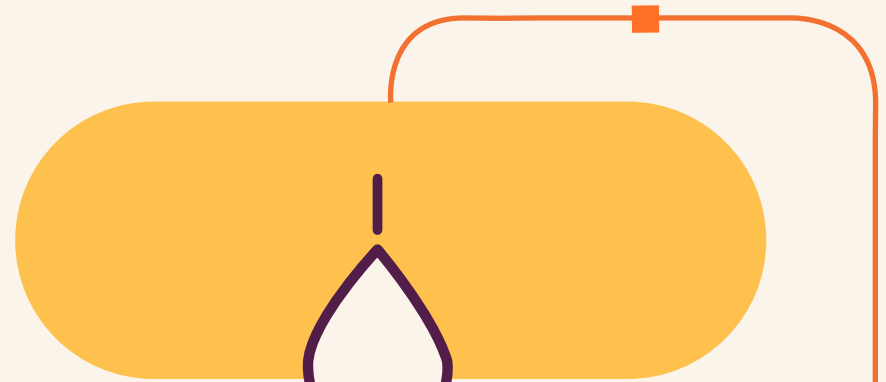


# POLISH



## 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, [insert rest of text here].



# About the Polish Language

Polish is the sixth most spoken language in the European Union. Spoken primarily in Poland, it is the native and official language of the Poles. Over 50 million people around the world speak Polish. It is spoken as a second language in eastern Germany, northern Czech Republic and Slovakia, western parts of Belarus and Ukraine as well as in southeast Lithuania and Latvia. Millions of Polish speakers live in other countries as well, including Canada,

Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The language is most closely related to Czech, Slovak, and Sorbian, with differences in pronunciation and grammar, and carries strong influences from both Romance and Latin languages (e.g., Italian and French) as well as Germanic languages (mostly German).



Polish has several mutually intelligible dialects. The three most widely spoken are Wielkopolski (Greater Polish), spoken in western Poland; Malopolski (Lesser Polish), spoken in southern and southeastern Poland; and Mazovian (Mazur), spoken in northeastern Poland, including the capital of Warsaw. Three of the remaining dialects are considered to be at risk of extinction due to historic geopolitical population movements.



# Core concepts in Polish culture relevant to customer service

## NOBILITY

Poles consider nobility an important motivator behind their actions. Due to their turbulent history, the Catholic Church's teachings of mercy and forgiveness, and the royal family's message of goodwill, the Polish culture treasures generosity and clemency as key traditional values. Justice, morality, and ethics are important guiding principles as well. Polish people tend to empathize quickly and are conscious of whether their actions are seen as honorable in others' eyes. This also means that they care if a business has similar principles – a brand's sustainable practices, kindness toward employees, ethical behavior, and so on, depending on the individual's principles, are often closely examined before a Pole becomes a customer.

## COLLECTIVISM AND INDIVIDUALISM

Poland is largely an individualistic society: They look out for their family and immediate circle first. However, Poland is also considered more collectivistic than other European countries. According to Hofstede Insights, while the Polish society is highly individualistic, they also need a hierarchy. Poles are deeply grounded in both family values and egalitarianism. Balancing these two sides starts with the understanding that everybody is important, but not equal.



"Jakoś to będzie" is the Polish way of life. Literally meaning "everything will somehow work out in the end," this commonly used phrase signifies unwavering certainty and optimism – anything is possible, regardless of the obstacles along the way.

## TRADITIONALISM AND CONSERVATISM

Poland's traditionalism and conservatism are evident in their vibrant religious landscape as well as social customs, values, and the hierarchical system. While they're realistic, adaptable, and sharp, they tend to romanticize ideas and treasure nostalgia and sentimentality over the past. Poles acknowledge their recent history and are frequently influenced by past events. Many of them consider the tragedy of the country's past a part of their Polish identity. However, it is important to take into account that times are changing, and drawing from 20th-century Polish culture alone is hugely misrepresentative of their current mindset. The country has shifted a lot toward optimism, and they're a fast-paced, success-oriented society, reflecting the impact of globalization.



