Overcoming Language Barriers with Digital Tools

ChatGPT · DeepL · Wordpress · Zoom · Wordly

Practical examples

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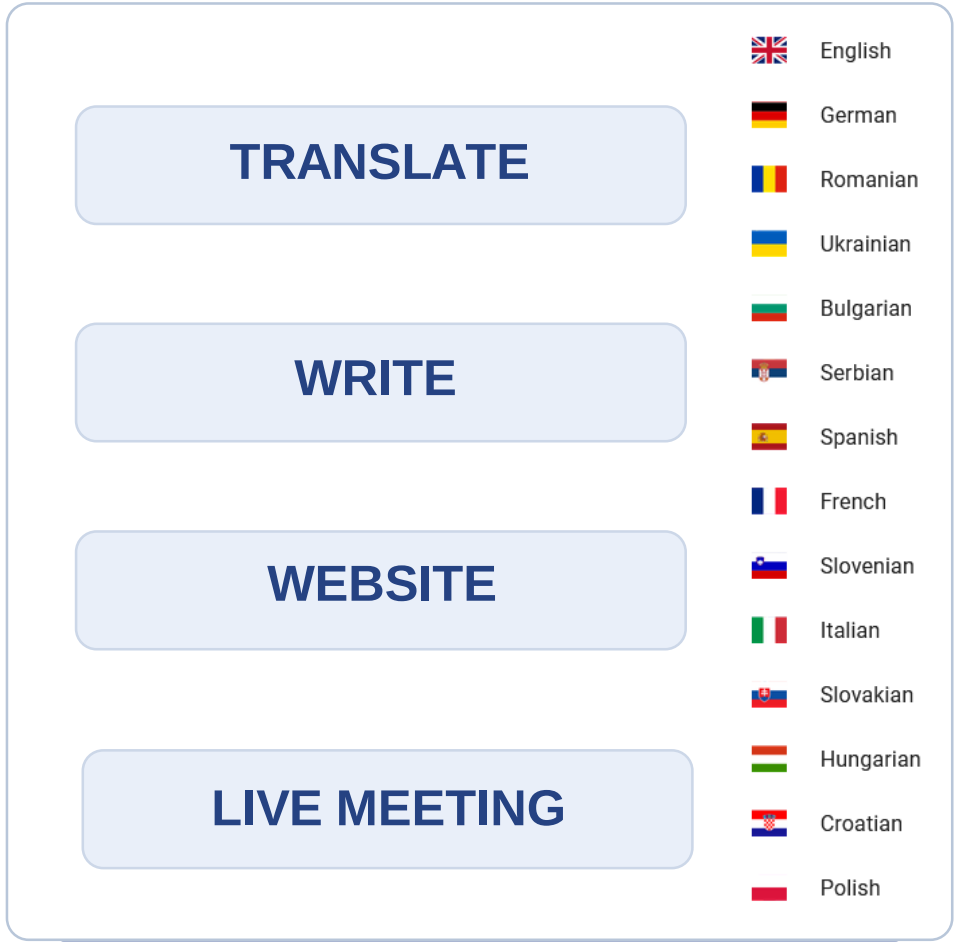


Why do language barriers matter?

Communication connects people but language differences can make it difficult.



Understanding each other

Not everyone speaks the same language.



Participation

Language should not prevent people from joining.



International cooperation

Multilingual communication helps us work together.

How can digital tools help us overcome these challenges

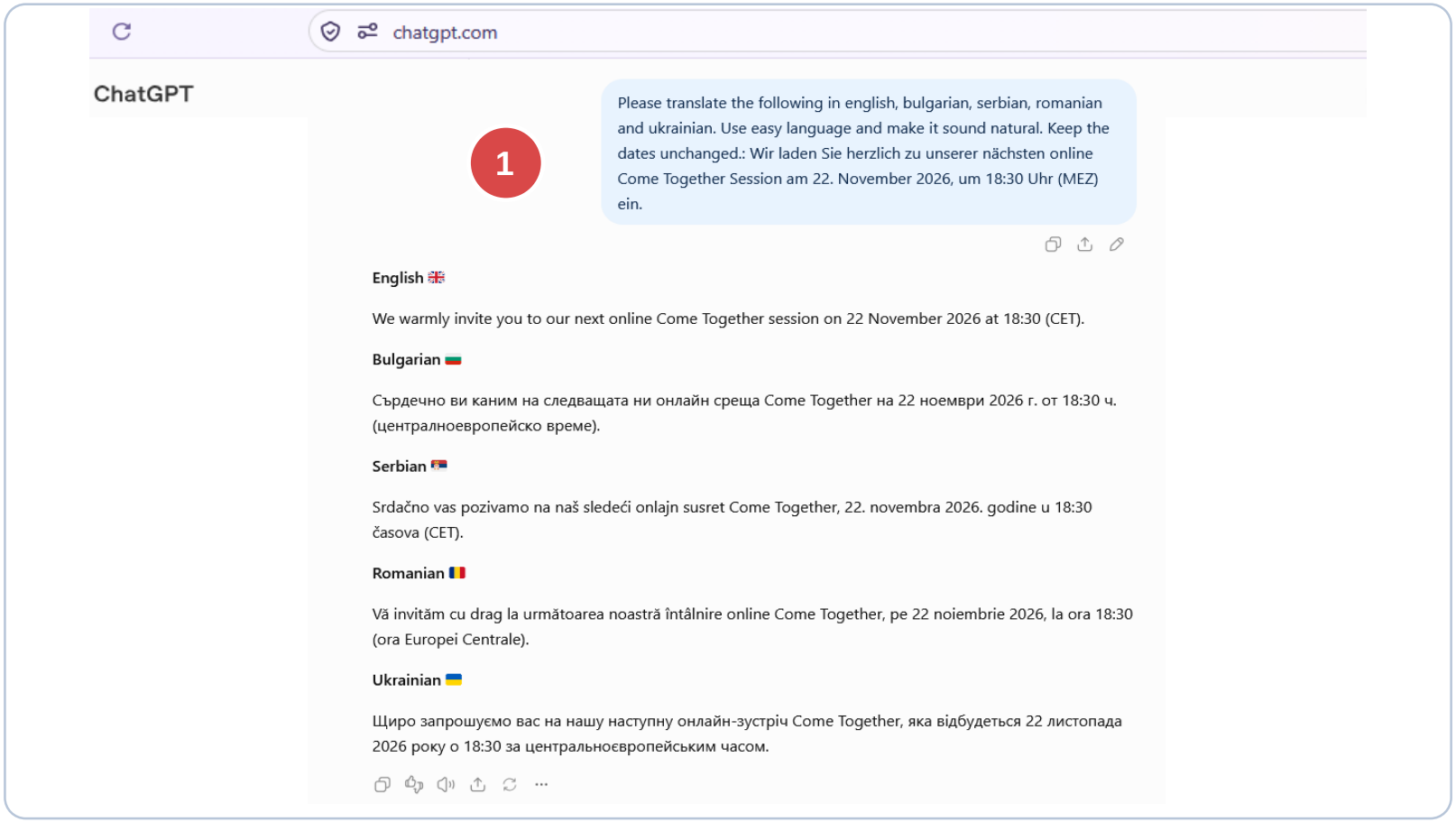
ChatGPT: translation

Translate, simplify and adapt text for different audiences.



ChatGPT: Translate an invitation

https://chatgpt.com/



WHERE TO CLICK

1. Write the language, audience and desired tone.
2. Ask for revision or clarification in the chat.

ChatGPT: Before and after

Original · German

Wir laden Sie herzlich zu unserer nächsten Online-Come-Together-Session am 22.11.2026 um 18:30 Uhr ein.

