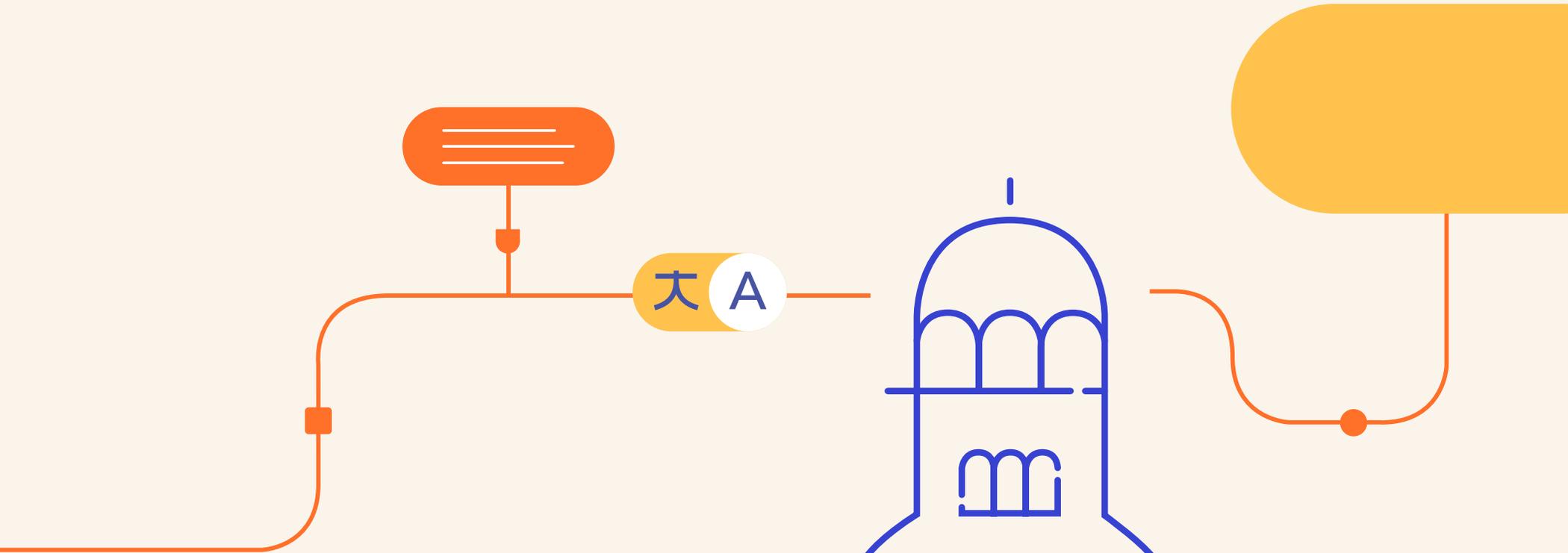


# BULGARIAN



## How to Approach Customer Support

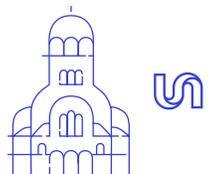
Tips for achieving better translations and respecting cultural norms

# Introduction

Global businesses today serve a diverse set of customers who speak different languages, come from different countries and regions, and have different cultural contexts.

Every one of the more than 6,900 distinct languages spoken around the world is unique, and cultural nuances can vary widely. It's important to understand these factors when providing customer service. Communicating in the customer's native language and behaving in culturally appropriate ways help develop and nurture trust. This is why any customer-centric business should strive to build cross-cultural competency into their customer service organization.

To help you achieve this, Unbabel has put together a series of language guides. Our goal is to provide helpful and illuminating context in an easy-to-digest format. In this guide, we'll cover the Bulgarian language.



# About the Bulgarian language

Bulgarian is the official language of Bulgaria and the first language of approximately 85% of the population. Bulgarians use the Bulgarian Cyrillic Alphabet, which consists of 30 characters. A derivative of Old Slavic, Bulgarian is closely related to Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Slovak, and Czech. The language is also spoken in Moldova, Transnistria, and Ukraine. Words from French, German, Greek, Italian, Russian, Turkish, and English have been adopted by Bulgarians too.



Bulgarian is known as one of the most difficult languages to learn in the world! It would take the average person approximately roughly 1100 hours of study to learn it.

ZDRAVETE

DOBAR

DEN!



