

Ten Post-Localization Trends for 2025

Industry Insight by CSA Research

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It's the end of another momentous year in which the pace of change, already at breakneck speed in 2023, accelerated even more. As we look ahead to the next year, here are 10 trends that we expect will define the language industry as the post-localization era continues to evolve.

#1. Accessibility + UX Present a Major Opportunity

User experience for all people is a focus, whether it is tailoring content and UX for a more personal engagement or ensuring a fully usable and legally compliant approach to accessibility. Governments around the world are enforcing more stringent accessibility requirements, but simply meeting legal minimums does not always result in the best user experience. Enterprises now see opportunities to align accessibility, localization, and user experience – with the UX tuned to a growing set of personalization requirements for a broadening range of delivery modalities (“[Design Language for Multimodal Experiences](#)”).

***Note:** Because interactions may involve customers, prospects, employees, or other constituencies, acting on this trend requires multiple experiences to meet their various needs. It also involves multiple systems and personas with different access to resources and the attendant security requirements.*

What It Means for Enterprises

In 2024, increasing numbers of localization teams either moved into accessibility units or worked closely with them as they realized the similarity of their missions. This cooperation is set to accelerate in 2025. Localization, accessibility, and UX teams – including product designers – understand that they must collaborate to deliver

experiences that not only successfully engage all customers, but also meet the challenges of compliance with regional and local mandates.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs have an opportunity to assist clients with services to identify and fix issues across all target markets, regulations, users and their expectations, languages, cultures, and delivery modalities. They may add or refine their diagnostics and testing capabilities, which involves acquiring new specialized skills to meet client requirements. We expect dedicated accessibility and UX units will become common for mid-sized and larger LSPs.

#2. Agentic AI Makes Localization More Responsive

“Agentic AI” refers to AI components that can automatically carry out a function. For example, a system could use MT for a support article when a user visits a page with a browser set for French, and then trigger a human review after this content has been requested in French 30 times. Such autonomous systems promise to be much more responsive to user requirements than today’s top-down models and could enable more personalized interactions once deployed. The enterprise challenge is to deploy these agentic AI systems in ways that promote efficiency and responsiveness while keeping them from spinning out of control. Nevertheless, their advantages favor their rollout to a broader swath of mainstream development in 2025.

***Note:** Knowledge graphs are a powerful way to control and constrain LLMs (“[Taming Global Content with Knowledge Graphs](#)”). In addition, both enterprises and LSPs should understand the basics of tuning these systems to meet specific use cases (“[Optimizing an LLM to Meet Specific Use Cases](#)”).*

What It Means for Enterprises

Agentic translation must be able to meet enterprise requirements for reliability and risk-avoidance. This means you cannot simply offload the agent development to an LLM. Instead, it must be fully integrated with knowledge-driven tech stacks and AI and be truly responsive and responsible (“[Responsive Machine Translation](#)”). Some enterprises will be tempted to scrimp and save in their efforts but will then discover

that the results fail to meet requirements or expectations. To successfully deliver business-quality, on-brand experiences in other languages, enterprises must conduct content audits to understand what they are producing and align it with their business goals (“[Removing Waste through Content Audits](#)”).

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs may be sidelined by some agentic AI technology efforts, but their expertise in process and resource management makes them ideal partners to help their clients understand how and where to take this approach and to set it up in ways that will meet requirements for quality and risk avoidance. To compete in this field, LSPs will have to be comfortable building and deploying agents using tools such as [Blackbird](#) or [Aixplain.ai](#). Those that can combine the best technologies and human expertise where it adds value can become trusted partners, helping enterprises expand their customer experience to a broader range of languages and audiences.

