

C2.1 – MTSL

(Week 2)

TASK 1: CORRECTING STYLISTIC ERRORS

SOLUTIONS:

Worksheet 1:

1. Case of ambiguity. The word “flying” may be interpreted both as an adjective (flying planes = planes that fly) and as a verb (flying planes = to fly planes). Thus, as it stands, the sentence may be taken to mean a) “Planes that fly can be dangerous.” or b) “It can be dangerous to fly planes.” Option b) is probably what the author intended to say.
2. Ambiguity again. It is not clear who was driving, the bears or us. Thus, the sentence may be interpreted as a) “(While) driving through the forest, we saw many bears.” or b) “We saw many bears who were driving through the forest.” Option a) is certainly what the author meant to say.
3. Absurd. Anyone who is unable to read the message (for whatever reason) will not understand that he/she ought to alert a member of the crew. The notice should have been posted in several different languages.
4. The quotation contains a cohesion error. It is not clear whether the pronoun “they” refers to the burros or to their owners, which leads the reader to wonder if the latter are subject to being placed before a firing squad. Solution: Replace “they” with “the animals”.
5. Repeated grammatical error involving the use of a plural verb form (“are”) with a singular subject (“one”). More strikingly, because the writer does not clearly specify that between five and ten percent of *anorexics and bulimics* are men, the sentence is open to an absurd interpretation, namely that between five and ten percent of women between 12 and 25 are men.
6. Ambiguity. Just as we saw in example number 1, the –ing form (here “visiting”) may be interpreted as a verb or as an adjective. Thus, this sentence may be understood to mean a) “It may be tedious to visit professors.” or b) “Professors on visit may prove to be tedious.” Option a) is most probably what was meant
7. Ambiguity. While one would normally understand from this sentence the idea that “the chickens were too hot to be eaten”, the sentence is also open to the following interpretation: “The chickens had no appetite because they were hot.” The sentence would be clearer thus: *“The chickens were too hot to be eaten. Or The chickens were too hot for us (me, him, etc.) to eat.*
8. Mistake with the verb “sit” instead of “set”. Clearer and truer to the conventions of the genre: Replace the verb “sit” with another verb such as “place” or “chill”.
9. Mistake involving the use of a reflexive pronoun. The sentence should read either “...and had to be encouraged to feed himself” or “...and had to be encouraged to eat.”
10. Mistake with “by Smith” as the agent. It is not clear whether Dr. Smith discovered that the patient had twelve children, or whether it was discovered (by someone else) that Dr. Smith had himself fathered twelve children with the patient. Better: Use the active voice. *Dr. Smith found the patient had twelve children.*
11. Cohesion error involving the antecedent of the pronoun “it”. As it stands, the sentence appears to say that what disappeared on the third day was the knee itself. Better: Replace “it” with “the pain” or “the trouble”.
12. Absurd. The ad implies that one pays less and also receives less. Better: *Pay less and get more.*
13. Absurd. If one must “see” it to appreciate it, the visually impaired, at whom the ad is directed, would be at a loss. Better: *Check it out!*
14. Mistake involving the agent (see example 10). The sentence appears to imply that the police are responsible for having beaten and robbed the man. Better: Use active voice. *Police find man beaten, robbed.*
15. Typographical error. (“be gin” instead of “begin”) which inadvertently leads one to understand that dinner will consist of alcohol alone.

TASK 2: CORRECTING TRANSLATION ERRORS

SOLUTIONS:



Worksheet 2:

- Grammatical and lexical errors: 1) *a* high quality *fabrics* (singular article with plural noun); 2) “stamped by hand” is better expressed as “hand-stamped” before the noun; 3) “it can be possible” is redundant (better: “it is possible to” or “you may”) and of course the correct verb is “to find” (not “to found”). Also, “possible” is correctly written with double ‘s’.
- Multiple errors: The first sentence should read: “*In November 1991, Lake City was born.*” The second sentence makes no sense, as it has no explicit or logical subject, and the word “tu” should presumably be “to”. In the third sentence, the comma following the subject should be eliminated. This sentence also appears to make little sense, or to lack cohesion with respect to the rest of the text.
- Obviously, the mistake lies in the fact that the reader is being welcomed to Ibiza, when the hotel in which he/she is staying is in Castellón. (It is easy to imagine that the person charged with doing this “translation” simply made a literal copy of a brochure from a hotel in Ibiza.)
- This translation is nearly incomprehensible if one does not a) know Spanish and b) perform the mental exercise of imagining what the original Spanish text might have looked like. The name of the museum being described is originally *Museo de Prehistoria y Cultura Valenciana*, which could be translated as “Museum of Prehistory and Valencian Culture”. The text is full of grammatical and lexical calques and errors. Among the most striking grammatical errors to be found is, in the first sentence, the use of the non-existent adjective “significatives” positioned after the noun with a plural ending. (It should be “significant”, positioned *before* the noun it modifies.) We also find the word “since” used incorrectly (it should be “from”) and yet another adjective incorrectly used in plural form, “romans”, which, incidentally should be capitalized (“Roman”). (The same mistake of adding an ‘s’ recurs once again in the text with the adjective “abundants”, which modifies the word “collections”, also in the plural, when logic would dictate that there is only one collection.). A comma is missing after the linker “moreover”. In the third sentence the phrase “etnographical culture of the Valencian” ought to be changed to “Valencian ethnographic culture”. As for lexical errors, we may mention “fund” instead of “finds”, “significatives”, as we said before, instead of “significant”, and “contains” instead of “deals with” in the first sentence. In sentence two, it would be more natural to say “it features” instead of “it exhibits”, and once again, “etnographical” should be changed to “ethnographic”.