?
- Will the translator be translating into their mother tongue?
- Will there be a single point of contact for me in the company?
- Who is involved in the checking process and will there be any extra fees charged?
- What quality system is the company following?
- Are other services, such as typesetting, interpreting, voice-overs and copy writing, available?
- Does the translation company carry professional indemnity insurance?
- What kind of turnaround promise and guarantees does the company offer?
- Is the company a member of the ATC or ITI?

A professional and trustworthy translation company should be one that is ready and willing to answer all of the questions above.

#8

Not planning the translation project

It is essential to offer the translation company enough time to properly manage their workflow and delivery process. A rushed translation project often does not produce the best results, and patching up subsequent mistakes is certainly something you will want to avoid.



Before you place the job, make sure that you liaise with the person who will sign off the translated documents in your company. For example, when a marketing department does not liaise with the manufacturing department, they may discover at the last minute that the translated version of the machine is no longer produced. If the export team has not been consulted prior to this, vital information on the packaging could be missed. Errors and mishaps such as these can cost delays, damage the company's reputation and create tremendous stress for everyone that is totally unnecessary.

Planning your translation project ahead of time is essential. No task or preparation is too small and this work can go a long way. Some of these tasks could include:

- Showing the translator a draft of the text so that they are familiar with the content.
- Being clear about your needs. Prior to starting the project, make sure that the translation company is clearly aware of what you are looking for in terms of format, register and audience.
- Providing reference materials or previous translations to offer more detailed information on the document's content.
- Clarifying details such as the amount of time that is needed to translate, revise, edit and review it.
- Let the translation company know if extra research is required on the translator's side when a corporate document is translated.

Performing the above tasks would prevent the following obstacles from becoming reality:

- Translators not being briefed properly and incorporating mistakes into the final product.
- The translation, editing, reviewing and sign-off stages overlapping.
- Unclear information being given that prevents the translator from providing a comprehensive, high quality translation.
- Deadlines being missed as extra rounds of feedback are needed to fix translation errors.
- Unexpected costs.
- Regional language variations not being incorporated.

#9

Not using plain and clear language when creating your content

Think international from the start. Avoid any references to colour, the human body and anecdotes that could be interpreted differently by speakers of other languages.



Plain and clear language improves your overall corporate communication and plays a vital role when you translate into other languages.

Some people use complicated language or too much technical jargon because they think it shows off their knowledge and expertise, or they assume that the readers will know a lot about the subject. These approaches can not only put off readers, but also confuse them.

By using plain language, you will provide your readers with clear and concise information. It will improve your overall corporate communication and play a vital role when you translate into other languages.

A piece of text that contains jargon or uses culturally biased language can be misunderstood, even in your domestic market. Meaningless and unnecessary words create confusion and obscure the true meaning of your message.

The English website www.plainenglish.co.uk includes some striking examples about the effects of using plain language when creating content:

Before:

If there are any points which require further explanation or more details, we shall be glad to furnish these by telephone.

After:

If you have any questions, please phone.

Before:

High quality learning environments are a necessary precondition for facilitating and enhancing the ongoing learning process.

After:

Children need good schools if they are to learn properly.

Keeping things simple, straightforward and to the point is even more critical when it comes to marketing material. Idioms, local sayings, colloquial terms, slang and regional variations are best avoided.

The translation of 'thinking alike' will make a lot more sense in other languages, than the translation of 'Singing from the same hymn sheet'.

Levent's Top Tips for Running Successful Translation Projects

Define your project clearly and in detail

You can do this by asking questions like, what is being translated, is it really necessary to do this, who are the target audience and what is the translation's purpose?

Plan the whole project, right from the start through to delivery

Create a project plan, including the schedules, quality expectations and budget.

Establish who is responsible for what

Define who is responsible for each stage, who will sign off the final copy before translation begins, and who will decide if a translation is fit for its purpose, as well as the role that your translation provider will play.

Manage risks and issues

What are the known risks and how can they be managed? Find out if any other external operations depend on your translation project, such as overseas shipments, advertising campaigns, press releases and branch openings.

Have a contingency plan

Remember to include sufficient time for all of the stages and allow extra time for any unexpected delays. If all goes according to plan, then you will deliver the project early.

Create a translation quality plan

Establish the required quality and relevant stages, such as revision by a second translator. How is the terminology going to be maintained? Is consistency with previous translations ensured? Who will sign off each stage, and most importantly, define the quality criteria that will make the translation fit for purpose.

Brief your translation provider

Communicate your project plan to your translation provider.

Monitor quality

Once the translation quality plan is created monitor the actual quality throughout the project to ensure there are no surprises at the end.

Be prepared that something may go wrong at some point

Even the best laid plans can go wrong. To prevent a crisis, follow the above steps throughout the project and be prepared to deal with problems, as and when they happen.

Choose your translation provider carefully

Your translation provider can be a valuable strategic partner for your international presence.

Contact us

Please contact us for more information on the items below by filling this form or visiting our website at ttcwetranslate.com/contact-us-today.



- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> MARKETING MATERIALS | <input type="checkbox"/> WEBSITE TRANSLATION PROXY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TECHNICAL DATASHEETS | <input type="checkbox"/> BRAND NAME CHECKING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ONLINE HELP | <input type="checkbox"/> MULTILINGUAL SEO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WEBSITE LOCALISATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MULTILINGUAL VOICEOVER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOFTWARE LOCALISATION | <input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS CARD TRANSLATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TRAINING MANUALS | <input type="checkbox"/> NEW COUNTRY TESTING KIT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> USER GUIDES | <input type="checkbox"/> MACHINE TRANSLATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> PATENT TRANSLATION | <input type="checkbox"/> CALL US TO ARRANGE A MEETING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TECHNICAL AUTHORIZING | Other: |

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