duolingo™

LOCALIZATION STYLE GUIDE

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1. GOALS OF THIS GUIDE

Welcome and thank you for helping us make language learning available to the whole world!

This guide was created to help those who will be localizing Duolingo by describing some specific things to keep in mind regarding voice, personality and brand goals. Please use this document as your main reference. Duolingo's terminology, interface and software is unique. It is best to follow these guidelines as closely as possible.

Here are some of the questions we'll answer in this document:

1. How should it sound?
  An outline on voice, tone and style
2. Which words are appropriate?
  Further explanations on terminology
3. How are the different platforms dealt with?
  Different approaches to each platform
4. How do I remember all this?
  A brief summary just for you

Remember, this is your main stylistic reference for localizing our product. We may update it at times to reflect the latest ideas we've hatched… so print it, doodle on it, pencil in important notes, but be sure to check back often to get the latest version!

2. COMMUNICATE WITH DUOLINGO USERS

2.1 Be Duolingo

The Duolingo voice, tone and style is friendly, witty and fun. When translating into other languages remember to keep it that way. Duolingo targets a varied audience so it is key that, when localizing, you use a contemporary voice, tone and terminology. Think of the how you would speak in a setting that is neither too formal nor overly informal. If it comes down to it though, you should keep the tone closer on the informal side of things rather than formal.

Fun
Since our teaching model is based on "gamification", the style, tone and voice of our product should, in all international markets, seek to reflect family-friendly video games. To see some examples, please refer to section 3.1 "Catch Phrases and Slogans".

> Instead of just being stretched phone versions, the new apps are specifically optimized for tablets. We've also added landscape mode, meaning you can now hold your device however you like, even Gangnam style!

Personal
As a language education site, one of the things we value most is diversity of all types. You should remember to always keep your translations respectful yet, of course, fun. Duolingo prefers a direct and personal approach when it comes to addressing our users. (For example, there are two *you* forms in Italian, the formal *Lei* and the informal *tu* and *voi.* Steer clear of the formal you if such a distinction exists in your localization language.)

2.2 Reach Our Audience

Be direct
Use simple yet effective sentences. When translating longer texts you should try to keep explanations and ideas uncomplicated so that just about anyone can understand them. It is okay to use specific terminology in the cases where it applies so long as they will not be obscure to the general audience.

Keep it Global (vs regional)

Always localize in as "neutral" a language as possible to avoid alienating users from different regions or countries. Beware of using expressions from a specific dialect or small group. When dealing with idiomatic phrases, you should use an equivalent phrase in the localization language with the same meaning. (For example, avoid using idiomatic phrases that are only used in Portugal when localizing Duolingo for all Portuguese-speaking countries).

3. TERMINOLOGY

3.1 Catch Phrases and Slogans

The Duolingo voice and style relies on certain catch phrases and slogans. Be sure to localize and translate these the same way each time! It will simplify your task and students' appreciation of what you've done. Below are a few examples of phrases you will see again and again:

No ads, hidden fees, or paid 'premium' content
Duolingo is addictive.
Duolingo is now available on the perfect device for learning a new language.
Duolingo on the go
Friends don't let friends spend money on language learning software.
If you'd rather not receive notifications, you can unsubscribe here
Learn a language for free. Forever.
Make your breaks and commutes more productive with our iPhone and Android apps.
Learning, gamified.
Next time please play nice!
Real world content
Streak freeze
You're all alone!
You're heating up!

3.2 Remember "Free Language Education for the World"

The Duolingo brand takes great pride in our mission to provide free language education to the world. The "no ads, hidden fees or paid 'premium' content" slogan should always be kept in mind when localizing and an effort should always be made stay away from words that resonate with the idea of "purchasing" or paying for anything on our site. This specifically applies when localizing text about the game currency (Lingots) and store.

3.3 Brand Name and Capitalization

Certain terms related to the Duolingo brand and product are not to be translated or localized. If it consistently begins with a capital letter (Duolingo, Duo, etc.) it remains unchanged. *Lingot* is not always capitalized but is another term we do not change across different user interfaces.

In some languages, depending on the grammatical case of the word, it may need to have a different ending or be otherwise rewritten to make sense. (For example, in Spanish the singular of lingot is *lingot* and the plural is *lingots*).

¿Qué es un lingot?

El **lingot** *(m.)* es la moneda virtual de Duolingo. A medida que vayas aprendiendo, recibirás lingots y podrás usarlos en la tienda. ¡Entre más aprendas, más lingots ganarás! Las formas en que podrás obtenerlos son las siguientes:

Subiendo de nivel	Gana **1 lingot** *(multiplicado por el nuevo nivel)*
Completando unidades	Gana **2 lingots** por completar una nueva unidad

Exceptions may be made for non Roman alphabets such as Chinese. In these cases, please do not stray from the localized brand name or you will make the owl cry.

3.4 Using the Glossary

The glossary is a very useful tool for maintaining consistency and making sure that you understand Duolingo-specific terms referenced in our texts. It will allow you to get acquainted with established definitions of recurring terms and their translations. This will help you maintain consistency during the localization project so please be sure to refer back to it as much as needed!

4. LOCALIZATION BY PLATFORM

Localizing the different Duolingo platforms may ruffle your feathers a bit. You may ask, why does the Leaderboard look different on mobile devices? Why are the catch phrases abbreviated in certain places? How come this button says "Next" instead of "Continue"?

(app screenshot)

(web screenshot)

Chances are your computer screen at home is much larger than the screen on your phone. Be wary of character counts when localizing for mobile platforms. If possible, maintain the same length as the UI string you're working with. And as always, be consistent. If it is impossible to use the same terminology across platforms, at least make sure to be consistent throughout a single platform.

We recommend keeping track of common variations:

Web notes

Android notes

iOS notes

5. WORDS TO LOCALIZE BY

Duolingo is fun and effective… and translating should be too! Here are some key words to help you take flight:

CONSISTENT

Don't confuse the users.

RESPECTFUL

We have a diverse audience.

OWLSOME

Don't hold back the puns.

GAMIFIED

Because learning is fun!