UNIT 5

Media Matters

READING

Look at the heading and subheading. What do you think the article is going to be about?

Do You Know the Difference Between English LOLs and French MDRs?

If so, then a career in social media translation may be for you …



It probably comes as no surprise to learn that English is the main language used on social media—around 52% of all content is in English. In recent years, social media has become a major asset for companies across the globe, allowing them to communicate their message with their target audience instantly and to interact with their customers on a variety of social media at the click of a button. Statistics from *Common Sense Advisory* show that 72.4% of internet users are more likely to make a purchase from a brand that uses their own native language to communicate with them online. Large organizations often need to reach their international customers through social media in languages other than English. To do this, they have to employ the skills of a good social media translator.

Patricia Jacovides works as a freelance social media translator. She explains some of the important things she has to consider when translating social media posts.

"Facebook posts, tweets, or Instagram status updates are things many of us do in our first language without giving them too much thought. But when you need to communicate a message to people globally, it's more than just a simple matter of translating content word for word. One of the first things that I need to do is plan ahead. Trying to produce interesting social media material can often be a difficult process, especially because of the limits of a social media platform like Twitter where you can only use up to 280 characters. This used to be even more difficult before 2017 when the limit was set at 140. Interestingly, this isn't the case for Japanese, Korean, and Chinese tweets whose limit is currently still set at 140 because more information can be communicated using symbols. But I translate from English to Spanish, so before I start, I have to think about any space issues which may affect the translation process. Translation from English often results in something called 'language expansion' where the number of words or characters in the translated text is higher than in the text being translated. Length can still be an issue if a company is communicating via Facebook or Instagram, which have higher character limits. Even when it's possible to write longer posts, research shows that shorter posts are often the ones that are most likely to engage an audience.

I also have to think about adapting the content of what I write depending on the country, culture, or area where the social media posts will appear—this means translating things such as units of currency, temperature, and units of measurement. For example, in the USA, they use pounds, inches, miles, and degrees Fahrenheit, whereas in many Spanish-speaking countries, they use kilos, meters, kilometers, and degrees Celsius. I also have to be culturally sensitive and understand that the content that is acceptable to people in one country may not be acceptable in another. I also need to consider globally which social media platforms to use for which audiences. For example, audiences in the Dominican Republic use Snapchat much more than those in other Latin American countries where it isn't really that popular.

It's also important to translate *text-speak* or social media buzzwords correctly. Acronyms to shorten a phrase to just a few letters are now standard across social media, but these do differ from country to country. In English, people use *LOL*, which translates as *laugh out loud*, but in French you'll find *MDR* or *mort de rire* instead, which translates as *dying of laughter*. Hashtags can be a great way of engaging with your customer, but you have to play it right. Creating a hashtag involves a lot more than simply placing the symbol in front a word. You need to think about the role the hashtag is going to play, how it fits with the company's profile and brand, and the reaction you expect to get from your audience. I think it's true to say that there are lots of different and important things to consider when translating."

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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adapting (v): to change ideas or behavior to fit with a new situation

asset (n): a benefit

freelance (adj): work done by a person who isn't employed by a particular company, but who sells their services to a company for an amount of money, e.g., a freelance journalist

interact (v): to communicate with; have an effect on

standard (adj): generally used or accepted as normal

statistics (n): a set of numbers that describe a situation

VOCABULARY

Choose the correct option.

1 A good theater show should be able to … the audience.
a attract **b** catch **c** engage

2 Many students have devices that allow them to access digital … such as world news stories.
a content **b** subject **c** theme

3 Have you ever read a/an … of an English-language book? I've read *Oliver Twist* in Spanish.
a translation **b** story **c** edition

4 There are 26 … in the English alphabet and 33 in the Russian alphabet.
a signs **b** types **c** characters

5 Did you know that the @ … stands for the word "at"?
a mark **b** symbol **c** figure

COMPREHENSION

Choose *True* or *False*.

