

# AMADOR BILINGUAL VOICE-OVERS

Spanish/English Voice-Overs with No accent in Either Language



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## The Seven Most Common Bilingual Voice-Over Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

*By Rosi & Brian Amador*  
Spanish/English Voice-Over Actors since 1994

In nearly seventeen years of doing voice-over work, Brian and I have had the good fortune to work with repeat clients on projects from commercials, corporate narrations, documentaries, eLearning, audiobooks and marketing to web tutorials, telephony and children's audiobooks, as well as animated movies for museums. Following is a list of seven common mistakes to avoid when hiring bilingual voice-over talent for your job.

### I. Incorrect or Regional Spanish

Spanish-language v/o scripts are often translated from English scripts, sometimes in a hurry, and sometimes by people whose Spanish is less than perfect. Avoid having your project marred by Spanish that's grammatically incorrect, awkward, or excessively regional. Remember that a colloquial expression from one part of the Spanish-speaking world can be unintelligible, or worse, offensive, to people from other regions. When hiring your voiceover talent, look for native bilingual speakers with a neutral, universal accent and vocabulary who can comfortably recommend corrections and edits. For more complex jobs, a seasoned voiceover actor will often have established relationships with

professional translators who can attend to your project quickly, thereby ensuring the highest quality translation.

## 2. Spanish Text is Too Long

Spanish is a beautiful, poetic language, but it's not as efficient as English in getting the point across. A literal translation of an English voiceover script is often too long to fit in the allotted time. Again, a native speaker who can suggest changes to the script while maintaining the message can help you streamline your Spanish script. Sometimes it also helps to have someone who can talk fast!

## 3. There's "Bilingual" and There's Bilingual

Many people speak two languages. If you're looking for bilingual voiceover talent, make sure they speak both languages well, enunciate clearly, and speak with a neutral accent. After all, the point of voiceover is to communicate a message, and this works best when the listener is not distracted by the speaker's accent or lack of fluency. Seek out testimonials documenting fluency.

## 4. No Studio Available When You Need It

Don't let your project grind to a halt as you wait for the voiceover to be recorded. If your project is time-sensitive, it helps to have voiceover talent that can record broadcast-quality VO in a home studio. For more complex jobs, a seasoned voiceover actor will often have established relationships with local studios and with other voiceover talent who can help you populate a project with the best people for your job, on your timeline.

## 5. Not the Kind of Audio Files You Need

Especially if you're working with someone who has a home studio,

make sure they can get finished audio to you in the format and with the specifications you need (MP3, AIFF, WAV, etc.). If you need a lot of prompts or a memory-intensive format, you'll also want to be sure they can get the files to you quickly, either through their own FTP site or yours. Some kind of phone patch system is also a must if you want to be able to offer real-time coaching or suggestions.

#### 6. It's Just Reading, Right? Anyone Can Do It

Wrong! All you need is one bad experience to show you how mistaken this assumption is. Without a competent voiceover actor, you can do countless takes, running up studio time and hourly fees, and still not get what you're looking for. Mispronunciation, lackluster interpretation, and inability to voice multiple characters or to offer different interpretations, are all problems that can be avoided by hiring experienced, artistic voiceover talent. Don't be afraid to ask for references or demo recordings.

#### 7. The Flipside: The Voiceover Diva

Maybe you hired a talented, experienced VO actor with great demos, but if they're not willing to take instruction, you're still not going to get what you want. Make sure your VO talent is someone who understands that you are the client and is responsive to your suggestions – someone with a positive attitude and a sense that you're on the same team, who cares as deeply as you do about your end product.

*This article was co-authored in July 2009 by: Rosi & Brian Amador, Bilingual Voice-Over actors since 1996. Clients include PBS, WGBH-Boston, NYSE, National Geographic School Publishing, Houghton Mifflin, Scholastic, Live Oak Media, Comcast, Scientific Learning, MedicalSpanish.com, MASS Department of Public Health and Dr. Dental. The Amadors have a top quality home studio and provide 24-hour delivery, access professional translation services and a network of further bilingual voice-over colleagues for multiple voice projects. Their teenage daughters also do bilingual voice-over narration.*

*Rosi and Brian are also 27-year veteran Latin music recording artists, touring nationally with their Three-time Boston Music Award-winning Latin band, Sol y Canto. Rosi and Brian also provide original music, guitar, other instruments and vocals to their clients. The duo's Billboard-charting CD's have garnered praise and their live performances have earned them three Boston Music Awards as "Outstanding Latin Act as well as a Boston Magazine "Best of Boston" win. "...a sweet, sophisticated Pan-Latin folk sound built around the gorgeous mezzo soprano of Rosi Amador and the vocal harmony and pristine guitar of her husband, Brian." - Rhythm Magazine*

*For the Amadors' Voice-Over websites, including demos, testimonials and client list, please visit:*

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