



CREATIVE LINGUISTICS FOR MARKETING CONTENT: GETTING IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

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What many businesses miss is the vital importance of engaging local market audiences with content that resonates with each individual – not just with simple translation, but with the expected language and adaptation of both textual and non-textual content that convey their brand, reputation, and trustworthiness.

Common Sense Advisory (CSA), "Can't Read, Won't Buy," 2020

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WHY CREATIVE LINGUISTICS MATTERS

At its most basic level, translation is about converting one language into another to achieve a level of understanding that reduces or removes the language barrier with international consumers.

The **outcome of a translation process varies greatly depending on how it's approached** – whether through the use of technology, human talent, or both – and how **closely aligned** those things are with the **nature and purpose of the content**. The more creative your content, the more important this becomes in driving ROI.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CREATIVE LINGUISTICS?

Creative linguistics is a set of language services geared specifically for marketing content.

Marketing content ranges from creative to informational, high-visibility to low-visibility, long-term to short-term. By evaluating the nature and purpose of your marketing content, you can determine what level of language service is necessary to successfully and effectively adapt it for international audiences. On time, on budget, and driving the results you need.

ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

Brands sometimes fail to make the connection between the nature and purpose of marketing content in informing linguistic need. And buying language can be perplexing.

The localization industry's “one-size-fits-all” approach to translation serves them well in delivering high volume, low-cost translated content. However, many marketers find out the hard way that this approach to buying translation and localization services ultimately dilutes brand and the quality of local user experience.

Poor or obviously translated content results in ineffective marketing and lost business at best, and public embarrassment and permanent brand damage at worst.

When it comes to adapting marketing content for international audiences, it's key to localize your content so that it resonates with and engages your target market(s). Get it right and you maximize engagement and ROI. Get it wrong and you risk a costly mistake for both your budget and your brand.

How does the localization industry get creative content so wrong?

- 95% of the top 100 language service providers (LSPs) are geared for heavily automated translation delivery.
- Machine translation solutions are growing at a faster pace than creative linguistic services.
- Just 35% of the top 100 LSPs have a transcreation service offering, yet marketing capabilities and expertise are limited.

Source: Common Sense Advisory



BE CAUTIOUS IF YOUR LANGUAGE SERVICE PROVIDER:

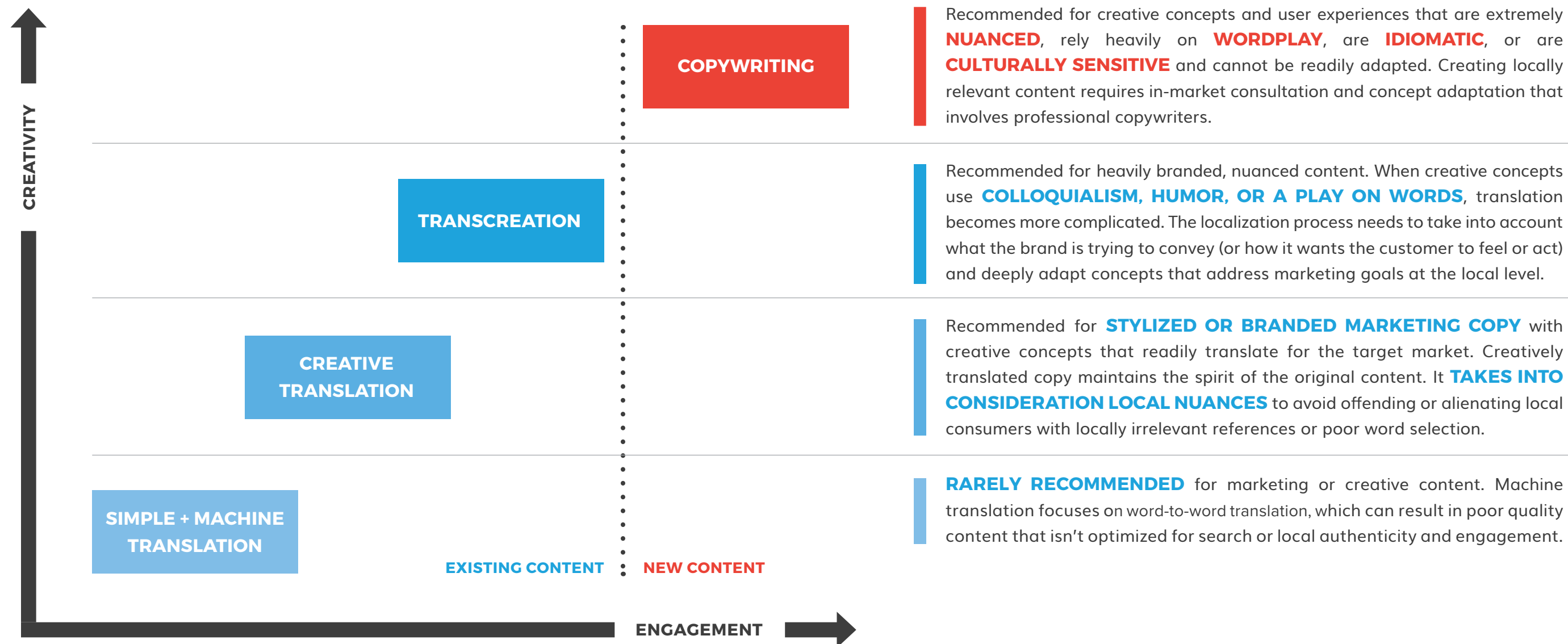
- **Tries to talk you out of creative linguistics.** This could indicate that your LSP doesn't have creative capabilities.
- **Talks about per-word pricing for transcreation and copy-written content.** Skilled creative resources generally charge by the hour, regardless of language.
- **Isn't transparent about who will be doing your translation or adaptation.** The right partner will be transparent about the linguistic resources onboarded to work on your content, will be consistent with those resources, and will connect in-country resources to your in-country stakeholders.
- **Doesn't offer multiple options for creative adaptations.** Your LSP should offer multiple options for creative linguistic services. For highly creative product names, tag lines, short-form advertising copy, etc., you should expect back-translations and rationale behind each adaptation. This will allow you to choose the option that best fits your goals and target audience.
- **Discusses your needs in the context of software.** This is a sign your LSP is putting their business goals ahead of yours. Software should support your creative linguistics strategy, not drive it. Don't invest before knowing what works.
- **Delivers "human" translation that sounds like it came from a machine.** If you think your LSP used machine translation without consulting you first, chances are you're right.

