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Translation and the Community: Case Studies of Contextual Distortion

ABSTRACT

This article explores the process of involving cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities in attempts to improve the quality and effectiveness of community translations, with special attention paid to feedback received from CALD lay-readers in attempts to ameliorate translations. Through corpus analysis of healthcare and legal aid documents translated from English to Mandarin, the authors in this study analyse the complexities of reaching pragmatic equivalence in translations based on a set of pre-established criteria. What is at stake in these examples is that they occasionally result in cases of pragmalinguistic failures that can be termed ‘contextual distortions’.

KEYWORDS

community translation; CALD communities; lay-reader feedback; contextual distortion

1. Introduction and Background

The New Zealand Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers’ Rights specifically indicates people’s *right to effective communication* (Right 5, Health & Disability Commissioner, 2023). *Right 5* unquestionably applies to all members of cultural and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and can be fulfilled through Community Translation which facilitates language access to rights and services that benefit the health and social wellbeing of CALD individuals (Taibi, 2023; Taibi & Ozolins, 2016).

In the healthcare context, CALD members may encounter poor assessment, misdiagnosis and delayed treatment. They may not feel safe in their environment nor confident in the quality of care, which has an emotional impact on CALD patients (Chitty & Wang, 2023; de Moissac & Bowen, 2019; Karwacka, 2024; Khatri & Assefa, 2022). In a dire situation, such as the COVID pandemic, CALD members can be more vulnerable to disease and are associated with higher death rates when compared to members of the mainstream community (Khatri & Assefa, 2022).

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Serious concerns are also present in the legal context where CALD members may largely rely on information received via informal channels (e.g. family, friends in their community). Not having equal rights to language access in the justice system may make CALD members prone to risks of miscarriage of justice (Botero, 2014; Ministry for Ethnic Communities, 2023; Schetzer & Henderson, 2003).

Promotion of social inclusion of CALD members can be observed in the linguistically superdiverse communities of New Zealand where multilingual resources and services are provided in all public sectors (Ministry for Ethnic Communities, 2023; The Royal Society of New Zealand Te Apārangi, 2013). As of 2023, a cross-government collaboration has contributed to a guide for translation service providers based in New Zealand, *Unlocking Language Barriers* (Ministry for Ethnic Communities, 2023). The guide is a good source of practical information in support of communication between government agencies and CALD communities, including case studies, language use, and the dissemination of information such as knowing the target audience and the use of technology in the translation process. The guide also includes a step-by-step translation flowchart for translators or agencies to ensure good quality translation (Ministry for Ethnic Communities, 2023, pp. 18–19). Despite these good intentions, CALD communities have yet to be included in the translation process to ensure that multilingual materials are produced to meet what CALD members' perception of what 'good quality' might entail (Teng, 2023).

The involvement of CALD communities is essential to improving the quality of translations and the effectiveness of publicly disseminating information (AUSIT, 2022; Federici, 2022; Lai, 2023; Taibi, 2023; Taibi et al., 2019; Teng, 2023). While advocating for the necessity of including feedback from CALD members in the translation process, the current article discusses the complexities of including feedback from lay readers while evaluating the quality of community translation. Through linguistic analysis, our arguments are provided based on CALD members' assessment of a corpus of translated texts delivering information of healthcare and legal aids.

2. CALD communities in Community Translation

Community Translation has a mission to avoid marginalisation of CALD communities. However, if the translation quality is poor, CALD members may not have equal access to publicly available information and hence still be marginalised.

Scholars have repeatedly emphasised the consideration of sociocultural context in translation practice from an aspect that language use is contextually motivated (e.g. Angelone, 2016; Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), meaning texts are “the instances of linguistic interaction in which people actually engage” (Halliday, 1978, p. 24), and texts are socially constructed (Risku, 2002; Snell-Hornby, 1988). In this view, a translation is a linguistic

interaction where the author, the translator and the target-text reader engage, and a translator must aim to have the translation come alive in the target sociocultural context. Community translation services in specific are provided in an intra-social context (Lai, 2023), where the source text and the translation need to come alive within one single sociocultural context; the translation needs to be produced with considerations of the sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds of mainstream and CALD communities (the main end-users of translation). In other words, a community translation is a socially-constructed product (Fraser, 2000; House, 2000).

Quality control in community translation services is similar to seeking feedback in the creation of a consumer product. We need to know how and why the consumer would (not) use the translation. This perspective is in line with studies which address the significant role of CALD readers, for instances García-Izquierdo & Montalt (2016), Burns & Kim (2011), Taibi et al. (2019), Teng (2020), Norma et al. (2023), and a number of chapters in Federici (2022), as we well as in Blumczynski & Wilson (2023). These studies concluded that feedback from CALD members can contribute to the improvement of translation quality in aspects such as readability, actionability and acceptability. In particular, Norma et al. (2023, p. 30) suggested that a translation should “adopt a tone that resonates with the audience” which we agree on the basis that translated healthcare texts should deliver information that are culturally and linguistically acceptable by people at the “grassroots level” (Krystallidou & Braun, 2022, p. 142). In this way, the text fulfils its “ethics of communication” (Chesterman, 2001, pp. 140–141) towards the targeted CALD communities.

3. Pragmatic equivalence in Community Translation

As the social and philosophical impetus behind community translation is to empower communities of minority language speakers (Taibi & Ozolins, 2016), approaches to community translation should be user-centred (AUSIT, 2022). This mindset is in line with Nida’s concept of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964) where the focus is on the target-text readers (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 258) and achieving a dynamic equivalence in community translation means to maximise CALD readers’ acceptance and reception of the translation (Blumczynski & Wilson, 2023; Federici, 2022). Inspired by dynamic equivalence, Teng (2019, 2023) and Teng et al. (2018) proposed in previous studies, that the four elements that constitute dynamic equivalence in translation can be seen as four criteria determining to what degree a translation can have achieved pragmatic equivalence, meaning to elicit a response from the target-text reader similar to the response elicited from the source-text reader.

