Style Guide
for Translations into Spanish

Published on the ECLKC
About this Style Guide

The Style Guide for Translations into Spanish Published on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) comprises language best practices that are helpful in providing meaningful information to the Spanish-speaking Head Start community.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) asks its National Centers, contractors, and vendors who translate materials for Head Start to use this guide, along with the Head Start Bilingual Glossary, to render culturally sensitive and functional translations for all Head Start digital resources in Spanish.

Current version published in April 2019
1. Plain Language

Plain language is communication that an audience can understand the first time they read or hear it. The Head Start audience who reads and speaks in Spanish is diverse. It is composed of both providers and families from different backgrounds and cultures. This may be a challenge for translators and linguists; however, OHS has created specific language resources to provide material in Spanish that is accurate, concise, and fluent.

2. Tone

Content provided in Spanish through the ECLKC is:

- Informative and educational
- Written in a friendly and inviting tone
- Clear for all Spanish-speaking readers
- Authoritative and reliable

3. Voice

The ECLKC provides information and services for a diverse Spanish-speaking population. We strive to build relationships with the communities we serve through various digital platforms.

- For content in Spanish published on the ECLKC, use the personal pronoun “usted”
- For social media in Spanish, use the personal pronoun “tú”
4. Prior to Translating

4.1. Titles and References
Before translating a title or referencing ECLKC pages, make sure the title hasn’t already been translated either in page titles or PDF documents hyperlinked in pages.

- You can check if a title has been translated by doing a search in the ECLKC website Search box and then going to the Spanish page to look for the title in Spanish.
- In a paragraph or reference section, when a title hasn’t been translated yet, translate it and then add the “(en inglés)” notation to let the reader know that the content is only available in English.
- Avoid writing the title in English and then the Spanish translation in brackets since it is not a web usability best practice for digital resources.

4.2. Hyperlinking
- When a hyperlinked text takes the reader to an English page, add the notation “(en inglés)” after the hyperlinked title, link itself, or text.

Example: Recursos para abordar el uso indebido de sustancias durante el embarazo (en inglés)

5. Spelling, Grammar, and Text Formatting

5.1. Acronyms, Abbreviations, and Initialisms
- When writing an initialism in English for the first time in a webpage or document, spell out the whole term, followed by the “(sigla en inglés)” notation.

Example: La Oficina Nacional de Head Start (OHS, sigla en inglés)

- Don’t use the “(sigla en inglés)” notation in titles. Use it when the term appears for the first time in the body of the article or page.
• Acronyms and initialisms in plural form don’t include an “s” at the end nor an apostrophe
Example: Los niños que son DLL se comunican usando palabras de uno o más idiomas.

• Acronyms that are proper names and have more than four letters are written with only the first letter capitalized
Example: Unesco

• Abbreviate “for example” in Spanish if it has been abbreviated in English: (e.g.)
Example: P. ej., las familias pueden esperar fuera del aula.

5.2. Apostrophes (’)

• Do not use the apostrophe (’99) in numbers when translating into Spanish
Example: Esta es la promoción del 99.

5.3. Bulleted and Numbered Lists

• In lists consisting of only one word, don’t capitalize the first word and use a comma or no punctuation mark at the end of the word
• In lists consisting of phrases, don’t capitalize the first word and use a semicolon at the end of the phrase
• If you use a comma or semicolon in lists consisting of only one word or phrase, use a period in the last item on the list. You can also use “y” in the second to last item after the punctuation mark
• In lists with complete sentences, capitalize the first word and use a period at the end of each sentence

Reference: http://ow.ly/d/2ndo
5.4. Capitalization

- Capitalize:
  » Only the first word of a title, unless the name is officially written using capitalization in all words in a trustworthy reference
  » Acronyms

- Don’t Capitalize:
  » Days of the week and months
  » Languages, nationalities, ethnicities, and religions
  » Titles, positions, and professions (e.g., especialista en la primera infancia, director)
  » Any kind of subject matter (e.g., derecho, matemáticas, psicología)
  » First word after a colon, unless it is a quote or part of a subheading in a heading (e.g., Los diferentes colores que usarán son: blanco, amarillo, verde, gris y azul)
  » Words in parentheses, unless it is an acronym or abbreviation

5.5. Commas

- The serial comma is not used in Spanish
- Use a comma before “y” or “o” when there is a sentence that numbers elements and immediately after a new sentence is introduced, or when a complex sentence with more than one subject is introduced

Example: En la mañana los niños estuvieron tranquilos, alegres y ordenados, y después de almuerzo estuvieron muy inquietos.
5.6. Date and Time

- Add a comma between the day and the date
- Leave a space between “p.” and “m.” or “a.” and “m.” when using these abbreviations
- Add the time zone using this format: (hora del este)

Example: La reunión se llevará a cabo el martes, 25 de diciembre de 2019 a las 9 p. m. (hora del este) en el salón general.

5.7. Em Dash (—)

- Type the em dash right next to the initial word of the clause (sub-paragraph)

Example: Para todos los maestros —los que se encontraban en la reunión— era esencial dialogar sobre ese tema.

5.8. Italics

- Use italics only when referring to text in another language within a Spanish narrative

Example: Los muffins para el desayuno de los niños eran saludables.

5.9. Numbers

- Use figures for all numbers above nine
- Spell out all numbers under 10
- Use numeric figures for all ages, dimensions, fractions, miles, sums of money, percentages, and times of day
- For money, use the English punctuation: $1,276.50
  » Don’t use: $1.276,59
- For abbreviated ordinal numbers, use (º, a, er, os, as) following this order: number, period, and superior letter

Examples: 1.º, 2.º/a, 3.º, 4.ª, 21.º, etc.
  La 2.ª edición se publicará muy pronto.
• Avoid using fractional numbers as ordinal numbers

Example: Use “decimosegundo” en vez de “doceavo”.