1 Most shoppers prefer online content that appears in their native language. True / False
2 A skilled social media translator will always translate word for word. True / False
3 Tweets sent in Japanese must not be more than 140 symbols long. True / False
4 The French acronym *MDR* has a slightly different meaning to *LOL*. True / False
5 Hashtags always appear in English to avoid confusion. True / False

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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READING

Read the text. Have you seen the world's first artificial intelligence (AI) news anchor?

No Jobs Are Safe from Robots: Not Even Reading the News on TV



Tech companies across the world have been working on developing "artificial intelligence" or AI as it is known since the 1960s. AI is defined as "intelligence that is shown by machines rather than shown by humans" and is often used to describe machines (or computers) that can do things that humans can do, such as learn and problem-solve. Other abilities that are generally thought to be examples of AI in modern machines include: understanding human speech, taking part in and winning high-level games (e.g., chess), operating cars, and following directions and instructions.

While some of these technologies are already being used across the globe, there was a huge amount of media interest in November 2018 when China's news agency *Xinhua* announced that they had created the world's first male AI news anchor who could talk, move, and act just like a real human. The AI anchor was developed together with tech firm and search engine company Sogou Inc. and, according to a *Xinhua* blog post, was created to reduce costs of paying a human news anchor and improve efficiency. It could, *Xinhua* claimed, work 24 hours a day. At the same time, they also revealed to the world an English-speaking model. Although it's not clear exactly what technology has been used to create the anchors, it seems that *Xinhua* has used TV clips of human news anchors as a base layer and then animated parts of the mouth and face to turn the speaker into a virtual image. By combining this with a voice, *Xinhua* can program the digital anchors to read the news far more quickly than using traditional animation techniques such as CGI (computer-generated imagery).

Early attempts were not so successful. A female AI news anchor, named Jia Jia, first appeared on television screens in China in 2017. Her debut broadcast was delivered live and she was "interviewed" by a tech expert. She took a long time to reply to the questions and gave only one- or two-word answers. However, Chinese viewers were mostly impressed by her make-up, clothes, and hairstyle. Rather than dressing her in modern clothing, she wore *hanfu*, a historic style of clothing that was worn by China's ancient rulers.

In February 2019, *Xinhua* launched their first female AI news anchor, Xin Xiaomeng, whose debut news story was about a government meeting in Beijing. She is modeled on real-life *Xinhua* news anchor Qu Meng, and because there is very little physical difference between the two, many viewers didn't notice when Xin Xiaomeng made her first appearance. This AI is slightly more flexible than the male model and is able to stand, use lip movements, nod her head, wink, smile, and deliver news stories in a perfect accent.

AI technology at the present time is not perfect. In videos of the English-speaking news anchor, it's obvious that the range of facial expressions is limited, and the voice sounds robotic and unnatural. But research in this area is constantly getting better, and it's not hard to imagine a time in the future where AI news anchors will look and sound exactly like the real thing.

CGI (computer-generated imagery) (n): images that are created by a computer

debut (n): a first appearance

defined (v): to explain the meaning of a word or phrase

efficiency (n): the ability to work well and produce results by using your time in the best way

impressed by (adj): admiring someone or something very much

TV clips (n, pl): short parts of a TV show that are shown separately

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VOCABULARY

Match the definitions to the words.

1	a small copy of something …	**a** animated
2	the way a person's face looks that shows what they are thinking or feeling …	**b** model
3	a way of speaking words that shows which country or area you come from …	**c** flexible
4	added a series of cartoon drawings to an image to make it look as if it is moving …	**d** accent
5	able to move or bend easily …	**e** expressions

COMPREHENSION

Choose the correct option.

1 "Artificial intelligence" describes machines that can perform similar tasks to …

a computers.

b humans.

c robots.

2 One of the advantages of an AI news anchor mentioned in the article is that it …

a doesn't need to be paid.

b rarely breaks down.

c can read the news quickly.