SELECTING THE RIGHT CREATIVE LINGUISTIC SERVICES

With so much at stake, where do you get started? First, you'll need to understand your budget, content goals, and quality needs. Prioritizing content in terms of potential return, risk, visibility, and engagement will help you understand where to focus the most effort.

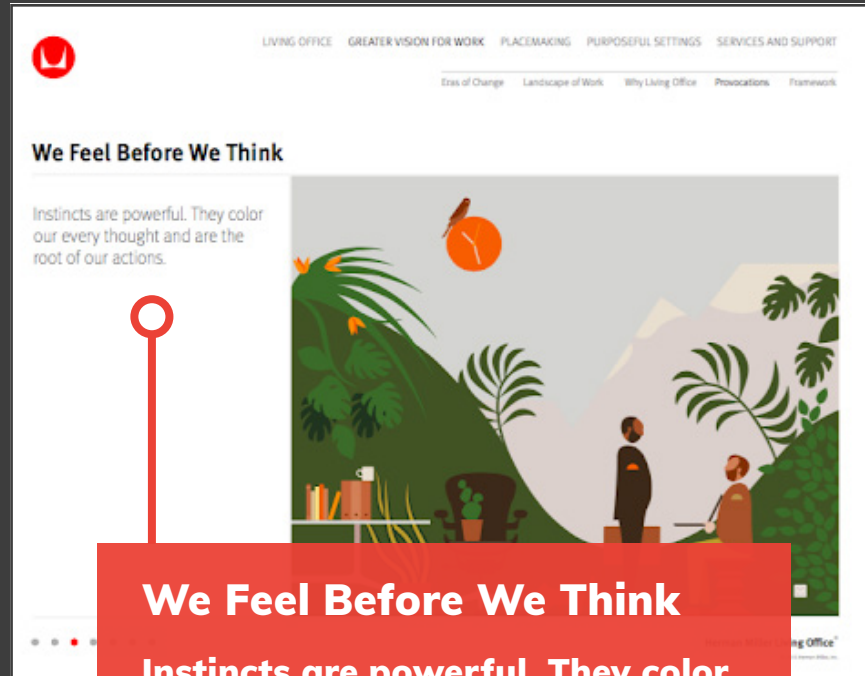
MAPPING LINGUISTIC SERVICES TO MARKETING CONTENT

Creative linguistics offers layers of service options geared toward your marketing content:



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

CREATIVE TRANSLATION



We Feel Before We Think

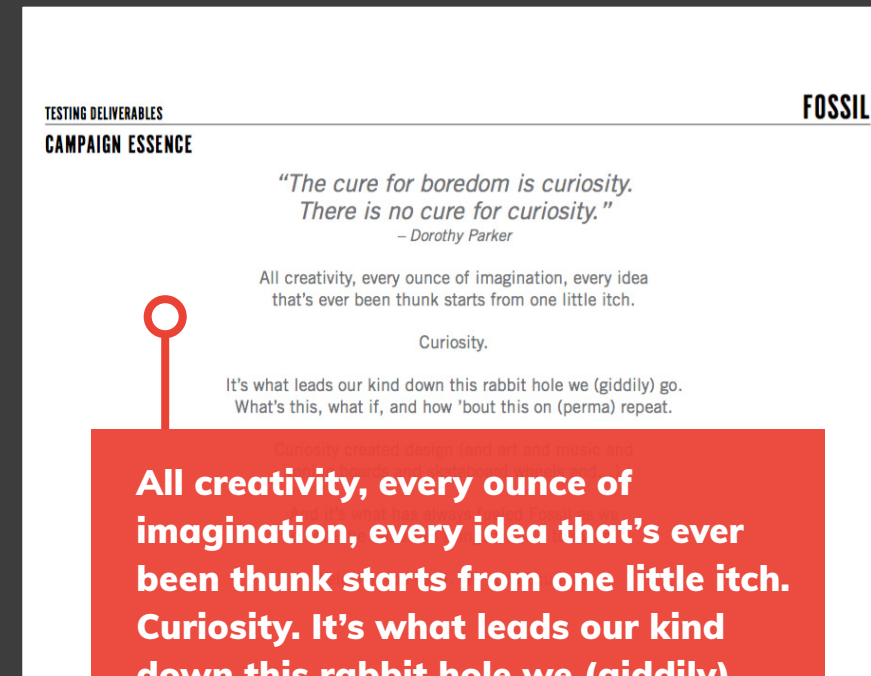
Instincts are powerful. They color our every thought and are the root of our actions.