English

We warmly invite you to our next online Come-Together session on 22 November 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Romanian

Vă invităm cu drag la următoarea noastră întâlnire online Come-Together, pe 22 noiembrie 2026, la ora 18:30.

Serbian

Srdačno vas pozivamo na naš sledeći onlajn susret Come Together, 22. novembra 2026. godine u 18:30 časova (CET).

Bulgarian

Сърдечно ви каним на следващата ни онлайн среща Come Together на 22 ноември 2026 г. от 18:30 ч. (централноевропейско време).

Useful follow-up

“Please make the invitation sound warmer and more personal, so that both older adults and younger participants feel welcome.”

ChatGPT at a glance

Translation, rewriting and audience-friendly communication

ADVANTAGES

Flexible: can translate, explain and rewrite in one conversation.

LIMITATIONS

May produce errors or change details. Always check names, dates and facts.

FREE VERSION

Useful text translation and editing; feature limits apply.

PAID OPTIONS

ChatGPT Plus: US$20/month. Other paid plans and team options are available.

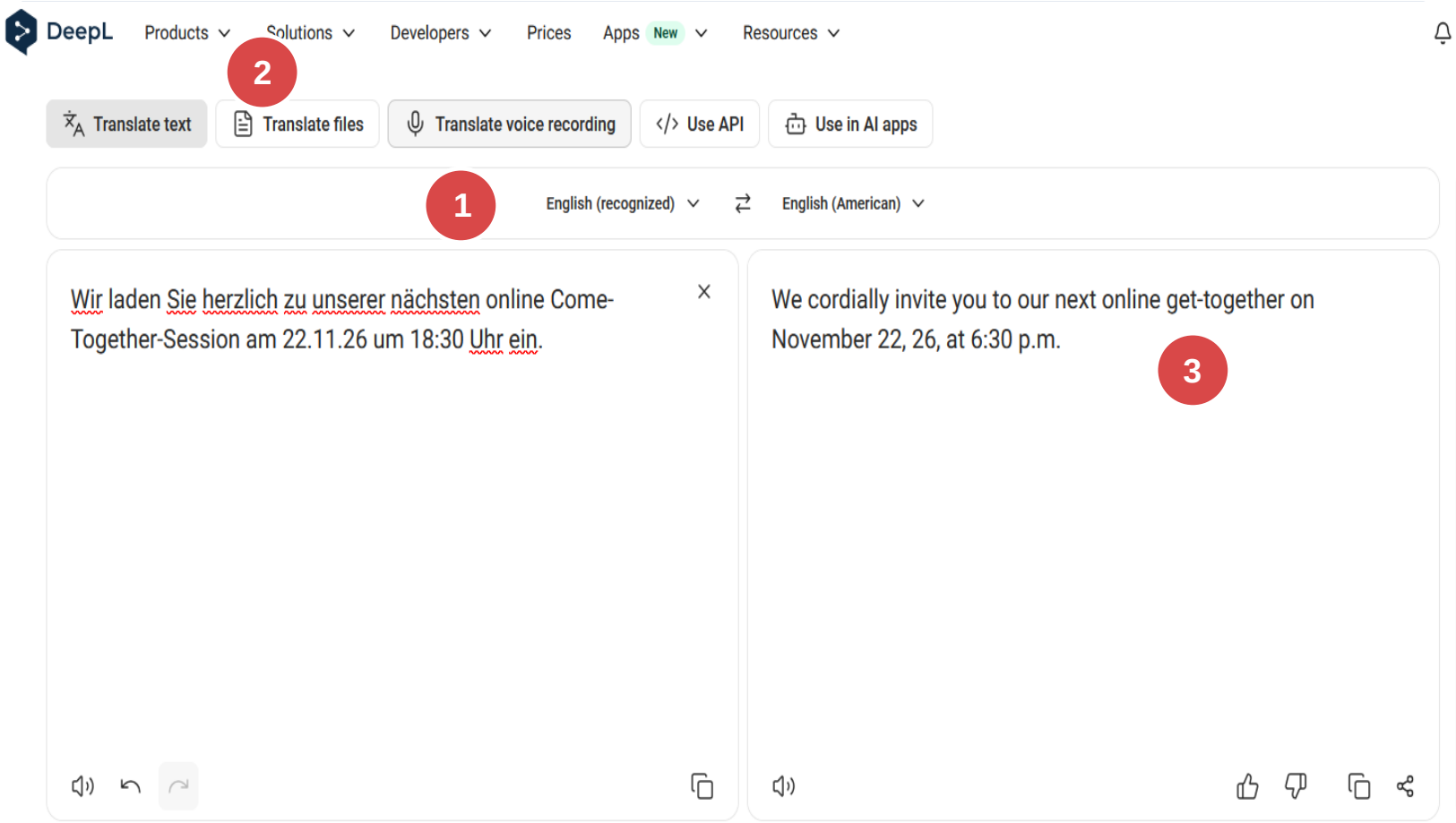
Key point • Great for adapting language to a specific audience.

DeepL: translation

Translate texts and documents into other languages.

DeepL Translator: Translate texts and files

https://www.deepl.com/de/translator

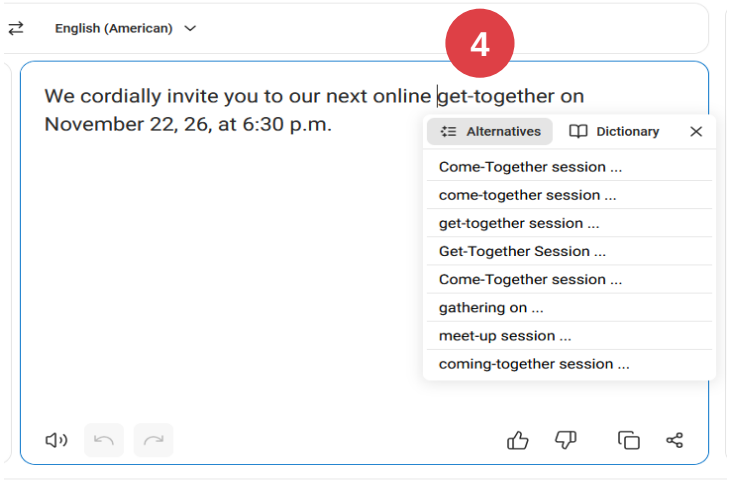


WHERE TO CLICK

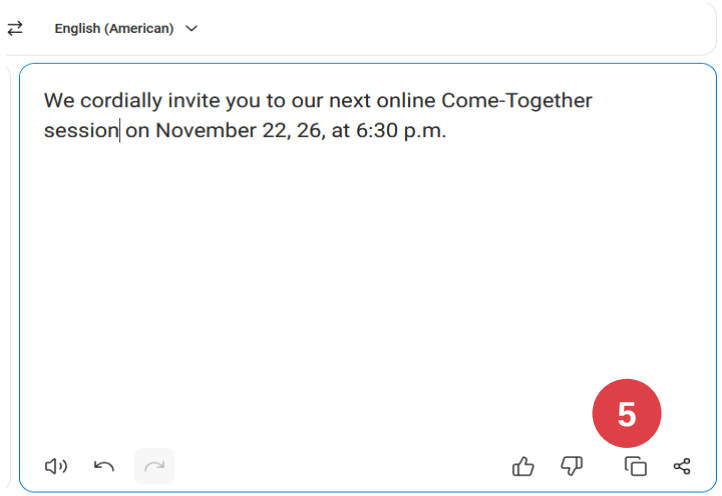
1. Choose the source and target languages.
2. Select “Translate files” to upload a document.
3. Review the translation and its terminology.

