LCW recently translated and localized our "Introduction to Managing Unconscious Bias" eLearning module into 29 languages*. Many organizations know that translating eLearning content is not an easy task -- the process goes beyond the simple translation of the words on the screen. Below are some insights that maybe useful in planning for your next eLearning project, if you think it may end up being translated:

Pre-Production: **Text and Content**

- **Text Growth**: Translations from English to other languages are almost always longer than the original English text, which means you should allow enough room for text growth. Consider leaving plenty of "white space" in the English slides and place holders, for the text to grow, so the final content doesn't end up looking crowded and squeezed. If your object (text box, banner, speech bubble, etc.) fits the English text perfectly, that object will undoubtedly need to be resized for any translated text.
- **Content for Translation**: What, exactly, will be translated? Are there any tag lines or slogans that will be left in English? Should source references, authors and books be translated? Are any of the expressions or idioms referenced in the narration too US centric and need to be modified for translation? Making these decisions ahead of time helps eliminates questions from the translators halfway through the project on how to solve these issues – which can delay the project.
- **Breaking up text**: Are there any phrases that are broken up by word (to create an interesting animation, for example)? Are there any words which are broken up by letter (e.g., a text box for each individual letter in the word)? At the beginning of our course, for example, the word "unconscious" was originally turned into a graphic animation, with each letter in a separate colored box. That creative element didn't work very well in many languages. The translation of "unconscious" had either more or fewer letters, forcing us to spend considerable time deciding how to re-create the animation. And in several Asian languages, it simply wasn't possible. The same is true of sentences which are constructed graphically (i.e., they aren't a full sentence in a text box, but various words which come together in an animation). Re-working these with a different number of words in the translation became very laborious.
- **Word order in Animations**: Sometimes simple animations depend on word order, where one word comes on-screen before another. In English, we typically put the adjective before the noun, but in many other languages the adjective comes after. After translating text, it can be necessary to re-order animations as well – to create the correct on-screen word order. Making note of these types of animations will help the translation team understand how the words appear, and will help the design team correct the animations.
- **Content is Final:** Have all stakeholders and team members provided their feedback on the content? Any changes that are made after translation and after foreign-language layout can have significant impact. Even minor changes to the translated content after translation/production has begun can wreak havoc on your timeline.
- **Voiceover and syncing**: In most cases, on-screen animations are tightly synced to the narration. After translation and voiceover recording in the foreign language, many (if not most) animations will need to be re-synced, so that they appear at the correct time during the narration. The foreign language narration is also likely to be a bit longer, so be sure to design in such a way that you can re-sync a section, without having to re-sync everything else. For example, it can be dangerous (and time-consuming to fix) if English narration is synced to the action which appears in an embedded video. We also recommend that you mark "key frames" in the English by highlighting the word which triggers key animations – and ensure that same "key frame" highlight is transferred to the foreign language version. Then, during syncing, the editors can place the animation correctly based on the highlighted "key frame" word in the translation.
- **Audio labeling**: Audio narration files on each scene should also be labeled in a way that make translation of the segment and syncing of audio simple to do regardless of language. If your eLearning file has 22 "Audio 1's", it's going to be exceedingly difficult to know for sure how to replace audio clips

with foreign language versions. By numbering them (or lettering them), you can quickly and easily find the correct foreign language audio clip that goes with each scene or slide.

Pre-Production: **Software and Technology**

- **Software**: Make sure you know the authoring tool you are using for your E-learning well so you can help anticipate problems before they occur. For our 'Introduction to Managing Unconscious Bias' training we used Articulate Storyline 2, but there are plenty of other authoring tools out there.
- **Player Localization**: Some authoring tools may require you to also translate the text on the player into the languages that are not natively available in the player. In other words, if you can't easily change your player to a French player (menus, navigation text, etc.) you may need to find a way to translate some player text. For example, with Storyline 2, we had to provide a translation of certain player text into Thai (via an xml file), as this is not a current option for player text.
- **Videos and graphics**: Do any of the videos or graphics have embedded English text? If so, make sure the developer has access to the editable source file in order to create language specific version of that video or file.
- **Fonts**: Not all fonts can handle all characters in all languages. Make sure all the fonts you use are compatible with all the languages the content is being localized into – or choose new fonts for some foreign language versions and manually edit the content to ensure correct fit and aesthetics. Be sure that translators, if editing the formatted source text (as is possible with most authoring tools), keep all formatting intact. Otherwise, your designers will need to reformat any text which no longer appears correctly on the screen due to formatting changes during the translation process.

Pre-Production: **Terminology**

- **Glossary:** Creating a glossary of specialized terms, approved by language experts, should be the first step in your translation process. This will help you translate content accurately and consistently through the materials. LCW found this especially helpful with very complex terms such as 'unconscious bias', 'implicit bias', 'blind spots', etc. This also proves helpful later on when local employees review the course and make recommendations for potential translation edits. Although native language speakers are very valuable during the review process, they are not necessarily content experts and many not be familiar with those exact terms. Having references and approvals from content and language experts helps answer those questions or even push back if someone questions the translation choices.

Post-Production: **Final QA**

- **QA:** After all the elements have been put together in each language, a native language linguist should review the course and make sure that text boxes display correctly, that transitions and animations play and are synced with audio, that fonts display correctly and that no English text remains (unless it's supposed to be there). The linguist may also suggest content improvements once they have the opportunity to watching how all the elements come together.

The eLearning module is currently available in 29 languages: English, German, Spanish, Portuguese Brazil, Portuguese Portugal, Italian, French for France, French for Canada, Swedish, Turkish, Polish, Czech, Russian, Chinese Simplified (Mandarin mainland), Chinese Traditional (Mandarin Taiwan), Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Thai, Arabic, Bulgarian, Dutch, Hindi, Indonesian, Kannada, Marathi, Romanian, Slovak and Ukrainian.