

Client Review and Feedback policy

If we have delivered a translation, we welcome your feedback. Even after the job has been paid for.

Translation is democratic. The more heads the better. More options, more creativity, more fresh eyes.

People are fallible. You don't need a special credential to point out something that is objectively wrong. Sometimes the best way to translate something is not apparent to anyone until the translation is actually used.

But we insist that review, feedback and editing be carried out according to professional principles. This means, among other things, that we define all the key terms and concepts, and the methods of describing and dealing with these things.

Firstly, we already have a feedback system, called the "Notes File". No reviewer comments on our work will be addressed unless all the issues we have already raised in the Notes File have been resolved, with all the cooperation we require from the client.

Second, if our scope of work ends with the delivery of a translation that has been drafted, and then checked and edited based on the information in the Notes File, and then proofread, then any request to read client feedback and revise the translation is extra work that costs us money. So it must meet a clear standard. Please read the below carefully. To be valid feedback:

- It must address a specific problem with specific parts of the text.
- The text in question must be reproduced in quotation marks and the problem described in current, valid, technical linguistic terms.
- It must be explained in a way that people who speak only the source or only the target language can understand it. We will not accept any comments on trust. If the alleged problem cannot be fully articulated in both languages then it doesn't exist.
- An alternative translation or translations or solution must also be proposed. However, alternative translations alone do not constitute an articulation of the problem.
- If the reviewer finds that there are so many problems in the translation that specifying all the problems would take too long, then they must say so and pick the three worst things.

That makes it "valid". But that is only the beginning of the process. Being valid does not make it "correct". Ultimately we are being paid to make the final decision on the wording of a translation, not the reviewer. So no matter how valuable the feedback is, we reserve the right to make the final decision. We are happy to provide further guidance to people to help them develop valid arguments.

To further explain what "valid" means, these are examples of feedback that we will *not* entertain:

- Speculation as to the background, training, credentials, native language or other attributes of the translator, or of any other person involved in the production of the translation.
- General comments about the text, for example how it "flows" or how it "sounds".
- Back translations. If our translation is moot, then so is any translation back into the Source Language. Example: "this has been translated as [English expression]" or "this actually says [English expression]" Each of these examples is a translation itself and so begs the question!
- Reliance on the notion that there is a single "word for" any other particular word.
- The use of dictionaries as authorities
- The use of descriptions such as "literal translation", "word-for-word translation", "verbatim translation" and "direct translation". Except for the specific case of literal translation of figures of speech, these expressions do not mean anythingⁱⁱ.

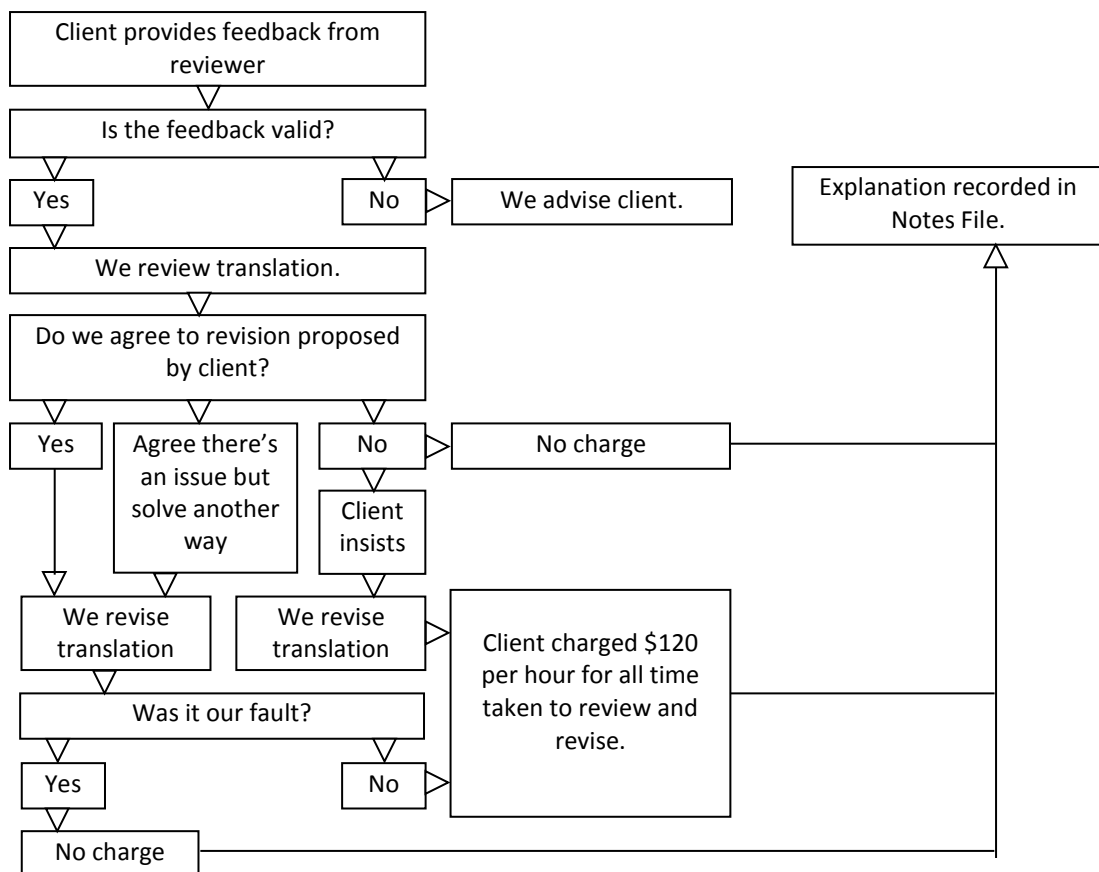
The only valid criteria are “accuracy” and “faithfulness”. There are always several ways to translate anything, and quality is not a question of “did we use the right words?” but rather “is the translation accurate and faithful?”

If our client insists on a change that is based on no more than personal preference, and if in our view it does not impact the accuracy or faithfulness, then we are happy to make it, but we charge for that time.

If this sounds like a lot of hard work, it is. Translation is hard work, and requires technical knowledge and accountability. We are responsible on pain of non-payment for delivering a satisfactory product. All the risk is with us. Client feedback is provided by people to whom none of these things apply.

Please note the following ONLY applies to the checking and editing of the translation, and each individual reviewer comment may follow a different route on the diagram below.

Also, this is not “proofreading” which is completely differentⁱⁱⁱ. We are happy to proofread our translation after it has been laid out or otherwise processed by a designer, but we will charge our hourly rate for all the time required to mark up and instruct on any typographical errors we find.



ⁱ Please read the first two pages of this article to understand why <https://poolettranslation.com.au/file/2722/151>

ⁱⁱ Please read this for full explanation <https://poolettranslation.com.au/file/2727/851>

ⁱⁱⁱ For strict definitions of technical terms like “accuracy”, “faithfulness”, “checking”, “editing” and “proofreading” please see our glossary: <https://poolettranslation.com.au/file/2624/776>