DeepL Translator: Improve your translation

Click a translated expression to compare alternatives, then copy your result.



Alternative wordings



Translation result

WHERE TO CLICK

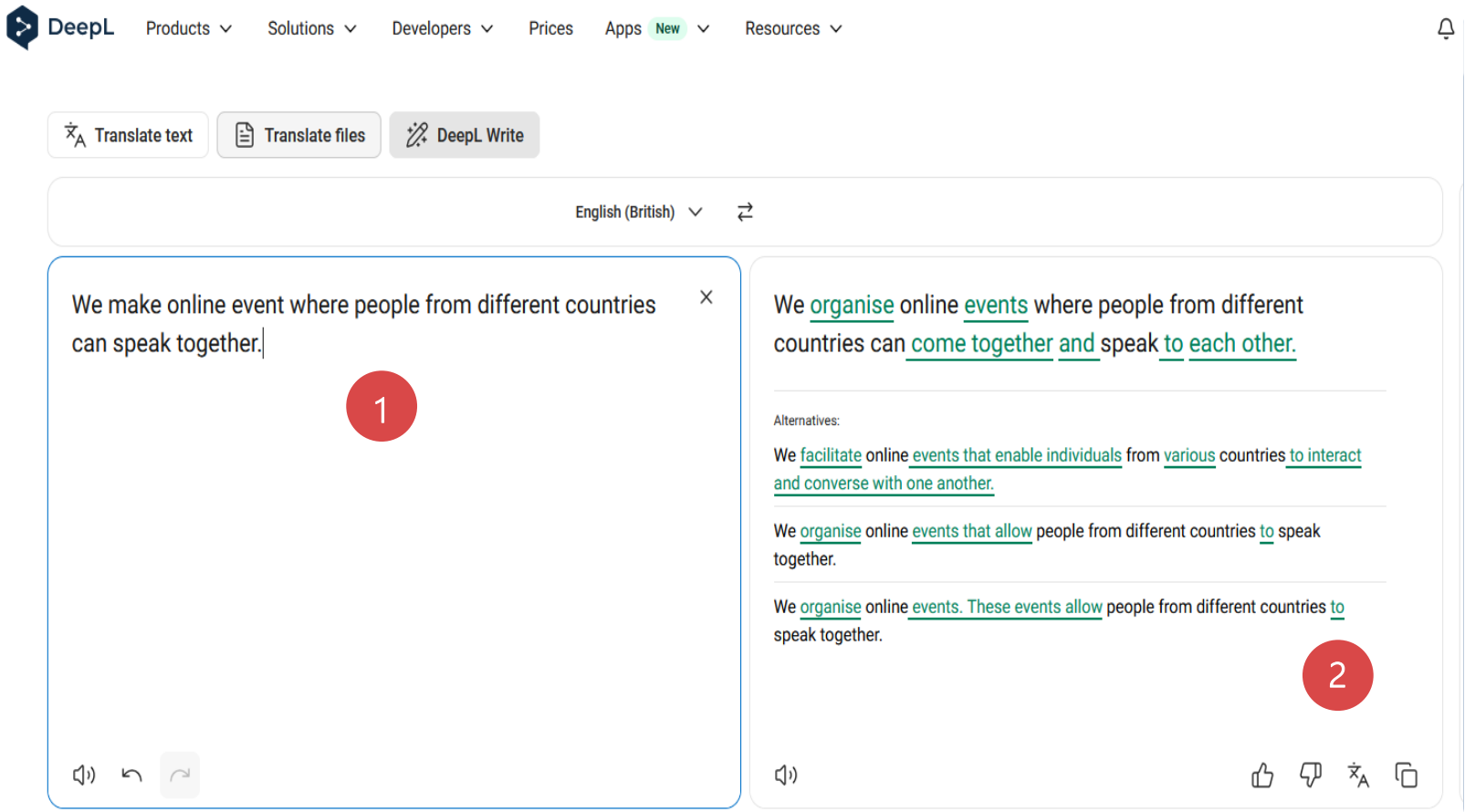
4 Click a word or phrase in the translation to compare alternative wordings.

5 Click the copy icon below the translation to reuse the final text.

You can refine individual expressions without translating the entire text again.

