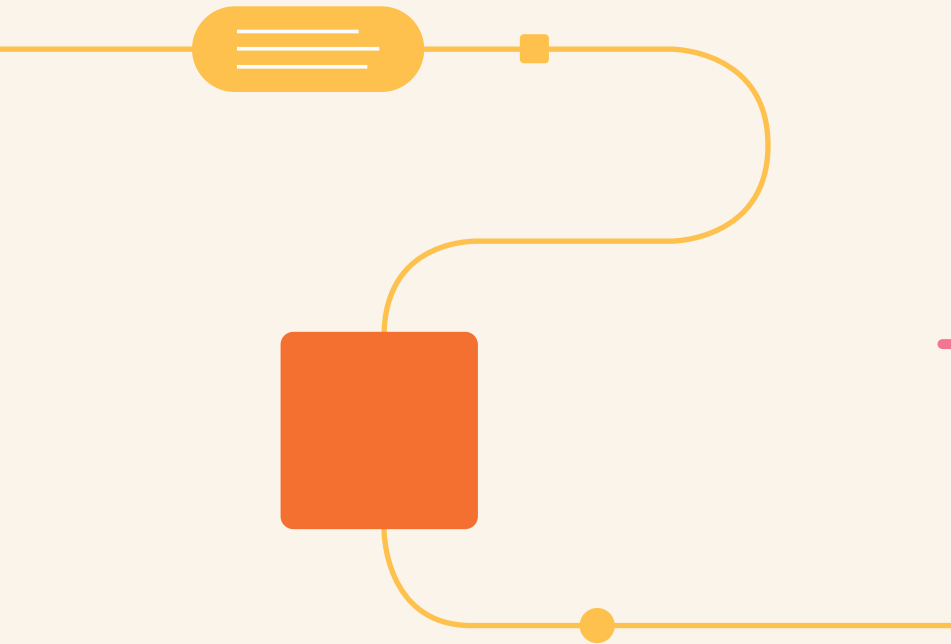
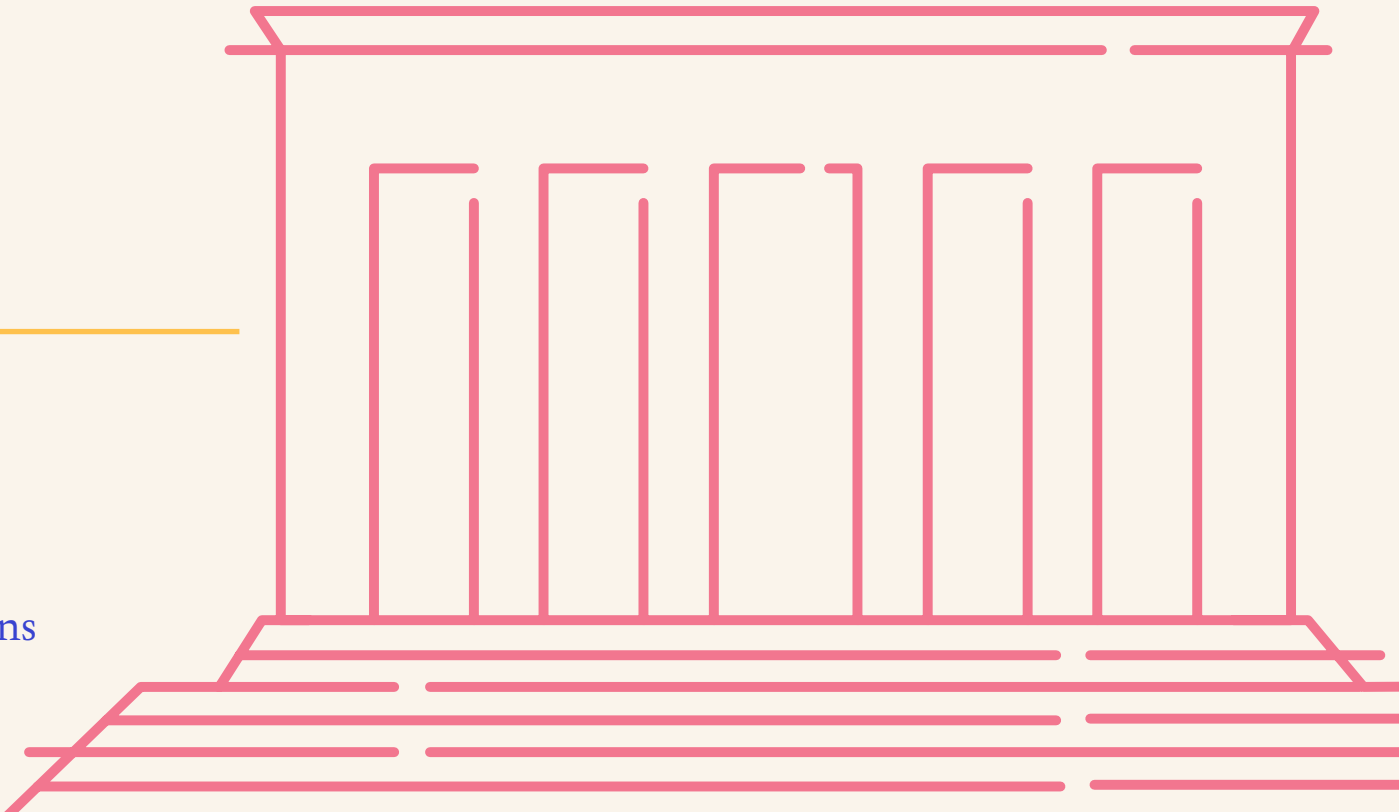