Determining the response elicited by a translation on a target-text reader can be subjective as we may not be able to determine the discrepancies between the

source sociocultural context and the target sociocultural context (Dickins et al., 2016). It is also possible that readers of the same sociocultural background may respond differently to a single version of a translation (Dickins et al., 2016). However, community translation is intra-social (Lai, 2023), the source texts in general do not convey obscure meanings but clear pragmatic functions in terms of making the general public (including CALD members) feel well informed within a single sociocultural context (Fraser, 1993; Taibi, 2023). The concept of dynamic equivalence therefore fits the pragmatic aspect of community translation because both the source and target texts are produced with a single intention and such considerations can be informed by “the dynamic view of equivalence” (Hatim & Munday, 2004, p. 48) that has gone beyond the semantic level.

The concept of going beyond the semantic level is particularly important in terms of aligning translators with lay readers. Crezee and Burn’s observation (2019) indicated that translators tended to make comments based on comparisons between messages in the source and target text. Similarly, Teng’s recent study (2023) revealed that professional translators’ emphasis on semantic meaning seemed to make them overlook potential “contextual meanings” (systemic functional linguistics; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004)¹ delivered through a translation; lay readers, however, were quite sensitive to distorted contextual meanings in a translation due to “pragmalinguistic failures” (Hale, 2014, p. 323; Thomas, 1983) – i.e. failures of pragmatic equivalence caused by inappropriate linguistic features.

Ideational meaning represents both the experiential reality encountered by human beings (e.g. ‘the doctor has treated the patient’ versus ‘the doctor has dealt with the patient’) and the logical reality in the described experientiality (e.g. ‘John threw the ball and the ball hit Dave’).

Discrepancies between the translators’ and lay readers’ perspectives are presented in Figure 1.

4. Design of the study

The current study presents part of the findings from a 2021 Whitinga Fellowship Project (21-UOC-016), granted by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, New Zealand. The study conducted a small scale investigation in 2022 and 2023 on whether feedback from lay-readers can contribute to the improvement of translation quality in the context of community communications. The study followed the steps outlined in Figure 2.

¹ For detailed discussion of the three contextual meanings, see Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Halliday (1978).

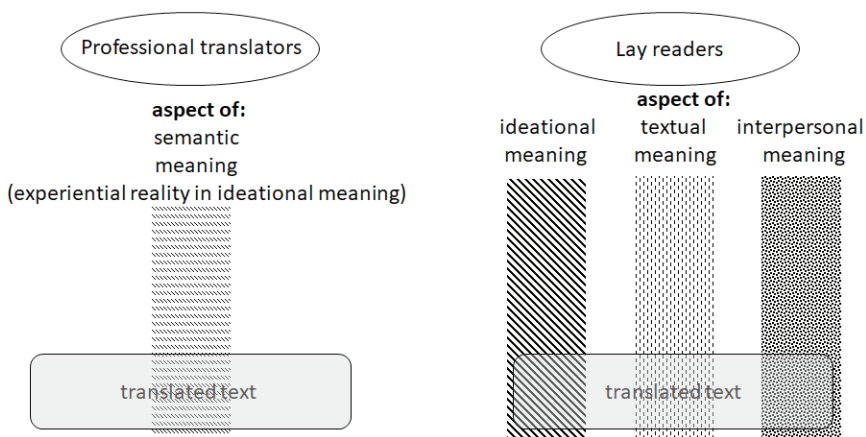


Figure 1: Discrepancies on three contextual meanings – translators vs lay readers (Teng, 2023, p. 91)

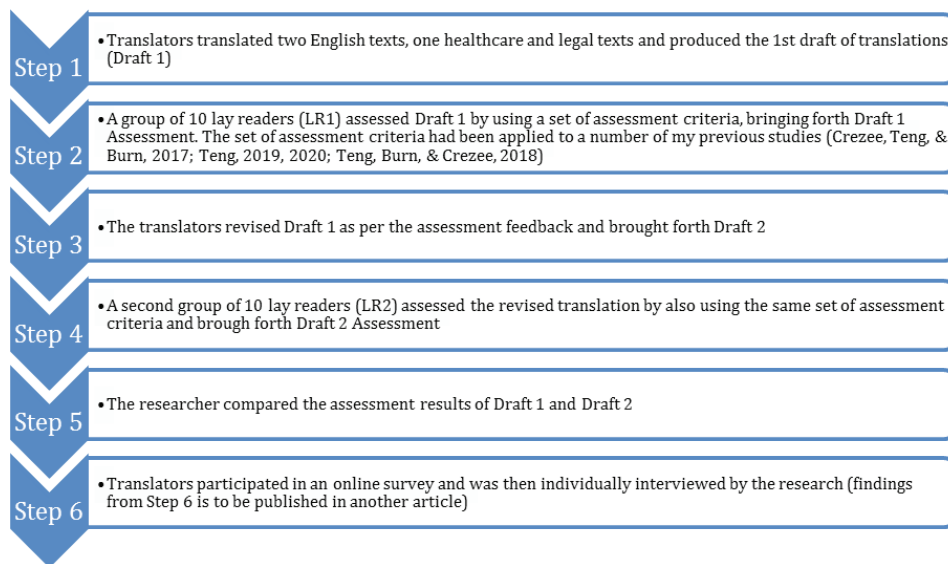


Figure 2: Research steps

4.1. The texts

This study included a total of 10 texts written in English, five delivering healthcare related information (e.g. managing diabetes) and five delivering information relevant to legal rights (e.g. tenants' rights). See Figure 3 for the selection criteria of texts to be translated.