***Note:** LSPs already equipped with creative and inventive developers and a strong basis in risk management and regulatory compliance could have an advantage in building and monitoring agentic-driven experiences. Similarly, enterprise teams can collaborate with accessibility and compliance teams to ensure that their solutions meet requirements. They must also monitor them to prevent runaway systems or other problems that arise.*

#3. Maverick Spending, Security, and Ease-of-Use Challenge LSPs

Countless AI tools promise click-button delivery of content in multiple languages at prices that can be easily put on a company credit card without a purchase order (“[What Is Shadow IT?](#)”). As LLMs seemingly push translation prices to zero (that is, as long as you don’t factor in the costs beyond the words), localization and procurement teams alike must fight a rearguard action against such maverick spending and the uncontrolled use of multilingual GenAI in their organizations. However, because these teams perceive LSPs as too slow or expensive, many enterprises previously did not provide essential multilingual support or chose the alternative of free, online machine translation, leaving LSPs a new opportunity in low-cost, but better-quality AI services.

Note: *If you are switching to platforms that include some level of language support, be aware that these may not meet requirements for security, control, and risk management. Review their features and processes carefully to avoid unpleasant surprises.*

What It Means for Enterprises

Localization teams must insert themselves into AI-driven initiatives early on: Almost all such efforts have a multilingual dimension that will otherwise not be addressed or be executed at some decision's idea of "good enough for <country>." However, to get into the discussion, teams have to elevate their pitch to reach businesspeople rather than operations leaders. They must speak the language of risk and brand compliance to highlight where maverick spending and shadow IT pose a threat to the enterprise – and where they do not. As user experiences cross organizational boundaries, localization teams will require options that meet other groups' needs for access and ease of use, or they risk being bypassed by platforms with built-in language offerings.

Note: *Pitches should also address spoken language and multimedia applications that go beyond written text to integrate all channels into a unified and understandable whole.*

What It Means for LSPs

Providers must use a risk-based approach to identify and win over additional decision-makers and help enterprises rein in rogue elements that can negatively affect security or brand when they go their own way for multilingual content. At the same time, LSPs can engage with these maverick teams directly by offering compelling and easy-to-use solutions that help bring them back under control. LSPs that can offer a full continuum of services, including fully automated ones, will have a more compelling offering. Technology vendors and hybrid LSP-tech vendors must provide integrated tools where end-users can jump around to different communication, translation, localization, and interpreting methods without having to log into new systems.

#4. ROI Continues to Dominate Strategy Discussions

Although the rounds of drastic budget cuts – or even letting entire teams go – that characterized 2023 and 2024 are unlikely to be repeated in 2025, localization teams are

under notice that they must show their contribution to the organization and justify their cost. Similarly, LSPs need to demonstrate that their services are the best way for their clients to achieve market goals. This requirement demands that both groups elevate their vision from factors such as cost-per-word or saving from TM to focus on the strategic value of language and its contribution to return on investment. This requires data to show that teams are delivering enterprise value (“[Calculating the ROI of Localization](#)”).

Note: CSA Research provides a *suite of data-driven business analytic tools to help you make the ROI case for language services.*

What It Means for Enterprises

Most enterprise localization groups still struggle to show their value and lack data for even basic ROI calculations. When they focus on operational metrics, it reinforces their image as a cost center rather than investment. These teams should instead demonstrate the value of international markets versus the cost needed to support them. They must also understand the metrics the executives focus on and show their contribution to them (“[Align Your Localization Enterprise KPIs](#)” and “[Dashboards for Globalization Success](#)”). Every localization leader should have a compelling two-minute answer to the question “why shouldn’t we just replace you with ChatGPT?,” one that highlights the contributions they make to international success.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs should help their clients make the ROI case. Have facts and figures about international markets ready. Use CSA Research’s [Global Business Analytics](#) to guide the discussion with them. Develop case studies to show how you have helped other clients meet goals for enterprise KPIs such as international market expansion, growth, or reduced support costs. Work with your clients to help them build their internal pitch deck and benchmark their performance against their peers. The more you can be seen as a resource, the more secure you will be. If you see opportunities for how your clients could better leverage their international investment, share these ideas with them and guide them in crafting a strategy that is focused on enterprise value.

#5. Risk Management Opens the Way to Understanding Quality

For decades, translation or interpreting quality was understood to mean adherence to an ideal of perfection. However, as enterprises deal with exploding content and communication volumes and GenAI, this slow, review-driven process cannot keep up. Instead, enterprises need to treat quality as a risk-management function (“[Translation Quality as Risk Management](#)”). They can then decide where to invest based on the potential harm from errors to customers, brand, reputation, and financial or legal status. This approach requires organizations to understand what they produce, why they create it, and any harm from errors. Based on this knowledge, they will then take appropriate measures to fix problems and choose the most appropriate processes.