TURKISH



How to Approach Customer Support

Tips for achieving better translations and respecting cultural norms

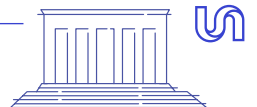


Introduction

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 Turkish language.



About the Turkish Language

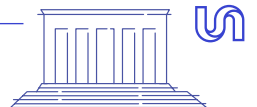
Throughout history, the Turks moved and covered a wide geographical area around the world, taking their language with them. Today, Turkish is spoken among 70 to 80 million people, stretching from Mongolia to the north coast of the Black Sea, the Balkans, East Europe, Asia Minor, Iraq, and a large portion of northern Africa. It's the national language of Turkey, and it is spoken in several other countries like Syria, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Greece, Germany, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan. Due to the great distances covered, Turkish is rich with several dialects and accents. Modern Turkish is based on the dialect spoken in Istanbul, the capital of Turkey.



The Turkish language is estimated to be at least 1500 years old and originated in Central Asia. However, if you consider the entire family of Turkic languages – all of which share similarities, with Turkish being the most widely spoken – they're ancient, at 5500 to 8500 years old.

EFENDİM

MERHABA



Core concepts in Turkish culture relevant to customer service

ONUR AND NAMUS

The core values of honor (onur) and reputation (namus) are deeply embedded in Turkish culture. A person's honor is influenced by not only their own personal actions but also the behavior of those they associate with (friends, family, etc.). If a person's actions are dishonorable, that implicates any groups they belong to, including their family. Turkish people are committed to being honorable and upholding the reputation of themselves and those around them. Typically, behavior that's considered honorable relates to having a high social status and exhibiting other core Turkish values such as hospitality and honesty.

COLLECTIVISM

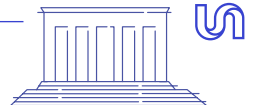
Turkish culture is collectivist. Turkish people are loyal to their family, social groups, and the country first. They put their groups' values above their own individual needs. This is why neighborliness is central to Turkish culture – people perform favors for each other on a regular basis. This rather sociable nature of the Turkish society means there usually isn't much privacy. Not many personal topics are off limits. However, that said, technology and cosmopolitan ideals have led to younger generations leaning more toward individualism.

HOSPITALITY

Turkish people place a high value on being generous and helping those in need. Selflessness is a part of everyday life. For example, in return for a compliment or a few kind words, a Turkish person may give away their own valuable possessions. In business and in life, this might translate into actions such as deferring decision-making to other people or overextending themselves to accommodate others' needs.



Honor gained from accomplishments is şeref, while honor that comes from being virtuous and generous is izzet.



