



Can AI Help Us Reach Everyone?

Testing Translation Tools for Housing Communication

Executive Summary

Across England and Wales, many people live in communities where English or Welsh is not their first language. For organisations working with tenants, residents and wider communities, this creates a clear challenge:

how do we make sure important information is understood by everyone?

Translation can be expensive, time-consuming and difficult to provide consistently across multiple languages and communication channels. At the same time, AI translation tools are becoming more accessible and are increasingly being used to translate documents, create dubbed videos, generate avatars and support communication across languages.

This work from TPAS Cymru explored whether digital translation tools, including Google Translate and Bing Translator, alongside AI-powered tools such as Canva, ChatGPT and HeyGen, could support communication, particularly around housing issues such as damp and mould.

The work tested written document translation, AI video translation, AI avatar videos and a bonus repair/complaint activity where participants could submit an audio or video complaint in their own language.

The feedback showed that AI translation has clear potential. In many cases, participants could understand the main message and **valued the effort** to provide information in their own language. However, the research also showed that **AI translation should not be treated as ready-to-use without human review**.

Participants identified issues with technical terms, cultural context, tone, pronunciation, trust and naturalness.

A key message from the research is that AI can help organisations communicate in more languages, but it should not replace human judgement, community review or professional checking, particularly for important housing information.

1. Context

According to the 2021 Census, there are **over 4 million people across England and Wales whose first language is not English or Welsh**. Many of these people live in communities served by housing providers, local authorities, public services and community organisations.

This raises an important question:

Are we reaching everyone?

For organisations working with tenants and communities, communication is not just about sending information. It is about making sure people understand their rights, know what action they can take, and feel confident that services are accessible to them.

This is especially important in housing. Issues such as damp, mould, repairs, complaints, safety and disrepair can have serious consequences if information is misunderstood or not acted upon. Where language is a barrier, tenants may be less likely to report problems, understand their options.

Traditional translation can be costly and slow. Many organisations may want to provide information in multiple languages but may not have the time, budget or internal capacity to do so consistently. AI translation tools could help address this challenge, but only if they are accurate, culturally appropriate and trusted by the people who use them.

This research was developed to explore that question in a practical way.

2. Why We Did This Work

The purpose of the research was to understand whether AI-powered translation tools could help social housing landlords and other stakeholders communicate more clearly and inclusively with tenants and communities whose first language is not English.

The work was designed around a real communication issue: damp and mould in housing. This was chosen because it is an important health and safety topic where clear information matters. Tenants need to understand what damp and mould are, what their landlord should do, what action they can take, and where to go if the problem is not resolved.

The research aimed to explore:

- whether AI translations are easy to understand;
- whether the translations make mistakes;
- whether any wording could be confusing or misleading;
- whether translated content feels natural in the participant's language;
- whether people would trust AI-translated communication;
- whether AI video and avatar formats feel helpful or uncomfortable;
- whether AI could help a landlord or contact centre operator understand a complaint made in someone's native language.

The work was not designed to prove that AI translation is perfect or ready to replace human translators. Instead, it aimed to test how these tools perform in realistic

communication scenarios and identify where they may be useful, risky or in need of human review.

3. What We Did

The research included three main activities, plus an **optional** bonus activity.

The research tested AI translation across different formats of communication. The focus was not only on written translation, but also on video translation. Video translation was done both through direct translation and through script translation, which was done through generative AI, creating an avatar,

The bonus activity was conducted to research whether tenants would be able to submit a video complaint about a household issue in their native language, which could then be translated using AI into English so that housing officers would understand the problem.

The testing was carried out using communication about damp and mould in housing. Participants were asked to review translated content in their own language and provide honest feedback on clarity, accuracy, naturalness and trust.

3.1 Task 1: Document Translation Review

The first activity focused on written document translation.

Participants were asked to review a short English text about damp and mould. They were then shown four translated versions of the same text in their language.

The platforms used for document translation were:

Version	Platform
V1	Google Translate
V2	Bing Translator
V3	ChatGPT
V4	Canva

Google translate and Bing translate operate using neural machine translation (NMT) which predicts the likelihood of a sequence of words. ChatGPT and Canva translate use AI for translation. The digital tools were decided based on accessibility and recommendations from others within the sector.

There were some notable features of using these platforms from a user perspective:

- Bing Translate only allows for up 1,000 characters to be translated at one time

- Bing was also the platform that changed the format of the text the most and was the most difficult to keep translated text close to the original
- Canva translate is a feature that is behind a paywall and only available for those with the paid version
- Canva translate is also an additional app within the Canva platform and needs to be added on
- Canva allows you to translate text on any visual without changing the formatting drastically

Participants were asked to compare the four versions and consider:

- how clear each translation was;
- whether there were any mistakes;
- whether anything felt confusing or misleading;
- whether the language felt natural;
- which version was easiest to understand;
- which version they would prefer if the information was being sent to tenants.

This task helped us compare how different digital tools handled the same housing-related text across different languages.

3.2 Task 2: Video Translation Review Using HeyGen

The second activity focused on AI video translation.

For this task, we used [HeyGen](#), a paid AI video platform, to translate and dub an existing video into different languages.

HeyGen offers different subscriptions to use the platform ranging from a free plan to pro. To conduct this research, TPAS Cymru purchased the creator options which costs **£21 per month**. This subscription allows for videos up to 30 minutes and access to all premium features.

The process of translation through HeyGen required a video to be uploaded to the AI tool to be translated into a desired language. To complete this task, a member of the TPAS Cymru team filmed a short informative video on damp and mould aimed at tenants.

Limitation of this platform is that audio (MP3 files) could not be translated which raised an issue when one participant submitted audio only in the additional complaint activity. Furthermore, on initial usage the platform can be difficult to manoeuvre with specific tools being difficult to find. However, HeyGen offer training modules which users can undergo to utilise the platform effectively and to its full capacity.

Beyond translation, HeyGen offers a wide range of generative tools built into their platform, such as photo to video generation and the ability to transform presentations into an avatar video.

Participants were asked to watch a short video about damp and mould in English and then watch the AI-translated version in their own language.

They were asked to consider:

- whether the translated video was easy to understand;
- whether anything sounded wrong or unnatural;
- whether the video felt helpful, strange, robotic or trustworthy;
- whether they would prefer this type of communication.

This task was included because many organisations already use video to communicate with tenants and communities. AI video translation could make existing video content accessible in more languages, but we wanted to test whether this worked in practice.

3.3 Task 3: AI Avatar Video Review Using HeyGen

The third activity tested AI avatar video generation, also using [HeyGen](#).

Instead of translating an existing person led video, a script was provided and HeyGen was used to create a video from scratch, featuring an AI-generated avatar speaking in the participant's language.

To generate the avatar video, the same script used in Task 2 was inputted into HeyGen to be translated into the desired language, to be read by a pre-made avatar.

Avatar selection was made based on the language of translation. Filters such as gender, age, and ethnicity were applied to select the avatar's appearance. Additionally, the avatar's voice was also customisable with some languages (Arabic, Urdu) being able to be read with an accent (if selected).

Participants were asked to consider:

- whether the avatar felt natural or strange;
- whether they trusted the avatar;
- whether they would prefer a real person or an avatar;

This task was included because AI avatars may offer organisations a quick way to create multilingual videos without filming a real person each time.

3.4 Bonus Activity: Native Language Complaint or Repair Request

Participants were also offered to participate in an optional bonus activity.

For this activity, they could send a short audio or video recording in their own language, making a complaint or describing a housing issue such as damp, mould or a repair request.

The purpose was to test whether AI could help translate a complaint or repair request made in someone's native language into a form that a landlord, contact centre operator or repairs team could understand.

Languages we had for the additional activity were:

- Polish
- Arabic
- Urdu
- Welsh

We asked participants to submit an example complaint through either a short video or audio file. However, as mentioned previously, HeyGen does not allow for MP3 audio to be submitted for translation, meaning that one submission was not able to be used. This left us with 4 examples – one from each of the languages above.

Participants did not need to show their face. They could record audio only, or point the camera at a wall, object or area of concern. The focus was not on their presentation, but on whether AI could understand and translate what they were saying.

The aim was not to replace staff judgement. Instead, it tested whether AI could act as a support tool to help translate, summarise or clarify information for staff.

4. How We Gathered Feedback

Feedback was gathered from people who could review the translated content and comment on how it worked in their language.

The guide made clear that there were no right or wrong answers and that the research was testing the AI translation, not the participant.

Feedback was received across several languages, **including Arabic, Urdu, Polish, Ukrainian, Hindi, Welsh, Somali.**

We also received one additional feedback for Task 1 for **Yoruba**¹, however, were not able to gain additional insight as HeyGen did not support that language.