3 Audiences preferred the AI news anchor Jia Jia's … to her performance.

a appearance

b modern clothing

c accent

4 *Xinhua's* female AI news anchor, Xin Xiaomeng, … the male version.

a didn't appeal to viewers as much as

b didn't look physically similar to

c could move more than

5 According to the article, it's likely that in the future …

a people won't be able to tell the difference between AI and human news anchors.

b all television news anchors will be replaced by AI models.

c English-speaking AI news anchors will replace Chinese-speaking ones.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

UNIT 5

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READING

Read the text. Why is the successful situation of the Indian newspaper industry uncommon?



New Success in the Indian Newspaper Industry?

In today's competitive markets, where falling newspaper sales is normal, India's print media appear to be an unusual success story. India has a growing and constantly changing newspaper market, but according to a Media Research Users Council survey, the number of readers of newspapers has grown from 407 million in 2017 to 425 million at the end of the first 4 months of 2019. This is in direct contrast to almost every other market in the world, where newspaper sales have fallen dramatically since the birth of online news websites.

In a country with an astonishing 82,000 newspapers in publication, most of this growth is caused by local newspapers written in a variety of regional languages. The availability of newspapers in different languages has meant that India's newspaper market appeals to millions of non-English speakers. *Dainik Jagran*, a Hindi newspaper, was the highest-selling paper in 2017 with over 17 million readers. Hindi daily papers in total had 186 million readers. *The Times of India* is the only English newspaper to appear in the top 10 list, although English newspaper readership went up from 28 million to 31 million between 2017 and 2019. An increase in literacy rates together with more local content explains the rise in regional newspaper sales. Physical newspaper sales have also grown partly because their online versions have failed to attract India's 450 million active internet users. People were put off by too many website links that didn't work and too many advertisements that claimed to be news stories.

However, the newspaper industry in India hasn't always enjoyed increasing sales. India's newspaper industry faced problems in the past because of government control, a lack of financial investment, and the challenge of so many different languages. But the arrival of the internet was accompanied by a newspaper revolution. Growth in technology and the ability of newspaper companies to afford to buy new printing equipment meant that it was possible for newspapers to be printed in a variety of regional languages, rather than just in either Hindi or English.

But perhaps the biggest reason why newspapers across India have continued to increase their sales is because more people than ever before, particularly in rural areas, are now able to read and write. Newspapers have given them the opportunity to be involved in political life in a way that wasn't possible in the past. The situation in the state of Kerala, on the southwest coast of the country, is one such example. During the 20th century, this was an area with some of the highest literacy rates in India. There was also a strong sense of political involvement among the people, and the number of people per 1000 who read a daily newspaper was well above the national average for India, even though the average income for the people there was below the Indian national average. This shows that newspapers are not a sign of belonging to an "elite" group of people, but as a way for Indian people to take part in national, social, and cultural affairs.

It remains to be seen what will happen in the future. As the younger generation of Indians is increasingly likely to get news stories on their smartphones and tablets, it might not be possible for printed newspapers to continue to have such unusually high sales. The challenge for India's newspaper industry is to be able to keep their audiences through quality digital news websites, while still having enough advertising and subscription income to continue their paper editions.

astonishing (adj): amazing; surprising

elite (adj): having a high status because it contains the best of its kind

in (direct) contrast to (phr): be very different from something else

literacy rates (n): the number of people who can read and write

LIVEWORKSHEETS

put off by (phr v): to make someone not want or like something
readership (n): the number of people who read a specific newspaper, book, or magazine
regional (adj): relating to a particular area or part of a country
revolution (n): a sudden or major change

VOCABULARY

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

editions income investment publication subscription

1 Danielle became well-known after the _____ of her first novel.
2 There are two different _____ of this cook book—one in English and one in French.
3 Do you know what the average annual _____ is for young people in your country?
4 I bought my friend a monthly _____ to her favorite magazine for her birthday.
5 Peter's father made a/an _____ of $4000 into his new business.

COMPREHENSION

Write the word, number, or short phrase that each sentence refers to.

1 The name of the most popular English-language newspaper in India: _____
2 The number of active internet users in India in 2019: _____
3 The main reason sales of newspapers have increased in rural areas of India: _____
4 The number of newspaper readers in India in April 2019: _____
5 The number of print newspapers published in India: _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS