



Selling Your Book in the Spanish-Language Market

By **Monica Di Santi**

The Spanish-Language market is a mirror where many English written books project their reflexion. Spanish and Latin American editors tend to publish books that have already been successful in Europe and USA. Novels, self-help and children's books are widely translated into Spanish.

Can you, as a writer, push your book into the Spanish-language market? Yes! Start with a good research of the market. Browse Spanish and Latin American publishers' catalogues and see if your book fits in with those already published. Once you have found a suitable publisher for your book, get your book translated into Spanish and submit it to a Spanish-speaking editor, together with a cover letter written in Spanish.

Editors are open to evaluate the potential of unsolicited manuscripts, and if they like your work they may publish most of your books. They tend to publish the same author several times. This will increase your exposure and give you an opportunity to promote your books in the Spanish-language market.

When you contact the editors, use their language as far as you can, and express your willingness to take part in the marketing of your books. They expect you to be ready to travel, speak to groups and attend booksignings. This will bring you close to your readers and editor as well, getting a better profit in the long run.

Regional Market Differences

The Spanish-Language market is big and dissimilar in its readers and usage of the language. Some books sell better in some countries than in others. Harry Potter and R.L. Stine's "Goosebumps" series have sold better in Argentina than in Chile. Self-help books sell slightly better in Spain than in Latin America. Children's fiction used in schools gets a good profit everywhere. Romance also sells well.

Some editors have realized these differences, and prefer to analyze the characters and contents of the books before investing their money. Others publish books already translated and published in other Spanish-Language countries. So, any book translated into Spanish will certainly sell in more than one country.

Just as British and American English have differences that make them distinctive languages, so does the Spanish language in different regions. The broadest division is the Castilian and Latin American Spanish, but important variations can be distinguished among the Latin-American countries too.

U.S. Spanish is basically a mixture of Mexican and Central American Spanish, and is quite different from the language used in South America. Every region has developed its own variety combining the original Castilian Spanish, native languages and successive immigrations.

What a Translator Can Do for You

A good professional translator is the key to reach the unknown market. She has to be a native speaker of the target language, and should be based in Spain or Latin America. The translator can not only provide you with an accurate translation of your book but with valuable information and action as well.

The translator can write your submission letter according to the local protocol, i.e. a letter thought and written in Spanish, not a literary translation of the English words, which generally sounds awkward. This will show your authentic interest in the people as well as in business, and will make a positive impression.

The translator can also make the first contact with the editor, and submit the translation of your book in a floppy disk. She can also translate the editor's messages into English for you. She will be a bridge between you and the new market.

When your book is accepted, the publisher will contact you directly to make a contract in Spanish, so you will need your translator to understand the terms precisely. It will be sent by regular mail as both, writer and publisher need the genuine signature on a piece of paper.

Once the contract is signed, the editor will communicate with you as many times as he considers necessary. These messages may be in English or Spanish. If the messages are in Spanish, you'll need your translator once more. It is important to have a computer with Internet access, an e-mail program and a fax machine to develop a relationship with your editor and translator.

How much will it cost to get your book translated? The average translation rate is USD 0.10 per word in the target language, but you can get a volume discount, specially if you establish a long-term relationship with her. Some writers share their Spanish-language royalties with the translator.

Where to Find a Translator

One place to look for a professional translator is the Infomarex website. Infomarex provides information about 3,000 professional translators on their panel, belonging to different parts of the world.

Proz is another excellent website to look for a translator. Translators are grouped according to the pair of languages they work with. They get points for good answers they have provided to their colleagues.

You can also post your project at Ants.com and reach lots of potential partners. Freelancers are rated according to the quality of previous work done. This service helps you choose among likely candidates. This website has recently earned the Better Business Bureau Online Reliability Seal.

As you can see, it's easy to push your book into the Spanish -Language Market. So, why not try?

Useful Websites

Proz: Translators - <http://www.proz.com>

Infomarex: Translator Panel - <http://homepage.circom.net/~infomarex>

Ants.com - <http://www.ants.com>

Guía de Editores de España (Spanish editors' guide) - <http://www.guia-editores.org/todas.htm>

(See also Global Writers' Ink's links to translators and other language resources at <http://www.inkspot.com/global/links/language.html>.)

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