

Checking the Quality of Your Translated Book

by **Monica Di Santi**

You've worked hard writing your book and now you want to sell it, not only in your country, but in foreign markets as well. In most cases, this means your work has to be translated. Will your ideas and voice still be present in the foreign version? It depends on the quality of the translation. But how can you check the quality of the translation if you don't know the target language? Here are some hints.

The first thing a good translator has to do is to read the book thoroughly, two or three times, to be sure she understands every single detail. So, you can check and enrich her understanding of your work by talking or sending her a set of questions about your book. Ask her for details and meaning. After all, the translation of your book depends on the interpretation of this particular reader who can write your ideas in another language.

Once the book is translated, the manuscript has to be corrected and proofread. Generally, these revisions are done by other translators. Once more, you can use the same procedure -- talk or send a set of questions in your mother tongue -- to gain some feedback from the translated version. This will be helpful, but you won't be sure whether the proofreader has only the translated version.

So, you can go a step further and provide your own proofreaders. Where can you find a proofreader if you live in a country where that language is not spoken? There may be lots of bilingual people in your country, but consider some points before you choose a proofreader.

Locating Proofreaders

When a person speaks two languages but doesn't work with them daily, there's a tendency to transfer the structures and vocabulary of the more widely used language to the second one. The result is that awkward sentences and words that sounds similar to those in the predominant language are accepted as good translations, even if they are inappropriate to the context. So, to choose a good proofreader, you have to look for professionals who work with the two languages daily, at an excellent level.

You can also look for a good proofreader in another direction. Lots of newcomers reach the USA every year, taking part in International Cultural Programs. These people are fluent in their native language and they also know how to speak English, or at least understand enough to answer your questions. Such individuals can read the translated manuscript without having access to the original version. You can provide them with your set of questions, and then compare their feedback to the one coming from the English version.

To locate such individuals, get in contact with the organizations that bring them into the country -- or, check with foreign language teachers in schools and ESL teachers in colleges. You'll meet high school teenagers, university students, and professionals who are working for a short period in your country. People taking part in international programs are expected to engage in activities connected with their mother tongue and the local community, and your project may be just what they are looking for.

Checking Details

You can also check some other details in your translated manuscript:

Names. Often, a character's first name will be translated into a comparable name in the target language (e.g., "Mary" becomes "Maria"). This makes your work easier to read, specially for children.

Cultural Exchange Resources

AFS Intercultural Learning - <http://www.afs.org/>

American Intercultural Student Exchange - <http://www.aise.com/>

Council on International Educational Exchange - <http://www.ciee.org/>

The Exchange Network - <http://www.sevec.ca/>

Fulbright Teacher & Administrator Exchange Program - <http://www.grad.usda.gov/International/ftfp.html>

Teacher Exchange Programs - <http://www.ctf-fce.ca/e/tic/exchange.htm>

Teachers Helping Teachers with Teaching Exchanges - <http://www.angelfire.com/ca/zael/>

Visiting International Faculty Program - <http://www.vifprogram.com>

Translation Resources

The American Translators' Association - <http://www.atanet.org/>

International Federation of Translators - <http://www.fit-ift.org/>

Languages-on-the-Web - <http://www.languages-on-the-web.com>
Links to international language resources, including translators

NCTA Searchable Translator Database - <http://www.rahul.net/lai/ncta/trdb.htm>

Book titles. Reference book titles should not be translated unless a target language version of the book is available.

If you want to reach foreign markets, now you know how to check the quality of the translated manuscripts and hit the target.

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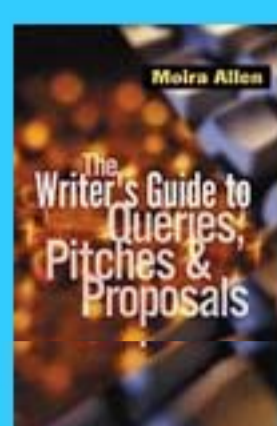
Northwest Translators and Interpreters Society - <http://www.notisnet.org/index.htm>

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