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# THE QUALITY OF INSTITUTIONAL TOURIST TRANSLATIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FRENCH TOURISTS

## LA CALIDAD DE LAS TRADUCCIONES TURÍSTICAS INSTITUCIONALES DESDE LA PERSPECTIVA DE LOS TURISTAS FRANCESES

MARÍA NIEVES FLUET SÁNCHEZ

marianieves.fluet@um.es  
Universidad de Murcia

### Abstract

The relevance of Spain as a tourist destination is unquestionable. Given the dependence of the country on this sector, the question arises as to whether public institutions, in particular tourist offices, offer quality information to foreign visitors. In this study, we will focus on tourists from France, which, according to INE (Spanish Statistical Office) data, is one of the three main countries of residence of the tourists who visit Spain the most. In this way, we will be able to answer the following question: do tourist offices provide them with information in their language, and is the information of sufficient quality to be understood by a native speaker? With that purpose in mind, a survey was carried out among 244 people with three objectives: to find out how they use tourist offices, to discover how satisfied they are with the information they received translated into French, and to detect what factors they consider determining whether a tourist translation is of high quality.



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**Keywords:** Tourism; Tourist offices; Translations Spanish to French; Survey; Satisfaction ratings.

## Resumen

La relevancia de España como destino turístico es incuestionable. Dada la dependencia que tiene dicho país de este sector, cabe preguntarse si los organismos públicos, en concreto, las oficinas de turismo, ofrecen información de calidad a los visitantes extranjeros. En el presente estudio, nos centraremos en los turistas procedentes de Francia, por ser, según los datos del INE, uno de los tres principales países de residencia de los turistas que más visitan España. Así, podremos responder a la siguiente pregunta: ¿las oficinas de turismo les proporcionan información en su idioma y esta posee una calidad suficiente como para ser entendida por un nativo? Para ello, se realizó una encuesta a 244 personas con tres objetivos: conocer el uso que hacen de las oficinas de turismo, averiguar el grado de satisfacción respecto a la información traducida al francés que recibieron y saber qué factores son para ellas los que determinan que una traducción turística sea de calidad.

**Palabras clave:** Turismo; Oficinas de turismo; Traducción español-francés; Encuesta; Grados de satisfacción.

## 1. Quality: A matter of perspective?

Spain's relevance as a tourist destination is undeniable. Every year, a wealth of foreign tourists visit the country to explore its historical and cultural heritage, indulge in its diverse gastronomy, and immerse themselves in its renowned fairs and festivals. According to data published in 2024 by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE), 85,169,050 tourists chose Spain as their travel destination in 2023. As a result, tourism contributed €108,662 million to the economy, representing a 24.7% increase compared to 2022. Furthermore, according to Heymann (2024), the tourism sector exceeded initial expectations and broke records thanks to the massive influx of international visitors throughout 2023, solidifying its position as one of the main drivers of the Spanish economy and surpassing pre-pandemic levels. These figures highlight tourism as one of Spain's most significant sources of revenue.

Among the many foreign visitors to Spain, three nationalities remain consistently loyal each year. Based on INE statistics (2023), the United Kingdom is the leading country of origin for tourists, followed by France and Germany, which have closely competed for the second position in recent years, with only minimal differences in visitor numbers. Given this, the present study focuses on tourists from France, including its overseas regions. Spain remains the top international holiday destination for French travelers (Government of Spain 2024). Additionally, Turespaña, in a report published in May 2024, states that French tourists perceive Spain as an ideal leisure destination, with their main activities in 2023 being city visits, beach outings, and shopping.

Given Spain's strong reliance on the tourism sector, it is worth questioning whether public institutions, particularly tourist offices, provide high-quality information to foreign visitors. Public institutions play a crucial role in tourism promotion, as the information they provide is expected to be reliable, comprehensible, and easily accessible. Namely, tourist offices serve as intermediaries between the attractions of a given locality and visitors, both domestic and international, with the goal of positively shaping the destination's image. It is essential to recognize that tourists form their first impression of a place through the tourism-related texts provided by these offices. However, do tourist offices offer information in the visitor's language, and is its quality sufficient for native speakers to understand it? To address this question, a survey was conducted between July and October 2021 among 244 French individuals of varying ages, education levels, and professional backgrounds. The survey aimed to fulfill the following three main aims: 1) to understand how tourists use tourist offices; 2) to assess their level of satisfaction with the French translated information they received at Spanish tourist offices in recent years and 3) to determine the factors they consider essential for a high-quality tourism translation. Ultimately, this study focuses on the role of tourist offices, as public institutions, in tourism promotion from the perspective of French tourists who have already visited Spain.