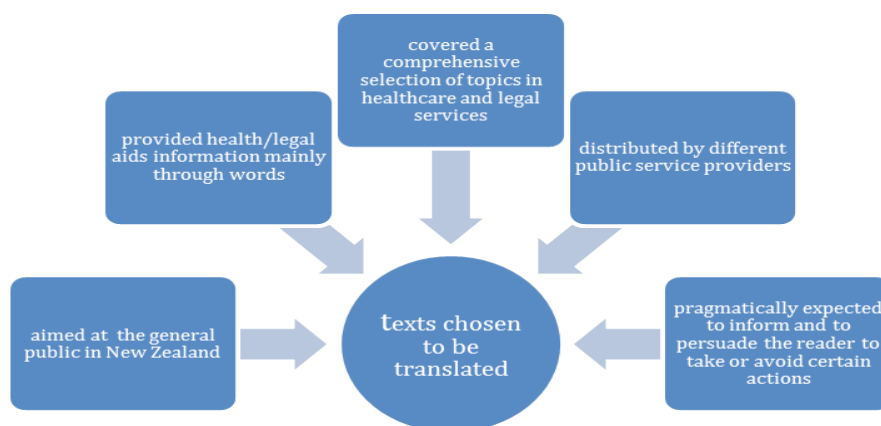


Figure 3: Texts chosen to be translated

Translated texts all followed the layout of the English original in terms of paragraph and sentence structure. For analytical purposes, either a paragraph or a sentence was referred to as a passage. The 10 English texts comprised a total of 155 passages, and some of them comprised more passages than others: the shortest one had eight passages while the longest had 24 passages. The translation quality of each passage was respectively evaluated by two groups of CALD members evaluators by using a set of assessment criteria developed with CALD members' perspectives in Teng's previous studies (2019, 2020, 2023).

4.2. The participants

Five professional translators (English-Mandarin) were recruited for translation purposes and four of them completed the participation in the current study. Before proceeding to the translation, the translators were reminded of the pragmatic functions of the source texts as to inform and persuade, and were instructed to bear in mind such pragmatic functions during the translation process. See Figure 4 for the selection criteria².

² Figure 5: Lay readers – CALD members
See <https://nzsti.org/Eligibility/10986/> for the eligibility for NZSTI membership.

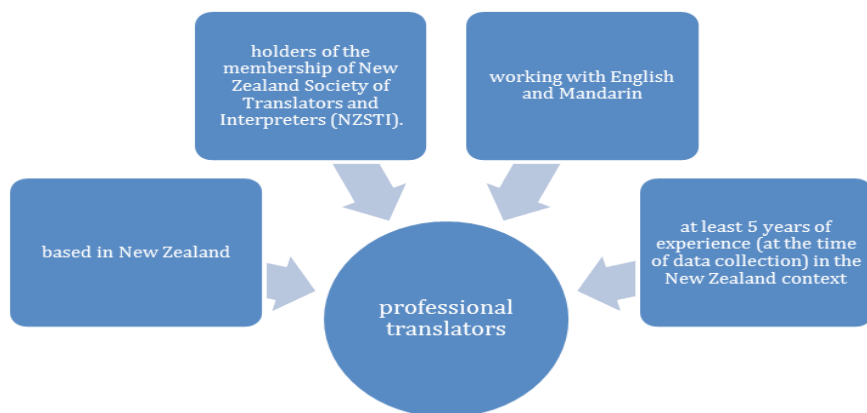


Figure 4: Professional translators

Twenty lay readers were recruited and assigned to two groups, LR1 and LR2, and 19 of them completed the participation in the current study. See Figure 5 for the selection criteria.

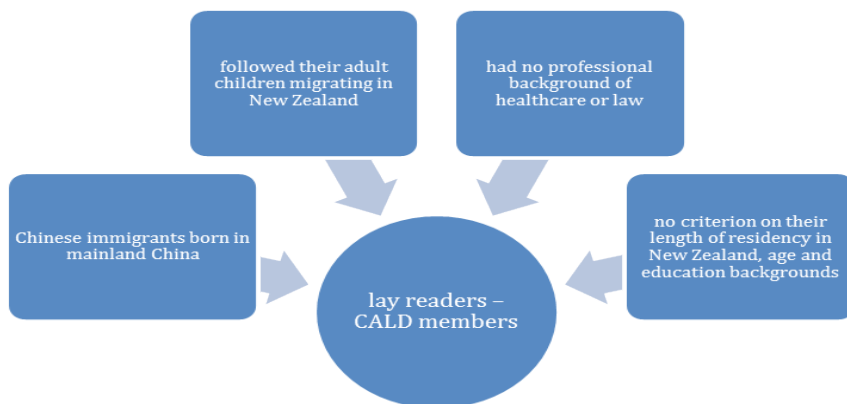


Figure 5: Lay readers – CALD members

Selection criteria in Figure 5 reflects the nature of the cohort of immigrants who may heavily rely on translation services in New Zealand and immigrants coming to New Zealand under the parent category (Immigration New Zealand, 2016) may heavily rely on the Chinese translation of texts delivering crucial information aimed at the general public (Tang, 2017).

Four participants in LR1 and 4 in LR2 had a tertiary degree obtained in China. Considering the age of participants, holding a tertiary degree would not contribute to their English proficiency because English language education was condemned as learning the enemies' language (e.g. the United States of America) in mainland China in the 1950s (Adamson, 2004, p. 28; Gil & Adamson, 2011, pp. 35–36).

Before proceeding to the translation assessment, lay readers were instructed to write down comments on each translated text and/or write down what they knew they should or should not do as per the translation. They were also encouraged to make assessments based on their opinions and bear no concerns of being a non-professional.

When assessing translated texts, lay readers had no access to the English source texts of the translations they were assigned, thereby reflecting the reality of the target CALD members who are often disadvantaged: not possessing the language ability and socio-cultural knowledge necessary to participate in mainstream society.

