

# Scientific Editing Around the Globe: Russia

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Scientific editing in Russia is as varied as it is in North America and other parts of the world with strong publishing programs. I'm glad to tell you about my role as editor of geology documents in Russia.

VZG is a sort of research institute for the geology of foreign countries. It also has the rights of a publishing house, which is why editing and publishing are important activities of ours. Most of our documents are published in Russian, about 30% are published in English, about 5% in French, and about 1% in Spanish. The graphic documents are prepared in accordance with the regulations of the International Geological Union, so the many non-Russian buyers of documents find them easy to use. Among our publications, maps with explanatory notes, monographs, and reports predominate.

As is true of every editor, we have many problems in this sphere, such as economical

and ethical problems, concerns with translation, and right to publish. Some problems have an international significance (for example, economic problems). Others bear national coloring (such as traditional systems of argumentation and presenting evidence).

In addition, geology differs from other branches of scientific knowledge in the materials to be edited. In geology publications, graphic documents are the most important part of any study, and textual items mostly appear as explanation of graphics. This situation provokes special geologic approaches to editing: All parts of the edited materials have to be in full correspondence; the documents must agree internally.

Before stating the essence of the matter, it might be useful to definite "editing". I prefer the following definition: Editing is a process of preparation—treatment by the editor of the original text for publication, directed to perfect the form and content of the original text with preservation of the author's individuality. Thus, the editor is responsible for the appropriate form and content of a text to be published as well as for maintaining an author's individual style. In this, the editor meets a dilemma: to process a text without loss of its individual features.

It seems to me that the best way to highlight the challenges we have is to illustrate briefly our editing of a publication. A good example might be the monograph and atlas *Geology of Hydrocarbon and Mineral Resources Associated with Post-middle Jurassic Sequences in the Oceans and on the Continents*, published by VZG in 1993. The original text was edited by LE Levin, IS Gramberg, and EN Isaev. The English-language version was edited by GJH McCall, fellow of Liverpool University, England. This monograph consists of 704 pages; the atlas contains 7 maps (37 sheets) with a total area of 30 square meters.

The monograph was written by 16 authors during 16 months. After that it was edited by scientific, literary, technical, and English-linguistic editors, in that order. It took 20 months to complete all the editing. Fortunately, the scientific editors of the publication do not belong to the sort of editors who prefer to rewrite a text rather than to persuade an author to agree with the editor's corrections. The main tasks of the scientific editors were to control the following:

- the vocabulary so that the same terms were used for the same things throughout the text;

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- equal completeness in the description of similar cases;
- full correspondence and no discrepancies among all parts of the monograph and the same between the monograph and the atlas;
- maintaining the so-called “author’s aroma” of writing.

The monograph and atlas were printed separately. The monograph, which was printed first, was done in St Petersburg and took 14 months to print. The atlas was printed in Moscow and took 40 months.

I am sure that, among the VZG products, this publication is one of the best in form and content. But (the Russians are fond of using this conjunction) we have a scholarly saying: If it is written in English as “London”, it could be pronounced as “Liverpool”. Because of the differences in rules of pronunciation between Russian and English, even common words can be misunderstood; we cannot translate each word directly. If we did that, the original Russian title of the monograph and atlas, when directly translated into English without linguistic editing by a native

English-speaking editor, would be *Geology and Minerageny of Late-Jurassic-Quaternary Sedimentary Cover in the Oceans and on the Continents*. “But” this is the subject of another aspect of “Editing Around the Globe”.

Thinking about the help we can receive from the membership of associations such as CBE, I am sure that every kind of exchange of ideas and information, approaches, and methods gives us a unique possibility to unite and to enrich our experience as well as to overcome all challenges we meet in our very interesting work. 