DeepL Write: Correct grammar and spelling

https://www.deepl.com/de/write

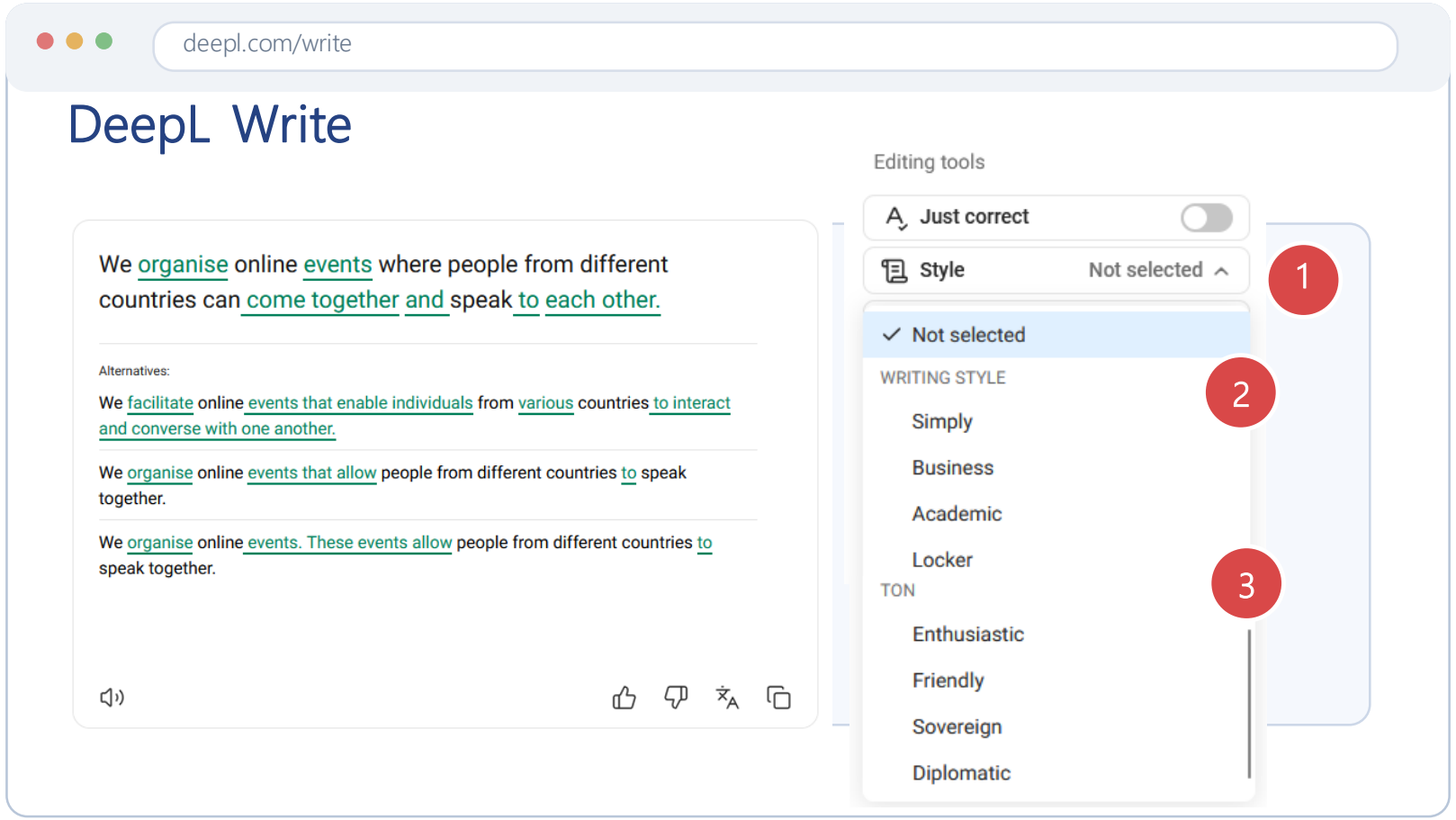


WHERE TO CLICK

1. Paste text into the left-hand field.

2. Review automatic grammar, spelling and wording suggestions.

DeepL Write: Choose style and tone



WHERE TO CLICK

1. Open the "Style" menu in the top-right.
2. Choose a writing style (e.g. Simple or Business).
3. Or select a tone (e.g. Friendly), then apply.

DeepL at a glance

Translator + Write: two tools for different tasks

ADVANTAGES

Strong for quick text/document translation and clearer wording.

LIMITATIONS

Context or specialised terminology can be imperfect; check output.

FREE VERSION

Translate and improve short texts with usage limits.

PAID OPTIONS

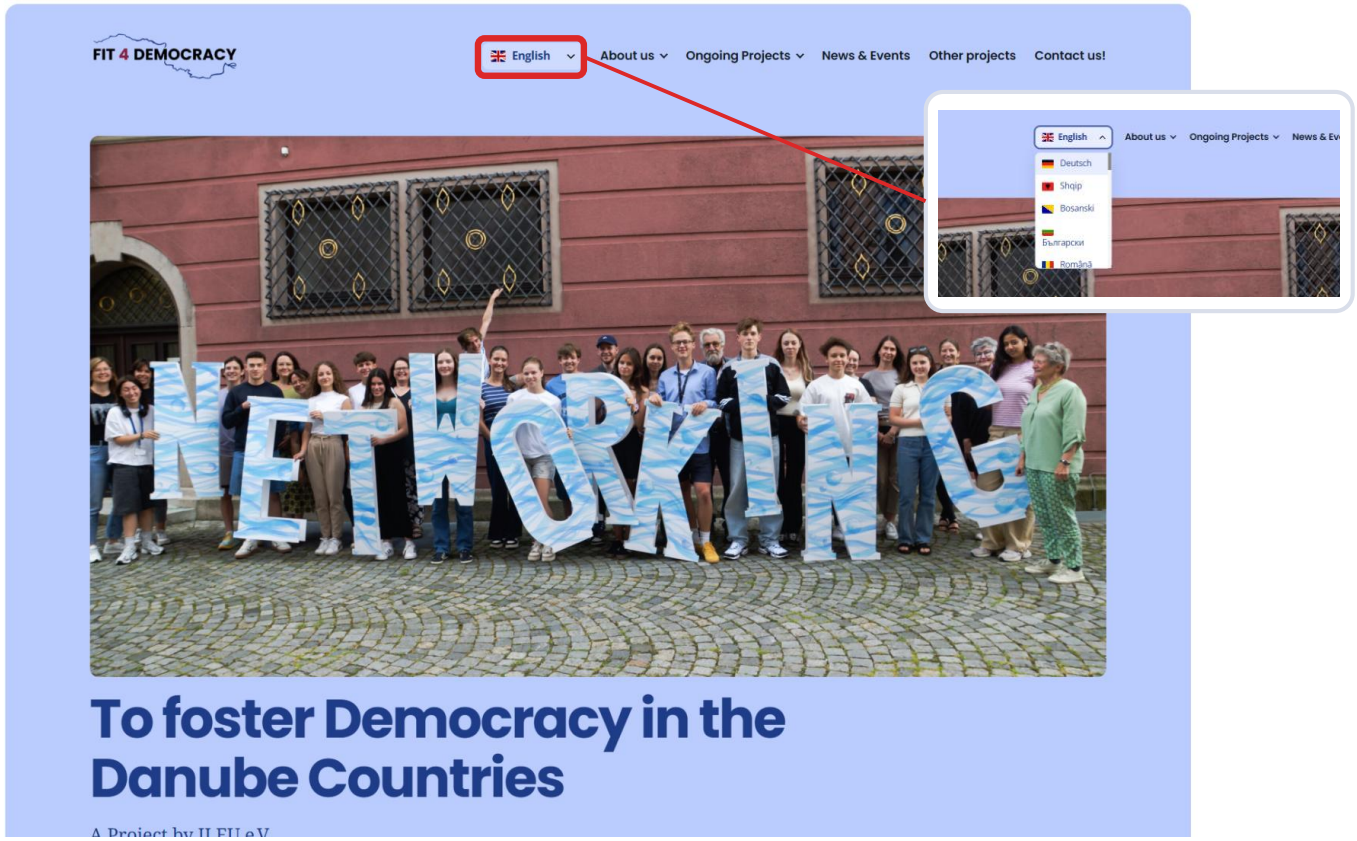
Translator Individual: from $8.42/month; Write Pro add-on: $7.86/month.

Key point • Translator changes languages; Write improves wording.

Multilingual websites

Because our Partners speak 14+ Languages

The fast and free option



A Free WordPress Plugin

GTranslate automatically translates website content into different languages. Visitors can switch languages directly on the website, without any additional software.

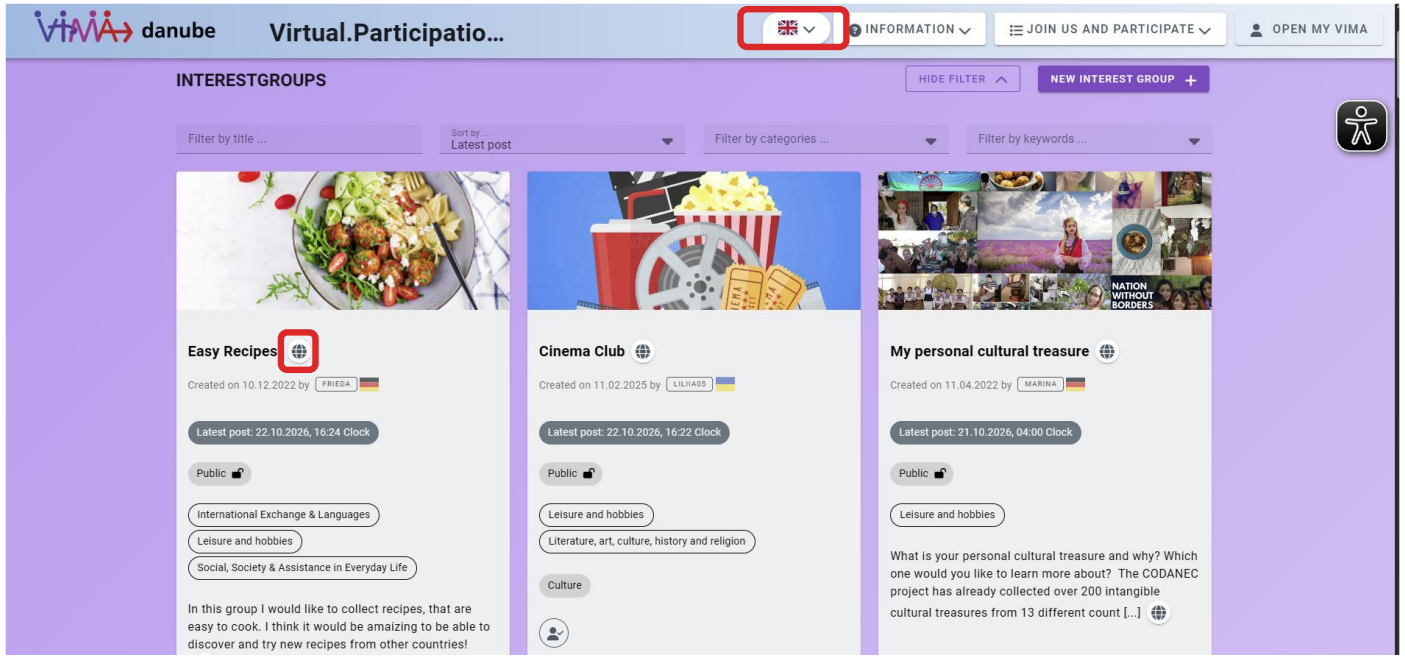
Advantages (+)
- Free and easy to set up
- Instant translation into many languages
- No manual translation required