Before delving into the study's objectives and methodology, it is essential to introduce the concept of *quality*. Is it subjective, or can it be

objectively measured? Do tourists, researchers and translators perceive quality in the same way? As previously mentioned, this study approaches quality from the perspective of French tourists, as they are the end-users of these translations, and their opinions are crucial for improving these texts.

The perception of quality held by a researcher or translation professional may differ from that of the target audience (in this case, tourists). A translator, as a linguist, may place greater emphasis on writing style and orthotypographical correctness, whereas a general reader may focus more on the information itself and accompanying visuals rather than textual accuracy. In this regard, we agree with Nobs (2003: 63):

El hecho de que un lector considere que la traducción evaluada está en concordancia con la cultura de traducción con la que la mide, no permite sacar ningunas conclusiones acerca de la calidad de la traducción, sino únicamente acerca de la percepción de esta calidad por un usuario concreto y sobre el grado de éxito que el TM ha logrado.

From the perspective of perception and specific users, the target audience for tourism texts is highly heterogeneous, not only in terms of cultural and social background, but also in how each individual interprets a location or the information provided about it. Some tourists may prefer less content about a specific destination or activity, provided it is well-written, while others may prioritize content richness over writing quality. This variation persists even among respondents with similar demographic variables such as age, gender, or educational level.

Thus, we argue that the target audience plays a fundamental role in translation since the translator works for them. We also acknowledge that many translation decisions are influenced by the reader, extending beyond linguistic choices to cultural considerations. As Nida & Reyburn (1981: 9) highlight: “no se puede considerar completo ningún análisis de la comunicación sin un estudio detallado de los receptores del mensaje”. In other words, they argue that the recipient’s reaction takes precedence over the perceived quality of the translation. In their view, the quality of a translation is determined by the level of acceptance among its target audience. In conclusion, they position the recipient as the key factor in determining, through their reaction, whether a translation is of high quality.

While we agree that recipient feedback is invaluable in assessing translation quality, certain variables must be considered, including the recipient's educational level, age, gender, subject-matter knowledge and social background. Therefore, in our opinion, while the target audience is among the most relevant factors in achieving a high-quality translation, it is not the only one.

Since we have pointed out the possibility that tourists' perceptions of quality may differ from those of researchers, we will now deal with several scholars who have conducted studies on this topic. This will allow us to compare the survey results with the criteria established by these experts.

Durán Muñoz (2012: 104) notes that:

A menudo, se equipara “calidad” a “adecuación” de la traducción, lo que implica que el texto meta debe adecuarse a la cultura meta para que proporcione la equivalencia comunicativa y funcione correctamente y, así, se alcanzaría la calidad de una traducción.

For this author, in addition to pragmatic and functional adequacy, the following factors determine whether a translation is of high quality:

a) Legibilidad del texto meta: la claridad y la comprensibilidad, coherencia y cohesión que muestra el texto de llegada en su totalidad; b) corrección gramatical: las normas gramaticales, ortográficas y ortotipográficas de la lengua de llegada; c) comportamiento profesional del traductor: en cuanto a las competencias técnica y documental, así como con relación a los aspectos acordados en el encargo (plazos, presupuesto, herramientas requeridas, cumplimiento de normas, uso de glosarios y memorias de traducción, etc.) y d) tratamiento adecuado del material verbal y no verbal: imágenes y símbolos que aparecen en la traducción, el tipo de letra y el color, etc. (Durán Muñoz 2012: 105)

Regarding the research by González Pastor (2018) on the translation of cultural elements in tourism, she emphasizes that translators must consider the unique characteristics of tourism texts to achieve high-quality translations. These include verbal and non-verbal elements, the text's intent (whether purely informative or also persuasive), the necessity of using Anglicisms (which are frequent in Spanish tourism texts), website design and overall presentation. She concludes that quality is achieved through an

effective combination of textual and graphic elements, namely, engaging content and attractive design.

A key reference in assessing tourism translation quality is Nobs (2003), who focuses on the quality of professional translations, meaning those intended to provide a service. She acknowledges that any quality assessment process inherently contains subjective components, influenced by both recipients and professionals based on their interpretation of translation and their role in the process.

Additionally, as Nobs (2003: 65) states:

El factor más importante a la hora de determinar la calidad de una traducción es el grado de cumplimiento del propósito previamente establecido entre las partes implicadas en la acción comunicativa transcultural.

Since translation quality is relative and subjective —depending on factors such as the translator's writing style, client requirements and decision-making process— multiple ways of translating imply multiple ways of evaluating quality.

Soto Almela (2014: 131), citing Umberto Eco, refers to the concept of the “model reader”; that is, the active role played by the reader, but applied to translation:

Implica que el traductor no solo tenga en cuenta los conocimientos del mundo de los destinatarios, sino también sus expectativas en cuanto a un texto traducido en general y en cuanto a un determinado tipo de texto en particular.

