It’s the packaging that counts

Optimising language in publications and presentations

Stefan Schulz @ IMI Vollversammlung Christmas 2019
Motivation for this talk

- For 25 years dealing with English as a language of science
- In many roles:
  - Reader
  - Author, co-author
  - Mentor, supervisor
  - Presenter
  - Audience
  - Reviewer
- Conclusion: consequences of insufficient command of English
  - Misunderstanding important messages
  - Wasting time (understanding, explaining, correcting)
  - Overestimating poor content (due to excellent “packaging”)
  - Underestimating good content (due to bad “packaging”)

Purpose of this talk

In scope
- Which errors should be addressed?
  - Spelling and grammar errors (harmless but ugly)
  - Style errors (tedious, slows down reading)
  - Lexical and Semantic errors (misunderstandings, confusion)
- Tools available at your fingertips

Out of scope
- Scientific writing in general
- Presentation skills

Childs, that beliefs in Santa Klaus

Hopefully and not without reason we can count on Santa Claus’ obligation to stand a trial in court for having inflicted acts of animal cruelty on reindeers

You’re invited for a Christmas snake

And when the bunny went to rest, the little deer closed her eyes, hunted them down straight from the front the spouse
1. Proofing tools
2. Web as corpus
3. Parallel Corpora
4. Machine translation
1. Proofing tools

2. Web as corpus

3. Parallel Corpora

4. Machine translation
Proofing tools

- For English and German, the in-built proofing tools of Microsoft Office do a good job for
  - Spelling correction
  - Grammar correction
  - Style correction (only English)
- Grammar and style corrections come with explanations
- There is no reason not to use them (even in your native language)
- “I only use LaTeX” -> use Word proofing on the source text, on a pdf dump, or use a LaTeX to Word / RTF converter
Proofing and explaining

Santa Claus meet Easter Bunny.

Klaus believes in Santa Claus.

The child, that hates Santa Claus won't get presents.

Hopefully, Santa Claus will be prosecuted for animal cruelty on reindeers.

In december I go shopping christmas-presents.
MS Word proofing pitfalls

- Proofing is disabled in a document type
- Proofing is disabled for a style
- Proofing is disabled for a document
- Proofing language changes within the same document
- Proofing checkbox greyed
PowerPoint proofing pitfalls

- Proofing is disabled in a document
- You set new proofing language but it jumps back to old one
- Certain elements are not sensitive to new language settings
- Very common with new presentations resulting from merging old ones
Solution: setting proofing language and enable proofing with a mouse click

Windows

Private Sub SetProofingLanguage()
    ' choose from https://docs.microsoft.com/
    ' en-us/dotnet/api/microsoft.office.core.msolanguageid
    ' ?view=office-pia
    ' Sets the proofing language for a complete word document.
    ' Proofing settings have to be selected globally
    LANG = msoLanguageIDEnglishUK
    'LANG = msoLanguageIDGermanAustria
    ' Sets Language for whole document and all document styles
    Selection.WholeStory
    Selection.LanguageID = LANG
    Selection.NoProofing = False
    ActiveDocument.AttachedTemplate.LanguageID = LANG
    ActiveDocument.AttachedTemplate.NoProofing = False
    For Each s In ActiveDocument.Styles
        On Error Resume Next
        s.LanguageID = LANG
        Next
    End Sub

Powerpoint

Sub SetProofingLanguage()
    ' choose from https://docs.microsoft.com/
    ' en-us/dotnet/api/microsoft.office.core.msolanguageid?view=office-pia
    ' Sets the proofing language for a complete powerpoint presentation.
    ' Proofing settings have to be selected globally
    LANG = msoLanguageIDEnglishUK
    'LANG = msoLanguageIDGermanAustria
    For Each sld In ActivePresentation.Slides
        ' Loop through all the slides of the active presentation
        For Each shp In sld.Shapes
            ' Loop through each shape on each slide
            If shp.HasTextFrame Then shp.TextFrame.TextRange.LanguageID = LANG
            ' If shape is a text box etc
            If shp.HasTable Then ' if shape is a table
                Set oTbl = shp.Table
                For lRow = 1 To oTbl.Rows.Count
                    For lCol = 1 To oTbl.Columns.Count
                        With oTbl.Cell(lRow, lCol).Shape.TextFrame.TextRange
                            .LanguageID = LANG
                        End With
                    Next
                Next
            End If
        Next
    End Sub
1. Proofing tools

