Detailed Proposal Writing Techniques (Structure and Style of English)

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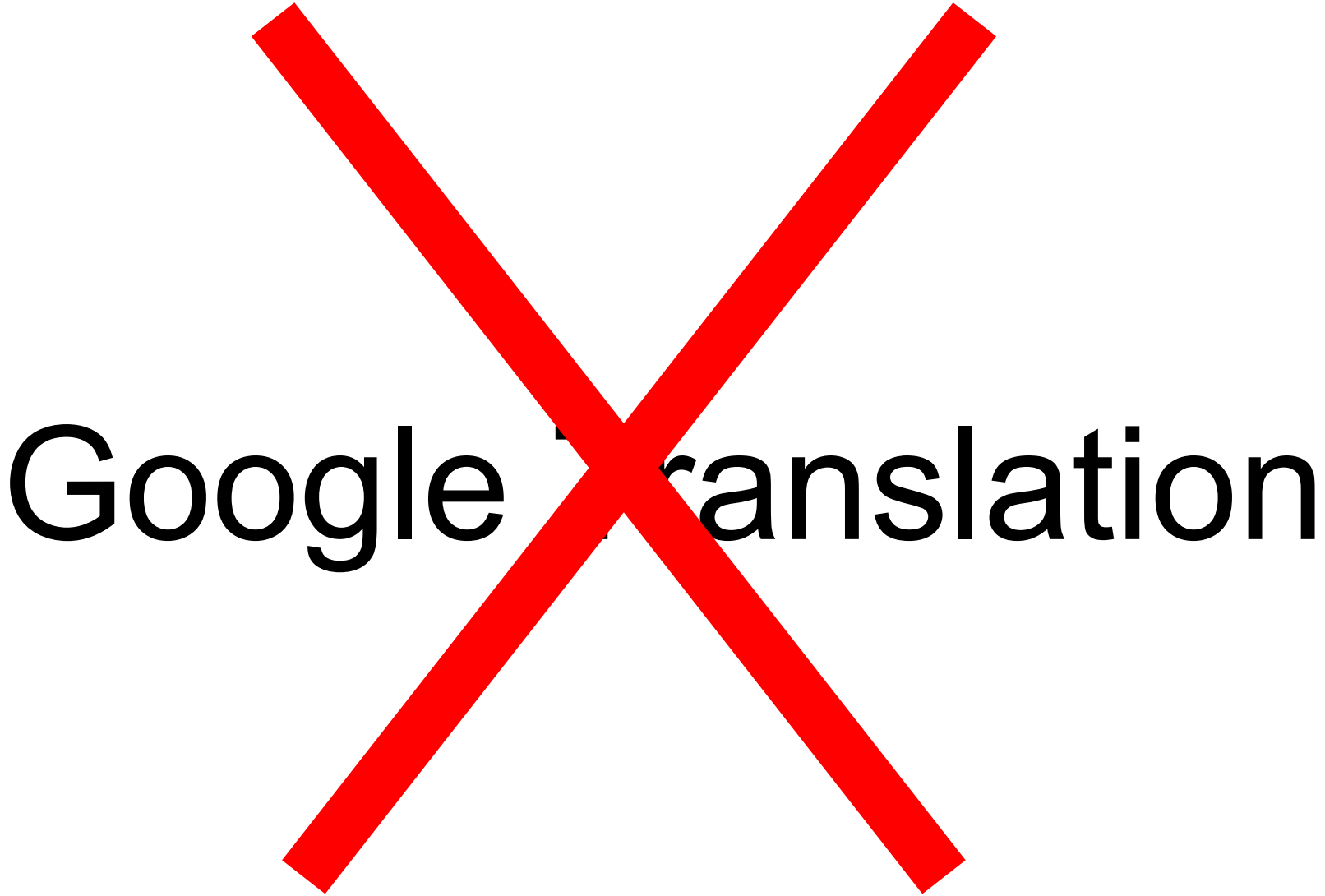
Score improvement by merely a 1 point WILL make your ranking much higher.

Proposal Review

- Assessment criteria
  - –Overall scientific merit of the proposed investigation
  - –Potential contribution to the advancement of scientific knowledge

English writing (1)

- Poor English writing
  → hard to read for reviewers, which would give bad impression → lower score
- As natural English as possible
  - In English you need to describe almost everything;
  - In Japanese people can understand many things without detailed explanation;


Google Translation

English writing (2)

- It is advised not translate from your mother language to English; it is better to think in English and draft English text all the time during the proposal preparation.

- Simple but logical sentences would be OK.

  We are not writing a novel !

English writing (3)

- Be careful the usage of articles; wrong usage of “a/an” or “the” may dramatically change the meaning of a sentence.

  Do you have time ?
  Do you have the time ?

English writing (4)

- Singular or plural form
- How to use auxiliary verbs
  will / may / can / need
- Improve the manuscript several times.

Be kind to Reviewers (1)

- Reviewers have to read at least 100 proposals in two weeks or so !!

- Better to assume that not all reviewers are experts in your field; often they are novice; in many cases they do not know what you have achieved so far.

Be kind to Reviewers (2)

- Proposals should have clear and focused structure
  - Concise, minimal and complete information, but sufficient justification
  - Be logical and show sufficient evidence and/or rationales
  - Use of “heading”s would help a lot

Structure (1)

- To show evidence, reasoning, rationales
  - Research background and motivation/issues to be resolved for advancing astronomy;
  - If the proposal is based on proposers' past research, show clearly what were obtained and what issues remained unresolved;
  - Methodology in resolving the issues;
  - Which information should be obtained in achieving the goals;

Structure (2)

- To show evidence, reasoning, rationales
  - Data analysis plan;
  - Demonstrate that your group has sufficient experience and skills to conduct the proposal;
  - Demonstrate it is possible to advance astronomy even if negative results were obtained;
  - Show clearly it is impossible to resolve the issues without ALMA;
  - …

What vs Why

- EA proposers tend to be good at describing WHAT they plan to do, but not so good at describing WHY they plan to do.

- Science is an activity to answer many WHYs. “What to do” is a kind of methodology for answering these “Why”s.
- “Why”s are more important than “What”s.

Make Reviewers Convinced !

- “Justification”
  The action of showing something to be right or reasonable

https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/justification

Why ? → Justify them (1)

- How reviewers assess: e.g.,
  - Why is this science theme important for advancing astronomy ? Is its scientific background well and sufficiently described ?
  - Why are the proposed objects most suited in achieving the scientific goals ? Is the number of sources justified to be appropriate, not too many or not too few ?
  - Why is the spatial resolution chosen most appropriate ?

Why ? → Justify them (2)

- How reviewers assess: e.g.,
  - Why is the sensitivity chosen most appropriate in achieving the goals ?
  - Why is the frequency / the band / frequency resolution / molecular lines chosen most appropriate ?
  - Why are the spws needed and most appropriate ?
  - Why is ALMA really needed ?
  - … Why, Why, Why ?

Good Luck !