Regarding expectations, we agree with Soto Almela that the translator must be able to anticipate user's expectations in the absence of empirical studies that might help determine them. For this reason, it is crucial for the translator to always keep the target audience in mind and infer their needs or expectations based on their textual, social and cultural conventions.

Generally speaking, the factors outlined in the previous paragraphs are those that contribute to achieving high-quality tourism translations. However, do tourism translations actually reach a sufficient level of quality to be fluently understood by native speakers? If not, what consequences

might arise from the absence of translation or a poor-quality translation? Durán Muñoz (2012: 265) summarizes it as follows:

Esta baja calidad en las traducciones afecta directamente a la imagen de un país en el extranjero, ya que la traducción de textos turísticos es el medio que utilizan los turistas para aprender, conocer y acercarse al país que visitan. En este sentido, podríamos determinar que el turista recibirá una mala imagen del país si este no cuida su comunicación con el turista, ya sea de forma escrita o de forma oral.

The author asserts that, in general, tourism translations do not meet expected quality standards, as they frequently contain numerous syntactic, spelling, and terminological errors. All these deficiencies hinder effective communication between the sector and tourists due to inadequacies in the drafting of destination information. It is important to consider that not all French tourists visiting Spain speak the language; therefore, they must be provided with all necessary information during their stay (places to visit, gastronomy, monument opening hours, museums, transportation, etc.), and texts must maintain a reasonable level of quality to ensure comprehension.

So, why are translations (when available) of such low quality? Le Poder & Fuentes Luque (2005) and Durán Muñoz (2012) identify several factors as responsible: a) the lack of attention given to this specialization; b) the lack of professionalization; c) translation project conditions, such as tight deadlines and low fees; d) the translator's insufficient cultural and linguistic knowledge; e) poorly written source texts and f) reverse translation. Additionally, scholars such as Soto Almela (2014) and Bugnot (2005) point out that the bibliography dedicated to this topic is very limited, as it is only sporadically addressed in a few specialized journal articles and didactic studies. Therefore, based on these findings, tourism translation does not appear to be firmly established within the field of specialized translation.

Among all these factors, some clearly and directly depend on the (poor) performance of the translator. For example, if the translator lacks an appropriate level of linguistic, cultural, or research competence in both the source and target texts; if they undertake reverse translation without mastering their working language or fail to seek revision from a native translator; or if they accept assignments with extremely tight deadlines and significantly

lower their rates. It is important to remember that a professional translator must have prior knowledge of the characteristics and challenges posed by tourism texts in order to address them effectively and produce high-quality translations. Likewise, they must possess extensive knowledge of the cultures of the languages they work with, as well as the linguistic conventions and systems of these languages. Similarly, in tourism translation (as in any type of translation), the target audience must always be considered. Thus, the translator must be familiar with the intended audience and their expectations to convey the source text's message as effectively as possible. These, in our view, are the factors that depend exclusively on the translator.

Finally, the one factor that does not depend on the translator is the poor drafting of the source text. Even so, we believe that the translator must remain professional and produce high-quality translations, regardless of whether the source text exhibits deficiencies in content or format. As Calvi (2019: 71) unequivocally states, “a menudo, el problema no está en la traducción sino en la inadecuación del texto fuente, que no responde a las necesidades informativas del destinatario”. However, we agree with Kelly (1997) that poor quality in the source text should not be maintained in the translation; rather, a series of decisions must be made to address its deficiencies. Nonetheless, if this task requires additional effort, it should be reflected in an increased translation fee.

In the next section, we will further elaborate on the objectives of this research.

## 2. Aims

### 2.1. *Research questions*

To clearly define the purpose of our study, we will first formulate the research questions, then present the initial hypotheses, and finally outline the aims.

Research questions:

- a) Do French tourists consult the website of tourist offices from their homes when planning a trip, and do they visit these offices upon arrival at their destination?



- b) What level of satisfaction do they have regarding the French translated information provided by the tourist office in the locality they visited, including the quality of the written content?
- c) What factors do they consider to be the most important in determining the quality of information directed at foreign tourists?

Next, we will outline the hypotheses that provide provisional answers to the aforementioned research questions.

## 2.2. Hypotheses

Regarding the first question, we generally assume that most French tourists will use tourist offices at their destination but will consult tourist office websites less frequently from home. In other words, they are likely to use alternative sources when planning their trip. We believe this is due to the abundance of available information sources, with tourists prioritizing reviews from other visitors over the official content on a tourist office website. However, we estimate that visiting a tourist office at their destination will be perceived as practical and convenient, particularly for short stays, as it provides quick access to all necessary information. Concerning the degree of satisfaction with the information received in tourist offices, including its writing quality, we anticipate that, in general, tourists will be satisfied. That is, the information provided will meet their expectations for obtaining an overall understanding of the place they are visiting, without paying much attention to whether the texts are well-written. As for the factors that make information targeted at foreign tourists considered as high quality, we assume that they will prioritize format, such as accompanying images and engaging content, over grammatical and orthographic accuracy. This could be due to the fact that not all visitors of a tourist office are linguists, and even if they were, they would likely be satisfied as long as the information is comprehensible.