# Core concepts in Bulgarian culture relevant to customer service

## INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVISM

Collectivism, loyalty, and socialization are integral parts of Bulgarian culture. The culture is strongly influenced by the Roman, Ottoman and Persian regimes, communism, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. Individuals are indoctrinated into predetermined social groups from birth onwards. In recent years, there has been a gradual shift towards individualism which has been attributed to Bulgaria's transition to a market economy. Globalization and inclusion into the European Union have played key roles by increasing opportunities for education, employment, travel and business expansion abroad.

## SHORT-TERM ORIENTATION

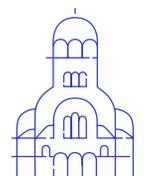
Bulgarian culture is largely focused on respect for traditions, fulfilling social obligations, and handling life's issues day by day. Bulgaria is still considered a developing country that faces heavy corruption. Although it's progressing, little focus has been placed on planning far into the future.



There has been a rising interest in corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Bulgaria over the last decade or so. Companies have become more conscious about their influence on the environment and their contribution to society, and have implemented CSR principles and policies with the goal of having a considerable impact on social unity, transparency and trust among stakeholders.

## GENDER ROLES

Bulgaria has had a relatively large gender gap in which men held most of the positions of power while women maintained the household. Post Communism, laws have been created to ensure women have equal educational, political, and economic opportunities to men. According to a study presented by the World Bank in 2019, Bulgaria is now one of the highest performing economies in women's work rights.



# Best practices for communicating with Bulgarian customers

## ASK QUESTIONS

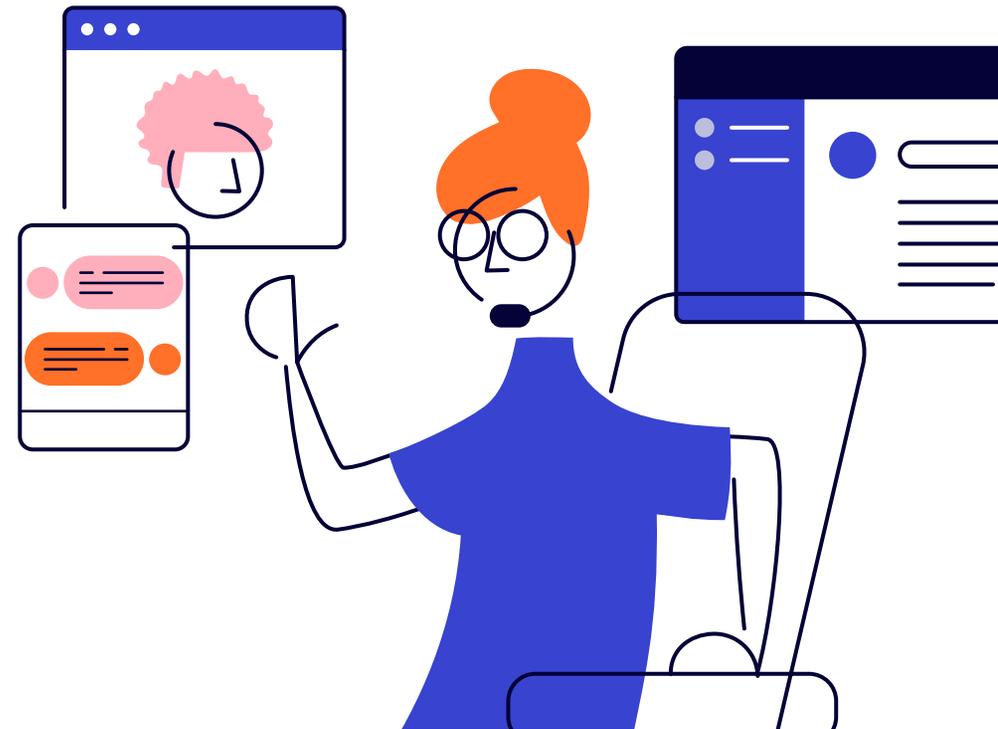
Take every opportunity to impress your customers with service that goes above and beyond. Although Bulgarians are direct, they may not be confident in their responses at times. You may need to rephrase questions (or confirm answers) to gain clarity and gauge customer satisfaction.

## BE PROACTIVELY HELPFUL

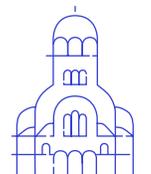
Advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations greatly influence Bulgarian consumers. Be sure to present information in an organized and exciting way, including making clear distinctions between products, providing attractive price lists, and quick service.

## BE TACTICAL

Bulgarians tend to shop based on need rather than desire. They also prefer a realistic approach compared to overly jubilant interactions. If you need to deliver bad news to a Bulgarian customer, be sure to lead with that, then follow it up with a solution (good news).