Content is branded and/or stylized but readily translatable by a skilled creative translator.

Creative difficulty level: **simple**

Concept adaptation level: **simple**

TRANSCREATION



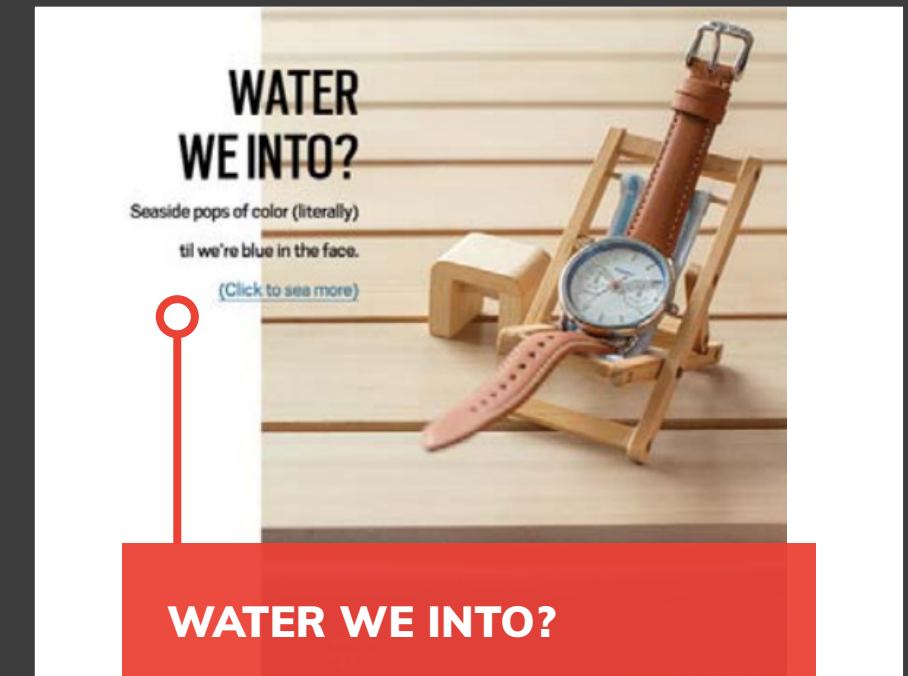
All creativity, every ounce of imagination, every idea that's ever been thunk starts from one little itch. Curiosity. It's what leads our kind down this rabbit hole we (giddily) go. What's this, what if, and how 'bout this on (perma) repeat.

Content is heavily nuanced with colloquialism and playful tone designed to inspire connection to the concept.

Creative difficulty level: **medium to complex**

Concept adaptation level: **medium**

COPYWRITING



WATER WE INTO?

Seaside pops of color (literally) til we're blue in the face.

Content is idiomatic, culturally nuanced, and heavy on word-play, requiring in-market research and concept development by professional copywriters.

Creative difficulty level: **medium to complex**

Concept adaptation level: **medium to complex**



HOW TO GET IT RIGHT:

Translation is a tactic, not the goal. It's the least a company can do to reach an international audience. To drive lasting engagement and long-term results, you likely need to think beyond translation in its traditional sense.

Focus on impact and start small. Don't waste budget translating everything. Prioritize the content most likely to generate business results in each of your target markets.

Your content should inform the language services you choose. Not the other way around.

The more creative the content, the greater the effort and reliance on human talent. While this may mean a greater cost upfront, you'll see a return in engagement and brand sentiment.

Transcreation often requires changes to visual elements as well. Imagery, layout, design, and color choices may all be affected by a transcreated outcome.

This chart can help you determine which services make sense for your marketing content, depending on the level of creativity you use in your brand voice:

	SIMPLE + MACHINE TRANSLATION	CREATIVE TRANSLATION	TRANSCREATION	COPYWRITING
Social media post		✓	✓	✓
Ad copy			✓	✓
General web content		✓		
eBook		✓	✓	✓
Marketing email		✓		✓
FAQs	✓			
Product descriptions		✓	✓	
Product reviews	✓	✓		

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Poor translation signals a lack of investment that visitors may perceive as a lack of interest or concern for their market, thus undermining your brand and ability to sell.

CSA, "Can't Read, Won't Buy," 2020

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