# Best practices for communicating with Polish customers

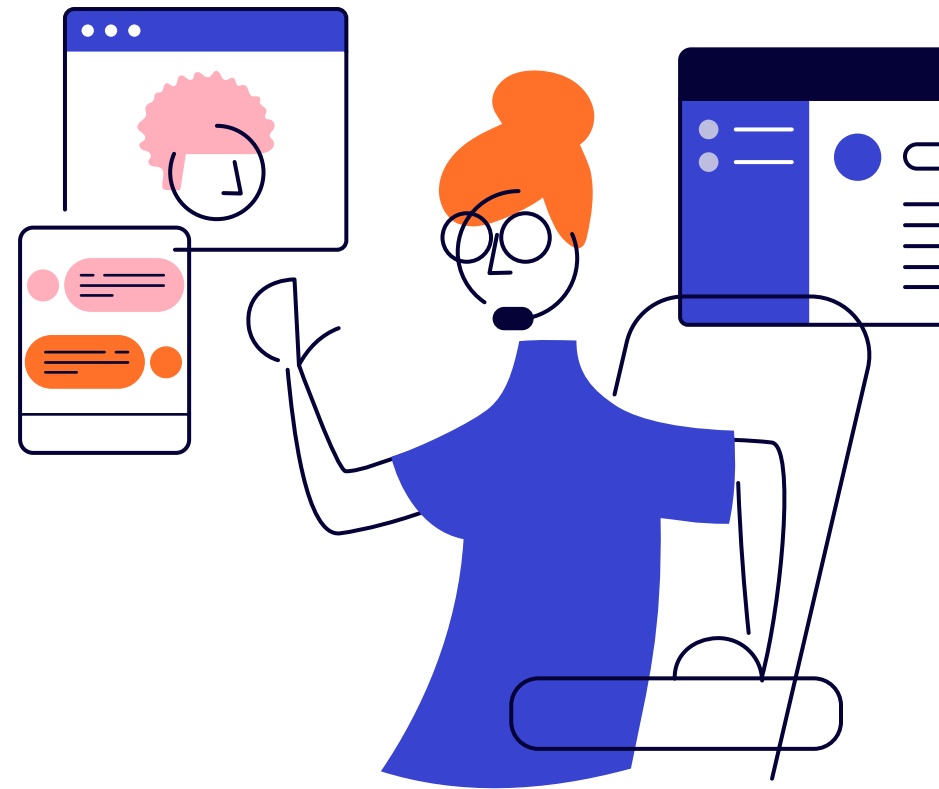
POLISH

## APPRECIATE THEIR HONESTY AND CREATIVITY

Poles are generally straightforward and blunt: They'd rather deal with the problem quickly than let it fester. Faster resolution is highly appreciated, so convoluted processes or discussions must be avoided. They're honest and expect the same from you. They have a general tolerance for imprecision and flexibility, so they might not follow instructions to the T. It's possible they might have tried to fix the issue by themselves before coming to you; they're creative problem-solvers, so their approach might seem unconventional. Show an inventive approach to address their needs and respect their time to appeal to their innate sense of adaptability.

## DON'T QUESTION THEIR NOBILITY

While the Polish are straightforward in their communication, they're also still polite. It's important to not make an offhand (or serious) comment that implies that they're not honorable. This might put them in a defensive position, and they could argue aggressively if they feel insulted. Be tactful of their feelings, and keep criticism and feedback to a minimum. Polish humor might be offensive to some, so while you can prepare yourself to face this, it's not your place to joke about their country or history. Nobility also includes commitment, fairness, and integrity from you: Make sure to emphasize your trustworthiness and reliability. Poles value high-quality customer service; they're even willing to pay more for a product or service if it means getting good support during and after purchase.