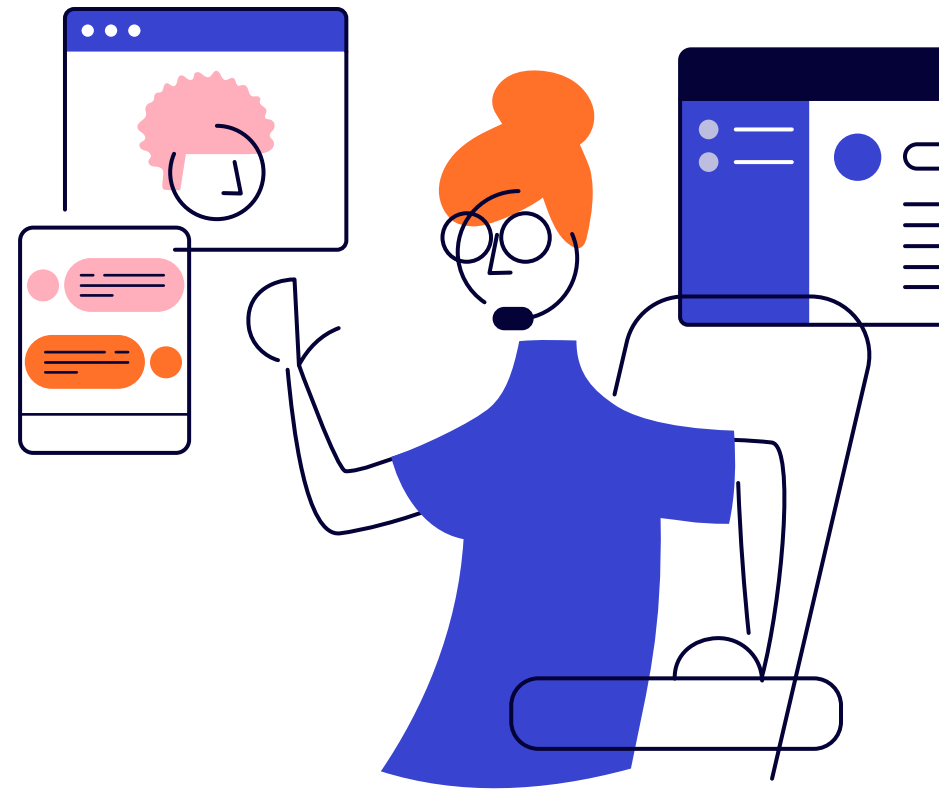
Best practices for communicating with Turkish customers

OFFER CRITICISM OR ADVICE INDIRECTLY

Turkish communication is indirect. Your Turkish customer might be roundabout in giving you feedback because they are cautious of offending you. Disagreement is usually softened with words such as “maybe,” “probably,” “perhaps,” etc. Turkish customers are generally hesitant to be assertive in making negative statements or discussing sensitive matters. This could mean that a “yes” from them might not mean they agree; they could just be reluctant to directly say no. Make sure to read between the lines, ask open-ended questions for clarity, and rephrase criticism or negative statements in a more positive way.

MAKE YOUR CUSTOMER FEEL WELCOME

Even though interactions between you and your customers are formal, it’s important to extend hospitality and generosity to them. This involves putting an effort into building rapport and a personal relationship with them. For Turkish people, trust and loyalty go a long way. If you’re seen as too impersonal or guarded, they might view you with suspicion and hesitate to follow through with you. Focus on building a long-lasting relationship with customers even if you interact with them only for the duration of a chat. Time pressures like expiring offers and hard sell tactics might seem threatening. Instead, stress on the win-win scenario and maintain a positive attitude throughout your conversation.



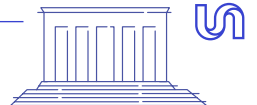
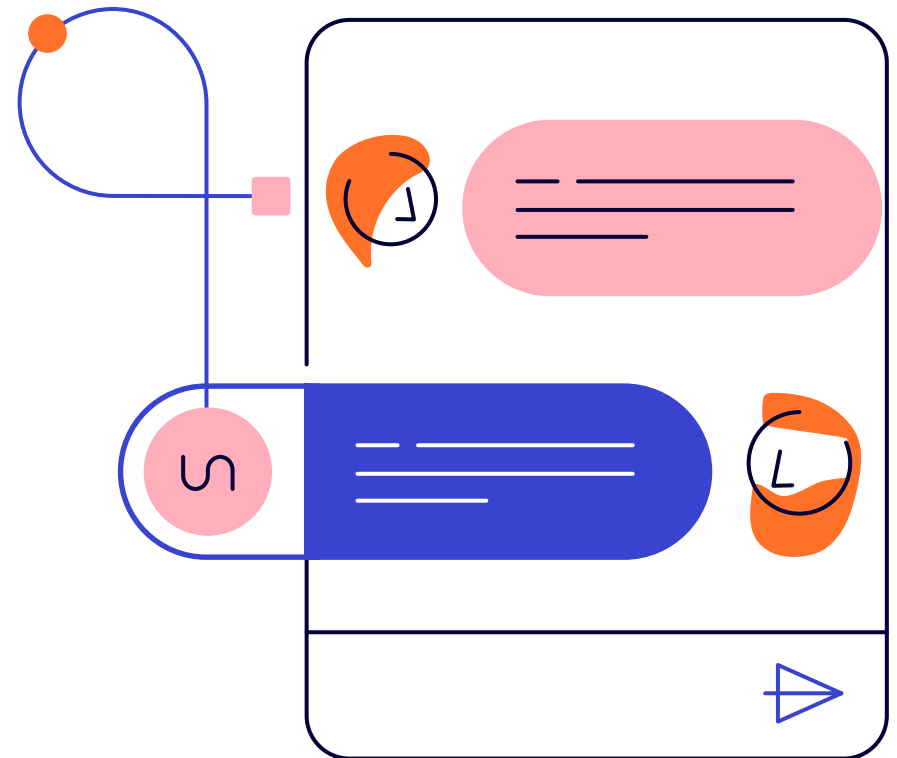
Best practices for communicating with Turkish customers

