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March 2011 FEATURE

To Grow, Go Global

How to Create a MultiLingual Business

— quality collaboration —

Quality translation dictates a collaborative effort

By Nabil Freij
President, Founder and Owner
GlobalVision International, Inc.



Why in-country proof is crucial and how to best structure and streamline it

Imagine the following: First, you are tasked to organize people in different countries, operating in different time zones, with different cultures and languages, not reporting to you, to participate in what will be a very laborious task. Second, these people are committed to doing other jobs that take up all their work time. Third, it is very likely that you cannot offer them incremental pay! Those who have been involved in coordinating in-country proof of a translation localization project understand how difficult the process can be.

Attending to the above is a major undertaking for even the most experienced project manager. Are you overwhelmed already?

This is why some in our industry argue that an in-country proof is not needed after the translation of a product is completed. We can't disagree more.

THE CASE FOR IN-COUNTRY LINGUISTIC PROOF

Control Theory teaches us that a dynamic system remains unstable until it has a negative feedback loop built into it.

Look at the graph on the right and think of r as the source text. The target, or translated text, is y . G is the translator and K is the in-country proofreader.

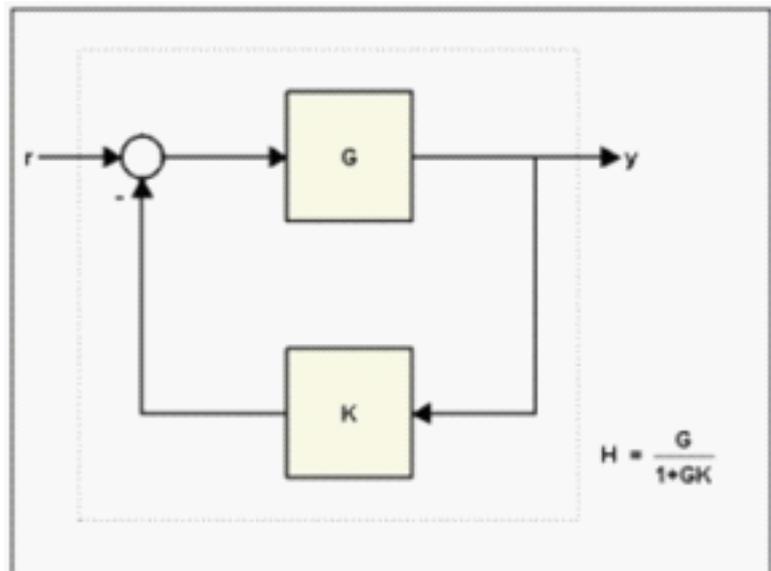
K will have to proofread the translations of G and offer constructive (negative) feedback to the translator to help meet the required quality.

The translation management system is H . It is a dynamic system. For it to be stable, it will require to properly handle input from G and K — the translator and in-country proofreader.

Also, to ensure a stable system, collaboration among the different influencers in the system will be needed. The more efficient and optimal the collaboration efforts are, the more stable the system will be.

10 STEPS YOU CAN'T IGNORE

Having proven that the in-country proof is crucial, here are 10 important steps to follow to turn this challenge into a successful endeavor.



1. Choose the right individuals. The more connected you are with your international offices the more aware you will be with your options. Pick a person that has excellent command of the local language and your product, and that is motivated to help. If you don't have a choice, still qualify them to make sure that your agendas are aligned and then work constantly on motivating them.
2. Provide your proofreaders all the information they need about the project, the tools that they will use and the process that they will follow. Do that before the translation starts so that they are setup early and can ask any questions when there is time still to address them.
3. Provide necessary training for special tools or processes that they will use to ensure that they have full control over their tasks and follow all the appropriate steps. Unlike professional translators, your in-country proofreaders are not expected to know how to use translation memory (TM) tools or deal with terminology or specialized translation file formats.
4. Get your proofreaders to review the terminology in their own languages early and approve them. Give them a chance to influence them before the translation starts, or while it is ongoing. Giving them ownership and ability to influence the end-quality early in the process makes them feel part of the overall process, and not just an afterthought, or the go to person to fix all problems in the last minute.
5. Enable your proofreaders with technology to facilitate their work and communicate with the project stakeholders. Most people like to use MS Word to make corrections, or, annotate PDF files. Try to make the proof process work with these simple tools. However, give them access to an easy to use, but robust translation management system to communicate answers to translator queries and to preview the terminology.
6. Pin down the file handoff process so that translated vs. proofed files are not confused or lost.
7. Allow for your translators to see the changes that are implemented by the proofreaders to learn any style or terminology nuances, or preferences, and to correct any inconsistencies, typos or grammatical errors.
8. Enable a process that facilitates the inclusion of the corrections from proofreaders into the Translation Memories for future reuse. You want to avoid asking your proofreaders to apply the same changes each time your source changes; it will demotivate them from doing their work in future releases.
9. Allow proofreaders ample time to complete their work. Remember, they don't report to you and you don't control their time or paychecks.
10. Give your proofreaders positive reinforcement often throughout the project. You can only influence them through proper motivation and leadership.