5. Findings

The findings are organised by theme rather than by language alone. This is because similar issues appeared across different languages and formats.

5.1 AI Translation Can Improve Access, But It Is Not Ready to Use Without Review

Across the feedback, participants mostly understood the main message. This suggests that AI translation can play a useful role in helping organisations reach people in more languages.

In several cases, participants appreciated the effort to provide content in their own language. **One Ukrainian feedback note shows how people would appreciate having resources in their language. Urdu feedback also noted that the video translation could be relied on if there was no option for an interpreter.**

However, the feedback also showed that AI translations were not perfect. Participants identified mistakes, unnatural wording, missing context and occasional changes in meaning. These issues matter because the topic being tested was damp and mould, which can affect health, safety and tenants' rights.

The key finding is:

AI translation can help organisations start communicating in more languages, but human checking is still needed before information is shared with tenants.

Useful quote:

“Could rely on it if there was no option for an interpreter.”

5.2 There Was No Single Best Platform Across All Languages

The document translation task showed that no single platform performed best across every language.

For example:

- In Ukrainian feedback, ChatGPT was ranked highest, followed by Bing, Google and Canva.

¹ Due to only receiving feedback for Task 1 only from one participant, Yoruba has not been included in the summary table towards the end of the report but has been mentioned where relevant.

- In Polish feedback, ChatGPT performed strongly, while Bing had some serious errors.
- In Welsh feedback, Google Translate was ranked first, with ChatGPT and Canva joint second, and Bing last.
- In Hindi feedback, Canva was considered the strongest overall because it had a more natural flow and explained difficult concepts more clearly.
- In Arabic feedback, some participants preferred Google, while others preferred Canva because of readability and layout.
- In the singular Yoruba feedback, the participant preferred Google translate as the most accurate translation however still struggled with using words in the appropriate context. Bing was scored the lowest out of all the versions.

This shows that organisations should not choose one tool and assume it will be best for all languages.

The key finding is:

Platform choice should be tested by language. A tool that performs well in one language may perform less well in another.

5.3 Technical Housing Terms Need a Checked Glossary

One of the strongest themes was the difficulty of translating housing-specific and technical terms.

Words and phrases that caused issues included:

- damp;
- mould;
- rising damp;
- penetrating damp;
- condensation damp;
- landlord;
- property;
- repair;
- complaint;
- Ombudsman.

In some cases, words were translated too literally. In others, English words were simply written in another script, **which may only be understood by someone who is bilingual**. Some technically correct terms were also too formal or unlikely to be understood by everyday readers.

The term Ombudsman was raised several times. Feedback suggested that some people may not know what an Ombudsman is, either because the concept is unfamiliar or because there is no direct equivalent in their language or culture. This means a direct translation may not be enough. The term may need a short explanation.

The key finding is:

Organisations need a clear multilingual glossary for common housing terms, especially where the words relate to rights, complaints, repairs and safety.

Suggested glossary terms include:

English term	Suggested approach
Damp	Translate using plain language and explain the type of damp
Mould	Use the term most familiar to the community and explain health relevance
Complaint	Explain the action, not just the word
Ombudsman	Include a short explainer of what the Ombudsman does
Legal timescale	Avoid complex legal wording; explain what must happen and when

Useful quote:

“Ombudsman... needs to be explained if it was going out to tenants.”

5.4 Literal Accuracy Was Not Enough

A repeated finding was that AI translations may be understandable but still not sound natural.

In many score cards, we found that the meaning came across, but the wording felt too formal, robotic or directly translated from English. This was especially clear in feedback on Polish, Ukrainian, Hindi and Arabic.

This matters because tenant communication needs to be clear and reassuring. If a translation sounds unnatural, it may make the organisation seem distant or less trustworthy, even if the information is correct.

The strongest translations were not always the most literal. They were the ones that sounded natural, used appropriate everyday language and explained difficult concepts clearly.

The key finding is:

Useful quote:

“The best version isn’t just the most correct one, it’s the one that actually sounds natural to someone who speaks the language.”

5.5 Cultural Context Matters

Translation is not only about language. It is also about cultural understanding.

This was particularly clear **in relation to the Ombudsman**. Some feedback noted that the concept may not exist in the same way in other countries or languages. This means people may need more than a translated word; they may need an explanation of what the Ombudsman is, when they can contact them, and why it matters in the UK housing system.

