

## **Translating The World One Picture Book At A Time**

The cry “we need diverse books” reverberates throughout the children’s literature community. The need to provide a more apt, more complex representation of the world to young readers is at the forefront of the industry. But is representation truly diverse when so little of the children’s literature currently published in English comes from outside our own national borders?

Diversity, as it relates to global literature, is sadly lacking given that only 3 percent of the annual publishing market in the United States is of translated texts. Furthermore, few of these translated texts openly note in plain view they are translations, and translators are frequently not credited on the title page for their work. Publishers often cite the “otherness” of translated texts as a reason not to produce them, an insinuation that is a disservice to readers and is in opposition to the diversity being called for in the world of children’s literature.

This presentation reports the results of a year-long study by the author of nearly 300 translated picture books, which are sources rich in language, story, culture, religion, history and art but which have received scant critical attention from scholars and educators. If those well-versed in the field are uneducated as to the potential to explore the world through translated texts, what does that mean for the average reader? Translated texts represent an untapped resource in the quest for diversity in U.S. publishing, and without further research or promotion of translated texts, the potential to expose and educate readers to the diverse world around them will continue to remain underutilized.