After formulating the research questions and hypotheses, we now specify the three aims of this study:

- a) To understand how French tourists use tourist offices, both in terms of consulting their websites before traveling and visiting them upon arrival at the destination.

- b) To assess the level of satisfaction regarding the French translated information received in tourist offices of Spanish localities they have visited in recent years.
- c) To determine the factors that French tourists consider essential for high-quality tourism translations.

In the next section, we will explain the methodology used to achieve these objectives.

### 3. Methodology

The research instrument used in this methodology is the survey, a data collection technique that involves administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Rojo (2013) defines surveys as a research tool aimed at providing information on trends, opinions, or attitudes characterizing the professional situation, behavior, or actions of a population sample. Furthermore, she states that while surveys may appear to yield only quantitative data, they can, in fact, provide both quantitative and qualitative insights. She identifies two main instruments within surveys: interviews and questionnaires. Based on this classification, we opted for the latter as our research instrument. The purpose of this approach is to obtain objective data that can be analyzed both quantitatively (e.g., number of participants, age, gender) and qualitatively (e.g., trends, attitudes, habits). Ultimately, questionnaires serve as an invaluable research tool for understanding the habits, opinions, or preferences of a specific sample of the population in a manner that is representative and extrapolatable to the general population.

#### 3.1. Survey description

For the survey design, we utilized the questionnaire model provided by the University of Murcia through the Area of Information and Communication Technologies, which was specifically created for this study.

The questionnaire was titled “Le tourisme en Espagne”. The accompanying image featured a photograph of the Alhambra (under a Creative Commons license), chosen due to its worldwide recognition. Historically, the Alhambra has been Spain’s most visited monument until its closure

and subsequent visitor restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 (Hosteltur 2021). In addition to the welcome page (which provided a brief explanation of the questionnaire's purpose for respondents) and the closing page (where respondents were thanked for their participation), the questionnaire was structured into three sections: 1) informed consent and the option to receive the survey results; 2) respondent profile and 3) survey questions. It is important to note that not all respondents answered every question. The questionnaire was designed so that, based on a "yes" or "no" response, respondents were automatically directed to the most relevant follow-up question. In other words, responses were linked, ensuring that respondents did not have to manually skip irrelevant questions, thereby saving time and minimizing potential confusion.

The survey contained both open and closed questions, with a majority being closed questions in a Likert scale format. This format enabled us to formulate specific questions with multiple-choice answers measurable on a 1-to-5 scale, which proved useful in assessing user satisfaction with tourist office services and tracking consultation frequencies across different information sources. Regarding open-ended questions, the first such question appeared in the initial section, where respondents were invited to provide their email addresses if they wished to receive the study results. Closed questions required respondents to choose an answer from a list of options: some were dichotomous ("Yes" or "No"), while others followed a Likert scale format. The latter included five possible responses ranging from "never" to "always".

Finally, the questionnaire remained available for a period of three months, from July 13, 2021, at 11:00 AM, to October 13, 2021, at 8:00 PM. Since the questionnaire was conducted online, it had the advantage of reaching a larger number of respondents from various locations through different distribution channels. Additionally, online questionnaires allow for immediate data recording. The dissemination methods used for the questionnaire included email, social media (Facebook and Twitter), and WhatsApp. Email was employed as a more formal distribution channel to reach professional and academic contacts, as opposed to social media, which was used for more familiar audiences.

3.2. Results, data analysis and interpretation of the survey

In this subsection, we will present the results obtained from the survey completed by French participants, followed by an analysis and interpretation of the data. To support this, we will include screenshots displaying data in tabular format. These screenshots were taken from the PDF document generated by the University of Murcia’s survey model.

A total of 244 responses were collected over the three-month period the questionnaire was available. The highest number of responses was received during July and August. Among all participants, 86 individuals (35.2%) requested to receive the survey results, while the remaining 158 (64.8%) opted not to.

Next, we will present the collected data, structured by sections. The first section will focus on the respondent profile, followed by an analysis of the survey questions and responses.

Profile of respondents:

a) By gender



Sexe :		
Respuesta	Total	%
Masculin	100	41,0
Féminin	144	59,0
Sin rellenar	0	0,0

Figure 1. Number and percentage of respondents by gender

As observed in Figure 1, the majority of respondents (59%) were women.

b) By age

In order to define age groups, we determined that respondents had to be at least 18 years old, but we did not set an upper age limit. The first group (18-25 years) mainly included university students; the second (26-35 years), young professionals; the third (36-50 years), individuals with a stable personal and professional life; the fourth (51-61 years), those with experience and stability who might consider early retirement and the fifth (62+ years), retirees, since the current retirement age in France is 62.