What It Means for Enterprises

Many organizations have little oversight concerning the materials they produce. Content audits that identify audiences, requirements, and risks will be an increasingly critical tool to guide enterprises in making choices (“[Removing Waste through Content Audits](#)”). They will discover that they need better content governance policies, particularly as GenAI makes it easier for anyone within enterprises to become content creators who can open the organization to legal or regulatory trouble. They will also need processes to ensure that generated content meets legal, brand, and regulatory requirements in all languages and does not create a liability.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs can help their clients conduct content and interaction audits and define appropriate quality processes. They can also use their in-depth knowledge of their buyers’ content and target markets to help them understand the best approaches to translation, interpreting, and multilingual multimedia to identify potential risk factors. LSPs will be on the front line for addressing these quality requirements and assuring that their clients protect themselves from uncontrolled risks. Given the inherent risk and litigiousness in some locales, we predict that 2025 will see at least one major lawsuit in which unverified LLM translation will play a role, potentially leading to a rush back toward human services for critical content.

#6. Data Privacy and Security Concerns Loom Ever Larger

In 2024, some LSPs reported dramatic increases in the number and scope of compliance audits they faced, and this trend will accelerate in 2025 (“[The Evolution of Language Procurement](#)”). A few years ago, security and privacy tended to be single-item checkboxes in requests for proposal (RFPs), but enterprise and government tenders now have far more stringent and demanding requirements for data privacy, security, and localized storage: Think 100-page forms about processes and protections. Some information security (InfoSec) policies may restrict access to and use of generative AI tools if the tool’s policies do not align with corporate policy – this will force companies to work around them or hold off on ambitious plans to use AI.

What It Means for Enterprises

Complex processes and questionnaires can lead to extended lead times and slow starts for engaging with a new language provider or implementing an advanced language technology or service. Security and transparency requirements may also limit enterprises’ choice of providers. Language services teams should coordinate with InfoSec groups early on to avoid unnecessary delays and ensure that they can use the technology they need to. Because these requirements are relatively new, many teams may not be aware of their potential for delay or the scope of what they are asking from their LSPs and language technology vendors.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs must be ready to complete these audits and questionnaires. To prepare, they should proactively document their compliance with requirements for security, data protection, data residency, and supply-chain transparency. Various software packages can help with this process, but ultimately, expertise in InfoSec and procurement requirements is becoming a must. They must also document their use of AI – in all its forms – and to discuss restrictions with prospects: This will help them know what to include in responses to RFPs and how to label the work that they do. For example, they may emphasize that machine translation is a class of AI for some clients while quietly avoiding the term for others.

Note: LSPs must not forget that risk management extends to their own supply chain, with contractual requirements to control unauthorized use of LLMs and MT. They require appropriate guardrails to ensure that their clients' content does not end up going to forbidden services or locations.

#7. Labeling AI-Generated Content Affects Language Services

Statistical and neural MT largely escaped regulatory attention over the past decade, but as bureaucratic apparatuses turn their eyes to GenAI, AI-driven language services – such as machine translation, automated interpreting, and synthetic, cloned voices – no longer remain free from scrutiny. Although not a primary focus, they will be caught up in laws and regulatory requirements for labeling AI-generated content. In addition, many enterprises are already labeling AI translation as a risk avoidance strategy: By identifying it as such they can attempt to disclaim liability for problems and warn customers about potential problems. These rules will take time to develop, but industry participants need to be involved early on to avoid being stuck with bad rules.

What It Means for Enterprises

General proposals to label AI-generated content will be a poor fit for translation-related material. Instead, look to efforts such as those in ASTM's F23 standards committee to create standards for distinguishing unreviewed AI-generated translation from translation prepared or reviewed by qualified professionals ("[Translation Labels Manage Risk and Reputation](#)"). In addition, industrial companies are not waiting for regulation or standards but instead are already pushing their own approaches to avoid liability. If 2025 witnesses a high-profile lawsuit, companies may rethink how they deploy language technology and how they disclose its use. Companies need to discuss this issue with legal counsel to make sure they are prepared for any risks.