4.3. The Assessment Criteria

Inspired by Nida’s concept of dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964), Teng argued elsewhere that (2019, 2023; Teng et al., 2018): in the context of community translation, when a translation Sounds Natural, the translation can Make Sense to the target reader; when the translation Makes Sense, it is possible to maintain the Original Manner of the source text – e.g. maintain the original pragmatic function as to being informative and persuasive with a suggestive tone. When the translation maintains the Original Manner, with considerations of the socio-cultural context of the target text, the translation can then possibly elicit a Similar Response from the target reader. That means the translation is of good quality and has achieved pragmatic equivalence, as illustrated in Figure 6. See Teng (2019, 2023) for further detailed discussion.

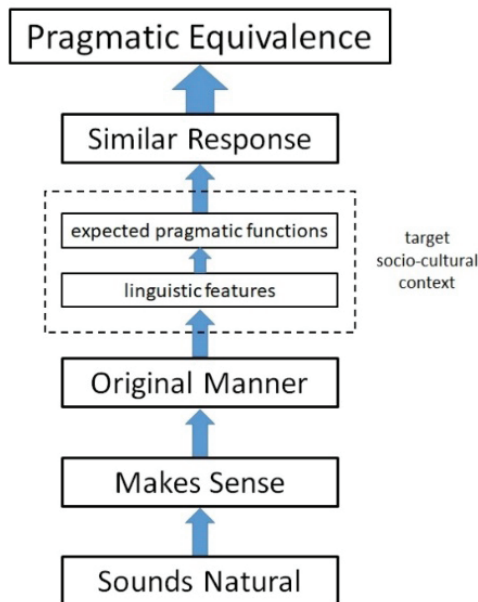


Figure 6: Factors in producing pragmatic equivalence translation (Teng, 2023, p. 73)

To cater to lay readers' level of metalinguistic knowledge, a set of criteria was provided with description in Chinese for each criterion to help them understand what aspect each criterion was aimed at, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Set of assessment criteria used by the lay readers

<p>翻译质量標準 – 您认为这个翻译达到了下列叙述的标准的话，請打勾 ✓</p> <p><i>Translation assessment criteria – please tick ✓, if you think the translation achieve the criterion</i></p>
<p>这句中文翻译读起来像普通话 ()</p> <p><i>The translation sounds natural in Mandarin – Sounds Natural (SN)</i></p>
<p>这句中文翻译能让您看得懂 ()</p> <p><i>The translation makes sense to you – Makes Sense (MS)</i></p>
<p>你感觉得到这句中文翻译想要告诉您一些信息或要您做一些事情 ()</p> <p><i>You feel that the translation wants to inform you with something or ask you to do something – Original Manner (OM)</i></p>
<p>因为这句中文翻译，您知道应该或是不应该做什么 ()</p> <p><i>Because of this translation, you know what you should or should not do – Similar Response (SR)</i></p>

Note: English translation in the italic is provided in this table for non-Chinese speaking readers of this article.

For instance, when a compliment in English such as *I like your hat!* is translated based on its semantic meaning into Chinese as 我喜歡你的帽子 / *I like your hat*, the Chinese translation may not make a native Chinese speaker feel complimented. Instead, they may feel put in an awkward situation, depending on the interpersonal relationship in a Chinese-speaking sociocultural context. If participants in this conversation are on a similar level in the social hierarchy system (e.g. workplace colleagues), the addressee may feel puzzled and wonder *so, you want my hat?*; if the addressee is at a higher status in social hierarchy than the addresser (e.g. a department director vs a department member), the addressee may feel offended, thinking *are you asking me to give you my hat or buy you one?* Regardless of the interpersonal relationship between the addresser and addressee, Chinese-speaking lay readers may tick the criteria Sounds Natural, Makes Sense and Original Manner, but leave Similar Response blank. This assessment outcome indicates

that the Chinese speaker feels the translation Sounds Natural and Makes Sense, but it is also asking them to do something (which is not the Original Manner of the English *I like your hat*); the translation, therefore, does not make them feel complimented, thus fails to elicit a Similar Response.

4.4. Summary of Assessment Results

The 10 texts selected to be translated contained a total of 155 passages. These were assessed by the first group of lay readers, LR1. Since one translator withdrew from participation before revising the first draft of translation, 1 healthcare and 1 legal text were withdrawn from the revision phase, leaving a total of 136 passages. These passages were revised and assessed by the second group of lay readers, LR2.

Both Draft 1 and Draft 2 of the translation could be considered as good quality because a majority of the passages in both drafts were assessed as achieving all four criteria (Table 1). Example 1 shows lay readers' comments on both drafts of Health Text 1, which was titled *IBUPROFEN PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE* and distributed by Waitemata District Health Board (see Appendix A). Three evaluators in Example 1 all explicitly expressed that they understood what they were advised to do regarding the medicine, Ibuprofen. In other words, they were fully informed: both drafts achieved pragmatic equivalence.

Example 1: Lay readers' comments – Health Text 1

Draft 1 LR1-4	这是一份服用药物的信息指南：这是一种用于止痛和消炎的药物，服用这种药可能引起严重的副作用，所以对这种药不要私自给予任何人。针对老年人，切记不可过量服用，要严格遵照安全服用药物的方法。
Author's translation	<i>This is a guidance providing information of taking medication: this is a medication for pain relief and inflammation. Taking this medication could lead to serious side effect. Therefore, do not give this medication to other people. Particularly for older people, [we] must bear in mind that [we] cannot over-dose and must closely follow the way of taking medication safely.</i>
Draft 2 LR2-11	上述翻译件完全能读懂并理解，我明白知道了应该做啥，或不应该做啥
Author's translation	<i>The aforementioned translation is completely readable and comprehensible. I've come to understand and know what [I] should do or should not do.</i>
Draft 2 LR2-14	我了解药物不能随意给他人。另外，如果使用布洛芬，必须注意事项
Author's translation	<i>I understand that medication should not randomly be given to other people. Besides, if taking IBUPROFEN, there are precautions [I] should be aware of.</i>

Table 2 presents a summary of assessment results of the two drafts and Figure 7 presents some highlights of assessment results of Draft 1 and Draft 2.