NEGOTIATE AS A COURTESY

You read that right. In fact, sometimes, not engaging in bargaining or negotiation of some kind is considered rude. Turkish people need to see enough evidence and supporting information before they make a decision. To help them with this process, rely on engaging oral and visual ways of presentation instead of hard-hitting written statistics. Meaningful concessions, offers, and deals presented as favors signal to your Turkish customer that you respect and like them. Offering discounts in price is not the only way to do this; emphasizing on non-monetary gains, such as power, influence, honor, and reputation could also influence their decision. That said, the biggest priority is to remain considerate and courteous.



Polite, unintrusive small talk might help ease your Turkish customer into the conversation. Safe topics include Turkish culture, food, and sports. Steer clear of sensitive topics like politics, history, and religion.



Best practices for optimizing machine translation output

When writing in English with the knowledge that the content will be translated into Turkish, 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

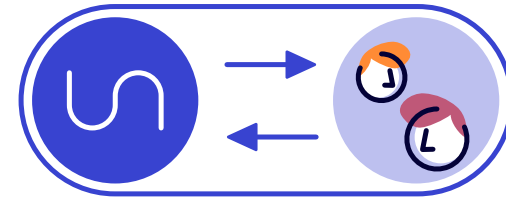
8 Stick to English grammar rules

- 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)

Best practices specific to English - Turkish machine translation

1 USE THE FORMAL AND INFORMAL TONES CORRECTLY

In Turkish, both formal and informal tones are used in customer support. However, it's preferable to use the formal tone as it's more common.



FORMAL GREETINGS

not advised

· Hi,

advised

· Hello,

FORMAL CLOSINGS

not advised

· See you!
· Have a great day!

advised

· Best regards,
· Yours sincerely,

INFORMAL GREETINGS

advised

· Hello!
· Hi!

INFORMAL CLOSINGS

not advised

· See you!
· Bye!

advised

· Have a nice day!

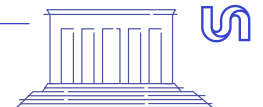
When writing in the informal register for a Turkish audience, try to use everyday language. Don't be overly familiar with your clients.

not advised

· I will make this work just for you!

advised

· I'm going to work on this for you.



Best practices specific to English - Turkish machine translation

2 AVOID EMOJIS

not advised

· Good morning, Stefannie :)

advised

· Good morning, Stefannie.

3 AVOID INTERJECTIONS

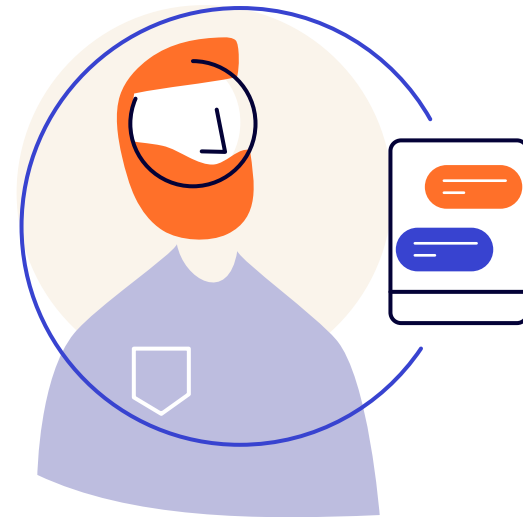
Interjections are more suited to the spoken language than to the written language. They should be avoided when writing to a Turkish audience.