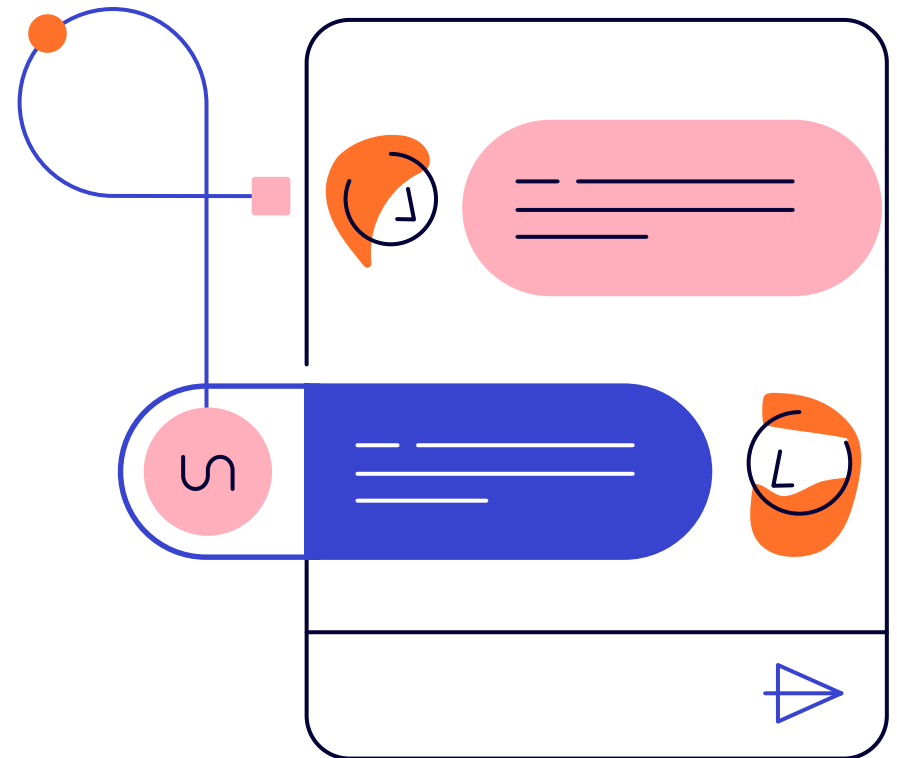
# Best practices for communicating with Polish customers

## EMPATHIZE WITH YOUR POLISH CUSTOMER

Empathy and general helpfulness are extremely important in Polish culture. Poles are generally known to help one another even if it requires significant effort. They tend to be effective at empathizing with others and appealing to others' understanding. They're comfortable expressing their innermost feelings to perfect strangers. Indulge in small talk (if the customer initiates it) and make sure to build rapport with your customer. Don't give them the impression that you only care about the outcome or bottomline; Poles prioritize quality of the relationship and honesty over everything else.



While emotions and feelings are important, Polish people are still practical-minded; they prefer data and facts over broad, vague statements. Make sure not to boast about your company. Arrogance is not welcome.



# Best practices for optimizing machine translation output

When writing in English with the knowledge that the content will be translated into Polish, 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
- 9 Ensure no spaces are missing
- 10 Use proper punctuation and capitalization
- 11 Finish all sentences (do not use fragments)
- 12 Avoid double subjects (e.g., the noun and a pronoun referencing it)
- 13 Ensure the word order is correct
- 14 Check for subject-verb agreement (person and number in singular/plural) and pronoun agreement (person, gender, and number)
- 15 Format messages correctly (e.g., with no extra line breaks, bullets or asterisks)



# Best practices specific to English-Polish machine translation

## 1 USE THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL TONES CORRECTLY

In Polish, both formal and informal tones can be used in customer support. However, they require different rules. Whenever possible, try to use your client's surname in the greetings. But never use their first name.

### FORMAL REGISTER

#### GREETINGS

not advised

- Hi!
- Hello,

advised

- Dear John Smith,
- Dear Sir,

#### CLOSINGS

not advised

- See you!
- Have a great day!

advised

- With kind regards,
- Warmest regards,
- Yours sincerely,

### INFORMAL REGISTER

#### GREETINGS

not advised

- Hello!
- Good morning!

advised

- See you!
- Bye!

#### CLOSINGS

not advised

- See you!
- Bye!

advised

- Regards,
- Warmest regards,





# Best practices specific to English-Polish machine translation

## 2 AVOID EMOJIS

### not advised

- Good morning, Stefannie :)

### advised

- Good morning, Stefannie.