What It Means for LSPs

Labeling the source of a translation increases customer confidence, so LSPs have the opportunity to offer premium services that assist their clients in their risk mitigation strategies in anticipation of legislation or regulation. This will help to justify the price

they charge for human-driven services. In addition, in countries where translators are in a regulated profession and need a government license to work, regulators may take note that MT and other AI translation technologies have long evaded this requirement and step in to require human translation. However, because they cannot enforce such requirements outside their own countries, these regulations may end up harming LSPs by making them more expensive than providers elsewhere that can freely use AI.

#8. AI Makes Advances in Quality Estimation and Post-Editing

These technologies came on strong in 2024, and 2025 will see increased usage and, if the suppliers are paying attention, more viable and functional solutions. Automated quality estimation (AQE) will drive efficiency by helping providers focus human efforts in hybrid services that involve AI (“Augmented Translation”). Automated post-editing (APE) will further reduce costs by automating the improvement of “mostly good” translations that just need a little tweaking. However, some companies will find that these do not work well for their content due to a lack of discipline on the authoring side, or to ill-defined use cases, inconsistent content, or a lack of return-on-investment for relatively small volume requirements.

***Note:** In order to increase traction, providers of these technologies need to demonstrate their reliability and ability to identify and manage risk at any stage in the translation process, from source to published output in other languages. They also need to simplify deployment and document the ROI they deliver.*

What It Means for Enterprises

The best practice for deploying these technologies continues to evolve. Improved approaches and better capability to leverage resources such as style guides will broaden their application. Enterprises will use AQE and APE to speed up processes, control risks, and reduce costs. This adoption will enable them to reinvest savings into extending language support and creating a more engaging customer journey and brand experience. Achieving this will require them to audit content, processes, and translation operations to identify where the technologies can bring benefits. Providers will also make them easier to use, helping extend the use cases.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs will look to adopt these tools to streamline their own processes and will have to engage the same audit techniques – and offer that expertise to their clients. AQE is a prerequisite for true augmented translation or human-in-the-loop approaches. Deploying it will help stave off the collapse in rates paid to freelancers as it enables translators to focus on content that needs their attention. LSPs will be able to increase rates paid to workers even as they reduce costs overall. We predict that as language services become more affordable, this will drive an increase in human services in the long run and help provide a more rewarding career path for professional translators.

#9. Knowledge Graphs Appear on Mainstream Tech Wish Lists

Knowledge graphs – specialized databases that record and structure facts about entities within a company or field of specialization knowledge – will reach mainstream content teams in 2025, at least at the pilot stage (“[Taming Global Content with Knowledge Graphs](#)”). The technology’s compelling benefits in terms of improved search and enhanced control of LLMs are driving this attention. However, many such efforts will be monolingual, and enterprises will realize only belatedly that they must address global requirements. Broader attention to knowledge management activities will provide new opportunities for localization teams and LSPs alike.

Note: *Knowledge graphs are closely related to concept-oriented terminology management (“[TechStack: Terminology Management Tools](#)” and “[Maturity Models: Terminology Management](#)”). LSPs and localization groups that have experience with properly managing terms have valuable skills and resources to contribute in this area and their experience will help ensure that knowledge graphs meet international requirements.*

What It Means for Enterprises

Innovative data-aware enterprises will begin to leverage knowledge graphs to control LLM hallucination and to improve customer experience. Their ability to deliver more accurate search and increase content relevance will help ensure success for AI deployments. The challenge will be for localization teams to become involved early in

these efforts and demonstrate their relevance to them. They will need to build on existing terminology management success and show how they have done much of the hard work needed to build knowledge graphs. They will also be responsible for documenting the words and phrases that tie graphs across company languages.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs with expertise in terminology discovery and management will be able to leverage it to deliver knowledge graph services to their clients. These will range from consulting on design to maintenance or research services. Those that have been systematically managing concept-oriented terminology – rather than just glossary lists – for clients will have a valuable resource they can bring back to those clients as they build out knowledge graphs. They will be able to help their clients demonstrate an ROI for international investment as they advise them on building multilingual knowledge graphs that avoid the pitfalls of English-only development efforts.