Arabic feedback also highlighted dialect differences. Arabic is spoken across many regions, and a formal or widely recognised version may be understandable but may not feel personal to every Arabic-speaking community.

Urdu feedback also suggested that regional language preference matters, with one participant finding the Pakistani Urdu version clearer than the Indian Urdu version.

‘How did it feel (trustworthy, strange, helpful)? It sounded informative, somewhat helpful, but she made it sound like the broken pipe is the main cause and didn’t give an impression there could be other causes. Also, she didn’t mention Ombudsman, just Rzecznika, which is a little bit confusing, some people might not know where to take the complaint to. Overall, it was a good video but wasn’t specific enough in my opinion.’

The key finding is:

AI translation needs cultural review, not just language review.

This is especially important for organisations working with diverse communities where trust, familiarity and context shape whether information is acted upon.

5.6 Video Translation Was Helpful, BUT Voice, Pace and Pronunciation affected trust

The HeyGen video translation task showed positive potential.

Some participants found the video easier to understand than written information alone. Video helped explain damp and mould more clearly, and in some cases the translated video felt more engaging and accessible.

However, participants also noticed issues with:

- pronunciation;
- pace;
- mouth movements not matching words; (dubbing)
- words sounding too textbook like;
- voices lacking emotion;
- accents or delivery feeling unusual.

In some cases, these issues did not stop people understanding the message. In others, they affected how trustworthy or professional the content felt.

Welsh feedback, for example, identified pronunciation issues in the video translation, including difficulties with Welsh sounds such as “ll”. Ukrainian feedback said the mouth movements did not fully align with the words, although this did not distract from the message. Hindi feedback was more positive, finding the video clear, trustworthy and easier to engage with than the written text.

The key finding is:

AI-translated video can be useful, but it must be proof-watched by someone who understands the language, pronunciation and tone.

5.7 AI Avatars

AI avatar videos received the most mixed feedback.

Some participants felt the avatar was clear and acceptable for simple information.

Hindi feedback, for example, found the avatar trustworthy for awareness and guidance purposes.

However, many participants were more cautious. Several said they preferred a real person, or that the avatar made the communication feel less trustworthy. Some could trust the information, but not the delivery.

Concerns included:

- the avatar not feeling like a real person;
- voice and face not matching;
- the avatar smiling too much while discussing serious issues;

- pronunciation problems;
- the content feeling artificial; lack of emotion
- This is important because damp and mould is a serious topic. If the delivery feels too cheerful, unnatural or fake, it can weaken trust even if the information itself is accurate.

The key finding is:

AI Avatars can be a useful tool for communication however topic, understanding, and consistency may be an issue. AI avatars would need to be reviewed before use.

Useful quotes:

“Trust the information but not the delivery because of the avatar.”

“The avatar talks about serious mould issues, but she smiles too much.”

“Not 100% without a competent Welsh speaker proofreading.”

‘Powazne i moze Cie rozchorowac at 0.25ish seconds - sentence is not correct’

‘Twoj glos jest slyszalny – at the end of the video – doesn’t sound like someone would say it naturally, this is not correct. It would be better to say: Twój głos ma znaczenie.’

5.8 Written Information Still Matters

Although video can be more engaging, feedback showed that written information remains important.

Some participants preferred written documents for serious housing issues because they can be read again, shared with others and used to check specific details. This is especially important for information about repairs, complaints, legal timescales or what action tenants should take.

Some feedback also suggested that written documents could be improved by adding images or examples, particularly for topics such as damp and mould.

The key finding is:

Video and audio can support accessibility, but they should not replace clear written information for important housing issues.

A good approach may be to provide information in more than one format:

- a clear written document;
- a short, translated video;

- simple images or examples;
- contact details for further support;
- a note explaining where to go for complaints.

5.9 AI Could Support Complaints and Repairs, But Should Not Replace Staff Judgement

The bonus activity explored whether participants could submit a complaint or repair request in their own language.

This has potential for housing providers. It could help tenants report issues in the language they are most comfortable using. It could also help contact centre staff or repairs teams understand the issue more quickly.

Although videos were understandable and conveyed the issues clearly, this was dependent on language. The wider spoken languages (such as Arabic and Urdu) translated the problem better than Welsh.

However, although this is an area that should be explored whether HeyGen is the correct tool for this would be up to the organisation depending on complaints procedure.

5.10 AI Is Most Suitable for General Information, Not Sensitive Communication

The feedback suggests that AI translation may be most suitable for general awareness and guidance.

For example, it could be useful for:

- explaining what damp and mould are;
- giving simple advice on reporting issues;
- providing translated summaries;
- creating first drafts of multilingual information;
- making existing videos available in more languages;

However, AI should be used with greater caution for sensitive communication, including:

- complaints;
- legal action;
- rent

- eviction;
- safeguarding;
- health and safety concerns;
- **personal or emotional reassurance;**
- formal notices;
- communication where misunderstanding could cause harm.

6. Language and Platform Notes

The table below summarises the feedback received so far. (Pls note: every language had a varied number of feedback)

Language	Document translation feedback	Video translation feedback	Avatar feedback	Main lesson
Arabic	Google and Canva both performed well in different feedback. Dialect and “Ombudsman” need care.	Generally clear and helpful, though sometimes obviously AI. Formal Arabic may feel professional but less personal.	Mixed. Some found the message clear, but others were uncomfortable with the avatar not being real.	Consider dialect, cultural context and trust.
Urdu	Mostly understandable, but “Ombudsman” and contextual terms caused issues.	Helpful and easy to understand, though some contextual mistranslations appeared.	Weaker than video. Real person preferred.	Useful as a backup but needs review and regional Urdu consideration.
Polish	ChatGPT performed strongly. Bing had serious errors in meaning.	Understandable but some participants preferred written information.	Mixed to negative. Tone and smiling felt inappropriate	Written documents may be safer for important

Language	Document translation feedback	Video translation feedback	Avatar feedback	Main lesson
			for serious mould issues.	housing information.
Ukrainian	ChatGPT ranked highest, followed by Bing, Google and Canva.	Helpful and understandable	voice mismatch was distracting.	AI resources in Ukrainian may be welcomed but phrasing and tone matter.
Hindi	Canva performed strongest overall, followed by Bing, ChatGPT and Google.	Very positive; video felt clear, trustworthy and engaging.	Positive for guidance purposes, but less suitable for sensitive situations.	Canva and video formats showed strong potential, but caution for sensitive use.
Welsh	Google ranked highest; ChatGPT and Canva joint second; Bing last.	Useful but pronunciation issues affected quality.	Poor feedback due to pronunciation and unnatural delivery.	Welsh language AI needs competent Welsh speaker proofing and proof-listening especially because for words like, 'll'
Somali	Canva as the best	All okay	Acceptable but real person still preferred.	Technical terms need checking by a native speaker.

7. Recommendations

7.1 Use AI Translation as a First Draft, Not the Final Version

7.2 Test Platforms by Language

There was no single best platform across all languages. Organisations should avoid assuming that one tool will work for every community.

A practical approach would be to test each platform against the languages most commonly used by tenants or residents.

Suggested internal table:

Language	Best tool for written translation	Best tool for video/audio	Human reviewer needed?	Notes
Arabic	To confirm by audience/dialect	HeyGen useful with review	Yes	Consider dialect and tone
Urdu	To confirm by regional preference	HeyGen useful with review	Yes	Consider Pakistani/Indian Urdu differences
Polish	ChatGPT performed strongly	Needs proof-listening	Yes	Avoid serious meaning errors
Ukrainian	ChatGPT performed strongly	HeyGen useful with review	Yes	Tone and naturalness matter
Hindi	Canva performed strongly	HeyGen performed well	Yes	Avoid transliteration-heavy text
Welsh	Google performed strongly	Needs Welsh proof-listening	Yes	Pronunciation is critical
Somali	Canva as per our work	HeyGen useful with review	Yes	Technical terms need review

7.3 Create a Multilingual Housing Glossary

Organisations should create a simple glossary of common housing terms and have it checked by native speakers or community partners.

This would help ensure consistent translation of terms such as:

- damp;

- mould;
- landlord;
- repair;
- complaint;
- Ombudsman;
- disrepair;
- legal timescale;
- safe home;
- temporary accommodation.

The glossary should include not only direct translations, but also plain-language explanations where needed.

For example:

Ombudsman

Rather than only translating the word, explain:

“An independent organisation that can look at your complaint if your landlord has not resolved it.”

7.4 Involve Native Speakers and Community Reviewers

All translation should be reviewed by someone who understands the language, cultural context and likely audience.