Limitations (−)
- Translation quality may vary and can not be adapted
- Limited control over translations
- No multilingual SEO in the free version

We use it because it is a quick and cost-effective way to make our ILEU websites accessible to international visitors.

Tool Recommendation:
GTranslate plugin ↗

Why is this not Ideal for Every Site?



For some of our more complex websites, we need more than just instant translation.

Additional Challenges

- Higher requirements for translation quality and accuracy
- More control to review and correct translations
- Languages play a more important role in the user experience
- Translated content should also be found through search engines (SEO). So It needs to be on the website so Search engines can read the content in all languages. Which helps websites appear in search results on Google and other search engines.

Our Example: ViMA Danube

Our community platform ViMA has more complex multilingual requirements. We currently use a different translation solution and are evaluating better options for its redevelopment. Like WPML.

WPML: more control, more responsibility



WPML pricing & details ↗

Benefits

Managed translations, content editing, translated URLs, potential multilingual SEO and compatibility with WordPress workflows.

Costs & limits

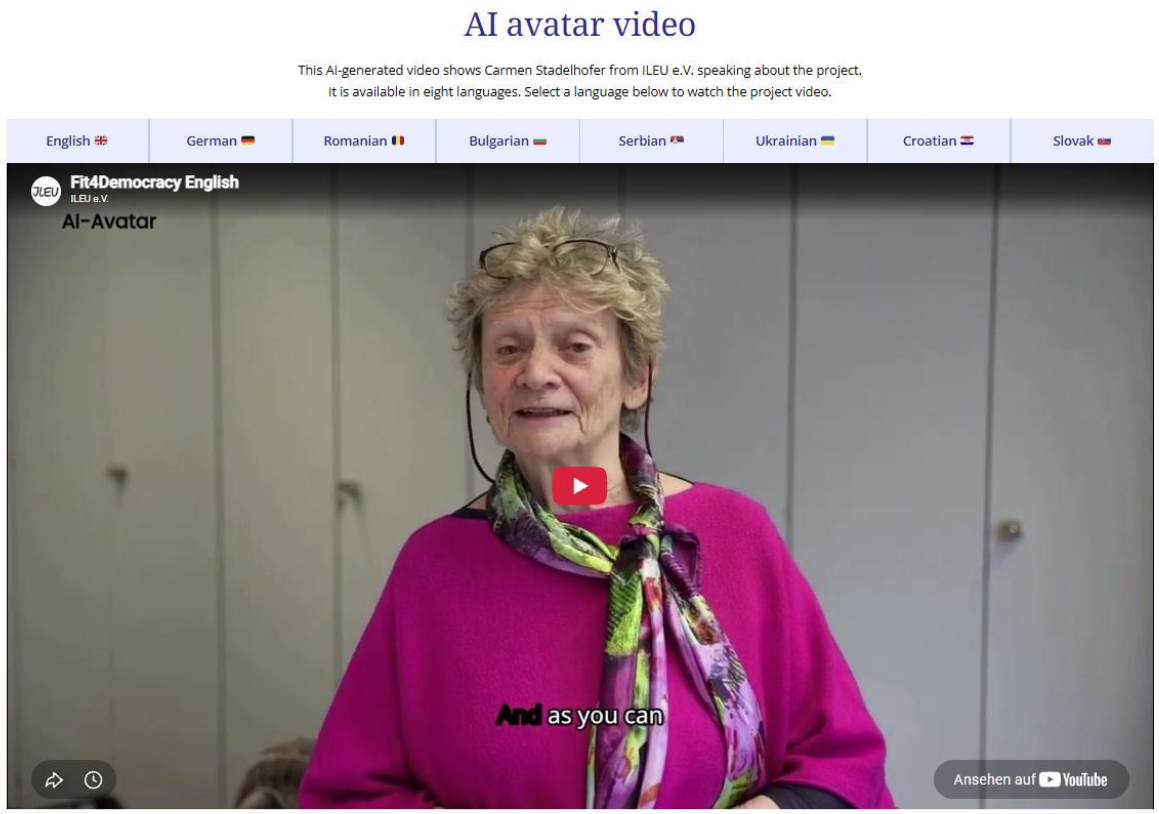
Multilingual CMS: €99 for a licence including one year of updates/support; AI translation beyond included words may cost extra. Setup and maintenance take time.

GTranslate vs WPML: our decision

Question	GTranslate (free)	WPML CMS
Speed to launch	Very fast	Needs setup
Translation control	Limited	Editable / managed
Indexed language pages	No SEO benefit	Possible with correct SEO setup
Software cost	€0	€99 licence + possible AI usage
Best for our use	Simple project websites	Potentially ViMA

Multilingual Videos

AI video translation: why we tried it



AI can help audiences hear our project videos in their own language.

We used **HeyGen to translate videos into different languages**, sometimes even creating AI avatars.

Why it is useful

Many of our international partners and participants do not speak German or English. AI translation makes our videos **more accessible**, allowing people to hear the message in their own language. Optional lip-sync makes it feel more natural.