Bulgarians are used to inconsistent bureaucratic practices than what's typical in more developed countries. Due to the slower service, they may not be in a rush to get things done or be well organized if they have an issue. Make a lasting impression by sorting out issues in a timely fashion.



# Best practices for optimizing machine translation output

When writing in English with the knowledge that the content will be translated into Bulgarian, there are several best practices to follow.



1 Avoid long sentences (over 30 words)

---

2 Avoid idioms or slang

---

3 Keep it simple and straightforward

---

4 Copyedit to avoid typos

---

5 Use active voice to reduce ambiguity

---

6 Avoid abbreviations, including contractions like "you're" and "we'd"

---

7 Be consistent, especially with terms like "email" that can be written multiple ways

---

8 Stick to English grammar rules

- Ensure no spaces are missing
- Use proper punctuation and capitalization
- Finish all sentences (do not use fragments)
- Avoid double subjects (e.g., the noun and a pronoun referencing it)
- Ensure the word order is correct
- Check for subject-verb agreement (person and number in singular/plural) and pronoun agreement (person, gender, and number)
- Format messages correctly (e.g., with no extra line breaks, bullets or asterisks)



# How to write in English for Bulgarian machine translation

## 1 USE THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL TONES CORRECTLY

In Bulgarian, both formal and informal tones can be used in Customer Support. However the formal tone is more widely used.

### FORMAL REGISTER GREETINGS

**not advised**

- Hi!
- Hey!

**advised**

- Hello Mr. Smith,
- Dear Mr. Smith,

### INFORMAL REGISTER GREETINGS

**not advised**

- Hey!

**advised**

- Hi John,
- Dear John,

### FORMAL REGISTER CLOSINGS

**not advised**

- See you!
- Bye!

**advised**

- Regards,
- Sincerely,
- Best wishes,

### INFORMAL REGISTER CLOSINGS

**not advised**

- See you!
- Bye!

**advised**

- Sincerely,
- Yours,



# How to write in English for Bulgarian machine translation

## 2 AVOID EMOJIS

---

### not advised

- Good morning, Stefannie :)

### advised

- Good morning, Stefannie.

## 3 AVOID INTERJECTIONS

---

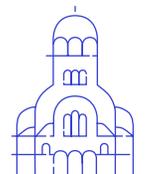
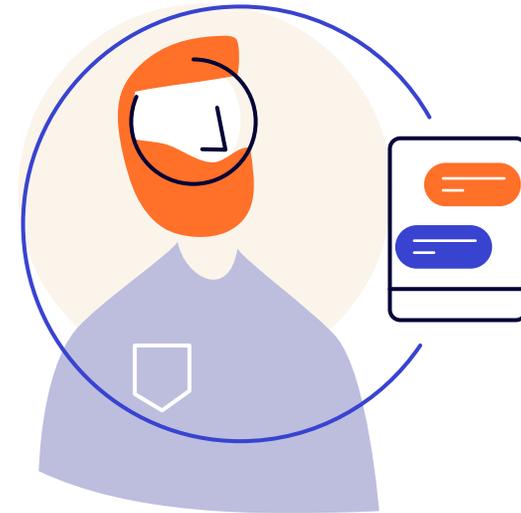
Interjections are more suited to the spoken language than to the written language and they should be avoided when writing to a Bulgarian audience.

### not advised

- Oh, I'm so sorry about that.
- Ah, that's alright.

### advised

- I'm sorry about that.
- That's alright.