This is particularly important where:

- the audience may not be familiar with UK housing systems;
- there are dialect differences;
- the topic is serious or sensitive;
- the communication includes legal or technical terms;
- the content will be used publicly.

Community reviewers can help identify whether the content sounds natural, respectful and understandable

7.5 Keep Written Information Available

Video and audio can improve accessibility, but they should not replace written information for important housing topics.

Written information allows tenants to:

- read at their own pace;
- return to the guidance later;
- share it with family, friends or support workers;
- check key details;
- follow steps more easily.

For damp and mould, written documents could be better with pictures, diagrams or examples

7.6 Use Video Translation for Awareness and Explanation

AI-translated video may be useful for general information, awareness campaigns

However, organisations should check:

- accuracy;
- pronunciation;
- pace;
- tone;
- subtitles;
- dubbing;
- whether the video feels trustworthy;

A good approach would be to use video as a supporting format alongside written guidance.

7.7 Be Careful with AI Avatars

AI avatars should be used cautiously.

They may work for simple, general information, but they may not be suitable for:

- complaints and disputes;
- legal or rights-based information;
- safeguarding communication;
- eviction or tenancy-enforcement notices;
- emotionally sensitive communication;
- personalised reassurance or support.

If avatars are used, organisations should consider being transparent that the person is AI-generated.

7.8 Use AI to Support Staff, Not Replace Them

For repairs and complaints, AI could help staff understand a tenant's message in another language. This could be particularly useful for audio or video repair reports.

7.9 Be Transparent About AI Use

Where AI is used to translate, dub or generate communication, organisations should consider being open about this.

Transparency can help build trust and avoid confusion, especially where avatars are used.

A simple statement could be:

“This translation was created using AI and checked before being shared. Please contact us if anything is unclear.

7.10 What format?

Different communication formats may suit different purposes.

Type of message	Suggested format
General awareness	AI-translated video with a written summary
Damp and mould guidance	Written guidance with images, supported by an optional translated video
Repair reporting	Native-language audio or video, supported by AI translation and staff verification
Complaints process	Clear written guidance, with interpreter or staff support where required
Legal or rights-based information	Professionally reviewed written translation with legal or subject-matter checking
Sensitive personal communication	Direct communication from trained staff, supported by an interpreter where necessary

8. Limitations

This was a small, exploratory study intended to provide early insights into the practical use of AI translation in housing communication. The findings should be interpreted considering the following limitations:

We had limitations such as

- The number of reviewers varied by language.
- Not all languages received the same depth of feedback.
- Some findings may reflect individual preferences rather than wider language-community preferences.
- Dialect, regional language use and cultural familiarity may have influenced participants' responses.
- The research focused on damp and mould, and results may differ for other subjects.
- AI platforms, functionality and performance may change over time.
- The complaint activity involved only a small number of examples.

9. Supporting Resources

- **Translation Tool Scorecard:** [View the full scorecard](#) provided to participants to review the translation tools.
- **Participation Guide:** [View the guide](#) shared with participants to support their involvement in the project.
- **Document:** [View the document](#) we used for Task01. Damp and Mould complaint which we translated using 4 tools.
- Original video we used: Watch [here](#)
- Video translated in Somali via Heygen (we did the same for the other languages; if you'd like to have a look, please reach out) [Watch here](#)
- Avatar video in Somali via Heygen. Watch [here](#)

10. Quotes from participants

Arabic-speaking participants

Document translation

“There was a gap when talking.”

“Only ‘Ombudsman’ was confusing.”

“I would say so, but not that much. It was not that good; I do believe it can be better overall.”

Video translation

“It was not that bad, but I noticed some gaps in the placing of words.”

“Yes, the gaps in between lines.”

“It was okay, nothing really out of the ordinary.”

Trust and overall views

“Now that a lot of people use AI, it is hard to know what to trust and whether the information they share is true.”

“If it can get better, it will be good and much better.”

“It was good but could be better. There are little mistakes that are overlooked and might not be noticed by someone who is not fluent in the language.”

Somali-speaking participant

Document translation

“The main issue is word choice. Some terms feel a bit too general or not quite the right Somali word for the technical meaning. It still makes sense, but a native speaker might feel that it is not the exact word they would use, especially for things like types of damp.”

Video and avatar translation

“It sounded normal, like what you would expect from AI, so it was okay.”