#10. Spoken Language and Multimedia Converge

A key facet of post-localization is that spoken-language services will become more closely aligned and integrated with written translation (“[The Post-Localization Era](#)”). In 2025, demand for automated dubbing will skyrocket, driven by better voice synthesis or cloning and lip-syncing technology that will greatly reduce the discomfort many audiences experience with dubbed content. At the same time, enterprises will also demand that omnichannel communication live up to its name and integrate speech more thoroughly. Although automated solutions still fall far short of professional human services in these areas, they will gain ground for vast use cases where the alternative today is no service at all.

What It Means for Enterprises

Many customers prefer video content, while others want written access. The alignment of the two will yield dividends in improved customer experience. Enterprises will also benefit from improved accessibility in emerging markets where literacy is low and voice is the normal means of communication. AI will improve participant experiences in

conferences and sales events where machine interpreting can add value with little risk. It will also make inroads for in-person scenarios such as reception desks where it is impractical to deliver human services, or at self-service kiosks that must be accessible in local languages. Technology will thus push spoken-language multilingual services into the mainstream of corporate communication.

What It Means for LSPs

LSPs that have focused on written translation to date will find that they must deliver services for spoken content and multimedia as well. They will be asked to use AI, with easy escalation to human professionals when the technology falls short. They will also need to be able to collect and access transcripts and other records of communication – while abiding by data privacy requirements – so they can leverage them along with translation memory and other resources that they are more accustomed to.

Translation-centric LSPs do not need to become full-featured interpreting providers – a difficult task – but may instead partner with or acquire interpreting providers. A broad portfolio of partners is essential to meet changing client needs.

Where Do We Go from Here?

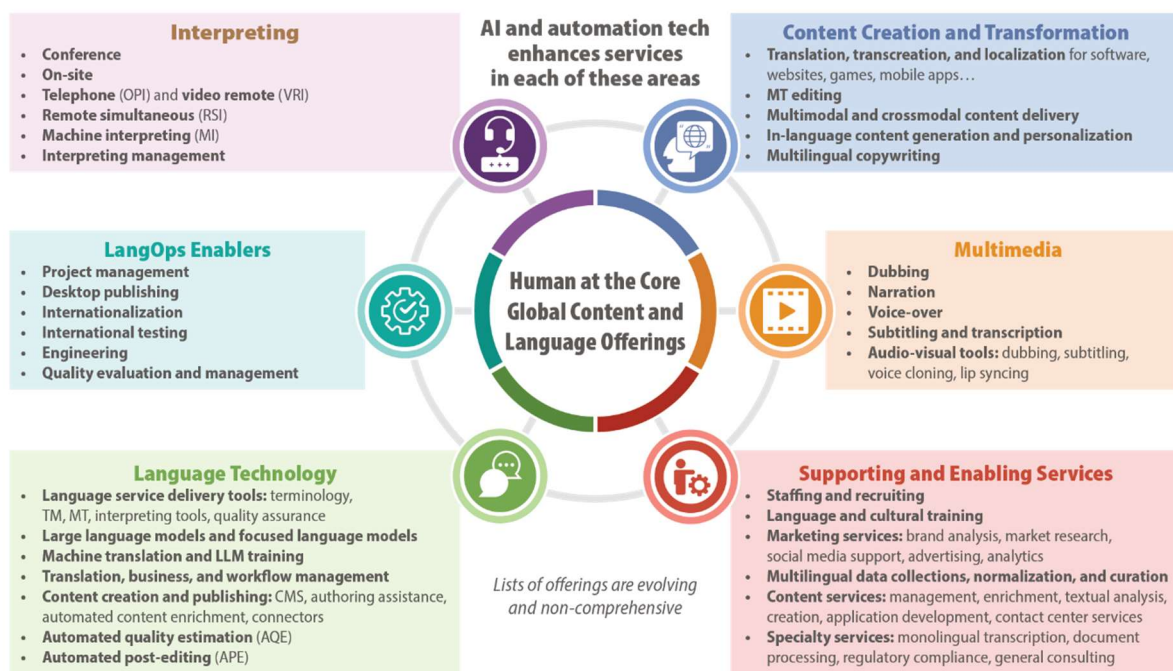
In 2017 CSA Research highlighted the need for LSPs to transform themselves into global content service providers (GCSPs) (“[The Language Services Market: 2017](#)”). We use “global content” to refer to any information in any mode or format that could provide additional value beyond its original market in other locales, each with its distinct linguistic, cultural, political, and economic requirements. Traditionally, translation and interpretation were the primary tasks, but organizations have recently demanded a broader range of content transformations that require additional skills ([Figure 1](#)). LSPs are turning into this new class of providers that enable their clients to meet customer requirements regardless of language and location.

