□□ Translation Scams Are on the Rise: How to Spot and Avoid Them

Maria Cattini | 18/05/2025 | Online Safety

In the world of freelance translation, scams are becoming increasingly common. Every week, translators across the globe receive suspicious job offers, fraudulent payment requests, and other deceptive messages designed to trick them out of money or personal data.

Here’s what every translator—freelancer or agency—should know about how these translation scams work, what red flags to look out for, and how to stay protected.

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□□ Common Tactics Used in Online Translation Scams

Translation scammers operate with surprising creativity. Here are the most frequent methods they use:

Common Translation Scams to Avoid

1

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Unsolicited Job Offers

They approach translators out of the blue with well-paid translation jobs—even when there's been no prior contact.

2

Poorly Written Emails

Grammar mistakes, vague project descriptions, or emails from generic domains (like Gmail) instead of company emails are major red flags.

3

Too-Good-to-Be-True Rates

Scammers often promise extremely high pay to lure in translators—only to scam them later.

4

Overpayment Scams

They send a fake check for a larger amount and ask you to refund the difference. The original check bounces, leaving you with a loss.

5

Upfront Payment Requests

Legitimate clients don't ask translators to pay registration or training fees before starting a project.

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6

Delayed or Missing Payments

Some scammers pose as clients, accept a completed job, and then vanish without ever paying.

7

Telegram Payment Traps

A rising trend involves directing translators to Telegram bots claiming to be a "finance department"—then requesting a fee (usually $60–75) to "release" the payment.

8

Fake Checks and Disappearing Clients

Scammers send fake checks for services rendered, take advantage of trust, and disappear without settling remaining balances.

9

Urgent Project Pressure

Pushing for immediate acceptance of large projects with tight deadlines is another trick to bypass due diligence.

10

Strange Contract Processes

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If a client avoids sending a contract or provides odd invoices with negative balances implying you owe money—walk away.

11

Unverified Clients

Real clients provide traceable company names, contact info, and professional tools. Scammers do not.

12

CV Theft and Identity Fraud

Some scammers steal real translators' CVs, alter contact info, and impersonate them to deceive agencies or get work under false pretenses.

13

Phishing for Personal Data

They pretend to be from trusted agencies and ask for sensitive information like bank details or ID scans.

14

Bait-and-Switch Jobs

After offering a well-paid job, they switch to lower-paid tasks or demand unpaid work to "complete the project."

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15

No Pay After Delivery

The scammer places an order under a fake identity, receives the completed work, and disappears.

16

Fake Company Presence

Some go as far as creating fake websites, logos, and email addresses to look legitimate.

17

Suspicious Communication Channels

Insistence on communicating via Telegram or WhatsApp with a "manager" is a common warning sign.

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Staged Testimonial Videos

They may even share a staged testimonial video from someone claiming they were paid—but pay close attention. These videos often have awkward delivery, similar-looking actors, and questionable accents.

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□□ How to Avoid Falling for Translation Scams

Here’s how you can stay one step ahead:

□ Always Verify Clients

Work only with verified companies and use professional platforms like **ProZ Blue Board** or **Translator Scam Alert Reports** to check client legitimacy.

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Stick to Official Channels

Use company emails and platforms like MemoQ, Trados, or direct portals—not Gmail or Telegram bots.

Don't Pay to Work

No legitimate client will ask you to pay to be added to a job list or to “unlock” payments.

Beware of Unusual Requests

If someone asks for immediate work with no details, a payment upfront, or asks to refund part of a payment—you’re likely being targeted.

Use Trusted Job Boards

Stick to established platforms and never trust random job offers via social media or direct messages.

If You’ve Been Targeted

If you've encountered a translation scam:

Report it to your national **cybercrime unit** or **postal police**

Share your experience in forums or Facebook groups like **Complaints About Translation Scammers Alert**

Warn others in the translation community and share screenshots where possible

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□□ Final Tip: Trust Your Instincts

When it comes to remote freelance work, especially in translation, caution is your best defense. If something feels off—whether it’s the wording of an email or a too-quick job offer—it probably is.

Do your research, verify every client, and never hesitate to say no.

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Online Scam Prevention

Follow these tips to avoid becoming a victim of an online scam.



Set up multi-factor authentication.



Never respond to scam messages.



Install antivirus software.



Keep social media accounts private.



File a complaint.



Be cautious transferring money.

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