Table 2. Assessment results of Draft 1 and Draft 2

	LR1	LR2
Possible outcomes	Average percentage of assigned outcome	
<u>Pragmatic Equivalence</u> (achieved all four criteria)	76.78%	97.30%
<u>SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Similar Response)	0.40%	0.13%
<u>OM-F</u> (failed to achieve Original Manner)	0.08%	0.10%
<u>OM-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Original Manner and Similar Response)	0.00%	0.10%
<u>SN-OM-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural, Original Manner and Similar Response)	4.29%	0.21%
<u>MS-OM-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Make Sense, Original Manner and Similar Response)	4.11%	0.00%
<u>Totally Lost</u> (failed to achieve all four criteria)	0.79%	1.10%
<u>SN-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural and Similar Response)	0.25%	0.00%
<u>SN-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural)	0.91%	0.72%
<u>MS-F</u> (failed to achieve Make Sense)	0.00%	0.11%
<u>SN-OM-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural and Original Manner)	0.04%	0.00%
<u>SN-MS-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural and Similar Response)	0.05%	0.15%
<u>MS-OM-F</u> (failed to achieve Make Sense and Original Manner)	0.09%	0.00%
<u>MS-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Make Sense and Similar Response)	0.00%	0.00%
<u>SN-MS-SR-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural, Make Sense and Similar Response)	9.35%	0.00%
<u>SN-MS-OM-F</u> (failed to achieve Sound Natural, Make Sense and Original Manner)	2.37%	0.07%

Note: Percentages shown in the table are the average percentage for each outcome in each translated text across the lay readers' assessment results respectively in LR1 and LR2.

Though Figure 7 shows that the average percentage of assigning Totally Lost (failing all four criteria) to translated passages shows an increase in Draft 2, we would consider it as nil as the difference is only 0.31%. We then looked attentively at the assessment outcomes indicating achievement of all four criteria – i.e. Pragmatic Equivalence – and outcomes indicating failing only Sounds Natural and/or Similar Response.

While the translation quality has improved by 20.25% in terms of achieving Pragmatic Equivalence (from 76.78% to 97.3%), a similar degree of improvement is

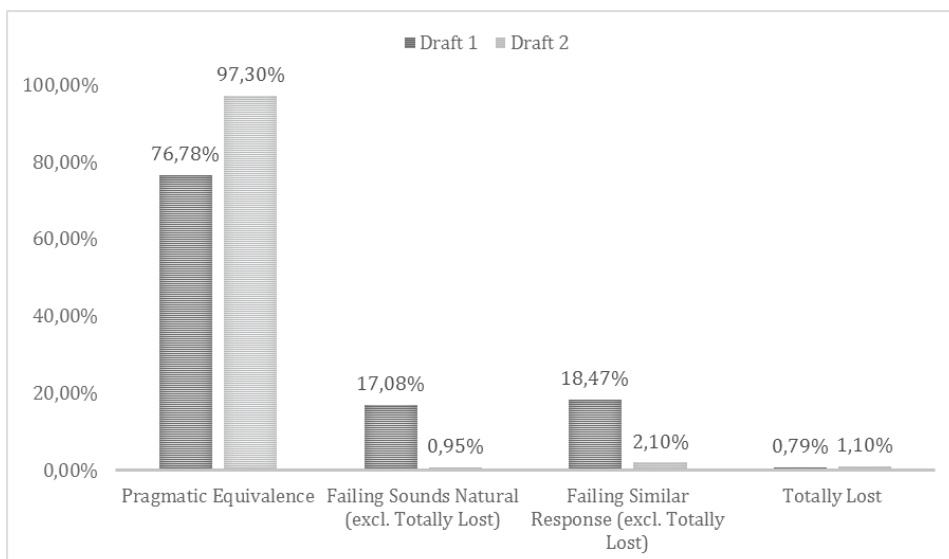


Figure 7: Highlights of improvement – Draft 1 vs Draft 2

also seen with a lower percentage of failing Sounds Natural and Similar Response, which respectively improved by 16.13% (from 17.08% to 0.95%) and 16.37% (from 18.47% to 2.10%). That means, in general, feedback from lay readers did have a positive impact on translation quality in the way that more translated passages had achieved all four criteria (Figure 6) and less had failed to either (both) Sound Natural and/or elicit a Similar Response. That is, participants in LR2 felt better informed and knew what they should (not) do as per the advised information in Draft 2.

Example 2 presents comments made by LR1 as opposed to LR2 on the drafts of Health Text 2, of which Draft 2 shows the greatest improvement of passages achieving Pragmatic Equivalence.

Example 2 shows that LR1-3's concerns with structural problems in three passages (P5, P6 and P7) had been amended in Draft 2.

While findings shown in Table 2 indicate that lay readers' feedback could lead to positive impact on translation quality, the current study aims to discuss potential risks that lay readers may misinterpret contextual meanings in the translation (see Figure 1) when they bridge "the contextual distortion" resulted from misunderstood and therefore distorted contextual meanings.

Discussion now turns to two instances where we saw experiential meanings of the source text being distorted in a translation – i.e. pragmalinguistic failures; yet, some lay readers still seemed well informed and knew what they were advised to do because they bridged the contextual distortion created by the pragmalinguistic failures.