“I will still generally prefer a real person depending on the use of it; sometimes the voice just seems lame.”

Overall view

“Overall, there are some major errors that break the meaning, as well as minor issues with tone depending on the version.”

Urdu-speaking participants

Document translation

“The Ombudsman and the first line were confusing.”

“It felt almost natural.”

“V1 has quite a few mistakes, V3 is overly formal, and V4 is not too bad.”

“V2 feels natural and okay. I have rated it based on this version.”

Video translation

“The word ‘blame’ should be replaced with ‘making you feel responsible’.”

“The word ‘inheritance’ should be replaced with ‘property’ or ‘building’.”

“It is a bit fast-paced. The Pakistani Urdu version was much clearer than the Indian Urdu version, although a few words in the Pakistani Urdu version sounded too textbook-like.”

Avatar translation and trust

“If there was no other option, it would have been acceptable to some extent.”

“The punctuation is off throughout the video. There are a few mistakes in terms of words, and the avatar’s movement looks unnatural and robotic.”

“More languages and dialects should be included.”

“It will depend on the quality of the translations and how human-like it feels.”

Polish-speaking participants

Document translation – general impressions

“At first sight, all the translations seem accurate. However, upon further reading, some sentences are not quite right and may be confusing to the reader. Some words did not translate well from English to Polish.”

“While the translation was correct in essence, several words and phrases were very formal or used unnaturally for this type of letter.”

“‘Wynajmujący’ does not feel natural there. It is a phrase used in legal documents, but not usually in letters explaining what the legal terms mean.”

“‘Wilgoć podciągana kapilarnie’ would not be used or understood by most readers, even though it is factually correct. ‘Wilgoć od ziemi’ is what a regular person would say.”

Document translation – version-specific comments

“In the first translation, most sentences make perfect sense and can be easily understood in Polish. However, there are some mistakes. I strongly believe the English term ‘Residents’ Rights Ombudsman’ should also be included in the Polish translation to avoid confusion.”

“In the second translation, some of the text is not quite right. Some bullet points do not make sense and make the text confusing.”

“The translation says ‘nadaje się’ instead of ‘nie nadaje się’, which is the opposite of what the English text says.”

“‘Poinformuj swojego właściciela’ translates more like ‘inform your owner’, rather than the owner of the house.”

“This is a great translation in my opinion. It is very close to the original version and mentions the Ombudsman in both English and Polish, which is great.”

“The rest of the text is good and can easily be understood, but I prefer V3 because it sounds more professional.”

“This translation is the most reader-friendly, flows easily and has no grammatical errors. Most phrases feel natural and appropriate.”

“It was the only translation that explained who or what the Ombudsman is without using Polish local-government labels that would be wrong in the UK.”

Video translation

“The last sentence sounded a little odd, and I could not make out what was being said.”

“It sounded informative and somewhat helpful, but it made the broken pipe sound like the main cause and did not give the impression that there could be other causes.”

“The video did not mention the Ombudsman, only ‘Rzecznika’, which is confusing because some people may not know where to take the complaint.”

“Overall, it was a good video, but it was not specific enough in my opinion.”

“I would prefer a written document.”

“At the beginning and end, some words did not sound like Polish. The accent was strange at times, and the lips did not move with the words as they should.”

Avatar translation

“The avatar sounded a little more convincing than the real person. The video was clear; however, some phrases were used slightly strangely, and you could tell it was not a real person. Even so, the correct message was received.”

Hindi-speaking participant

Document translation – overall

“There were grammatical, translation and interpretation issues across the versions. Several terms were either translated incorrectly or simply transliterated from English into Devanagari, which may be difficult for monolingual Hindi speakers to understand.”

“Some words were unnecessarily complex, and some phrases were translated too literally, resulting in less natural wording.”

“Some technical terms and literal translations could confuse readers who do not know English. Omitted words such as tenant not translated could be difficult for people who don’t speak English, but also why would it partially translate?”

Document translation – version-specific comments

“V1 was understandable, but some parts sounded robotic and less human. Several terms may only make sense to bilingual readers, while someone unfamiliar with English may not understand them at all.”

“A few important points were skipped, including that a complaint could be taken to the Ombudsman and that alternative accommodation should be offered if the landlord cannot fix the problem in time.”

“sounded natural overall, but some words were too complex and there were interpretation errors. A Hindi-only reader might still need help or could misinterpret parts of it.”