2. Web as corpus

3. Parallel Corpora

4. Machine translation
The World Wide Web is Big Data

Why not using the Web for language proofing?

https://www.google.de/

https://www.bing.com/
Majority vote

Reasonable assumption: the crowd is right

• Exact search (quoted)
• rc=1 accurate result count
• Filter by site: site:en.wikipedia.org

https://www.google.com/advanced_search
“Open” questions - using quotes and *

*It depends * the*

it depends on the person - Deutsch-Übersetzung – Linguee ...
https://www.linguee.de › englisch-deutsch › übersetzung › it+depends+on...
Viele übersetzte Beispielsätze mit "it depends on the person" – Deutsch-Englisch Wörterbuch und Suchmaschine für Millionen von Deutsch-Übersetzungen.

it depends on the situation - Deutsch-Übersetzung – Linguee ...
https://www.linguee.de › englisch-deutsch › übersetzung › it+depends+on...
Viele übersetzte Beispielsätze mit "it depends on the situation" – Deutsch-Englisch Wörterbuch und Suchmaschine für Millionen von Deutsch-Übersetzungen.

it depends from - German translation – Linguee
https://www.linguee.com › english-german › translation › it+depends+from ...
baderbuch.de. Today, the Sergio Leoni is an assertive firm, although it depends from the experience of qualified technical personnel and upon the introduction of ...

Is Inflation Hot or Not? It Depends on the Gauge. - Barron's
https://www.barrons.com › articles › is-inflation-hot-o...
Diese Seite übersetzen
vor 4 Tagen. In recent years, the Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge, the personal consumption expenditures price index, has been ...

*It is independent * the*

it is independent from - German translation – Linguee
https://www.linguee.com › english-german › It+is+independent+from ...
European monetary policy and conduct foreign exchange operations. It is independent from the governments and bodies of the EU. goethe.de. goethe.de.

it is independent - Deutsch-Übersetzung – Linguee Wörterbuch
https://www.linguee.com › englisch-deutsch › übersetzung › it+is+independent ...
irrelevant since it is independent from the Government. ... determined by the control terminals, i.e. it is independent of the power supply.

that it is independent - Deutsch Übersetzung - Englisch ...
https://context.reverso.net › übersetzung › that+it+is+independent ...
The system has been designed in such a way that it is independent of the network provider. Das System ist so zu konzipieren, dass es vom Netzbetreiber ...
Autocomplete

- Displays the most frequent following words
- Also works with *

https://www.google.de/
1. Proofing tools
2. Web as corpus
3. Parallel Corpora
4. Machine translation
Parallel corpora

- Samples from human translations
- Shows word and term correspondences in their context
- Closely related corpora: same topic but no translation

https://de.wikipedia.org/
Das Kindergarten-Team hatte die Nikolausfeier liebevoll vorbereitet und stimmungvoll die Halle dekoriert.

Zum Jahresschluss und zur Nikolausfeier luden Breguet, Blancpain, Omega und Swatch Kunden und Journalisten an die Place [...]

Die Kinder können außerdem an der vom Europäischen Parlament veranstalteten Nikolausfeier teilnehmen. [...]

[...] hatten unsere Aktion kurzerhand in ihre alljährliche Nikolausfeier mit eingebaut und somit eine Stimmung erzeugt, die uns [...]

[...] Meilensteine innerhalb eines Projektes, aber auch allgemeine Feiertage wie z. B. ein Osterbrunch oder eine Nikolausfeier.

Die Masken sind für Fasching-, Nikolausfeier, Halloweenpartys und als Dekoration zu verschiedenen Veranstaltungen geeignet.
[...] gestellten Bauvorhaben CCH-Erweiterung, Personalaufwendungen (Resturlaub, Überstunden, Altersteilzeit, Abfindungen und Leistungsprämien), [...] → cch.de

Die personalrückstellungen decken die üblichen Verpflichtungen gegenüber Mitarbeitern (resturlaub, ausstehende Vergütungen, abfindungen usw.) ab. → essanelle-hair-group.de

[...] Fertigungskapazitäten an den erheblich gesunkenen Bauelementebedarf der Kunden anzupassen: unter anderem Abbau von Resturlaub und Arbeitszeitguthaben sowie Kurzarbeit. → ecos.de