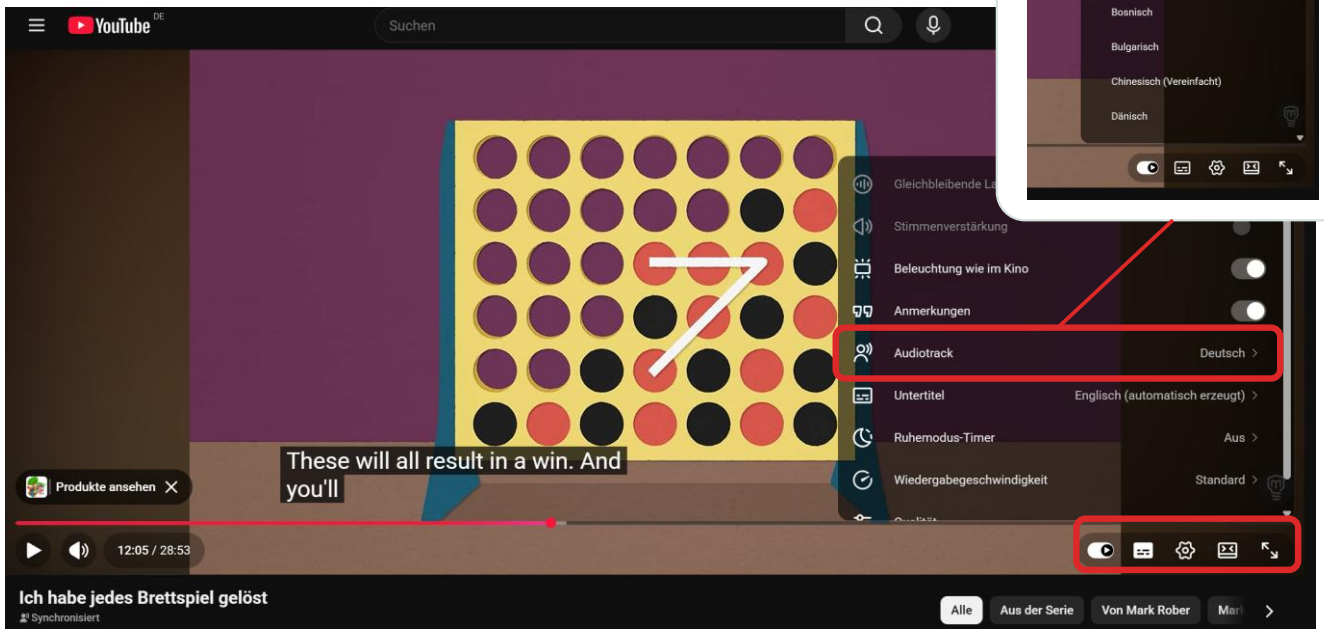
What we learned

Creating multiple language versions improves accessibility, but **each video needs to be checked, published and shared separately**. This can become costly in both time and money.

For details on avatars and HeyGen, see our earlier dedicated ILEU talk.
https://fit4democracy.eu/news/online-workshop-training-on-video-creation-with-david-fichtner-thursday-20-11-25-and-tuesday-25-11-25-6-pm-cet/

WATCH OUR FIT4DEMOCRACY EXAMPLE ↗

YouTube makes multilingual videos easier



Mark Rober: several languages, one YouTube video.

How we use YouTube

At ILEU, we usually publish and share our videos on YouTube. Fortunately, YouTube now makes multilingual videos much easier to manage.
Instead of uploading separate videos for each language, **we can add multiple audio tracks to a single video** all accessible through one link.

For the viewer

- YouTube can automatically play the video in the viewer's preferred language.
- Viewers can switch languages at any time via **Settings → Audio track**.

What creators need to do

- Create and review the translated audio tracks, for example using AI tools.
- Upload the finished audio files through YouTube Studio.
- YouTube handles the language selection — **no separate video uploads needed**.

Example: OPEN MARK ROBER ON YOUTUBE ↗

Creating translated audio: tools to try

HeyGen	**from $29 / month**	AI video translation, voice dubbing, optional lip-sync and avatars.
ElevenLabs	**from $6 / month**	AI voices and dubbing; usage depends on minutes and credits.
Rask AI	**from $39 / month**	Video dubbing and localisation; translation minutes are limited.
Synthesia	**from $19 / month**	AI avatars and AI dubbing; credits and plan features vary.

Costs grow with minutes and language versions; always check the output and consent to using a person's likeness.

Our usual approach: reviewed subtitles



Subtitles are available in the YouTube player settings.

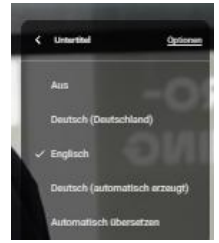
Why we use subtitles

For most of our videos, subtitles are a simple and affordable way to make content accessible to international audiences without changing the original audio and with less cost.

How it works for viewers

Viewers can turn on subtitles in the YouTube player and select an available language through **Settings → Subtitles/CC**.





How we use them at ILEU

- We usually provide German and English subtitles.
- We review the original transcript before translating it.
- For additional languages, volunteers help us check translation quality whenever possible.

Example: PLAY ILEU VIDEO ↗

YouTube Studio: how we make subtitles

YouTube Studio manages your own YouTube channel, uploaded videos and subtitles.

1	**GET THE ORIGINAL**	Open the video in YouTube Studio and download or copy its auto-generated captions.
2	**CHECK THE TRANSCRIPT**	Check names, project terms and timing before translating. For example, YouTube might hear “ELOI” instead of “ILEU”.
3	**SAVE THE CORRECT SOURCE**	Upload or publish the corrected captions in the original language.
4	**TRANSLATE AND REVIEW**	Use ChatGPT or DeepL to translate the corrected transcript, then check meaning and timing.
5	**ADD THE NEW LANGUAGE**	Upload the English subtitle file as its own track; repeat for other languages if reviewed.

TIP: Correct the source before translating, or mistakes will appear in every language.

OPEN STUDIO ↗

Dubbed audio or subtitles?

DUBBED AUDIO

WHY IT HELPS

- Viewers can listen in their language
- Better for long videos or people who struggle with reading

WHAT IT COSTS

- More production time and credits
- Voice, timing and meaning need review
- Multiple versions or tracks to manage

SUBTITLES

WHY IT HELPS

- Usually cheaper and quicker to update
- Original speaker's voice stays audible
- Practical for most ILEU interviews