## 3 AVOID INTERJECTIONS

Interjections are another marker for the informal tone of voice and should be avoided when writing to a Polish 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



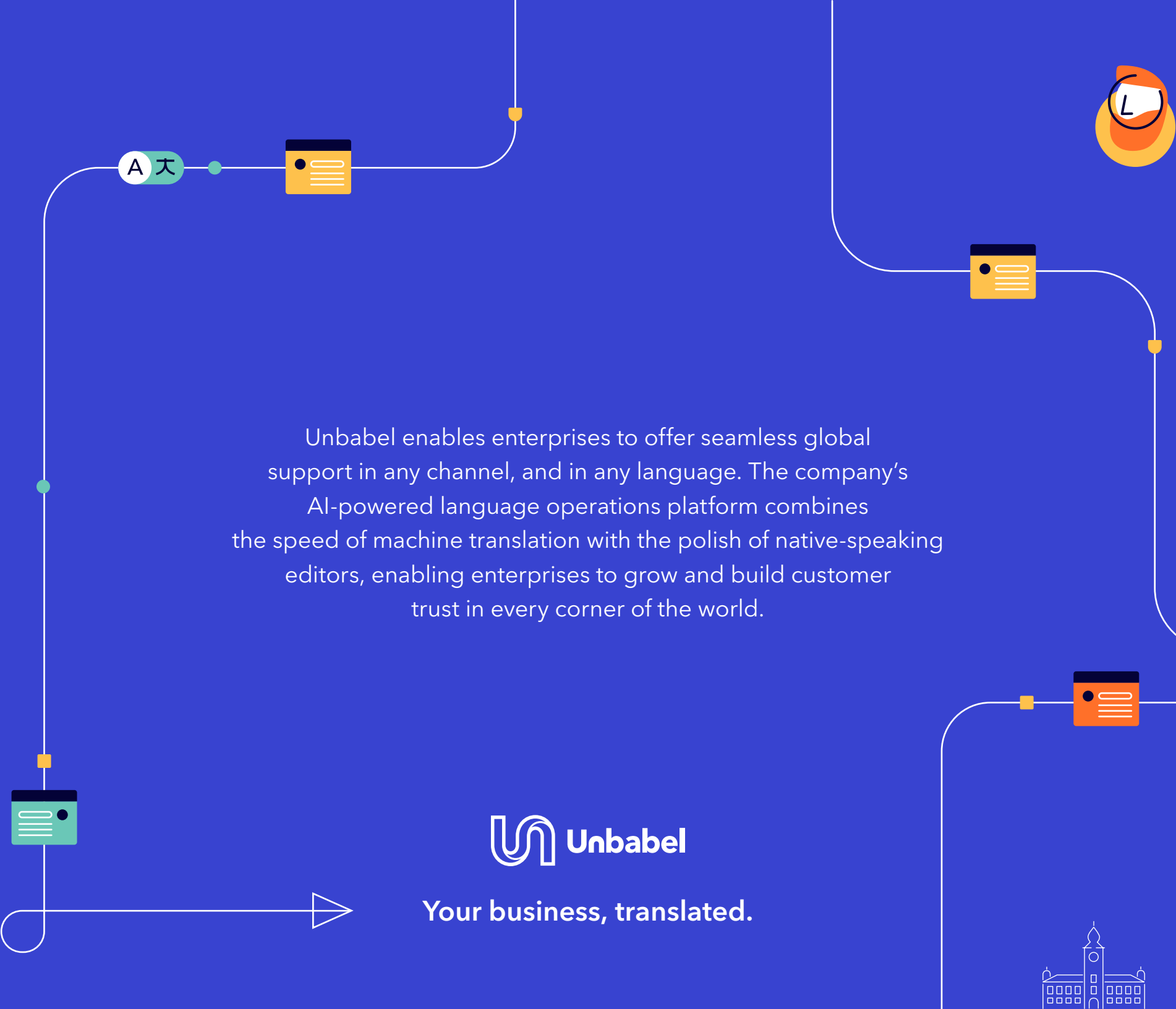
Of course, some best practices do not vary by language and should be applied to every customer service interaction. Here are the nine best practices we recommend.

- 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.**

