

Using Foreign Phrases In Your Writing

When you write for a mixed audience, occasionally peppering your work with foreign phrases can lend it a character that makes it more endearing to certain segments of it. If you write a blog, for instance, and has seen a growing number of French readers, throwing in a couple of French phrases during a piece (even if you haven't learned to speak the tongue) can really make it all the more special for those who pick up on the reference.

Common Expressions

Throwing in a common expression from the foreign language is employed by many writers. However, much of the luster in this case tends to fade away, especially if it's such a frequently employed phrase, such as greetings or clichés.

Section Headers

I love using the technique on section headers, especially if the article is related to the foreign language. When I wrote a piece about Italian aperitifs for a food website, for instance, I wrote short two to three word section headers, ran them through a language translation software and used the Italian equivalents on the actual piece.

While English-speaking readers probably didn't understand what the headers meant, they would have picked up on it eventually based on the context of the section. On the other hand, Italian readers loved it, almost like it paid a genuine homage to them.

Full Foreign Language Sentences

Occasionally, I've seen writers use full sentences in the foreign language as part of the piece. Even without explaining what they meant, the pieces flowed smoothly, while lending it a special character. As with headers, let the context fill in the blanks.