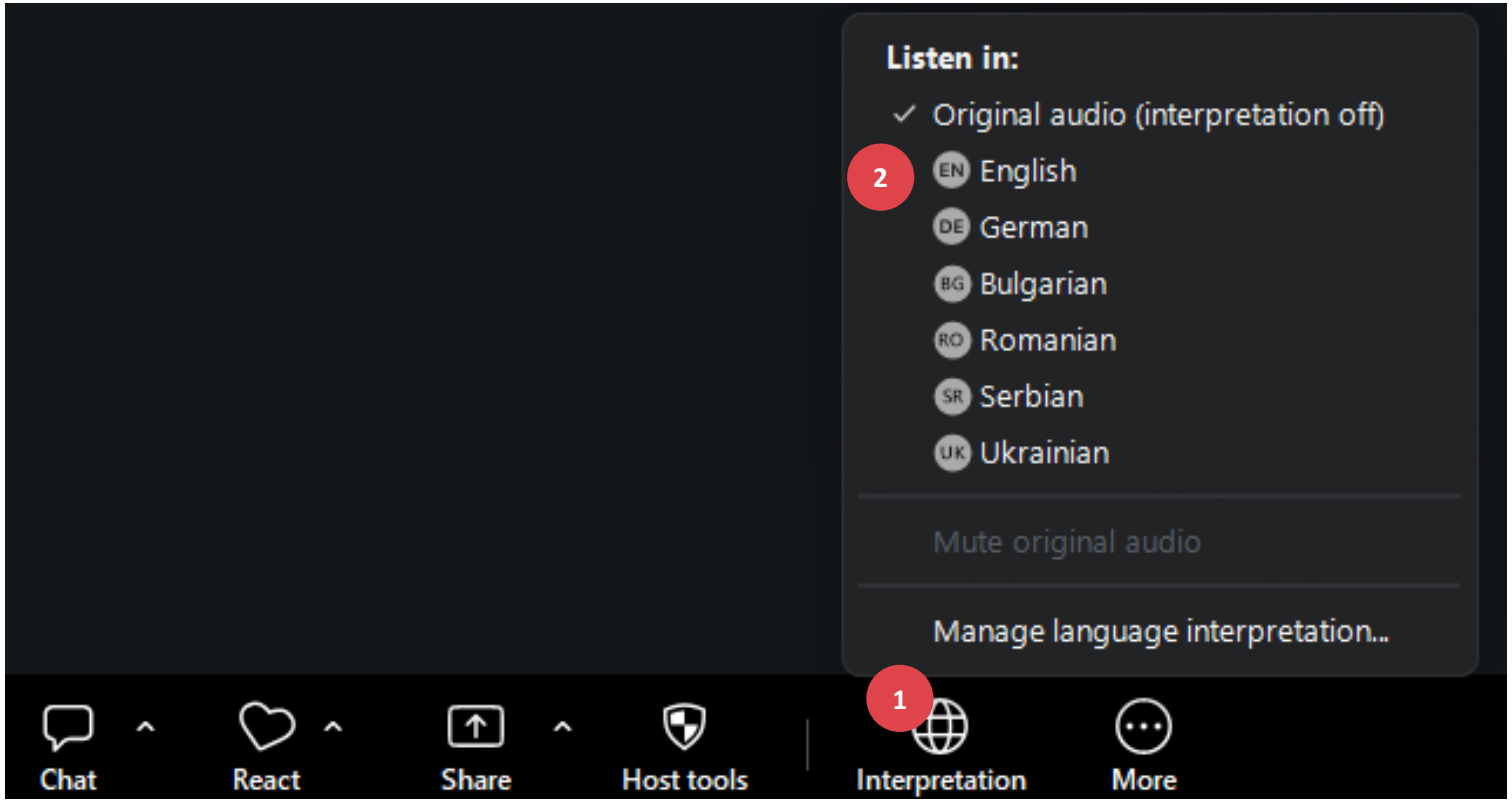
WHAT IT COSTS

- Viewers must read along and lose attention
- Names, timing and translations still need checking

Zoom: translation

Interpretation channels; captions and translated captions.

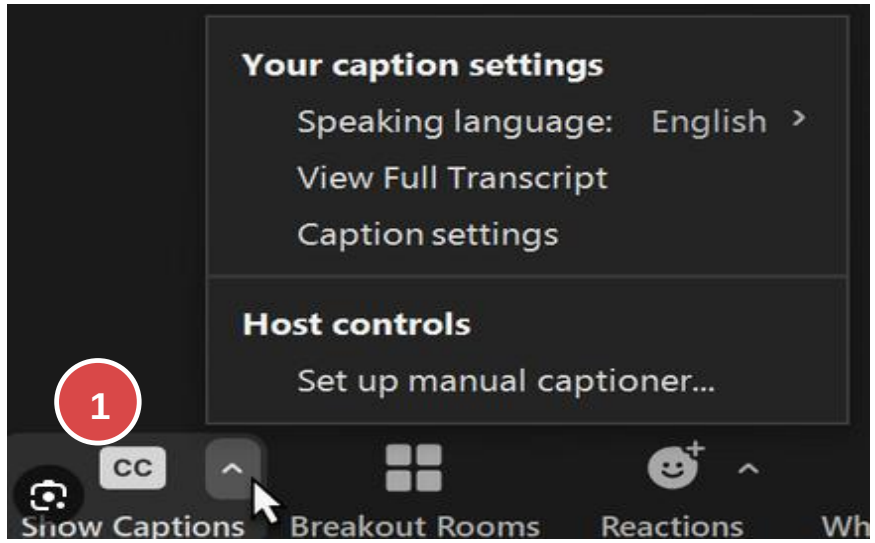
Zoom: Interpretation language channels

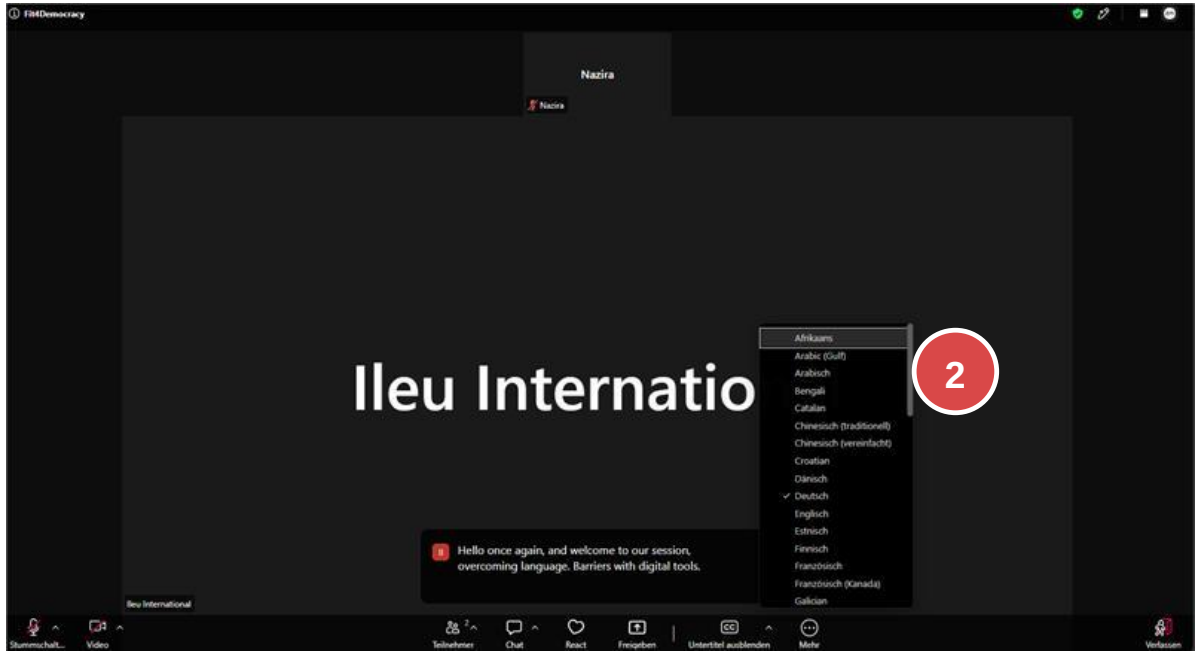


WHERE TO CLICK

1. Click the interpretation/globe control.
2. Select the preferred audio language channel.

Zoom: Captions and translated captions





WHERE TO CLICK

1. Enable captions for speech-to-text in the spoken language.

2. If available, choose translated captions to read another language.

Zoom at a glance

Multilingual meetings: audio channels and captions

ADVANTAGES

Language access without leaving the meeting platform.

LIMITATIONS

Audio interpretation needs interpreters; automatic captions can be inaccurate.

FREE VERSION

Basic meetings and automatic captions (where enabled).

PAID OPTIONS

Zoom Workplace Pro: from US$14.16/user/month. Translated captions may cost extra.

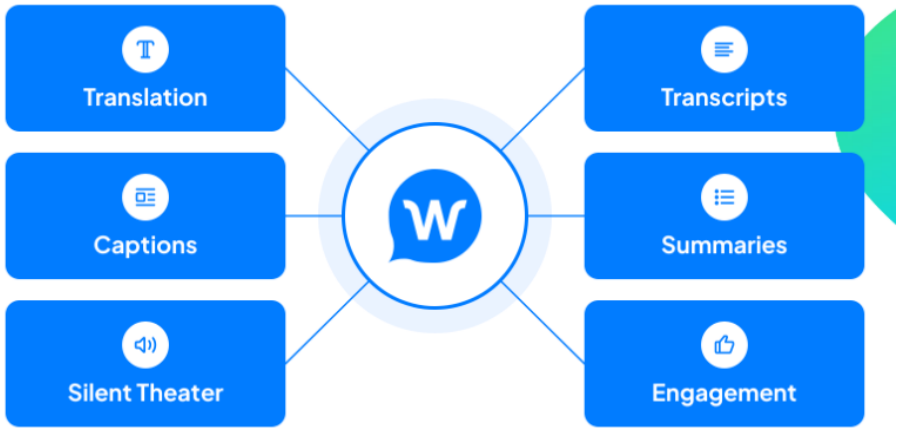
Key point • Choose between human audio interpretation and automated text captions.