The rapid expansion of AI and post-localization outlooks point toward a LangOps approach that integrates language services into other business functions. All the trends we identify in this report lead in this direction, either as enablers or as necessary outcomes. As LSPs formulate responses to these trends and strategies to distinguish themselves in the market, they must grapple with articulating their strategic value

beyond just porting words from one locale to another. At the same time, enterprise localization teams have to make a similar leap, to become global content service teams (GCSTs). Both groups must take new technologies and requirements seriously and reformulate their offerings to offer applications based on the services in Figure 1 in areas such as:

- Intelligent content creation and analysis.** The end is coming for notions of content as static, one-size-fits all matter that organizations push out into the world. Increasingly, each customer wants to engage in their own dialogue with brands and creators. GCSPs and GCSTs need effective strategies to handle tasks such as content personalization, repurposing content across modalities, and managing relationships between organizations and their customers, all while ensuring that it is in the right language and truthful for the locale where it will be consumed (“Four Futures for Global Intelligent Content”). This is a high-stakes game that requires all parties to be serious about delivering real value.

Figure 1: Post-Localization Language and Global Content Offerings



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Note: *The heart of the post-localization value proposition is that content is available in whatever language and format it is required in, accessible wherever an organization needs it to support its objectives. This means that offerings must be available within the tools that enterprises use with click-button simplicity. To achieve this GCSTs must work closely with other teams and GCSPs must work in partnership with them to provide the resources they need to achieve this vision.*

- **Enabling cross-lingual and -modal customer experiences.** The reality of omnichannel communication falls far short of the dream, but GCSPs and GCSTs have all of the pieces to make it a reality. This will not be easy, but it will enable organizations to engage with customers wherever they are, using whatever channel provides the best outcome. This means that they must juggle speech and written content, video, audio, localized materials and items forged with GenAI in the moment they are needed, and a wide variety of technologies to enable it all. To be successful, both groups will become architects of solutions that wield best-of-breed offerings to deliver the right experience, when and where it is needed.
- **Data management and deployment.** Organizations produce vast amounts of data in everything they do, but they require help to record, manage, curate, and deploy it in ways that support their objectives and also abide by data security and privacy mandates. GCSTs must understand the business context of their activities and GCSPs must provide them with services that enable them to make use of this data to further their goals.

Note: *Right now, many organizations have stars in their eyes when they look at LLMs, even when other AI – or even non-AI – technologies would deliver greater value (“[Paths to Project Management Automation](#)”). GCSPs and GCSTs must understand what all the options are and where to use them. For example, regular expressions provide excellent control and reliability for many applications at a lower cost than using an LLM. In other cases, such as assigning translators and interpreters to specific tasks, older machine learning approaches are far superior to an LLM. However, if teams do not have experience and understanding in this area, they will fall short of expectations.*

For each of these trends for 2024, localization teams and LSPs equipped with data, knowledgeable team members, and access to suitable technology will be best placed to succeed. Partnership with other teams – whether inside the enterprise, or across the

range of language services and technology providers – will be vital. Groups must also focus on demonstrating their value in concrete terms and gaining executive buy-in if they are to thrive in the post-localization era.