Example 2: Lay readers' comments – Health Text 2

Health Text 2 – Lay readers' comments

Draft 1 此翻译开案明意，首先概括指出虽然糖尿病是一种无法治愈的病症…。另：本翻译 P5, P6, P7 结构上不太像普通话。
LR1-3

Author's translation *The translation clearly indicates what it means from the beginning. It starts with general information that even though diabetes is not a curable disease...: P5, P6 and P7 in this translation does not [read] like Mandarin, in terms of their structures.*

Draft 2 翻译通俗易懂，在了解病史的情况下，知道自己该注意的问题。
LR2-12

Author's translation *The translation is easy to read and understand. Under the circumstance of knowing [my] medical history, [I] knows the problems/issues that I myself should be aware of.*

4.5. Correcting the distortion in experiential meaning

Experiential meaning is one aspect of ideational meaning, projecting the world that we have experienced, internally and externally – i.e. who did what, how, why, where and when (Burns & Kim, 2011; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). To be specific, the experiential reality (meaning) projected by a text is a result of interactions between the semantic meaning of lexico-grammatical components contained in that text (e.g. lexicons, syntax). How this reality is projected is shaped by the lexicogrammar of that language. In translation, when there is absence of consideration of what experiential reality could be projected by the lexicogrammar of the target language, the risk of projecting a distorted reality is present.

Example 3 presents a distortion of such and a lay reader's suggestion to amend the distortion.

Example 3: Passage 11 – Legal Text 1

Passage 11 – Legal Text 1

Source text	Give 28 days’ notice to end a periodic tenancy.
Draft 1	终止活期合约时需要给予 28 天的通知
Back translation	When terminating a periodic tenancy, a notice needs to be given for 28 days.
Draft 2	如果 租赁 任一方有意终止活期合约, 需要给予对方 28 天的通知
Back translation	If either the tenant or the landlord intends to terminate a periodic tenancy, they should give the other party a notice for 28 days.
LR2-13’s comment to Draft 2	需要给予对方 28 天的通知, 改: 需要提前 28 天通知对方
Author’s translation	<i>should give the other party a notice for 28 days, amended as: need to notify the other party 28 days in advance</i>

Passage 11 in Legal Text 1 is a text offering twelve tips for tenants (see Appendix B). Though the translation of Passage 11 was assessed as Sounding Natural by all lay readers in LR1, the translator revised this passage by adding *tenant or landlord* to indicate the agent of the suggested action *to end*. Passage 11 in Draft 2 was well received as it was assessed as achieving Pragmatic Equivalence by all lay readers in LR2, except by LR2-13 who suggested that the translation should be amended as 需要提前28天通知对方/*need to notify the other party 28 days in advance* as seen in Example 3.

The Chinese translation of the phrase *28 days’ notice* as 28天的通知/*28 days’ notice* in both Draft 1 and 2 can be seen as a result of focusing on the semantic meaning of the source text. The English possessive apostrophe can be understood as the Chinese particle 的/*de* functioning as a suffix that transforms a noun to an adjective (Li & Thompson, 1981). However, when the particle 的/*de* is attached to a temporal noun (e.g. 天/day, 月/month, 小时/hour), the noun attaching to the de-structure noun is interpreted as an activity that continuously happens through the described timeframe; for instance, the phrase 两小时的会/*2 hours-de meeting* is understood as *a meeting that runs/ran for two hours*.

Therefore, the Chinese phrase 28天的通知/*28 days’ notice* can be understood by native Chinese speakers as *giving notice every day for 28 days*. That means, the translation projected an experiential reality that conflicts with what people would usually expect when terminating a tenancy – *just one notice in advance is enough and you don’t need to notify the other party every day*.

Though the translation projected an unexpected experiential reality, LR-13’s suggestion indicated that lay readers in both LR1 and LR2 who assessed the

translation as achieving Pragmatic Equivalence might possess the contextual knowledge and hence ignored the distorted experiential reality, probably assuming that *the translation must mean 28 days in advance because it doesn't make sense to give notice every day for 28 days*. Comments from LR-3 and LR-14 in Example 5 indicate that the lay readers felt informed and knew what they were advised to do when terminating a tenancy, respectively seeing that giving notice is an obligation (LR-3) and seeing the translation provides an action *guideline*.

Example 4: Lay readers' comments – Legal Text 1

LR-3	让租房者了解自己的权【力】利和义务
Back translation	<i>[the translation] helps tenants understand their rights (power) and obligations</i>
LR-14	…让租赁者在租赁期、承租期以及退租期三个时段的过程中，都有精准确实可操作的行动依据…
Back translation	<i>…[the translation] allows tenants to have an action guideline which is precisely and practically operable during the three process of leasing, renting and terminating…</i>

We believe that those lay readers' life experience in China and New Zealand allowed them "to put themselves into the source-text readers' shoes, drawing their own conclusions with regard to what the text may mean for them" (Nord, 2016, p. 33). That is, the lay readers possessed the contextual knowledge regarding house renting and they used that knowledge to **correct the contextual distortion** – i.e. the distorted experiential and temporal reality projected in the translation which led to the pragmatolinguistic failure.

The comments also reminded us that we cannot rule out the possibility that lay readers might not possess the contextual knowledge of house renting. They therefore might not correct the distorted experiential reality. They would have felt the translation had achieved pragmatic equivalence because the translation Sounded Natural and Made Sense; hence they felt well informed (achieving Original Manner) and misguidedly believed that *they were advised to give notice every day for 28 days* (achieving Similar Response). This finding reveals a risk identified in previous studies (Teng, 2019; Teng et al., 2018): "a translation which Sounds Natural and Makes Sense...may distort the original [contextual] meaning...without the target audience's awareness of anything being amiss" (Teng, 2019, p. 91).

One other instance is Passage 11 in Legal Text 5 (Appendix C), which is the last passage in the text offering readers a final advice on dealing with traffic incidents.

Seeing the overall improvement of translation quality in Draft 2 (Figure 7), the translation in Draft 2 of Passage 11 in Legal Text 2 is one rare instance where the

revised translation of the passage showed a degraded quality. Figure 8 shows that less lay readers in LR2 assessed the revised translation of Passage 11 as achieving all four criteria (Pragmatic Equivalence) and more felt that translation had not met any of the four criteria (Totally Lost). Passage 11 is presented in Example 5.