Âge :

Respuesta	Total	%
A 18-25	63	25,8
B 26-35	50	20,5
C 36-50	70	28,7
D 51-61	29	11,9
E Plus de 62	32	13,1
F Sin rellenar	0	0,0

Figure 2. Number and percentage of respondents by age

Respondents aged 36-50 years participated the most in the questionnaire, representing 28.7% of the sample total. They were followed closely by those aged 18-25 (25.8%) and those aged 26-35 (20.5%). The least numerous group was those aged 51-61.

c) By educational level

To determine the level of education, we considered the two secondary education diplomas in France (*brevet* and *baccalauréat*) as well as higher education, including university and specialized schools. This approach was intended to help assess the expectations regarding information in French provided by tourism offices.

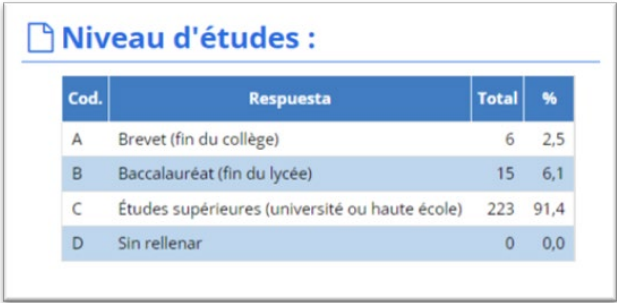


Figure 3. Number and percentage of respondents by educational level

A significant majority (91.4%) of respondents had completed higher education, either at a university or specialized school. Another 6.1% held the *baccalauréat*, and only 2.5% had obtained the *brevet*.

d) By professional status

Respondents were asked to indicate only their primary occupation, as some might be simultaneously job seekers and students or have other dual roles.

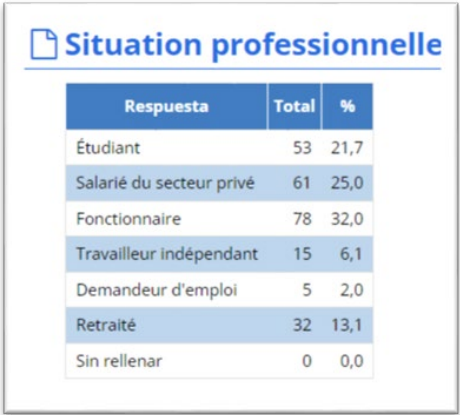


Figure 4. Number and percentage of respondents by professional status

Participants' professional situations varied widely: 32% were public sector employees, 25% worked in the private sector, 21.7% were students (at universities or specialized schools), 13.1% were retirees, 6.1% were self-employed and 2% were job seekers.

Survey questions and responses. The survey questions remained in French; however, their explanations and analysis are presented in English for clarity. Below, we examine the participants' responses to the survey questions.

a) *Avant de voyager en Espagne, où recherchez-vous les informations sur l'endroit que vous allez visiter ? Cochez la fréquence de consultation des sources d'informations suivantes:*

When we decide to embark on a trip, unless it is entirely spontaneous, we usually search for information about the destination to learn about its offerings, such as places to visit, dining options and accommodations. There are numerous travel blogs where travelers share their experiences, as well as websites that provide travel-related reviews, such as TripAdvisor®. However, these are subjective sources influenced by individual impressions. For example, a negative review of a destination may be due to the temporary closure of a museum, but it is important to verify whether the visitor checked the museum's opening hours in advance.

To avoid such inconveniences, it seems reasonable to turn to official sources, such as tourism offices, which offer both online and offline resources to provide accurate and up-to-date information.

In Figure 5, we assess whether French tourists frequently use tourism office websites.

		Jamais	Parfois	Souvent	Très souvent	Toujours
A	a. Dans une agence de voyages.	196	35	7	5	1
B	b. Dans une association culturelle.	191	36	9	7	1
C	c. Sur le site web de l'office du tourisme de la ville.	50	75	61	47	11
D	d. Sur les forums ou blogs de voyages.	65	57	48	56	18
E	e. Dans les guides de voyages. Informations issues aussi bien d'un site web comme dans quelques livres.	26	51	56	61	50