5.10. Percentages (%)

• If the English text uses the word “percent” spelled out, use it in Spanish as well: por ciento. If the English text uses the symbol (%), use it in Spanish as well

• Leave a space between the number and the symbol

Example: El 32 % del personal no asistió a la conferencia.

5.11. Prefixes

• Prefixes are written right next to the main word without a hyphen, except when that word is capitalized, it is an acronym, or a number

Example: expresidente, sociocultural, anti-Brexit, pro-LGTBQ

• Prefixes are written separately when used in a multi-word unit

Example: ex vice presidente

5.12. Punctuation

• Punctuation marks are written outside of quotation marks, parentheses, brackets, and dashes

• Exclamation points and question marks are used at the beginning (opening) and end (closing) of sentences: ¿? ¡!

• Don’t use a period on table of contents, image captions, or diagram captions

5.13. Quotes

• When introducing a quotation, use a colon and capitalize the first letter

Example: El estudio señala: “Los niños pueden comunicarse con los adultos desde que nacen”.
• Always add a period after a quote that ends in an exclamation or question mark

Example: “¡Es una estrategia excelente!”.

5.14. The expression “and/or” is incorrect in Spanish

• This expression only applies to English grammar. In Spanish, the conjunction “o” has both values, so “and/or” should be translated as “o”

6. Helpful Resources

Review some helpful resources that will help you deliver clear, reader-focused, and high-quality translations, Spanish captioning, and interpretation services:

6.1. Grammar Rules and Linguistic Questions Resources

• Diccionario panhispánico de dudas
• Fundéu
• Real Academia Española (RAE)
• Wikilengua

6.2. Translation Guidance

• Designing for Translation
• Plain Language Summit 2018: Translation Considerations (pp. 154–174)
• Your Spanish Content Strategy Is Much More Than Just Translation

6.3. Additional Federal Resources

• Bilingual Glossaries, Dictionaries, and Style Guides
• Child Welfare Terms, English to Spanish
• Glossary of English-Spanish Financial Terms
• Grant Terminology
7. Frequently Mistranslated English Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Preferred Translation</th>
<th>False Cognate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>access (to)</td>
<td>acceder a</td>
<td>accesar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act (as in law)</td>
<td>Ley</td>
<td>Acta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>actual</td>
<td>real, verdadero (en realidad, realmente)</td>
<td>actual actualmente</td>
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<tr>
<td>application</td>
<td>solicitud</td>
<td>aplicación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply (to) (e.g., for a job)</td>
<td>solicitar</td>
<td>aplicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apply (to) (something to)</td>
<td>aplicarse (es reflexivo), es aplicable a</td>
<td>aplicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>approach (as in method)</td>
<td>enfoque, método</td>
<td>acercamiento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>billion</td>
<td>mil millones</td>
<td>billón</td>
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<tr>
<td>citation (quotation)</td>
<td>cita</td>
<td>citación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collateral (finance)</td>
<td>fianza, garantía, aval</td>
<td>colateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compensation</td>
<td>remuneración (sueldo o salario)</td>
<td>compensación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comprehensive</td>
<td>integral, completo, exhaustivo</td>
<td>comprensivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consistent</td>
<td>coherente, constante</td>
<td>consistente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convenient</td>
<td>cómodo, práctico, útil</td>
<td>conveniente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directions (driving, instructions)</td>
<td>señas, instrucciones</td>
<td>direcciones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disorder (health)</td>
<td>trastorno, enfermedad, condición</td>
<td>desorden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eventually</td>
<td>finalmente, en última instancia</td>
<td>eventualmente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectant mother</td>
<td>madre embarazada/gestante</td>
<td>madre expectante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>facilities</td>
<td>establecimientos, instalaciones</td>
<td>facilidades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>form (as in an application)</td>
<td>formulario</td>
<td>forma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>foundation (basis)</td>
<td>fundamentos, bases, cimientos</td>
<td>fundación</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
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<td>False Cognate</td>
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<tr>
<td>health food</td>
<td>alimentos sin aditivos</td>
<td>comida saludable</td>
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<tr>
<td>healthy appetite</td>
<td>buen apetito</td>
<td>apetito saludable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>instance</td>
<td>ejemplo, caso</td>
<td>instancia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introduce (to) (meeting a person)</td>
<td>presentar</td>
<td>introducir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medical condition</td>
<td>enfermedad, afección, padecimiento</td>
<td>condición médica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minutes (meeting)</td>
<td>actas</td>
<td>minutas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post (to) (online)</td>
<td>publicar (en línea)</td>
<td>postear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>process (to) (an application)</td>
<td>tramitar</td>
<td>procesar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qualified (for a job, etc.)</td>
<td>estar capacitado, reunir los requisitos necesarios</td>
<td>calificar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipient</td>
<td>destinatario</td>
<td>recipiente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reconciliations (accounting)</td>
<td>conciliaciones</td>
<td>reconciliaciones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refer (to)</td>
<td>consultar</td>
<td>referirse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relevant</td>
<td>pertinente, correspondiente</td>
<td>relevante</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>remove (to)</td>
<td>quitar, sacar</td>
<td>remover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsive</td>
<td>sensible, receptivo</td>
<td>responsivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salary</td>
<td>sueldo</td>
<td>salario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensitive</td>
<td>sensible</td>
<td>sensitivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social media</td>
<td>redes sociales</td>
<td>medios sociales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>submit (to)</td>
<td>presentar, enviar</td>
<td>someter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substantiate</td>
<td>confirmar, corroborar</td>
<td>sustanciar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transgender</td>
<td>transgénero</td>
<td>transexual</td>
</tr>
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