



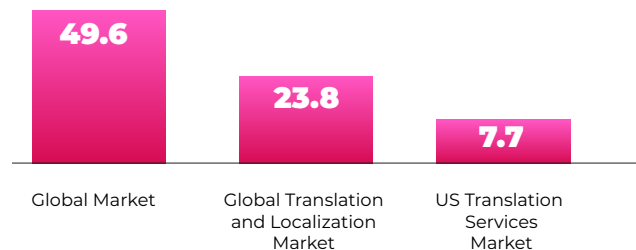
## Women In Translation: A Conversation with Adri Carbajal on Best Practices in Localization for Latin America (LATAM) Markets

Adri Carbajal (they/them) is Operations Lead at Terra Localizations. They have served as the Chief of Translation Project Management and Multilingual Desktop Publishing for Language Services at the Lima 2019 Pan American and Parapan American Games. They belong to the civil rights organization LGBT Mentoring where they offer mentoring opportunities to members of the community. They are also a professor in the Translation Master's Degree Program at the Universidad Privada de Ciencias Aplicadas. They specialize in Localization Management and Multilingual Desktop Publishing.

Recent Statista data reports that the market size of the language services industry was approximately 49.6 billion U.S. dollars in 2019, and that it is projected to expand even more in 2022 (Statista 2022). In comparison, as per a 2021 Slator report, in 2020 the translation, localization, and interpreting industry market share was 23.8 billion U.S. dollars. With respect to the United States, the translation services market portion reached 7.7 billion U.S. dollars in 2020 (Slator

2021). These important figures support forecasts and predictions from industry experts that the demand for language services will continue to increase, particularly in the technology, gaming, and media industry segments.

MARKET SIZE OF THE LANGUAGE SERVICE INDUSTRY  
(IN BILLION U.S. DOLLARS)



Data sources: 2021. Slator: "Translation and Localization Industry Set to Grow by Up to 10% to USD 26.2bn in 2021." 2022. Statista: "Language services industry in the U.S. - Statistics & Facts."

Considering the career opportunities for T&I professionals that this demand is creating in the fields of translation and localization, we spoke

with Adri Carbajal, senior project and localization manager, to get insights about best practices in localization and project management for the diverse Latin American markets. We also asked Adri about essential skills that project managers look for when seeking new localization talents, and what courses and/or training that localization programs should offer translators who are exploring a localization specialty.

## Best practices and strategies for project management and localizing for LATAM markets

*Thanks to globalization, Latin America—and the world—is now an interconnected place where countries and people interact. In the Translation and Interpreting (T&I) industry, many clients are usually looking for fast communication and fast turnaround times. What are the networking and/or communication platforms that you use for maintaining clear and effective communication and workflows with clients and vendors?*

There are several platforms nowadays that have allowed people to be in touch. Thankfully, Zoom, Skype, and Teams help us to see everyone in real time. My team is scattered around the world, so these platforms shorten the geographical gap between us and keep us connected immediately. I also recommend Slack, which not only is a great immediate communication tool, but also helps organize, target, and simplify information. We try to use it with the clients as much as we can and it has proven to be a great platform to manage interactions between teams.

I have to be honest; we're not using emails so much. We operate in a fast-paced environment and unless we need to address a particular issue in a serious or formal tone or if we are sharing the

company's official communication, emails tend to be perceived as a slower means of contact.

*Localization project management involves a series of stages to successfully identify markets, acquire clients, and build customer loyalty. What are two business strategies you would recommend for becoming strategic partners of buyers of localization services in Latin America?*

First, I find that in these times it is vital to use technology for the convenience of the user. Whether for communication or to solve complex processes, using technology gives us an advantage by optimizing time and quality, and also helps to reduce the percentage of human error.

In addition, working with specific, systematized processes is an organic way of creating loyalty and assuring the customer that the work process will meet their particular needs that will appeal to the specific request.

The joint use of these two concepts is ultimately very attractive to the client because you will offer them a tailor-made service, meeting their time and budget needs, which will translate into wanting to provide them with the best possible service.