Figure 5. Sources of consultation by French tourists before traveling to Spain

According to this data, 61 out of 244 respondents stated that they often consult the tourism office website before traveling to Spain, 47 very often, 75 sometimes, and 11 always. Only 50 respondents admitted they never used this source. Therefore, we conclude that many French tourists do show an interest in the information provided by local tourism offices. Conversely, the data indicates a preference for travel guides as a source of information. Only 26 respondents never consult them, while the rest do so at least sometimes (51) or always (50). Additionally, 56 respondents frequently consult travel forums or blogs. The least-used sources are travel agencies (196 respondents never consult them) and cultural associations (191 respondents never use them). This could be due to the fact that most respondents are under 50 years old and, likely for generational reasons, prefer to organize their own trips, making use of technology to reduce costs.



b) *Une fois sur place, vous adressez-vous à l’office du tourisme pour obtenir des informations sur l’endroit?*

Respuesta	Total	%
Oui	138	56,6
Non	106	43,4
Sin rellenar	0	0,0

Figure 6. Number and percentage of respondents who visit the tourism office in person

The results show that although the tourism office website is not the primary source of information for travelers planning their trips at home, most respondents do visit the tourism office upon arrival at their destination. Specifically, 56.6% of respondents indicated that they do so.

We consider this a positive result, despite the competition tourism offices face from numerous alternative information sources available to potential travelers today. This suggests that visitors trust tourism offices to provide reliable and official information, which is not always guaranteed by other sources.

However, as shown in the table below, 22.5% of respondents visit the tourism office sometimes, 19.3% often, 12.3% very often, and only 5.3% always. This suggests that improvements could be made to enhance the competitiveness of tourism offices by offering more personalized services that cater to visitor expectations, preferences and values.

Respuesta	Total	%
Parfois	55	22,5
Souvent	47	19,3
Très souvent	30	12,3
Toujours	13	5,3
Sin rellenar	99	40,6

Figure 7. Frequency of respondents visiting tourism offices in person

c) *Cochez votre degré de satisfaction quant aux informations fournies à l'office du tourisme:*

The role of a tourism office, according to Peláez López (2016), includes providing reception and information services and promoting the destination in collaboration with business entities. This aims to foster tourism growth while ensuring that local cultural and social values, as well as the environment, are respected.

Miralbell Izard (2007: 41) states that modern tourism offices perform the following functions:

Información, acogida, promoción, *marketing*, gestión de servicios turísticos complementarios, apoyo al sector turístico y apoyo a la administración de destino.

Therefore, tourism offices do more than just provide information; they also coordinate promotional efforts with public and private sector stakeholders such as local governments, hospitality businesses and tour operators.

Below, we present the satisfaction levels of French tourists regarding the information they received at tourism offices.

Cod.	Respuesta	Total	%
A	Déçu : aucune information fournie en français.	1	0,4
B	Insatisfait : les informations étaient peu nombreuses sur le lieu choisi.	5	2,0
C	Satisfait : les informations étaient correctes et suffisantes.	91	37,3
D	Très satisfait : les informations étaient claires et précises.	38	15,6
E	Comblé : les informations étaient très complètes, claires et précises.	7	2,9
F	Sin rellenar	102	41,8

Figure 8. Number and percentage of respondents by satisfaction level with the information received at the tourism office

It is important to note that only respondents who stated they visited tourism offices answered this question. Most respondents (37.3%) were satisfied with the quality and quantity of information received. Additionally, 15.6% were very satisfied, finding the information clear and precise. A smaller percentage (2.9%) were extremely satisfied, while only 0.4% were disappointed, stating they did not receive any information in French.

Overall, among the 142 respondents who reported visiting tourism offices at their destinations, 91 were satisfied with the information received. This indicates that the information was not only translated into French but also met the needs of French tourists.

d) *En termes de rédaction, cochez dans quelle mesure vous êtes satisfait du point de vue de l'orthographe et de la grammaire des textes fournis par l'office du tourisme:*

Cod.	Respuesta	Total	%
A	Déçu : la formulation était quasiment incompréhensible.	1	0,4
B	Insatisfait : le texte rédigé comportait beaucoup d'erreurs mais restait compréhensible.	6	2,5
C	Satisfait : la grammaire était correcte, mais la sensation perçue était que la rédaction du texte manquait de fluidité.	79	32,4
D	Très satisfait : la rédaction était correcte et la lecture était fluide.	49	20,1
E	Comblé : l'orthographe et la grammaire étaient parfaites et la lecture très fluide.	6	2,5
F	Sin rellenar	103	42,2

Figure 9. Number and percentage of respondents by satisfaction level with the wording of the information received

Once more, only respondents who visited tourism offices answered this question. Regarding the grammatical and spelling quality of the information, most respondents (32.4%) were satisfied, indicating that while the grammar was correct, the reading flow was not optimal. Another 20.1% were very satisfied with both grammatical accuracy and the naturalness of expression. A small 2.5% were extremely satisfied, finding the writing flawless and fluid. Conversely, 2.5% were dissatisfied and 0.4% were disappointed, stating that the text was nearly incomprehensible, possibly due to automatic translation without proper post-editing.