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

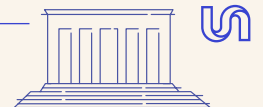


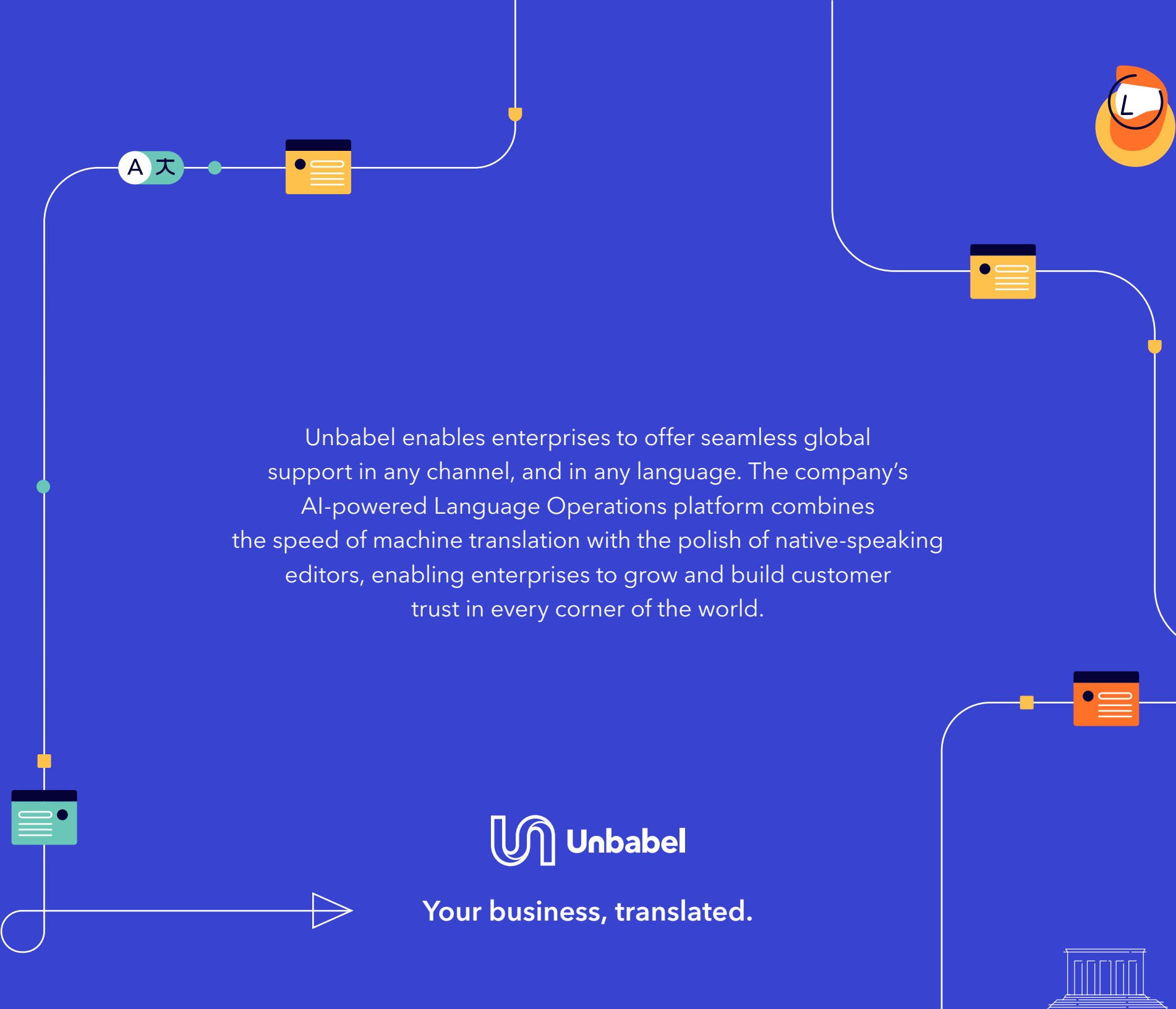
Of course, some best practices do not vary by language and should be applied to every customer service interaction. Here are the nine best practices we recommend.

- 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.