Ignore any of these steps and you are likely to suffer the consequences during or after the project's completion.

STREAMLINE THE PROCESS

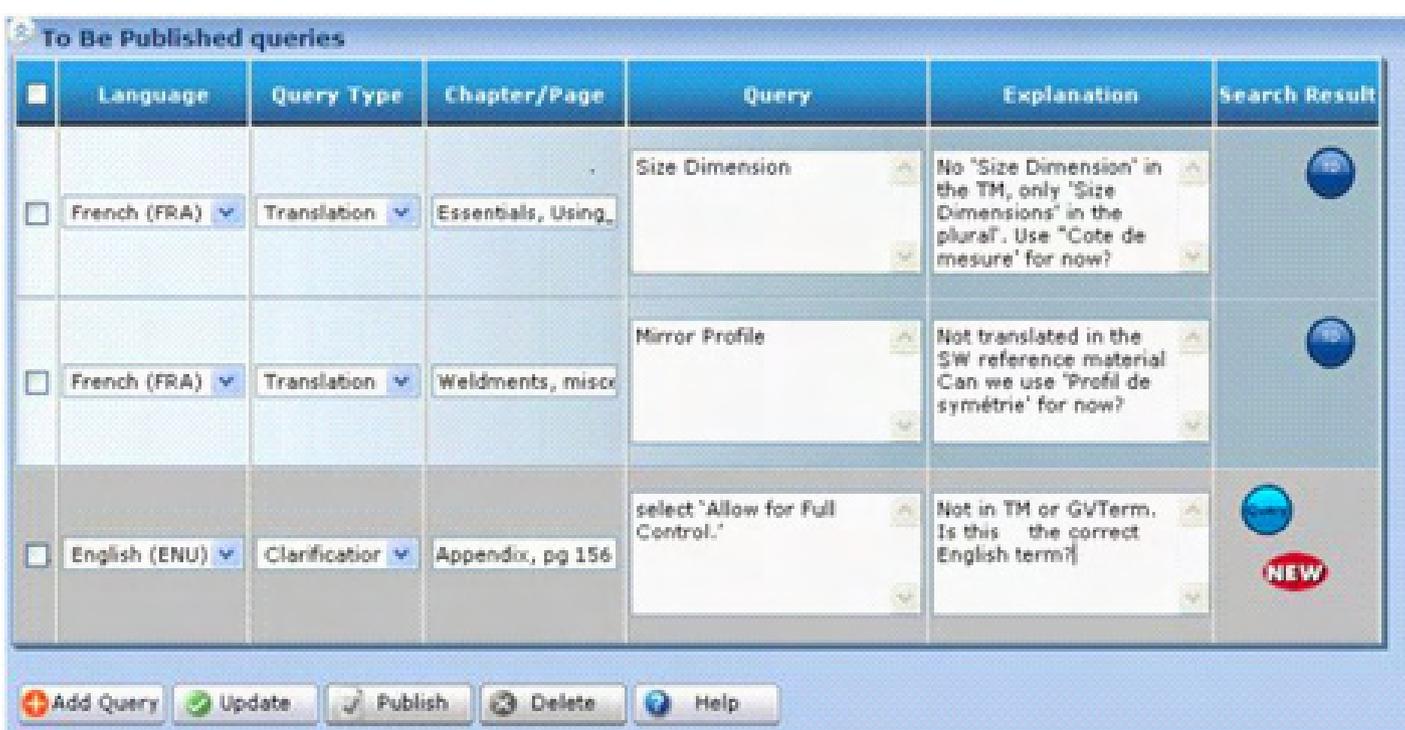
To facilitate the linguistic proof process, it is preferable to have multiple linguistic proof methodologies available to you to help meet each client's specific needs. Here are three main options:

1. Table format with 2 columns, source and target. Proofreaders read the source in the first column and make the necessary changes to the translated text in the second column either online or in a tool like MS Word. Translators then see exactly where the changes are made and apply all necessary corrections.
2. MS Word Document in bilingual format with source and target languages: Here the source and target are interlaced. The first string contains the target text and the second string contains the source text separated by a number that shows the fuzzy match from the TM. Proofreaders can decide to proof only new strings to the release. Changes are made in MS Word for translators to see where the changes take place to correctly act upon them.
3. A draft PDF of the target file is provided to the proofreader where he or she can electronically annotate the PDF with the requested linguistic changes. The annotated PDF file is then returned to the translator to implement the changes in the target files.

Note that a thorough linguistic proof is always a laborious process which if not planned correctly, may cause serious delays to the project. Your goal should be to eventually turn your translators, or translation vendor, into your final proofreaders, after gaining experience on your end-users' specific requirements and after following a rigid process that leverages the latest advances in translation management which keep the translators closely connected with the in-country product experts.

In order to reach this goal, think about integrating in your process the following enabling technologies that will help shift the burden of proof from the in-country proofreader to the translator:

1. An online terminology portal can be populated with your terminology in all languages and can be accessible to all translators and proofreaders while performing their work. By communicating the correct terminology to use, translators can be consistent and accurate in using the proper terms from the start.
2. A wiki-based portal can allow easy collaboration between the translators, the reviewers, the project manager, you, and your proofreaders. This en-



environment permits translators to ask questions about the source, moderated by project managers, and work closely with your proofreaders in order to provide the best fit translations when the translator is in doubt. Ensuring translators' accurate understanding at the beginning reduces the requirements for change at the end.

3. A translation management system will host all files, source and target to keep assets organized and to display the status of each task in each project. As one of the above three described proof options is applied, all terminology, translation memories, files and other pertinent translation assets will be updated with your feedback before proceeding with the desktop publishing or final build and release of the completed work.

As you build a translation memory, active feedback from qualified proofreaders will make it a better resource to rely upon, eventually eliminating the need for a comprehensive linguistic in-country proof. The translators would understand your special style, terminology and preferences for producing your documents. Style guides will be beefed up and consistently followed. Stakeholders will also continue to use the translation memory, the terminology database and the query database to ensure accuracy not only within your division's projects and products, but throughout the entire organization. Overall, your corporate international communications, brand and image will significantly improve.

THE IDEAL WORLD

While performing in-country linguistic proof may be a necessary step, the goal is to streamline the process and minimize the amount of work to be done while delivering

the expected high quality products to your international users.

What is the lesson to take here? Despite of what others may tell you, don't let translators translate in vacuum. Translation is not a task that you can throw over the wall to others in a process that excludes in-country input and guidance. If you do that, the translation quality will sooner or later diverge from your requirements and your end-users will someday give up on using your localized product.

Therefore, quality translation requires a collaborative translation management system. One that permits information sharing, that improves terminology understanding, that tracks schedules and tasks, that facilitates the feedback process, and that truly allows a two-way dialog, between the translators and product experts, to improve product quality and usability.

Next time you are told to forego your in-country proof, ask your localization or translation vendor to consider using a robust translation management system, or better yet, hire someone that does!

Author BIO:

Nabil Freij is the author of [Enabling Globalization](#) and the president, founder, and owner of GlobalVision International, Inc. (www.globalvis.com), a Localization and Translation specialist. He is trilingual and holds an MSEE from Brown University and an MBA from Bryant University. Freij's blog can be read at: <http://blog.globalvis.com>.