e) *Pourquoi ne vous adressez-vous pas à l'office du tourisme? Dans une échelle de 1 à 5, cochez les raisons:*

		1	2	3	4	5
A	a. Les informations issues des guides de voyages sont suffisantes.	7	3	20	35	41
B	b. La perte de temps dans la file d'attente à l'office.	44	16	11	13	22
C	c. Souvent les informations ne sont pas traduites en français.	56	16	22	8	4
D	d. Les informations proposées sont insuffisantes et contiennent des erreurs.	65	15	15	6	5

Figure 10. Reasons why respondents do not visit tourism offices in person

Only respondents who indicated earlier that they do not visit tourism offices answered this question. The most common reason was that they found travel guidebooks sufficient for obtaining the information they needed, consistent with the responses to the first question, which showed a strong preference for travel guides. Another notable reason was the inconvenience of waiting in line at tourism offices. Additionally, some respondents stated that they did not visit the tourism office because they assumed they would not receive information in French, while others believed that the information provided would be insufficient or contain errors. This perception may stem from previous negative experiences.

In Figure 11, we will determine how French visitors define a high-quality tourism translation based on the parameters provided in the questionnaire; in other words, which of these parameters they consider most important.

f) *En bref, dans une échelle de 1 à 5 cochez l'importance que vous donnez à la qualité de l'information destinée à un touriste français:*

		1	2	3	4	5
A	a. Correction orthographique et grammaticale.	18	12	61	93	60
B	b. Présentation visuelle et graphique attrayante.	8	11	51	98	76
C	c. Information intéressante et abondante.	7	1	52	85	99
D	d. Rédaction claire et compréhensible.	9	2	50	89	94

Figure 11. Importance of the quality of tourism information

All respondents answered this question, regardless of whether they visited tourism offices or not. The goal was to determine which factors they considered most important in tourism information. The majority valued having interesting and abundant information the most, followed closely by clarity and comprehensibility in writing. Conversely, grammatical and spelling accuracy was considered the least important. Respondents also found visual and graphic presentation relevant. In a nutshell, the results suggest that French tourists seem to consider a tourism text to be of high quality when it provides rich, engaging information in a clear and comprehensible manner.

4. Conclusions

Based on the data obtained in the previous section, we will now determine whether the study’s hypotheses are confirmed or refuted. Additionally, we will provide a set of insights into the results.

Figure 5 reveals that, in general, while the website of the tourism office is not the first source consulted by French tourists when planning their trips from home, the majority do visit the office once they arrive at their destination, as shown in Figure 6. More concretely, 56.6% of respondents indicated this behavior; however, 22.5% reported visiting the tourism office sometimes, 19.3% often, 12.3% very often and only 5.3% always (Figure 7).

Thus, the hypothesis that most French tourists prefer a different source, such as travel guides, whether in print or online, over the tourism office website for pre-travel information is confirmed. Furthermore, it is also confirmed that, once at their destination, most tourists utilize the services provided by the tourism office. These findings suggest that potential tourists place greater trust in travel guides, as they are written by individuals who have already visited the destination and provide more comprehensive information, such as recommendations, itinerary descriptions, maps and alternative plans. Similarly, visitors may perceive that the photographs and reviews in travel guides are more objective than those provided by a tourism office, whose primary goal is to promote the destination. Lastly, we may infer that most tourists visit a tourism office at their destination when their trip is unplanned or their stay is short, seeking guidance on what to visit within a limited timeframe.

Regarding the degree of satisfaction with the information provided by tourism offices, most respondents across all age groups (noting that this question applies only to those who used the tourism office services) were satisfied with the information received. They considered it accurate and sufficient for their needs. Only one respondent reported being disappointed, while seven reported being extremely satisfied. In terms of the quality of the written materials they received, most respondents were also satisfied, but they acknowledged a lack of fluency and naturalness in the text, suggesting that the materials were not written or reviewed by a native translator. Nevertheless, the overall outcome was satisfactory. Finally, these findings indicate that although the quality of the translation's composition could be improved, most tourism offices visited do provide information in French, as only one participant reported not receiving any information in this language. This could be attributed to a statistical factor, tourism offices may provide information in specific languages based on the predominant nationalities of their visitors. For instance, a town in southern Galicia may offer information in Portuguese rather than French due to its proximity to Portugal. Even so, we firmly believe that French tourists feel more welcomed and reassured in a destination where information is available in their language. From a marketing perspective, a satisfied tourist/customer

is more likely to return, an especially important consideration given that tourism is one of Spain's key economic drivers.