Auf diesem Langzeitkonto werden geleistete Überstunden, Resturlaub und sonstige Zeitguthaben auf Wunsch der Beschäftigten gutgeschrieben. → fraport.de

[...] gegenüber Arbeitnehmern aus Tantiemen und Prämien, Weihnachtsgeld, ausstehendem Resturlaub und Gleitzeitüberhänge erfasst. → hoenle.de

[...] which was completed in 2007; personnel expenses (previous year's vacation, overtime, partial retirement, termination benefits [...] → cch.de

staff provisions cover the usual obligations to employees (remaining leave days, outstanding remunerations, compensations etc.). → essanelle-hair-group.de

Thus, EPCOS is implementing a series of personnel measures in order to adjust production capacity to the significant drop in customers' demand for components. → ecos.com

The hours of overtime worked, residual vacation time, and other time credits are credited to this account at the request of employees. → fraport.com

[...] employees arising from profit-sharing bonuses and other bonuses, Christmas bonus, holidays not taken, and flexi-time surpluses. → hoenle.de

https://www.linguee.de/
1. Proofing tools
2. Web as corpus
3. Parallel Corpora
4. Machine translation
Machine translation

- Don’t use it to translate from your native language
  - Your proficiency in the target language won’t increase
  - You may be unaware of stupid translation errors, especially with complex sentences

- Use it to translate into your native language
  - To check the intelligibility of your text in the foreign language
  - If the translation engine misunderstands, readers misunderstand it, too

- You might even use voice input when preparing an oral presentation
  - To check your pronunciation
Es blaut die Nacht, die Sternlein blinken, Schneeflöcklein leis' herniedersinken.
Auf Edeltännlein's grünem Wipfel, häuft sich ein kleiner weißer Zipfel.
Und dort vom Fenster her durchbricht den dunklen Tann ein warmes Licht.
Im Forsthaus kniet bei Kersenschimmer die Försterin im Herrenzimmer.
In dieser wunderschönen Nacht hat sie den Förster umgebracht.
Er war ihr bei des Heimes Pflege seit langer Zeit schon sehr im Wege.
So kam sie mit sich überein: am Niklasabend muss es sein.
Und als das Rehlein ging zur Ruh', das Häslein tat die Äuglein zu, erlegte sie direkt von vorn den Gatten über Kimm' und Korn.

The night is blue, the little stars are flashing, the snowflakes are falling down.
There is a small white tip piled up on Noble Danlin's green top.
And there from the window a warm light breaks through the dark fir.
The forester in the men's room kneels by candlelight in the forest house.
She killed the forester on this beautiful night.
He had been in her way of caring for her home for a long time.
So she agreed with herself: it must be on Niklasabend.
And when the deer went to rest, the little rabbit closed his eyes, and shot them from the front over the man's eyes and corn.
Machine translation

- Don’t use it to translate **from** your native language
  - Your proficiency in the target language won’t increase
  - You may be unaware of stupid translation errors, especially with complex sentences

- **Use it to translate into** your native language
  - To check the intelligibility of your text in the foreign language
  - If the translation engine misunderstands, readers misunderstand it, too

- You might even use voice input when preparing an oral presentation
  - To check your pronunciation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>German</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The probe was sent to the labor</td>
<td>Die Sonde wurde zur Arbeit geschickt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweeter the clocks don't cling than in christmas time</td>
<td>Süßer klammern die Uhren nicht als in der Weihnachtszeit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forward- and back translation to detect minor grammar and style issues

https://translate.google.com
Machine translation

- Don’t use it to translate from your native language
  - Your proficiency in the target language won’t increase
  - You may be unaware of stupid translation errors, especially with complex sentences

- Use it to translate into your native language
  - To check the intelligibility of your text in the foreign language
  - If the translation engine misunderstands, readers misunderstand it, too

- You might even use voice input when preparing an oral presentation
  - To check your pronunciation
Voice input and Machine translation

I am from Leoben and I invested a lot of time into this talk

I am from Leolulu and I invested a lot of dime into this dog

https://translate.google.com
I wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

We hope you enjoy this issue and we would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a successful 2011.

We wish you our customes, partners and staff a merry Christmas and a happy new year 2008!

I would also like to take the opportunity to wish all those present in the Chamber a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

...