

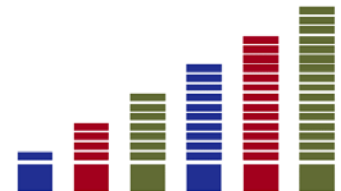
Communication and Quality in Official Statistics Translated into English

Session 14

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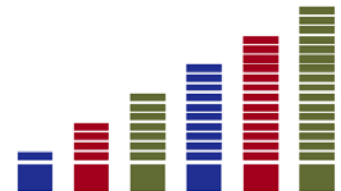
Topics

- **Language and quality in statistics**
- **Language and statistics**
- **General public**
- **Users' need**
- **Cultural backgrounds**
- **A style-guide (Italian/English)**
- **Conclusions**



Language and quality in statistics

- **Clarity and Accessibility (code of Practice)**
- **Reg. 223/2009 Clarity and Accessibility as Quality parametres**
- **Words to interprete numbers (metadata)**
- **Terminology disambiguation (classifications)**
- **Effective communication (tools: ELF, common lexis)**

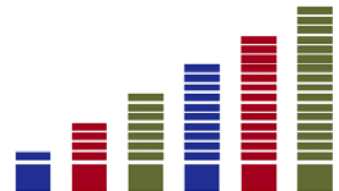


Language and Statistics

Numbers are the result of statistical processes, suitable words are a way to share them with the public

Some experiences:

- Fight the fog (European campaign)
- Making Data Meaningful (Unece)
- Rei (Institutional language network)

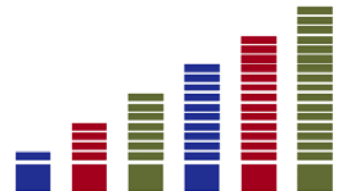


General public

Enhancing statistical literacy

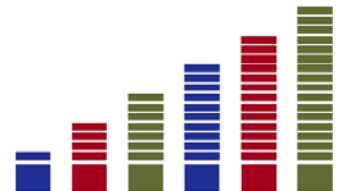


- **Communication strategy**
- **Explanatory texts**
- **Story-telling**
- **Interpretation of numbers**
- **Clear writing**
- **No technicality**



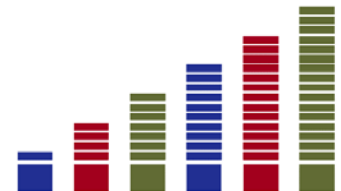
General public – User groups

- **Journalists and press-readers**
- **Stakeholders**
- **Development/innovation project drafters**
- **Official speech drafters**
- **Students (lower and upper degrees)**
- **NGOs**
- **Business**
- **Others**



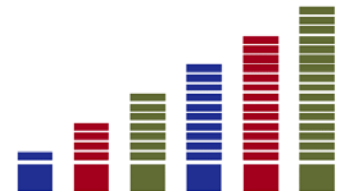
Users' need

- **Contents** – Topical, relevant and updated statistics
- **Presented in such a way to be correctly interpreted**
- **Significant keywords for search**
- **Readability**
- **Clarity**
- **Accessibility** (easy to find and to use)



Users' need – Some hints

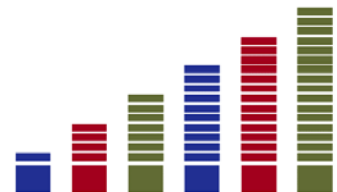
- *“Without a story line, a release becomes just a simple description of numbers”*
- *“Do not burden the reader with too many numbers in the body of the text and use only key rounded figures.”*
- *“**Focus on the reader** — be direct and interesting. Try to see things from the point of view of your readers. Involve them. Imagine which questions they might ask. Interest them.”*
- *“**Cut out excess nouns** — verb forms are livelier. Avoid noun disease by using verbs and verbal forms instead.”*
- *“**Prefer active verbs to passive** — and name the agent. If you change passive verb forms to active ones, your writing will become clearer because you will be forced to say who is responsible for the action.”*
- Quality and updated **glossaries** as reference



Users' need – some examples:

*“At a European level, statistics are increasingly important for the **definition**, **implementation**, **monitoring** and **evaluation** of policies.” (Use of nouns)*

“Focusing on the most recent years, 2010 was characterized by a recovery of economy after the recession of 2008- 2009, value added grew again (+2.8 percent), while the decline of labour input persisted (-0.6 percent), labour productivity increased by 3.4 percent. In 2011, the slowdown in growth of value added and a rise in hours worked (+0.5 percent) resulted in a slowdown in the growth of labour productivity (+0.4 percent).” (No rounded figures, no story-line)



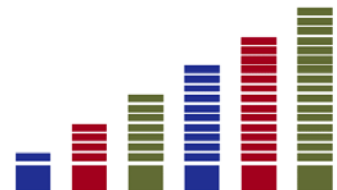
European cultural backgrounds

Diverse cultural/national backgrounds



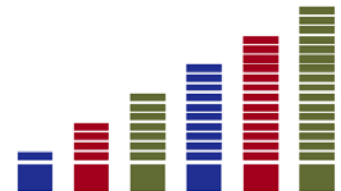
- Use of English - ELF
- Explicitate national references
- Terminology disambiguation (*use of international classifications when available*)
- Terminology accuracy
- Glossaries

Some items are the same of Language and Quality because we need quality in statistical translation!



European cultural backgrounds – Some hints

- The use of **English as a Lingua Franca (ELF)** – communication more important than proficiency
- Europe is an **intercultural situation** where the contact language is English
- When addressing an international public specific **national references** are to be clarified
- **Terminology** is coded for statistics under Eu Regulation, but when this is not the case cultural diversity may lead to misunderstandings.



European cultural backgrounds – Some examples

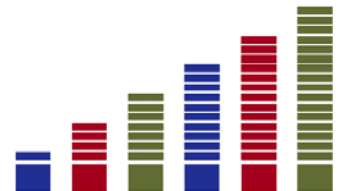
Contracts (Type of contracts depend on national laws)

Ex. **ESODATO** in Italy *Income-deprived early retiree?*

Wages and salaries/Earnings (which items are included – Bonuses, gratuities, contributions?)

Irregular employment (at times the best choice is to be general)

An example from Statistics Canada: they use “**Common-law relationship**” at Eurostat a more generic “**Consensual union**” or “**Cohabitation**” because different types of Juridical or no-ruled unions are to be included, and member states have different legislation in this respect.



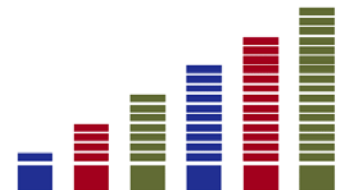
Translation tools and workflow

Tools:

- The use of Online translators (Google) **MAY** be an helpful tool when used by expert translators only
- Unambiguous and specialised terminology (classifications/Eu Regulations/ late)
- Terminology reference Eurostat (Ramon)

Workflow:

- A text should be translated when complete and never when in progress, because a text has to be dealt with as a whole, and translation has to maintain internal cross-references
- The translator should be the final reviser in the workflow in order to have the general user's eye.



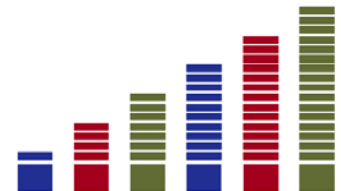
A style-guide (contrastive)

Drafting a specific style guide for statistical translation

Italian vs. English

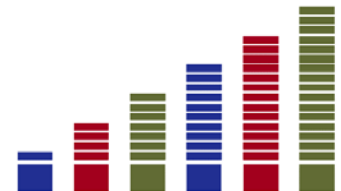
Some hints:

- Don't use present tense when speaking of the past (usually statistics describe past phenomena)
- Explicit the agent when translating impersonal Italian clauses
- Avoid the use of idioms, prefer plain language
- Repeating words vs. ellipsis



Conclusions

- Language and translation fully belong to quality in statistics
- Keep in mind users' need when writing and translating
- More care should be paid to the English version of statistical products as attention to the European international public
- Specific tools can be provided for translators and for statisticians writing in English



Thank you !