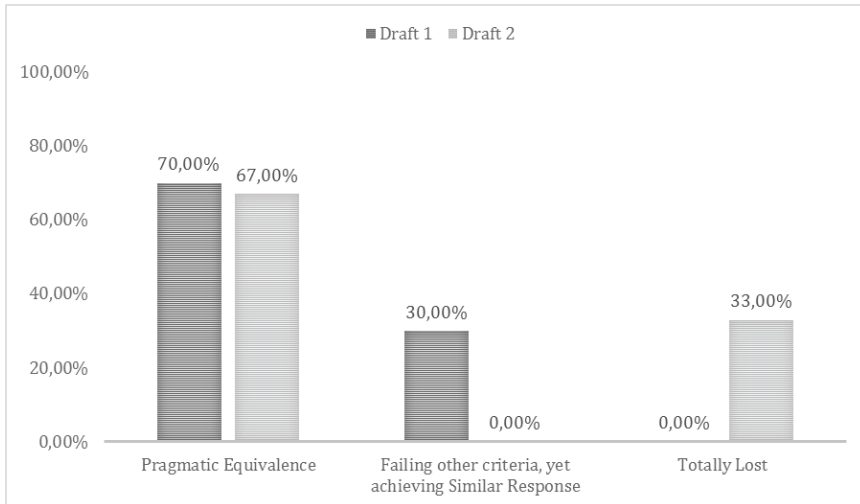


Figure 8: Degraded translation quality of Passage 11 in Legal Text 5

Example 5

Passage 11 – Legal Text 5

Source text It is best not to admit liability for any accident, especially at the scene...Causes can be **less simple** than at first appear and more than one driver can contribute to an accident.

Draft 1 不要承认引起这次意外的责任，尤其是在事发现场。...意外发生的原因，可能比单在现场看到的情况更为**复杂**，同时**意外发生也不可能是单一方面的司机引起的**。

Back translation Do not admit liability of this accident, especially at the scene ...Causes of accidents could be more complicated than it appears at the scene, in the meantime, **it is not possible that the occurrence of an accident is attributed from one single driver.**

Draft 2 在意外发生的时候及现场，你最好不要立刻承认引发这次意外的责任...发生意外原因，可能比在意外现场看到的更为**复杂**；而且**引发意外也不可能只是单方面的司机引起**。

Back translation When an accident happens and at the scene, you'd better not admit immediately the liability of causing this accident...Causes of accidents can be more complicated than it appears at the scene; and also **it is not possible that what attributes to the accident is attributed from just one single driver.**

Firstly, both drafts include the addition of the Chinese phrase 不可能/*impossible* which greatly distorts the experiential reality in the source text. Secondly, both drafts deliver similar messages, except for the translation of the English phrases *less simple* and *more than one driver*. We are now looking at how the combination of these Chinese expressions in the translation contributed to a higher percentage of lay readers assessing it as Totally Lost (33%; Figure 8).

Contextually, the semantic meaning of a word in one language may not always project the same experiential meaning in another language due to cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences. The English phrase *less simple* in Passage 11 was translated as 复杂/*fuzha* in Draft 1 and 繁复/*fanfu* in Draft 2³. Both Chinese adjectives can be rendered as the English *complicated*; however, the Chinese 复杂/*fuzha* denotes things not easy to analyse or understand for its intricately combined, interwoven parts, for instance, 这个机器的结构很复杂/*the structure of this machine is very complicated*; 繁复/*fanfu* denotes things not easy to be done or completed for involving complex steps, for instance, 申请签证的过程很繁复/*the process of VISA application is very complicated*. Translation of the English *less simple* into Chinese 繁复/*fanfu* in Draft 2 therefore created a **contextual distortion** as people usually do not see a traffic incident as something which involves complex steps.

One other cause of distorted experiential reality is the translation of *more than one driver* in both drafts. Draft 1 included the Chinese copular verb 是/*shi* which delivers a textual function of emphasising the following or preceding messages (Li & Thompson, 1981). Particularly when 是/*shi* is used in a 是...的/*shi...de* structure, an anglicised expression commonly seen in modern Chinese (Xiao & Hu, 2015), what is placed between 是/*shi* and 的/*de* is the prominent information and other options are excluded (Liu et al., 1996). Therefore, along with the addition 不可能/*impossible*, Draft 1 entirely excluded a scenario that *a traffic incident may indeed be caused by one single driver*. Some LR1 lay readers therefore felt lost when reading Draft 1 because the translation projected an experiential reality that conflicted with their concept of traffic incidents. Draft 2 included the adverb 只是/*just* preceding 单方面的司机/*one driver*⁴. Along with the addition 不可能/*impossible*, the rendition 不可能只是单方面的司机引起/*it is impossible to be caused by just one driver* in Draft 2 also projected an experiential reality conflictive to the reality that lay readers would have experienced.

³ We do feel that the phrase *less simple* could be translated as 不单纯/*not simple*, and would translate *Causes can be less simple than at first appear* as 车祸发生的原因可能不像现场看到的那么单纯/*causes of a traffic accident may not be as simple as what appears at the scene*.

⁴ The literal translation of 单方面的司机 is *one side of the driver*, which does not make sense in English in this context. Hence we back-translated the phrase as *one driver*.

Despite the distorted experiential reality in both drafts, LR1-4's comment (Example 6) to the translation of Passage 11 in Draft 1 specifically included the wording 不论哪一方过错/ *no matter whose fault it is*. That means the lay reader possessed the common sense that any party involved in a traffic incident can hold liability. This understanding is rather discrepant to the message delivered in the translation of Passage 11.