*Today's technology allows project managers to coordinate all kinds of translation projects with clients and vendors from different countries and time zones. As we know, in Latin America there are many different time zones. Have you ever missed a client deadline for different time zones? What two specific advice would you give project managers for efficiently handling timelines with vendors and clients across Latin America?*

If you are not able or do not have access to a worldwide team that can handle things on the spot, standardizing to a specific and broad time zone always helps as a main compass. This should provide you and your team a baseline to organize every task and deadline. This should also be a great approach to consistency in the way every member of the team communicates, thus reducing the chances of missing anything along the way.

On the other hand, there are also several online and free tools now that help with converting times. The use of these tools can make working with so many clients, vendors, and teammates a seamless effort time-zone wise.



Image source: freepik.org

*EN-ES Translators and language professionals recognized that while Spanish speakers in Latin America may seem to speak the same language, Spanish comes in different flavors and variants as a reflection of the diverse Hispanic/Latino*

*nationalities, cultures, and traditions in Latin America and the world. Considering these important cultural references, could you describe one important challenge in localizing English content for the LATAM markets? What is one localization best practice to address this challenge?*

Latin American Spanish is extremely rich in culture and regional traditions that derive from their respective variants and are loaded with very particular meanings. It may not seem so, but speaking Peruvian Spanish is somewhat

different from speaking Argentine Spanish, for example. Because everyday terms, expressions, and even jokes have so many cultural references, they might not be understood everywhere. Ideally, each product offered by a client should appeal to work with specific variants as they try to penetrate different markets. However, the reality is that this depends on the client's budget, their internal company policies, and their target market objectives, among other factors. It is part of our job as subject matter industry experts to guide them into making the best decision. I would love to tell the client that they should translate to all variants every time, but I think it is important to meet them halfway, discuss their needs, and figure out what works for them.

*As a senior project manager and localization professional, you probably are constantly seeking to partner and collaborate with localization talents. To that end, you probably have in place a proven system to vet these localization talents you seek. In your vetting process, what two skills do you consider essential in a localization professional aspiring to localize for the LATAM markets?*

This is mostly an affirmation based on personal experience, but I usually seek talents that have a great judgment in decision-making. I consider the ability to make decisions to be important in all areas because it allows the most appropriate decisions to be made, ranging from what the best term is for a project to how to systematize a technical process. In the final analysis, localization on a day-to-day basis is made up of many micro-decisions that together allow us to optimize quality and time invested.

The ability to research and be curious is another skill that is appreciated in localization. I have constantly figured out things by trial and error,



touching buttons and doing things here and there. Doing so eventually allowed the discovery of even better solutions by widening my base knowledge. Navigating mixed situations is part of this process and you should be prepared to maybe not have the answers but the initiative to look them up.

*In exploring localization training schools and programs, one can find a myriad of them in the United States and in Europe, so choosing the ideal program to specialize in localization may seem daunting. What three specific courses/training should a good localization school/program offer that aspiring localization professionals should look for when exploring them?*

I think localization programs should start teaching about project management and all concepts related to it. Project management addresses relevant topics, such as time management, risk management, and budgeting, that any professional in the field should understand and work with. It is also worth learning about agile methodologies, which are becoming more and more important in project management these days.

In addition, technology in localization is increasingly gaining momentum. It is rare to hear about concepts like regular expressions, segmentation rules, programming languages, and scripts in regular curricula, but they are remarkable assets in this field that serve both linguistically and in localization management.

Finally, I consider the development of soft skills to be very relevant. Professionals must have the ability to perform using assertive communication, leadership skills, management of complicated situations, and other abilities that allow them to interact in a teamwork environment, both internally and with clients and suppliers.

## Closing

Thank you so much for granting us this interview for the ATA TCD newsletter. Your input and advice will give T&I professionals new perspectives to understand project management and localization in Latin America. This is valuable information on what to look for in localization programs for those translators and interpreters who may want to acquire the relevant skills for working in the localization industry.

[Reviewer of this article: Paul Merriam]