Video translation

“The video was very clear and easy to understand. The translations were accurate and conveyed the intended meaning effectively.”

“Understanding the information through video felt much easier and more engaging than reading the translated text alone.”

Avatar translation

“For purely informative content, it felt trustworthy and effective. However, for feedback, notices or emotional reassurance between landlords and tenants, it might feel less trustworthy because some viewers could perceive the avatar as artificial or fake.”

“I would trust it for awareness and guidance purposes, though perhaps not for sensitive or highly personal communication.”

Welsh-speaking participants

Document translation

“All of the versions failed to translate ‘landlord’ properly.”

“Google was okay and got the general premise. Canva was not bad and did the job. ChatGPT was similar to Google. Bing was a little hard to read.”

“Damp can be translated in several correct ways, but we tend to use the Welsh Government term ‘lleithder’. Similarly, ‘llwydni’ and ‘mowld’ can both mean mould, but we use ‘llwydni’.”

“You need to be careful with the context of ‘damp’ and ‘mould’ because, as with many words, they can mean different things.”

“There were mutation and masculine/feminine issues with the Bing translation that were not present in the others.”

“‘Adrodd’ is not a word used for reporting something, so Bing and Canva failed on that one.”

“Google Translate came first; ChatGPT and Canva were joint second; Bing came last.”

Video translation

“The fast version was pretty good. The first five seconds did not make sense, but after that it was about 95% fine. I thought it would be terrible, but it was not.”

“The precision version was better than the fast version. There were no obvious major errors; a couple of words were wrong, but I knew what they meant.”

“It sounded Welsh-ish.”

“It was easy to understand, although some pronunciations were incorrect. It definitely sounded Welsh.”

“The precision version was better, but it still changed the Welsh ‘ll’ sound to an ‘s’ sound.”

Avatar translation

“I did not like it at all.”

“It was terrible and could not pronounce everything.”

“It sounded weird. The tone went up and down, and at one point it sounded angry.”

“The voice did not match the avatar, and it had a strange American accent.”

“It was kind of creepy.”

“I hated it.”

“There were mispronunciations, including changing the Welsh ‘ll’ sound to an ‘s’ sound.”

“I am not a fan of it at all, to be honest.”

Trust and quality assurance

“I would not trust it 100% without a competent Welsh speaker proofreading and testing it first, but it is useful for saving time initially.”

“The same applies to videos. The original needs to be clearly spoken and correctly pronounced, but proof-listening is essential.”

2. Facilitator-recorded consultation feedback

The statements below were captured during in-person feedback and may be paraphrased rather than exact words. They should be presented as recorded feedback, not as quotes.

Ukrainian-speaking participant

Document translation

‘Damp’ was translated as ‘moist’ across all versions, which was not accurate to the housing problem.

The translations were understandable but did not sound as natural as human translation.

ChatGPT was rated highest because its literal translation fit best, although it still did not feel fully human.

Video translation

The translated video was clearly AI-generated because the mouth movements did not fully align with the words, but this did not distract the message.

The video was helpful but lacked some emotion that could help build trust.

Video may work better for more complicated topics because the translation is clearer.

Most Ukrainian speakers would appreciate having resources available in their own language.

Avatar translation

The avatar phrasing felt less natural and more literal than the translated real-person video.

The voice did not match the person and was more distracting, although the voice itself sounded like a real Ukrainian speaker.

Urdu-speaking participant

Document translation

The term ‘Ombudsman’ may be unfamiliar because of cultural differences and should be explained through a short definition or jargon-buster.

Video translation

The second translated version was better, but contextual errors remained, including the use of ‘accuse’ and ‘inheritance’ in the wrong context.

The video was helpful and easy to understand and could be relied upon where no interpreter was available.

Avatar translation

The avatar was recognisably not a real person.

The participant trusted the information but not the delivery because it came from an avatar.

The avatar would be acceptable only where there was no other option.

Arabic-speaking participant

Document translation

Arabic dialect differences mean that some translations may be understandable to some speakers but not to others.

Technical terms and the word 'Ombudsman' were translated inconsistently.

The concept of an Ombudsman does not directly exist in the same way in the participant's language and therefore needs a clear explanation of what the role is and where to find it.

Avatar translation

The avatar version was clear, assertive, and well pronounced, but less natural than the translated real-person video.

If an avatar is used, it should be made clear that it is an avatar.