Example 7

Lay readers' comments – Legal Text 5

Draft 1 这篇翻译提醒我们，在驾驶汽车发生意外时必须要做的事情，以及司机本人要做的事项，同时意外发生后，不论哪一方过错，都不要急于承担这次意外的责任，保护好现场，让第三方来判定是谁的责任。

LR1-4

Author's translation *This translation reminds us of things that should be done after the occurrence of an incident when we are driving, and things that the driver himself need to do. In the meantime, after the occurrence of an incident, no matter whose fault it is, [you] do not rush to undertake the responsibility of this incident. Protect the site and let a third party to determine whose responsibility it is.*

LR-4's comment helps explain why more than 70% of the lay readers felt the translation (both drafts) had achieved Pragmatic Equivalence (Figure 8). That is, they seemed to rely on their own knowledge about handling traffic incidents to **correct the contextual distortion in the two drafts** and felt that they knew the advised approach to deal with a traffic incident.

5. Conclusion

Involving CALD members in the process of producing community translation can help guarantee the translation meets CALD members' expectations of a text delivering publicly-shared information in a particular realm of public services (Taibi; AUSIT). However, when considering the social mission of community translation as to help CALD members be socially integrated into mainstream society, we feel that translation delivering interpersonal meaning accordant with the norm of CALD members' original social-cultural background may not always be an ideal practice.

As per our case studies, New Zealand is a society where patient's autonomy is a crucial aspect in medical ethics (Zhang et al., 2021). A translation that meets lay readers' expectations albeit by distorting the interpersonal and experiential meaning of the source text may lead to a compromise of CALD members' autonomy in reception of healthcare services, as we demonstrated in examples of pragmalinguistic failures that fall under the guise of what we have coined "contextual distortions." Should that happen, we wonder how community translation could help CALD members be socially integrated and express their own will in the healthcare context.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Health Text 1 – Source Text

IBUPROFEN

PATIENT INFORMATION GUIDE

! **Never give your medicines to others even if their symptoms are the same as yours.**

WHY HAVE WE GIVEN YOU THIS GUIDE?

- This information is for you to use when taking ibuprofen
- Ibuprofen is used for pain relief and inflammation
- Ibuprofen can cause **serious side effects** so it is important you know how to take it safely
- Talk to your doctor, pharmacist (chemist) or nurse if you have any questions

THINGS YOU CAN DO TO TAKE IBUPROFEN SAFELY

- Take the tablets with or straight after food
- Swallow the tablets whole – do not crush or chew them
- Let your doctor know if you have had any problems with stomach ulcers, your kidneys, liver or heart, including high blood pressure

▶ IBUPROFEN CAN BE HARMFUL

- ▶ **Extra care is needed especially for older adults, or people who smoke or drink a lot of alcohol**
- ▶ **Always store ibuprofen out of reach and out of sight of children**
- ▶ **Let your doctor or pharmacist (chemist) know immediately if you:**
 - Have a skin rash, fever, or other 'allergic-type' reaction
 - Cough up blood (red or brown), or pass blood (red or black) in the toilet
 - Have pain in your stomach or indigestion-like pain
- ▶ **Tell your doctor and pharmacist (chemist) about all of the medicines you are taking**
 - Ibuprofen can be harmful when taken with some other medicines, especially medicines used for pain relief and some heart conditions
- ▶ **Asthma and ibuprofen**
 - Let your doctor or pharmacist (chemist) know if you have asthma **before** you take ibuprofen
 - If you have **asthma and nasal polyps**, you should not take ibuprofen; ask your doctor or pharmacist (chemist) about other types of pain relief for you
- ▶ **PREGNANCY and ibuprofen**
 - If you are pregnant, let your doctor and pharmacist (chemist) know; they may recommend other types of pain relief for you
- ▶ **Do not take any more than recommended**
High doses can be harmful, especially for older adults

Appendix B – Legal Text 1 – Source Text

► 12 tips for tenants

1. Know your rights and responsibilities and where to find information: tenancy.govt.nz.
2. Get a written tenancy agreement.
3. Inspect the property and complete a property condition report that is dated, and signed by both parties, before signing a tenancy agreement.
4. Keep all records relating to your tenancy.
5. Get a receipt for any rent paid by cash or for any bond you pay to the landlord.
6. Pay your rent on time.
7. Keep the property reasonably clean and tidy.
8. Tell the landlord if something needs fixing.
9. Do not intentionally or carelessly damage the property.
10. Give 28 days' notice to end a periodic tenancy.
11. A fixed term tenancy cannot be ended early by notice.
12. Letting fees and key money can't be charged to tenants.

MBIE 9321

New Zealand Government

Appendix C – Legal Text 5 – Source Text

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENTS AND ALCOHOL

You should also:

- Write down the name and address of any other driver or witness, the registration number of any other vehicle and the company insuring any other vehicle;
- Write down the name and number of any police officer who attends the accident;
- Provide your name and address and the registration number and insurance company of your vehicle;
- As soon as practicable, make a note of what occurred and draw a sketch plan of the accident to help you remember what occurred; and
- Report the accident to your insurance company promptly.

It is best not to admit liability for any accident, especially at the scene. It could affect your insurance cover. Causes can be less simple than at first appear and more than one driver can contribute to an accident.

PERSONAL INJURY IN AN ACCIDENT

If you are injured in an accident, you should:

- See a registered medical practitioner.
- Report it to the Accident Compensation Corporation.

PROPERTY DAMAGE IN AN ACCIDENT

If you are the owner of property damaged in an accident, you should try to obtain the name and address of the driver and owner of any vehicle involved, together with registration numbers and insurance companies.

If you are insured, report the accident to your insurance company promptly. Make sure you answer all questions on the insurance form fully and truthfully – particularly those about drinking alcohol before the accident. An untruthful or incorrect answer may mean that the insurance company does not have to pay under your policy.

A lawyer can assist you to make an insurance claim and recover any uninsured loss (such as hiring an alternative vehicle or paying an excess).

CONTACT WITH POLICE OFFICERS

- Be satisfied that the person is, in fact, a police officer. If you are in any doubt, you should request proof of identity as a police officer.
- Be very careful that what you say to or write down for a police officer is exactly what you