Regarding the factors that determine the quality of a tourism translation, our hypothesis is also confirmed: despite the fact that most respondents have higher education, they prioritize the informativeness and abundance of content over perfect spelling and grammar. They are generally content with a translation that, while containing errors, does not hinder comprehension. In other words, having a higher level of education does not necessarily mean being more demanding in terms of linguistic accuracy. The same applies to age: there appear to be no generational differences in expectations, as the majority of respondents across all age groups found the French-language information satisfactory. Lastly, although French tourists appear to be content with translations that are reasonably understandable, we believe the quality of tourism translations would improve significantly if all tourism offices employed professional translators or, at the very least, native linguists to revise texts translated by tourism office employees or post-edit machine translations. We understand that budget constraints or cost-cutting measures may be the primary reasons this does not occur. Additionally, there is rarely a formal complaint from tourists when they do not receive information in French or when it is difficult to understand. To address this, it would be beneficial for tourism offices to provide satisfaction surveys regarding the information they offer in visitors' native languages. This could encourage the offices to consider hiring professional translation services. In conclusion, given Spain's rich cultural heritage, we believe that ensuring mere comprehensibility should not be the unique goal; rather, the quality of translations should be optimal so that a higher percentage of French tourists perceive the texts as fluent and natural in their language, accompanied by high-quality visual elements.

Moreover, the survey results align with the factors discussed in Section 1 regarding what scholars define as high-quality tourism translation. As noted by authors such as Durán Muñoz (2012) and González Pastor (2018), a high-quality tourism translation is achieved when it offers engaging content, an attractive design, and clear, comprehensible writing. This also suggests that tourists are generally far more tolerant of medium to low



translation quality than academics and professional translators. This may be because the consequences of poor translation in the tourism sector are not as severe as in legal translation, for example. Unlike a sworn translation of an inheritance declaration, where even a minor mistake could have serious legal repercussions for a client, errors in tourism translations typically do not carry legal consequences. We cannot assert that a poorly translated official website would have the same impact as an inaccurate legal document, nor that it would lead to a significant loss of visitors and subsequent economic decline. In most cases, the institution's professionalism might be called into question, and tourists might file occasional complaints, but there would be no major consequences beyond reputational damage. However, this holds true only if the errors are limited to poor writing and do not create issues for tourists in areas such as guided tour schedules or transportation details.

To conclude, we can infer that the primary concern for tourists is that the information is understandable, rather than assessing its linguistic quality. Nonetheless, we must consider that the characteristics of an official institution or tourist destination shape its image abroad. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that greater professionalism enhances reputation and, as a result, attracts more visitors, positively impacting the economy and job market. In summary, while medium to low-quality translations of tourism texts published by official institutions may not have legal outcomes, they do affect the destination's image and could discourage potential tourists if they struggle to find (or understand) the necessary information to make a decision. To put it simply, the goal is to sell a destination, and in marketing, image is everything. It plays a crucial role in capturing potential visitors' attention, ensuring consistency between messaging and branding, fostering trust, and highlighting the advantages of one destination over another.

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## BIONOTE / NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

MARÍA NIEVES FLUET SÁNCHEZ holds a degree in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Granada and has been a sworn French translator-interpreter since 2006. She completed the Master's Degree in Editorial Translation in the 2011-2012 academic year. She obtained her PhD in Translation and Interpreting in December 2022 from the University of Murcia. She has been an associate lecturer in the Degree in Translation and Interpreting at the University of Murcia since the 2014-2015 academic year. As a freelance translator, she mainly works as a legal and tourism translator and as a proofreader. She has been a member of UniCo (the Spanish Association of Proofreaders) since 2015. She has also been working with the translation company Trágora Formación as a teacher since October 2013 and, from February 2015 to September 2018, she collaborated with the company ALBINEGRO, Centro Multidisciplinar, where she provided assistance to tourist groups in different museums.

MARÍA NIEVES FLUET SÁNCHEZ es licenciada en Traducción e Interpretación por la Universidad de Granada y traductora-intérprete jurada de francés desde el año 2006. Cursó el Máster Universitario en Traducción Editorial (MUTE) en el curso académico 2011-2012. Obtuvo el Doctorado en Traducción e Interpretación en diciembre de 2022 por la Universidad de Murcia. Es profesora asociada en el Grado en Traducción e Interpretación de la Universidad de Murcia desde el curso académico 2014-2015. Como traductora autónoma, se dedica principalmente a la traducción jurídica y turística y a la corrección ortotipográfica y de estilo. Es socia de UniCo (la Unión de correctores) desde 2015. Por otro lado, colabora con la empresa de traducción Trágora Formación como docente desde octubre de 2013 y colaboró, desde febrero de 2015 hasta septiembre de 2018, con la empresa ALBINEGRO, Centro Multidisciplinar, en la que realizó funciones de asistencia a grupos turísticos en diferentes museos.