Wordly: live translation

Multilingual participation in online meetings and in-person conferences.



What is Wordly?



AI-powered live translation

- A speaker talks in one language.
- Participants select their preferred language.
- They can read translated captions and/or listen to translated audio.
- Works for online, in-person and hybrid events

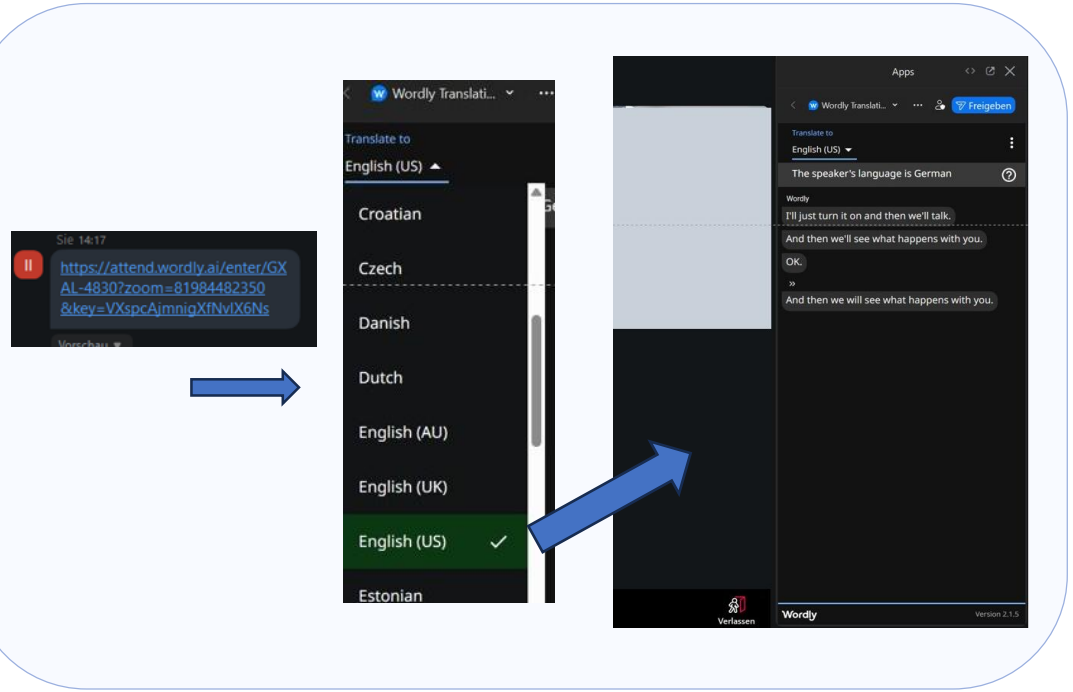
Why we use it

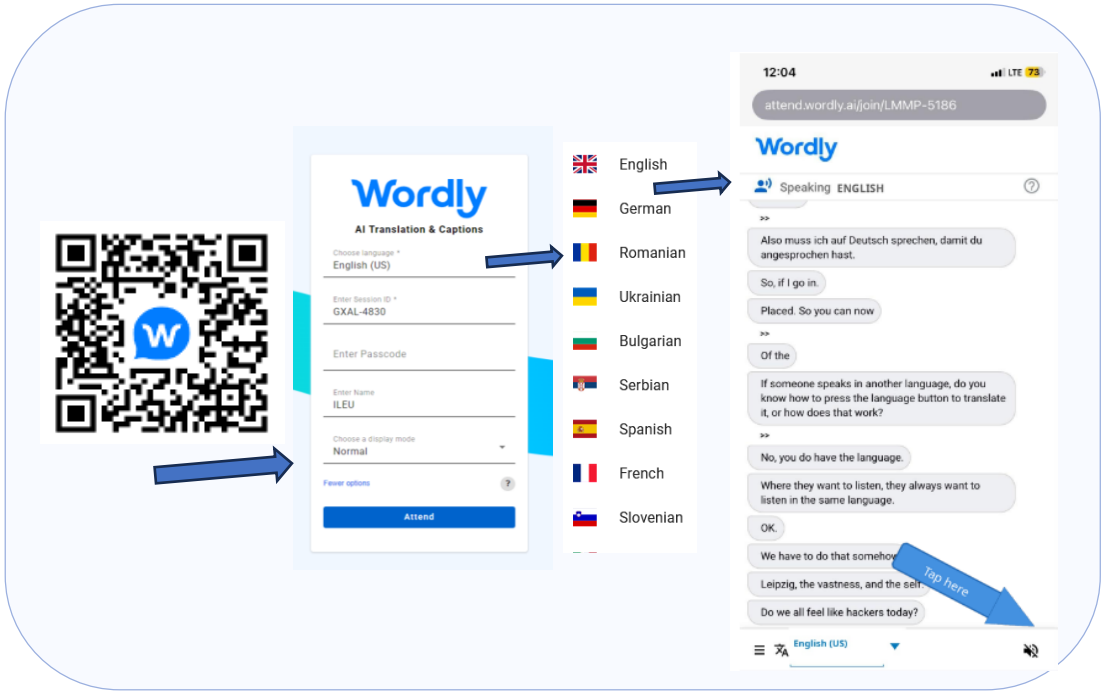
We want participants from several countries and generations to follow and contribute without requiring a separate interpreter for every language.

During this session

Wordly is active, participants can already experience the translated output live.

Wordly in Zoom: what participants see





Joining Wordly from Zoom

Participants open the access link or scan a QR code while following the Zoom meeting.

Selecting a language

Participants choose a language and follow live translated captions or listen to the audio.

JOIN → CHOOSE YOUR LANGUAGE → READ OR LISTEN

At our conference: subtitles on the big screen



Live subtitles on the big screen

We displayed live translations in two languages alongside the presentation, so everyone could follow without looking at a phone.

OUR MAIN APPROACH

The large projection was our primary way to make the conference accessible.

QR CODE: AN EXTRA OPTION



Guests could choose other languages on their phones, reading captions or listening through headphones. On the big screen we showed two languages; the QR code offered more languages individually. No app required everything opened directly in the browser.

Wordly: benefits, limits and costs

Benefits

Many selectable languages at once; browser/QR access; live translated audio and captions; reusable hours across sessions.

What to plan for

A shared screen can show only a limited number of languages at once. The QR option lets individuals choose other languages. We also need clear audio, stable internet and human checks for names or accents.

Public reference price: about US $1,500 for 10 hours (12 months). NGO discounts may apply.

Key takeaways: which tool for which need?

Texts, documents	ChatGPT / DeepL
Simple website	GTranslate quick & free
Managed multilingual platform	WPML more control but expensive
Dubbed Videos	Emersive but costlier
Subtitles	practical but less emersive
Meetings & conferences International Online Meetings	Zoomtranslation - Interpretation channels; captions and translated captions. Wordly live multilingual access with audio but expensive

More to Explore

Fit4Democracy Qualifications

Our previous online sessions

Materials and recordings from our training sessions on different digital tools are available on our website.

fit4democracy.eu/qualifications/

Want to learn more?

We can organize an extra session to explore today's tools in more detail.

Please fill out our short online questionnaire and tell us which topics interest you!