

*Invited lecture*

## **Bilingual publications: Challenges to the Editor**

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Simultaneous bilingual or multilingual publication is desirable to make research results accessible to as many readers as possible. Secondary bilingual or multilingual publication (after the first language version has been published), with the knowledge and permission of all copyright holders, is an acceptable form of secondary research publication. However, multilingual publication requires special human and economic resources that can be difficult to obtain. This talk identified some of the resources and explained the challenges involved in obtaining, developing and maintaining them.

The most important resource is of course high-quality translation provided by skilled human translators. Other human resources needed are editorial staff able to understand two or more languages, and an experienced managing editor or translation project manager. The process of integrating translation into a journal's publication process can be complex. Mutual respect, close cooperation and efficient communication among translators and editorial production staff are needed to make things work smoothly.

Economic resources are another important consideration, because high-quality specialized translation is expensive. Students, professors, doctors and nonprofessional volunteers with knowledge of other languages may sometimes be able to translate well, but usually will not be able to meet the journal's deadlines regularly because of their competing commitments. To ensure that translations consistently meet strict publication and production deadlines without a decline in quality, it is usually necessary to recruit experienced professional translators or to invest enough time and money in training less experienced translators.

Scheduling for bilingual or multilingual publication must take into account the time it takes to produce high-quality translations. The sooner

after manuscript acceptance translation can begin, the less risk there is that translation may interfere with the publication schedule. Translated versions can be published at a later date than the first-language version, although the delay can diminish the usefulness of translated versions. Any complex production schedule that involves many steps and external service providers should build in a few safety margins of 1 or 2 extra days along the way to compensate for unforeseen delays, human error and legal holidays in different countries.

Editorial quality affects the efficiency of translation, because translation is faster if the original language version is carefully copyedited for clarity, consistency, accuracy and lack of ambiguity. Ideally, rigorous copyediting of accepted manuscripts in the first language should remove all editorial errors before translation. If translation takes place simultaneously with copyediting of the original language version, all corrections and changes made by copyeditors and translators need to be transposed to both language versions. Getting this process to work efficiently can create considerable management and production scheduling challenges.

Sometimes, accepted manuscripts contain serious errors or evidence of misconduct that were not noticed by the reviewers or editors. Because translators read texts so carefully, they are good at finding errors, copy-and-paste writing and inaccurate referencing that peer reviews have overlooked. If translators can alert the editorial staff to these errors, they can help improve editorial quality, especially if the production schedule allows the errors to be corrected in the first language version. Making sure all changes are included in all language versions is an important consideration, since there should be no discrepancies in actual content between the different language versions.

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