# The Golden Rules of Customer Service



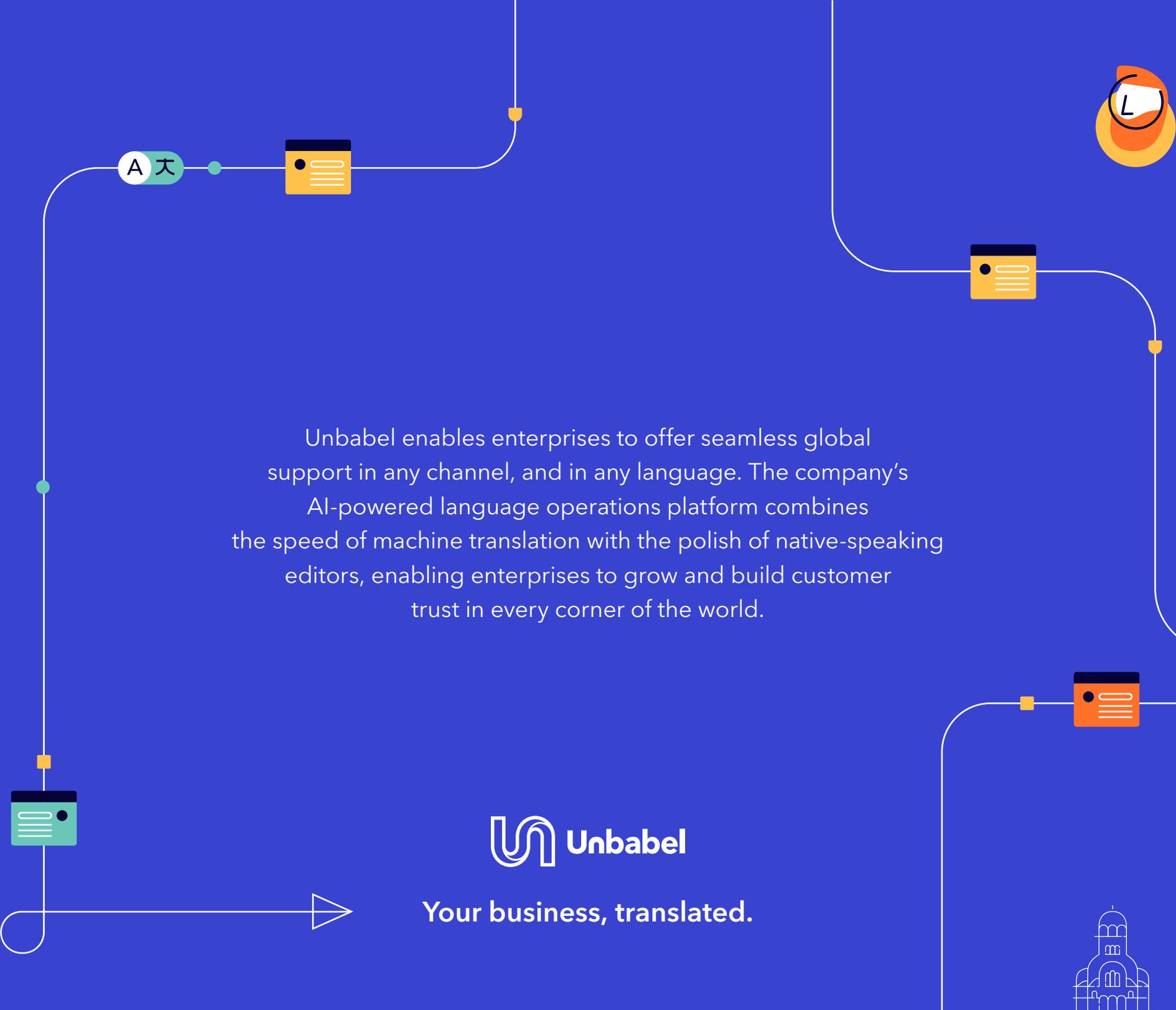
Of course, some best practices do not vary by language and should be applied to every customer service interaction. Here are the nine best practices we recommend.

- 1 EVERY INTERACTION MATTERS.** Always put in the best effort to make each interaction – every single one – a great one.
- 2 READ, DON'T SKIM.** Ensure you do not miss any valuable details or context in the message.
- 3 COMMUNICATE CONCISELY.** Only give the information you need to, helping your customer to find the answers to their questions or queries as fast and as efficiently as possible.
- 4 FOCUS ON GREAT SUPPORT BEFORE FAST SUPPORT.** Speed is important, of course, but it should not take precedence over quality.
- 5 MAKE THINGS EASY.** Always aim to reduce customer effort and take the burden off them when it comes to getting answers or help for their concern.

- 6 BE RESPECTFUL.** Always say “please” and “thank you.” This applies across cultural contexts and demographics. Politeness never goes out of style.
- 7 TAKE A NEUTRAL STANCE ON ISSUES.** There’s no reason to cause friction in a customer service interaction. Don’t take a stance on issues – even ones that seem harmless.
- 8 REMAIN POSITIVE.** This helps customers gain confidence in your ability to help them.
- 9 USE SIMPLE TERMS.** Keep it simple to avoid confusion and mistranslation when working across languages and cultural context, but don’t patronize customers.

In today’s competitive and globalized business climate, businesses who treat their customers with care and respect – including by speaking their language and respecting their cultural norms – will have the most success.





Unbabel enables enterprises to offer seamless global support in any channel, and in any language. The company's AI-powered language operations platform combines the speed of machine translation with the polish of native-speaking editors, enabling enterprises to grow and build customer trust in every corner of the world.



**Your business, translated.**

